

THE MIRROR

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Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: D. Littlejohn

2008

Romania
Merigar East
July 14–20
Khordas Rushan from Dzogchen Upadesha
root tantra “Dra Thalgyur”
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
The Method of Integration from Dzogchen
Upadesha root tantra “Dra Thalgyur”
Open Webcast

Russia
Moscow
September 2–9
The real nature of Ati Dzogchen
from Dzogchen Upadesha root tantra
“Dra Thalgyur”

Kalmykia
September 12
Teaching of Guru Aryatare
September 13
A Tsewang of White Tara

Italy
Merigar West
September 26–October 3
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat:
Training with the sounds of elements from
Dzogchen Upadesha root tantra
“Dra Thalgyur”

October 6–9
Santi Maha Sangha III Level Exam
October 10–17
Santi Maha Sangha IV Level Training

October 31–November 3
Practice and Teaching dedicated to those
who have died

Spain
November 14–20
Barcelona Retreat

Brazil
November 26–30
Brazil Retreat



Arrival of Rinpoche and Yeshe Namkhai and family to Tsegylgar East.

Photo: N. Zeitz

Being Present in the Land of the Dakinis

The 2008 Retreat at Tsegylgar East

Gerald Reilly

Khandroling, the remarkable two hundred and twenty acres whose name means “land of the dakinis,” has long been especially dear to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. At the beginning of the retreat at Tsegylgar East earlier this year, Rinpoche talked about this sacred land to the audience minutes before the first webcast began. He related an early dream involving Princess Gomadevi that he’d received in Singapore which only proved fully understandable years later in retreat at Khandroling where he received the Vajra Dance transmission. “I always considered this place is something important for Vajra Dance and for the teaching of the Longsal,” he said. “When the weather is good, we will all go there and do some practice.”

So began a retreat blessed with beautiful weather, relaxed and seamless orga-

nization, and remarkable transmissions, teachings, and lectures from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, his son Yeshe Silvano Namkhai, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo as well as instruction on Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, and Santi Maha Sangha from the Community teachers.

At the start of the webcast, Rinpoche related how the program had gone through a series of evolutions. Initially it was announced that the retreat would be on the famous Dzogchen terma by Jigme Lingpa known as Yeshe Lama, but it was decided too long for a week retreat. Later, there were plans to study Vimalimatra’s commentary on the important Dzogchen root tantra, Dra Thalgyur, but this time, the project wasn’t sufficiently corrected for the Massachusetts’ retreat. In the end, the topics of the retreat were, first, an important essence teaching by Jigme Lingpa called

Dzogchen Naslug Chethong and, second, two additional days of bardo teachings. “So everyone will be satisfied,” said Rinpoche with cheerful understatement.

From the start, the retreat possessed a timeless quality. A comment a few days later from Rinpoche’s son, Yeshe, clarified precisely what was going on. “The classic example is he doesn’t like the past,” replied Yeshe to a question about his father’s character. “Why? Because in Dzogchen practice when we deal with the past, we deal with karmic vision. It is useless to waste time on this. What is about present and future, this is more connected with knowledge.”

Unsurprisingly, with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu sitting in front of us, teaching us by word and example, the retreat kept all of us focused on this present and this future. On Saturday, the second day of the retreat,

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Teaching



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Norbu
“Realization is in
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Namkhai
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“Realization is in your hands”

Terma Teaching of Dorje Lingpa

An excerpt of a teaching given from May 9-14, 2008
Tashigar North, Isla Margarita, Venezuela

Open webcast

This is a terma teaching of the famous tertön, Dorje Lingpa. A tertön is someone who discovers teachings. Dorje Lingpa's teachings were taught by Guru Padmasambhava and then put in a terma by the famous disciple Vairocana.

From Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Introduction,
Day 1, May 9

Shulen* of Vairocana

Sunday, May 11

Good day everybody. So for continuing our teaching first we do Guruyoga for transmission. Today we have the requests of Vairocana.

Question by Vairocana to Guru Padmasambhava:

How did our illusion start? And how was it when we were not falling into illusion?

Guru Padmasambhava replied to Vairocana:

Listen Vairocana; in general, there are many systems that establish what the base is. Some call it emptiness, some call it clarity, some diverse kinds, some kadag since the beginning pure, or lhundrub, and since the beginning self perfected state. Despite these many considerations, if we fall into a single view, it is not perfect. In Dzogchen Upadesha, how the concrete situation is, how sentient beings' condition is and how the real state of enlightened beings is, are explained with three characteristics.

The essence is emptiness, so there is no object and no birth and it never changes its condition. So our consideration of good and bad as something from the beginning pure is the base of all manifestation. Even though there is nothing to confirm concretely, it is pervasive and can open everything for manifesting form, name and color, etc., and beyond all these limitations. So it is 'unborn' and beyond any aggregation. So this is the explanation of emptiness in the real sense.

Its nature is clarity. Even though we have contact with objects, there is no interruption of the potentiality of the five colors. With no obstacles that means there are no limitations. It is empty like a reflection in the mirror, not existing precisely like an object. Even if we enjoy, we go between our qualifications and can have everything we desire. Not having any problems outside and inside is the potentiality of the five colors. So its characteristic since the beginning, thought, everything, its real nature has never been moved or modified.

We are not just considering emptiness or considering clarity. It is not that we add something for explaining. It is beyond any kind of judgment. Even though we try to add a name or quality we cannot. With this experience we can discover emptiness and even with this discovery, its clarity is never missing, just like a crystal rock. It was not created by Buddha nor modified by sentient beings. It was not changed nor anything modified. When we have knowledge and wisdom, we discover that.

There are two qualities of knowledge. One is for the benefit of self-realization and the other for sentient beings. We do not separate the aspects samsara and nirvana. It is not that there is something entering and returning. Also we cannot separate vision and emptiness. We cannot limit with colors. Also with name, we cannot limit with judgments of good and bad. So the essence is empty, its nature is clarity and its potentiality is without interruption.



Photo: A. Chudinova

So this is how our real condition is. When we don't have that knowledge, we go after explanations in an intellectual way. When we understand and know the real sense of Dzogchen, this is for total realization. Being like this, our condition as the self-perfected state from the beginning, all sentient beings who transmigrate the three worlds and the six lokas, also their condition is non-dual and from the beginning the self-perfected state.

Vairocana asked again to Guru Padmasambhava:

How can we have that illusion without knowing our real condition?

Guru Padmasambhava responded to Vairocana:

Our real condition is emptiness and clarity, without interruption, and in Dzogchen we call this *zhönnu pumku* (*gzhon nu bum sku*), *zhönnu* means youth, fresh; *pum* or *pumpa* means vase, *ku* means dimension. So our potentiality dimension is like a light in a vase; that light is already there. When that light is manifest outside, this is the *samboghakaya* manifestation. Generally we don't have that capacity. Then our light and wisdom, everything, remains like in a vase. When that light manifests as five colors representing five wisdoms, we do not recognize that as the wisdom. How is it that we do not understand? Not knowing our real condition is just like eyes that see everything, but not our own eyes. If you look in a mirror you can see them, but that is another thing. When we have that kind of problem it is because we are ignorant from the beginning and that is called *lhenkye marigpa*.

It has its movement of wisdom. But when we do not have that knowledge, understanding or recognition of our real nature, immediately we have dualism vision. Maybe we think, "Oh I am here and I am seeing lights." That is why it is important if we have visions in our practice not to fall into dualism vision. You become attached and happy when you have visions. Then there can be no progress; this visions will be blocked and never repeat again. Our dualistic vision blocks. So all of our concepts, ego, me, I, others, race, color, name, everything manifests and with our three emotions we produce karma and with this potentiality of karma, we produce our impure, *samsaric* vision. When we see things with colors we get attached. If sounds and letters manifest we are immediately attached; we are attached to all enjoyments of senses. Then we produce the three worlds and the six lokas.

So that means that if we know the wrong point in our condition, in absolute truth the condition samsara never existed. Also the relative condition as something concrete never existed. We are in the non-dual knowledge of the two truths. When did our illusion start and when will it finish so we can have total realization? We go beyond all these concepts.

When our six senses are in contact with objects in an ordinary way we have attachment in an ordinary way with all its concepts. But with this knowledge, that its essence is emptiness, just that knowledge is *dharmakaya*. The knowledge that its nature is clarity, that knowledge is

samboghakaya. The knowledge that everything manifests different aspects and all are related with different kinds of emotions and that different emotions and experiences of sensation, clarity and emptiness related with the three gates arise. Just this is *nirmanakaya* in the way that the consideration of the dimension of hell is the dimension of heat. So everything in a real sense is manifesting the real nature of the three *kayas*.

With that knowledge arises and there is no need to think 'we have such knowledge' or 'we have realization' or 'we are transmigrating and missing that knowledge'. Just be in that real condition and discover that being in that kind of presence everything is part of our meditation. That meditation is the dimension of *dharmakaya* and we know this is our real condition. With this knowledge alive in you, there is no need to meditate on something else. Just that is the state of Dzogchen self liberation.

Sentient beings are training in samsara and fall in dualism by having a concept of subject and object. Even with just a little teaching and method and no real knowledge of self-liberated state, they go up and down, negating, purifying, meditating, and creating all these problems because they don't have knowledge or understanding.

Another time, Guru Padmasambhava said:

If we want to apply the essence of the teaching very precisely, we should understand our real nature of mind is since the beginning unborn. This means it has its qualification and clarity. That condition we have in ourselves since the beginning. Now we don't need to search and find it. So this is our real nature that is manifesting different aspects. We are being concretely in the state where there is no dualistic difference, like with the mind, and with our senses we are discovering this. We are not negating or changing anything. We relax in that state without attachment.

At the beginning there is no origin. Nothing is coming from somewhere so this is the essence of emptiness. There is no place where it is remaining. This is the nature of clarity. There is no place where it finishes or goes to. This is the nature of no interruption, self liberated. Nothing exists concretely. We want to explain with different words but it is difficult to do because its real nature is empty and it has its qualification self-perfection without the need to produce or develop anything. Our nature of mind has nothing concrete. When we are in a state of meditation, there is nothing to meditate. There is nothing to meditate. There is no one meditating.

Also any kind of defect of sleeping or agitation states are all related with thoughts, so don't keep or hold any consideration. Knowing everything is non-dual with your real nature, your potentiality, then any kind of idea you have, it is better not to keep it as something concrete as it is all related with mind. You don't need to confirm that something exists or that something else doesn't or that one way is the correct way and the other way is not. In that way all defects liberate.

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Photo: M. Schmookler

Mi lam (dream practice) is an Upadesha practice. This means that it is about experience. Rinpoche has explained Mi lam many times, so you have already received this practice. Therefore I will not explain the terms, or give transmission of Mi lam. Instead I will go a bit deeper and explain how to create or provoke experiences. When we go to sleep and start to dream, of course it is very good if we have positive experiences like awareness. But before we talk about a teaching like the dream practice, it is important to understand that whatever we receive as an image or vision, as our experience, comes from our mind.

First of all, you should be aware that our mind has a lot of capacity. It has a lot of potentiality, and can manifest many things.

If we dream, whatever is on our mind will probably also be in our dreams. You should not be surprised that you dream about certain things. For example, some people tell me, “I had this dream, and there was some seed syllable or color.” Many times we receive teachings - we listen to the teaching, and then we forget. It’s normal. We always forget. Then, what happens? Maybe we have a dream, and in the dream we are a little aware. Obviously, if we are a little aware, what is most important? For us, it is the teaching.

Even if we forget a teaching, it is somewhere very deep in our mind and it can immediately come back. If it comes back, then “poof!” You immediately have a vision about it. It’s like you have the whole experience of the teaching in that moment. Maybe

you learned that you could visualize a red ball at the throat in order to develop your dream practice. Or, maybe you learned that you could visualize a ball that moves up from the center of your body, similar to the visualization in the Phowa practice. Then maybe you forgot, or you tried to apply this but never succeeded. One day, it may happen that you have some clarity during a dream and this experience immediately appears. We are much more powerful in our dreams. When you have this experience, you can recall it when you are awake.

We are not doing these things in order to perform magic and spend our life sleeping. We are not interested in this. We do these things in order to obtain experience and knowledge. At a certain point, we immediately

Transmission, Experience, and the Dream Practice

From a teaching by Yeshi Silvano Namkhai, at Tsegyalgar East, on June 7, 2008

have experiences when we hear the teaching. This is correct, and we should attend teachings. It doesn’t matter whether your teacher is speaking Italian, English, or reading some text in Tibetan. If he is talking about a certain experience, then it is normal to have that experience in that moment. This is what usually happens. First you have a general introduction of information. Then you have a sort of explanation of how this experience could be. This is the symbolic explanation, like the explanation of the mirror or the crystal, which is given in order to help you understand the essence of the experience. This experience in itself has the power to give you wisdom, like clarity or emptiness, for example. You need to have this kind of experience.

You can’t talk about the teaching without having had experience of it. You can talk, but it is very connected to the transmission. This means that it is very connected with your own experience. At a certain point, there can be a formal act. For instance, you can practice different methods based on the experiences of emptiness, sensation, or clarity. You have already received direct introduction many times, through methods like *Yeshe Sangthal*. There are also many methods that use Hum. These are more connected with the experience or feeling of bliss. Sometimes you have this experience during this moment, and sometimes you don’t. But if you were totally aware of your

real condition, then you wouldn’t need to do *Yeshe Sangthal*, or even think about the letter A. Immediately, as Rinpoche talks about direct introduction, you would have this experience. It is like when we say that there are some people that can open a book written in another language, and immediately have visions and experience of the contents therein. This is very related to your state of presence, and whether or not you have this kind of vision.

Sometimes we create a kind of fantasy about the transmission, and how it works. It is better to be a little clear about this. You can only have an experience of how the transmission works in a dream. You can immediately recognize this when you have an experience of clarity in your dream. When you become aware of the dream, you can recall anything you have been doing during the day, such as Guruyoga, for example. If you train yourself to do a lot of Guruyoga during the day, then the first time you have a dream in which you are aware you are dreaming, and Guruyoga will manifest in your dream.

If you keep the commitment to do Guruyoga most of the time, then it will also come out in your dreams, but differently. Normally you have the idea of the A and thigle, which is a sort of symbol. The thigle is a ball that represents your primordial state and your potentiality to manifest wisdom. In dreams, it will be completely different. You will not have this idea. Instead you will feel like you are inside this thigle. You will start to feel and understand that a thigle is not only a symbol or a colored ball, but also something that goes far beyond your human condition.

You have experience of life. In dreams, you have a mental body and can actually feel pain. But this pain is not real. You may feel pain, fear, or different emotions. In the same way, you can have experiences of clarity, understanding, or emptiness – all the basic experiences that are the base of knowledge in Dzogchen. It is very important to have experience. If you don’t have experience, it is like you are only reciting mantras. You can stay there for hours and hours with a mala reciting, “Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani Padme Hum,” but it takes a long time to have knowledge practicing this way. Only reciting mantras is a very long road. Doing Guruyoga correctly is a lot faster. It has more meaning, makes you feel better, and somehow, you will start to have experiences of joy or bliss. ☉

Transcribed by Anastasia McGhee and edited by Anna Bartenstein

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Even in thought there is nothing concrete, so it self-liberates. So any concept that arises in your mind, don’t consider it concrete, rather relate it to movement. If we are not giving too much importance and we are in that state of knowledge and understanding, then everything liberates and you are in your real nature. All these are different words but in essence don’t be distracted and be in your real presence. When you are in your real nature and not distracted, then you do not need to create, modify or change.

This is a kind of introduction in a real sense by explaining how your real nature is. But of course no one can really explain in words. So there are many words with a lot of detail.

So it says:
Fresh, when did it start and when did it finish? It is beyond this.

The real relaxed state, like *tregchöd*, is beyond modifying, changing or creating something.

The real nature is clear, but not made clear by secondary causes or effort, but manifests itself, its real nature

Any thought, big, small, medium, good, bad, or neutral, our real nature is beyond all these thoughts. Thoughts are a function of mind, and mind is in time. Our real nature, *dharma*, is beyond time.

Just like a mirror, reflections are relative because if in front of the mirror there is an interdependent object, that ob-

ject is reflected in the mirror. The reflection can appear because the mirror has that potentiality. But the reflection is not the nature of the mirror; reflections are just like thoughts, emotions and any relative condition.

Our real nature is not that we become like a stone. It may manifest the sensation of bliss but this is not concrete either and is not created by secondary causes. Also there is a kind of all-pervasive clarity manifesting and even if we can feel it, we can’t explain this experience.

This is shine and *lhagtong*, the non-dual state. That is non-dual, *nyamzhag* and *jethob*; *nyamzhag* means when you are in a state of meditation and *jethob* means you are finished and are in an ordinary condition. That concept we have of samsara and nirvana is in the state of self-liberation. All phenomena are unreal, like birth and death, etc. When we have this experience, this is then something like a sword for cutting through samsara.

This is like a military general subduing all emotions.

This is the essence of all Tantric teaching.

It is like the heart mantra of all dakinis.

It is like a drop of the blood of my heart.

Only with this knowledge can you have total realization. ☸

★ Shulen is what a student asks a teacher to clarify knowledge

Transcribed and edited by Rosemary Friend and Naomi Zeitz

The Essential Dzogchen Teaching of Sangyas Lingpa according to the Longsal Teaching

New York Retreat
May 23-25, 2008

Kevin Heaney

New York City prides itself as being the gateway to America and a destination for tens of millions of visitors every year. Yet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had not visited New York City since 2005. This situation was corrected over the weekend of May 23, 24, and 25 when Rinpoche returned to give a three-day retreat on *The Essential Dzogchen Teaching of Sangyas Lingpa according to the Longsal Teaching*.

Before the weekend of the Teaching began, Rinpoche visited the New York City Community Center, Kundrolling, at its location on Thirtieth Street and Seventh Avenue. The idea for the ling had been birthed at the goodbye party for Rinpoche in 2005. This was his first visit to the center. His wife Rosa and son Yeshe

accompanied him. Needless to say, the New York Community was thrilled with the prospect of the Teacher visiting. As you may expect, there was a whole lot of cleaning and polishing in addition to the excitement over the official visit. Rinpoche led the Community in a Short Thun and the Community regaled him with song and poetry, tea and treats.

After Rinpoche and Rosa left, Yeshe remained and gave an inspiring talk on the blending of our principles and organization for the greater good of all. This was unexpected and incredibly illuminating. The whole Community was electrified and empowered to keep moving forward.

The weather in New York for the next four days was just perfect; nature was expressing her



approval for the entire affair. The Retreat was held in the Armenian Church, the site of the 2005 Retreat. The room filled quickly, and soon it was necessary to add four more rows of chairs as people kept coming in. In the end, over 250 individuals attended the Friday evening session. Rinpoche taught for over two hours and a long procession of students met with him individually until after ten o'clock.

Saturday morning began with an hour explanation of Yantra Yoga by Fabio Andrico. Rinpoche continued the Teaching of Sangyas Lingpa up to lunch. Jim Valby provided an extended teaching

on the Ganapuja. The wonderful Volunteer Workers of Retreat then flew into action and prepared mixed banquet plates for three hundred guests and a rapid serve wine bar in less than two hours. The 'behind the scenes' was a bit frantic and wild but no one on the other side of the kitchen wall would have known. Rinpoche led a Ganapuja, which was a powerful experience for students both old and new.

The evening became more spirited as the Annual New York Auction provided a heavy flow of wine and cash. The greatest interest was in the calligraphy by our Master. A good time was had

by all and the Auction Committee had a good deal of money.

The weather Sunday morning was yet another day of perfection, which only slightly off set the sadness of the ending of our Retreat. It is very hard to find oneself in the presence of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and not wish that experience to just keep going. Rinpoche spent his time with us concluding the Teaching and providing lungs for a number of practices.

The rest of Sunday's schedule included a demonstration of the Dance of the Vajra and a detailed explanation of Tibetan Medicine by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, the co-director of the Shang Shung Institute in Conway, Massachusetts. The weekend also included a talk and slide show by Ed Hayes on Khandroling, The Sacred Land in Buckland, Massachusetts, and an explanation of the range of activities at Kundrolling of New York City, so that anyone in the New York can continue the work.

Our only hope is that New York City will not have to wait so long for the return of Our Teacher! ©

>> *Being present* continued from page 1

direct transmission was given by the method of Yeshe Zangthal using the experience of clarity. "Our life if full of experience," said Rinpoche in explanation. "We learn everything from experience. So we can learn for discovering our real nature from experience. That is the unique way. Even in sutra teaching, Mahamudra explanation, they say it is beyond words, beyond explanation. In a real sense, the method is we are working with our experiences."

On the third day, our attention remained almost exclusively on Jigme Lingpa's Upadesha text. As background, Rinpoche presented a remarkably concise overview of the three paths of Dzogchen Semde, Longde, and Upadesha. He shared a significant dream years earlier from Naples wherein his root guru Changchub Dorje urged him to begin thögal practice and later he sat before a very youthful Jigme Lingpa who gave teachings related to the practice.

One of the retreat's central topics was integrating presence and contemplation in daily life. Jigme Lingpa offered a series of short instructions on developing the capacity to observe one's mental state. "When thought first arises, you are observing the face, not judging thought, whether good or bad," Rinpoche explained from the text. "This is called self liberation. In Sutra, we need antidotes; in Vajrayana, we need transformations: in Dzogchen, we are not doing this because Dzogchen teaches self liberation."

He expanded. "How are we self liberating? We are observing only thoughts' face. When we observe, it is self liberated. Nothing remains. Even if there are thoughts, we don't follow thoughts, only we observe and

then remain in the state of meditation."

"If you do that, then just like the waves of the ocean, even if there are big waves, finally all waves disappear by itself. There is no need for antidote. In the same way, thoughts also disappear by themselves. This is the principle of self liberation."

Later that same afternoon, the Community gathered a second time to receive the Medicine Buddha empowerment at the request of Shang Shung Institute. A few days later in the retreat, Rinpoche distributed a sadhana and gave precise instructions on how to perform the practice.

Monday morning brought the entire teaching to Khandroling. Everyone witnessed the organizers' and volunteers' remarkable feat of transporting an entire retreat to the land with great ease and comfort. The weather was clear and breezy. Seated on a throne alongside the Universal Mandala at the start of the teaching, Rinpoche performed Sang and Serkyem transmissions and rituals. Later, the assembly sang the Song of Vajra as dancers performed the Vajra Dance. More teaching on Jigme Lingpa's Upadesha text followed. Afterwards, a picnic lunch was served, and we were all graced with impromptu performances while newcomers were given tours of the land and retreat cabins. But the highlight of the day had to be Rinpoche's two joyful swims, surrounded by students treading water in the frigid lake. "It is warm!" Rinpoche yelled out, encouraging onlookers to enter the water.

Tuesday marked the return to the announced schedule and the familiar schoolhouse Gonpa with further explanations of Jig-

me Lingpa's teaching. Dzogchen means going beyond limits, and to communicate that principle, Rinpoche related a delightful story about attending a conference of Buddhist teachers where he could not easily be placed in a lineage by the organizers since he had been trained in a Sakya monastery, recognized as a Kagyu reincarnation, and given many Dzogchen teachings by his uncles and his root teacher. The organizers finally gave him a Nyingma identification badge, but an old Kagyu friend begged to differ. "We should always work with circumstance," Rinpoche concluded. "Then there is no problem."

Later, tregchöd was discussed. Rinpoche noted that "break-through" is an imprecise translation, suggesting "total relaxation" is a more helpful rendering. "We don't know how to relax," he continued. "With tregchöd, our body, speech, and mind become free, not bound or limited. Our consciousness or presence is not conditioned by tensions or attention."

He summarized the path of practice further: "First we learn presence. Then presence becomes familiar. No need for any effort. Then later it becomes perfected, and life becomes part of presence. Now then, we integrate with instant presence and we become perfect Dzogchen yogi or Dzogchen practitioner."

On June 4th, the retreat moved on to the second topic. Rinpoche focused on the Kyechi Bardo (Bardo of the Lifetime) and Chikka'i Bardos (Bardo of Moment of Death). At the end of the morning teachings, transmission and instruction was given for the shitro practice from the terma of Mingyur Dorje. This morning, Rinpoche

continued for a few minutes after the webcast. He distributed tagdrol, (liberation by wearing) and explained the important rituals and relics connected to Tibetan Buddhist rites of the dead.

In the afternoon, Yeshe Silvano Namkhai gave a talk about collaboration in the Dzogchen Community. Yeshe emphasized the need for experience to put our teachings into context and how working with the Dzogchen Community offered that opportunity for practitioners. "If we get experience and we use in practice it becomes knowledge," he observed, sharing his own rich personal history growing up at the center of the Community. Additionally, on Saturday right after the retreat, he presented a teaching on the Dzogchen base, focusing on the theme of experience, in particular what is gained through dream practice.

On Thursday, a second day of bardo teachings was given with emphasis on the Chosnyid Bardo (Bardo of Dharmata) and Sridpa Bardo (Bardo of Existence). Here the explanations focused on the practice of the night. "The most important thing for learning and applying knowledge of the bardo is the practice of the night," said Rinpoche. "When we are sleeping until we have dreams and until waking up, this is very similar to the process of dying and rebirth."

He offered a suggestive example. "The Dzogchen practitioner is just like an eagle's egg," he said. "I know how this is explained in Dzogchen tantra, even though I have never seen an actual eagle egg. But this egg is different than other eggs, because when it is open, that small eagle is perfect for flying. No need for perfecting. That means Dzogchen prac-

tioners, even when not showing it on the outside, but having that knowledge, they know how to be in the state of dharmakaya, in instant presence, and they repeat that, growing more familiar with it. And later, when they have no obstacles of physical body, which is death, transferred into the state of dharmakaya, and that is continued in the state of dharmata."

That afternoon, the retreat gathered for a second Ganapuja with Rinpoche. Afterwards, there was a wonderful slide show about the history of Khandroling that kicked off a fundraising auction to benefit the plans to refurbish and expand the retreat center and universal mandala. And the following morning, Rinpoche concluded with teachings on everyday living and tridlungs of the collective practices of the Dzogchen Community. At the end, at Rinpoche's request, great cheers of greeting rose up from the schoolhouse floor to the more than twelve hundred webcast connections, to all the Vajra brothers and sisters listening and watching, joined together beyond the usual limitations of space.

The retreat had come to an end. Undoubtedly, we had grown more present alongside Rinpoche's spacious presence. The efforts of teachers, organizers, and so many volunteers had come to fruition, creating a wonderful retreat for the entire Community. "The essence, of course, is Guruyoga," Rinpoche had said earlier in the teaching, and so we finished as we had begun seven days before: practitioners, both present and by webcast, performed a final Guruyoga, followed by the Song of the Vajra and a closing dedication. ©

Interview

“When you discover one, you discover all.”

Interview with Yeshi Namkhai

June 3, 2008

The Mirror: At a recent talk at Tsegylgar East you mentioned that while you were visiting Tibet for your enthronement ceremony at your monastery, you had some kind of awakening experience. Would you like to tell us something about that?

Yeshi Namkhai: Yes. An awakening experience isn’t like what you might see in a movie. Its not like you go some place, a monastery for example, and you are supposed to be the head of this monastery. In the movies they invite you when you are very young, present you with objects and special things that should belong to you, and you magically recognize these objects. You recognize these objects because you played that bell all your life. Or if you did something more Tantric, maybe you used a purba. Or if you did a lot of Tantric initiations I suppose you recognize your hat, all these ritual things. Probably though, if you are a Dzogchen practitioner, you would take the first bell that you found, and you would not use a hat or all this equipment. It would be very hard to recognize these objects and in reality it is kind of strange.

It is also very hard to recognize things in Tibet because the Chinese Revolution has destroyed everything. You find very little that is original, and what you find has been rebuilt. For example, the ASIA organization has done a lot to make everything alive, as it was in the past or similar to the past, but actually a lot of things have been rebuilt in a more modern style. So if you recognize something new, that would be strange. There are other changes in the small towns, services like water, electricity, mobile phones, satellite TV. A lot of things have changed completely. From this point of view it would also be strange to recognize the same place.

Actually, there wasn’t any electricity when I was at the monastery. The lights went out for several days and we only had candles or small lamps to light our way. The monastery was completely rebuilt with the help of our people of ASIA, people who also belong to the Dzogchen Community, but it was rebuilt in a different style because it was not possible to recreate it in the same style. Also a lot of the older people living near the monastery were no longer available, and the young people didn’t have the knowledge of how things were. There were a few very old people still there, but some were blind and some very old, so they could only kind of understand what we said. When you are eighty years old it can be hard to remember and recount your memories.

When I was at the monastery I had more experiences related

to Dzogchen than to the Sakyapa tradition, of which the monastery is a part. I expect more Dzogchen experience, since I’ve passed my whole life as a Dzogchen practitioner. I am more interested in knowledge and awareness than in rituals or ‘sacred’ things. When an event of awakening happens you start to have thoughts that are not from your mind or from within you. It is not that you start to have memories, but you have experiences that are completely from outside of your own mind, based on things you don’t know. It is very strange because you recognize, for example, an environment that you really don’t know. Like for those of us from the Dzogchen Community, we relate to Tibet through the words of our Teacher, not from our own experience. Even if we go there, we go because we are interested in the teaching and to see Tibet. What we recognize from Tibet and Tibetan culture is the land, the environment, etc. However, what we relate to are Rinpoche’s words, because this is the main source of our understanding of Tibet.

I was expecting something more like this. Instead I had real and familiar thoughts and feelings that were from another environment completely. It was a little confusing at first. Slowly I passed from having these kinds of thoughts and memories to having clear images, mental images, from the moment of death to the moment of rebirth. Like from today you go back and back and back, and then slowly you start to remember everything. You remember all that happened before your birth, and you start to remember everything backwards until the moment you died. This is more or less the main memory I have. I don’t have any clear memories before the moment of death and rebirth. I have thoughts, more or less like you have a consciousness. It’s like you have another consciousness, and this consciousness is suggesting memories, ideas, or experiences to you. In the end you have to guess whether these ideas are real or not. At the beginning I had a lot of confusion and I could not sleep for many days because all this was manifesting. It was like something opened and its flow could not be stopped. The first night I slept in Khyentse’s room, in this house that was completely rebuilt, more or less in the same style. At the beginning it did not stop for five days. I had so many dreams and visions.

I decided to go to this monastery in Tibet because I had received an invitation every year saying, “We are very old now and we have not seen you since you left us. We want to see you again before we die.” When I was very young,



Yeshi Namkhai meets with the Tsegylgar East Gakyil and Community, June 5, 2008.

Photo: M. Schmookler

this was psychologically terrible. It was always very difficult for me to accept. In the same year I achieved everything I had wanted, including a nice job, a good position in society, children, my wife; everything was more or less what I expected from life. Also I dedicated myself to the Community, which I knew would be very hard. I started and committed to this big project [the Dzogchen Community Reorganization Project]. I decided that one of the most important things was to end up with a journey to Tibet. I planned to go in December. Then I had three dreams that were a little similar. In two of the dreams there was a lot of violence with blood and fighting. The third one was full of obstacles and problems, mainly related to ASIA, which would block me. I would be stuck and have to stay in the airport, a lot of very complicated things. At that point I called Luigi and Migmar and I said that we would go to Tibet the next month. Migmar prepared and somehow in about two weeks we were ready to leave. We went without saying much. I wrote an email to Rinpoche and told him I was going. That’s all.

When I arrived there, the first night I had very strong dreams. They were not like normal dreams, but more like visions. They were so strong that I could not integrate with anything. I had a lot of strange experiences that were quite realistic, and sometimes I wasn’t even sure if I was dreaming or not. The whole night passed like this, and I had very interesting visions, mostly related to Vajrasattva. I also had several experiences that are usually explained during the direct transmission, like clarity, one after the other. Also some things I experienced in my childhood came back by themselves. As soon as something disappeared, something else appeared. The second night I started to have a more logical and complete understanding. It was as if there was a scene and you could see the different aspects.

I also had a lot of things to do, and we only had four days in Tibet. I had a lot of meetings and I had to give blessings. About one thousand people came to ask for blessings, and I felt I could not ignore this. There were some old people, and I had experiences

and visions about them where I saw them young. During my four days in Tibet I gave these blessings and attended the dances of the summer festival, which is the most important festival in the area. Usually all the Tibetans have this sort of festival. It is sort of religious and mixed, and maybe it is the only time of year when young boys and girls can meet, so there is a lot of movement. I dressed in Tibetan style and they asked me to dress like a monk. I refused, so I dressed in the usual colors between yellow and orange, like a tulku. We did a very long mandala offering in the Sakyapa style. The people were very moved and happy because they had been waiting for me for thirty-seven years.

The people from Galenting asked me to do *Shitro*, but it was the one practice text I had forgotten to bring, and I hadn’t memorized it totally. Rinpoche did this *Chang-Chog* of the *Namchö Shitro* for John Shane’s father at Merigar with the final part of burning the name – like he did in November in Merigar. We didn’t have a booklet of this practice then, but we had notes. I didn’t remember how to do the burning, so I just left that part out and did the whole practice as usual. I didn’t have any images of these people. I only had their names written on the paper.

Rinpoche explained once in France what to do if you don’t have the picture or any support to burn, but I didn’t remember. I finished the practice around midnight, and it was very long and intensive. I tried to sleep and relax to see if it would come by itself during the night. At about two or three in the morning I had a very clear dream. In the dream I did this practice and completed everything. I asked how to complete the practice and it came out by itself: this image with the central HUM, the papers, the hundred syllable mantra going around, and it started to burn by itself. It lasted for half an hour, something like this. I felt happy that I finished it because at least in the morning I wouldn’t have this job. It’s not nice if you say you will do something and then you can’t complete it.

I completed the other things that were on the schedule, all the meetings, and then on the last day I gave a talk. Before leaving,

the Khenpo asked me to go to the college up in the hills. While I was there, I found the only place that I recognized from my dreams. I had many dreams in my childhood about Tibet, but they were very different from what I saw in the pictures of Rinpoche’s travels or the pictures from ASIA. I never saw anything that looked like that in my dreams. For years I was convinced that this reincarnation story could be real, but I never saw anything I could recognize. I had this idea that I should recognize something. I thought it should be like in a movie. Everyone has this kind of idea.

When I was young I had this dream of something that looked like a very tall, white egg. It was in a strange place with reflecting colors like metals inside a very old monastery in a very green valley. I always had these images. When I went up in this valley I realized that this was that place. The *sangkang* was built wrong. It was not really correct and it looked more like an egg than a *sangkang*. I said, “Look, how strange!” Usually *sangkangs* are quite small, but this one was higher than normal, a bit like an egg and quite tall. Then I looked on the other side and I saw the valley of Galenting. At that moment the sun was reflecting very strongly on the water and it looked like metal. I started to recall this dream and I recognized that this was the same place as in my dream. Slowly I went into the college and I recognized everything. Of course, inside the main building of the college it was totally different. In my dreams there was a precise logic. On one side there were certain kinds of guardians and in the center was our Dzogchen lineage. But in the college it was all Sakyapa style instead and not really correct. The place was not really cared for and there were some broken tormas around. It was not very nice to see. But it was the right place, and there was the right object on the altar. I could recognize and guide every step. I knew this place exactly. I asked when this place was rebuilt. They said that this place was not rebuilt, but was built completely from scratch by ASIA, in 2004 or 2005. It was something very new. Then I understood that since I was three years old I had been dreaming about

Interview

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the future. Thus it was not really a matter of recognizing a past life. This was interesting because I understood that it was probably correct to go to Tibet now and not before. Otherwise there wouldn't have been any meaning for me to dream this for years.

The Mirror: Where is Galenting located?

Yeshe: My monastery is in Galenting, in Central Tibet. It is very beautiful there, and looks like the Alps. It is very green, with very high mountains, and a lot of water. It is full of these very rare flowers that you find in the Alps, *stella alpina*, which can be white or blue. We were there in the summertime and it was very nice and warm. I washed in the river.

What was interesting was that the day before I left, not the day of the college but the evening before, I asked to go to the old monastery. There is a room that they don't usually show because it is dirty and they are still working on it. They were repairing the paintings on the wall. Those days they were not working there, however, because the electricity had gone out. I asked to go there, and while I was there I started to recognize some of these images. There was a big painting of *Sambogakaya* ornaments, with a black background and all gold things on it. I started to remember something. I said, "There should be another room here with all these guardians and things." I asked them to come and open the room and tell me about it. Actually, I recognized most of these paintings. This was the place where Rinpoche's uncle was practicing, the only real place from that time. Nothing else was left. We took pictures of everything in that small room.

When I got back from Tibet, I started to have real signs, important signs. There were some things I didn't give really much value to, but the important signs were that I started to have dreams, during the night. Not the kind of dreams we might expect – usually we dream about our life or our past life, more karmic dreams. Practically we invent something, even if we say we had clarity dreams, we are always transforming something and at the end it becomes something ridiculous.

In the past I used to have lot of dreams, also with Rinpoche, but I never gave them any importance because he always said that dreams are very relative and shouldn't be given any importance. The dreams I started to have after the trip to Tibet were completely different, however. I felt very awake with very stable awareness during the dreams. I always had a clear idea of what time it was, and where I was. Many people talk about near death experiences. Most of the dreams were like this, where I would see myself sleeping in my room. The first dream like this was with the Medicine Buddha. For me, Buddha is general. I did not have a great knowledge of how the Five Dhyanis Buddhas

looked, so for me he was a general Buddha. He told me what he was, I was not really sure.

The Mirror: You received *terma* teachings?

Yeshe: It's not really *terma*. I don't know if we have to fix on this idea of *terma* teachings. I can say I have very precise dreams where I receive teachings, and this was a very simple dream. It was a teaching like the one I just received where we don't sing. It was the second practice, not the first one. The Mingjyur Dorje one, where there are only two mantras.¹ The explanation was exactly this one and it was very simple.

These Buddhas were very human, not like in a *thanka*. You don't recognize them easily because they are moving and talking. In the dream I remembered that Rinpoche always asks, "Who are you?" So I asked and he said, "Medicine Buddha." Then I recognized him immediately. He had already arrived in other dreams, but it was always a kind of test and I was not ready yet, more like this. He would tell me to try to remember, and to study like this or that. He told me, "You have this wonderful Teacher," and he showed me the Teacher's capacity. He also often gave explanations like this one of Minjyur Dorje. He said, "Ah, but you received this from your Teacher so it isn't important I talk about this. There are other teachings from your lineage that you won't receive easily." Then he said, "It is important you read your Teacher's book of Dorje Kotrab, Vajra Armor. This is important. You will find it in the second part of this book, *The Introduction to the Encyclopedia of Ju Mipham*. This is very important and you have to study it." Then he asked me to promise to study this and I said, "Listen, already the word 'encyclopedia' sounds like something very big. I am not good at studying." If you have to promise something and you cannot do it, it is not good, no? "I have to be honest, I am not able to study this stuff," I said. "How many pages is it? How many volumes?" He said, "At least twenty, between fifteen and twenty volumes." I said, "No, listen."

The Mirror: What did he say?

[At this point there is a lot of joyful laughter]

Yeshe: He said, "Don't worry, you don't have to study in the normal way. You will get the knowledge without reading all these things," and then he showed me how to do it. "And now take this book that you have," he said. I had just gone to the Shang Shung Institute store near the Gonpa at Merigar and taken some books without looking at the front cover. I just placed my hand to see if I felt any sign. He showed me one of these books and he said, "You took this book and that was correct." By correct he meant that it was correct to take it from a sign and not from mind, to use my capacity. Then he showed me something, over and over, and he said, "As soon as you wake

up, read this part. If you don't read this part you will forget this dream because you are still not like your Teacher. You will not be able to write down everything perfectly. It takes time, and you need to train this capacity. It doesn't come from one day to the next. You have to be trained to do this." Then he showed me these pages again so I could remember perfectly, and he said, "Now I will show you certain things about your life and your capacity. Don't fix on the idea of being someone. This is your life and what counts is your actual condition. You are a Dzogchen practitioner and you should go on with this. But don't forget that you have to get your past knowledge and this will happen very fast. But you need some instruction. Keep in mind that you have to study Ju Mipham now." He repeated these things about Ju Mipham and I said ok, and I promised this.

Then he said, "Now it is very late. It is about 3:40 am. We have been talking for more than an hour and a half, and remember in dreams time and space are very relative." Then he said, "Your Teacher has already been up since 3 am. He is preparing a lottery because he is really worried about the Dzogchen Community." Then he said, "Now you will wake up. Notice what time it is, and it will be precisely this time. Don't forget this so when you wake up you are sure this is not fantasy." Then he said, "When you wake up, immediately read this book and write down this dream because otherwise you will forget. Then go up and help your Teacher because he cannot do this all this work by himself." So I woke up at 3:45 am and it was the precise time that he said it would be. I read this book, I read these lines in the encyclopedia, I checked all the things he said, and then I wrote down this dream.

Then I went upstairs and Rinpoche had been up since 3 am. The Medicine Buddha had shown me the image of Rinpoche doing things and Rinpoche was dressed exactly that way, in exactly that condition. I prepared tea and something for him to drink, and then we prepared the whole lottery together and joked a little bit. We finished at 6 am, so it was a very long preparation. He is always doing like this. It was very strange that morning. I didn't really know how this Medicine Buddha was, and I definitely never think about the Medicine Buddha. I didn't really have a clear idea how he is usually presented. In Rinpoche's studio there was a book called the Celestial Gallery. It is a beautiful book full of images of Buddha. I asked Rinpoche about it and he said, "Yes, they are perfect and very nice." He explained some of them to me. As soon as I opened the book there was this image of the Medicine Buddha; it's a very nice painting. I didn't tell Rinpoche about the dream because I didn't want to. Then we went down for breakfast and it was about 7 am. Diego, Egle, and Mathilde woke up.

I took the book down to breakfast. My children saw the book and they wanted to see everything. At a certain point, Diego opened the book to the Medicine Buddha and said, "Who is this?! I want this one. I like this one. Can we take this book home?" and Rinpoche said, "Yes, sure, take it, take it." Diego was very fascinated by this image of Medicine Buddha. I had the webcast and a lot of things to do because there was a teaching that morning. I went to the Institute to work with Luigi, and Egle and the children decided to go to the Gonpa a half-hour before the teaching so she could show them the Gonpa. Normally you can't go inside the Gonpa because there are so many people. When Diego arrived at the Gonpa he found Fabio and Maurizio preparing for the webcast. I was in the other building of the Institute and we were testing. Diego went to the center of the Gonpa and started to shout, "Show me where the Medicine Buddha is!" very loudly. Fabio was a little shocked and he said, "Listen, we don't have the Medicine Buddha in the Gonpa. It's not part of the lineage, and we don't have it in the Gonpa." And he shouts at Fabio, "No you have to show me, I know it's here!" Then at the end Fabio said, "I will show you, I will show you." Fabio found an image on the Internet, and then Diego was finally calm. For months Diego talked about the Medicine Buddha, so I bought a statue and authenticated it. It was at our house for a year, and he was always looking at this statue. I prepared this statue, and I knew how to fill it because I saw Rinpoche do it many times. I thought I wouldn't disturb him and I would just do the minimum authentication. So I just put the correct mantra inside. I remembered the mantra from the dream, but I didn't know how to write it correctly. We didn't have this fantastic booklet from Rinpoche then, so I just found the mantra on the Internet. It is everywhere.

So I authenticated this statue. I prepared everything and put some crystals inside, some jewels from our family, and some small things I have, like relics. Then I prepared all the mantras, and put everything inside. Then I started to read the mantra to do the empowerment. Usually we do the visualization I received in the dream. The first time, I started to read the long and short mantra. I am allergic to camphor, an ingredient that is inside most incense, so I can burn only a certain kind of incense. Otherwise I start to have an asthma attack. I don't usually have incense at home. I asked Egle if she had some incense and she said, "No, no, we don't have it. You don't like it, so normally we don't buy it. But you should look around because maybe there are some old pieces in my box." But it didn't matter, and I did it without incense. Then I started to sing this melody that I heard on the Internet. It was sung in a very nice way, not like reciting. I tried to sing it that way and then after a while Egle came and said, "Oh you found the incense,

it has a very nice smell." So she smelled this smell and the children were laughing and everyone was very happy. So something was working. Then I thought, well, something was working with this mantra. The statue was empowered somehow. Then I closed the statue and put it on the altar. This was my first dealing with Medicine Buddha.

The Mirror: And now here we had the Medicine Buddha Empowerment with Rinpoche. [see page 13]

Yeshe: Yes, I didn't even know we would have this empowerment. I only discovered this a few days before leaving because Fabio said to me, "Listen, when you go to Tsegyalgar you will have another problem to manage." "I said, "What? I already have the webcast." He said, "No, you know there is an initiation." I said, "There is an initiation of *what*?" He said, "Oh I don't know, but something to do with medicine. But you have to deal with this." I said, "Fabio, send me something that explains this because I know I will do something stupid. I don't know how to do this stuff. You like this stuff, I am not the one to do this." Remember in Argentina when we did this initiation? We immediately made some mistake and Fabio said, "But it is different from the other time." And I said, "Ok, well." Basically this always happens. So Fabio said that there is this initiation and I said, "Oh, interesting." Then I discovered the day before that it was the Medicine Buddha initiation.

The Mirror: Yeshe, why have you decided to teach now, at this point in time?

Yeshe: I decided to teach now simply because I have no other possibility. "When you discover one, you discover all." This happened to me, and when you discover that you have capacity and development, it would be wrong to keep this only for yourself. Even here in these days at Tsegyalgar East, I can't sleep and I always have dreams about Longsal and the Vajra Dance. My life has changed so much and I have to dedicate it to the Dzogchen Community and the Teaching, but most of all to Rinpoche. Now I am having very interesting dreams about the three levels of Vajra Dance: the movement of how we do it now, the integration of how it should be with contemplation and instant presence, the mandala, and the full domain of form and the universe. I will practice and explain this to the Vajra Dance teachers as soon as I realize it and also because Rinpoche has asked me to.

The Mirror: Thank you so much for your time and for all you do for us. ©

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz
Edited by Anna Bartenstein and Naomi Zeitz

¹ See *The Practice of the Guru Medicine Buddha*, taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Tsegyalgar East on June 5th, 2008. The section that Yeshe is talking about begins on page 5 of this practice.

Dorje Lingpa

An extensive biography of Dorje Lingpa exists in English and has been published by scholar Samten Karmay in his article, *Dorje Lingpa and His Rediscovery of the “Gold Needle” in Bhutan*: (Bhutan Studies Journal Volume 2 No. 2, 2000). Karmay writes,

Dorje Lingpa [1346–1405] was born in the district of Dra, south of the Tsangpo river in Lhokha, Central Tibet. He lost his mother, Karmogyen, at the age of 3 and father, Sonam Gyaltsen, at 7. An aunt brought him up. His childhood name was Ogyen Zangpo. At the age of 8 he was symbolically ordained as a novice at Lharikha. At 13 he rediscovered hidden manuscripts from the ancient temple of Tradrug for the first time. Among the manuscripts he found there were the *khachang* ‘guides’ that indicated the existence of manuscripts concealed in other places.

At 15, he disclosed a large number of manuscripts at Namchagdraz amongst which he found the text *Tawa Longyang*. It became the basis of his Dzogchen teachings in later life. In this work he held some radical views on the main Dzogchen theories that aroused a good deal of interest among his followers, as well as eliciting severe criticisms from the Gelugpa dialecticians (Karmay 1988: 186). In his book, *The Great Perfection*, Karmay writes, “...while Longchenpa’s scholastic approach was aiming at re-structuring and organizing the Dzogchen philosophy, Dorje Lingpa was still producing new materials which gave a further dimension to the doctrine. The *Tawa Longyang* is perhaps the best example among [his *terma* texts]. (p. 217)”. From the same place he also revealed the Lama Kadu amongst other ritual cycles. The Lama Kadu is the ritual component of the annual festivals in several places in Bhutan today.

In 1362 he became known as Dorje Lingpa at the age of 17, and is said to have revealed more manuscripts in four volumes that contained texts on such subjects as medicine, the Bon religion, astrology and the do rituals, [but these have subsequently been lost over time]. He continued to engage in similar ventures in various places before he made his first visit to Bhutan. His rediscovery of hidden manuscripts of texts were so numerous that Sogdogpa Lodro Gyaltsen describes them as ‘the mad treasures’ (*ternyon*) and most of these Dorje Lingpa claims to have already achieved before the age of twenty – incredible as it may sound.

In 1369 aged 24, Dorje Lingpa was staying in the hermitage of Chuwori in Yarto, Central Tibet. In this place he claimed to have obtained a ‘guide’ to the ‘con-



cealed manuscripts’ by Vairocana. In a dream a monk gave him a flat bell (*shang*) and a thunderbolt (*dorje*) pointing with his finger toward the south and said, “O! Your wealth portion (*norkal*) and your would-be converts are down there, that way!”

Vairocana was an eighth century Tibetan Buddhist monk believed to have practiced Buddhism and Bon, the flat bell being a symbol of the Bon religion and vajra that of tantric Buddhism. Dorje Lingpa believed himself to be an embodiment of the monk and took the dream as an indication for finding hidden manuscripts in Tagtshang Sengge Samdrub in Paro. He therefore set out on a pilgrimage with the hope of divulging hidden manuscripts. When he saw Paro Chagkhar from a distance he was moved by its sight. He composed a song expressing that although he now found himself in a country that he did not know he felt very happy about everything that he could see.

In 1370, Dorje Lingpa stopped at Paro Tagtshang and revealed for the first time a certain number of hidden manuscripts that contained religious texts of Buddhist tantras and Bonpo Dzogchen meditation.

In 1371, Dorje Lingpa performed what is known as the ‘public revelation’ (*tromter*) in at least two places: at Ugyen Yiblung Dekyiling, accompanied by three hundred people, and at Pungthang Dewa Dhenpo (Punakha). He seems to be the first among the Nyingmapa *terton* to initiate this tradition. It consisted in disclosing manuscripts and other sacred objects from a hidden place with the public witnessing the action of disclosure.

In 1374 he set out to go to Bumthang and tried to cross over two high passes covered with snow, but he suffered from snow-blindness and was obliged to retreat. He finally arrived at Bumthang. In the same year he revealed more hidden manuscripts from the cave Nganlung situated near the lake Durtsho nagmo located in the Upper Chokhor, Bumthang.

Dorje Lingpa spent less than three years in Bumthang. To-

wards the end of 1376, in which year he returned to Tibet, he went into retreat at Yangdzong Shelgyi Dragphug (probably today Shebrag in Tang, Bumthang) for seven days in the second month of the year. In the fifth month, he gave teachings on Dzogchen based on the *Tawa Longyang*. One night he had a dream of a woman who appeared to be in Lhasa. She gave him long religious instructions and the next morning he wrote them down. During the seventh month of the same year he again gave teachings on Dzogchen and this seems to have been the last teaching he delivered in Bumthang. In the eighth month he returned to Tibet taking the ancient route of Monla karchung from Bumthang to Lhodrag. On the way he stopped in a place called Kampotshol where again he wrote down a dream he had there. He arrived in Lhodrag in 1376.

The Songs of Dorje Lingpa

There are no real detailed accounts of Dorje Lingpa’s life. No ‘biography’ of the *namthar* genre exists except a sketch account called *namthar* included in the collected works.

Apart from the bulk of the ritual texts of *terma* origin, which make up the whole of the collected works, Dorje Lingpa wrote a number of songs in verse. In this enterprise he seemed to have formed a habit of writing down as soon as the daybreak began what he could remember of religious instructions and prophecies that he believed to have received from the sages in his dreams during the night. There are other types of songs containing didactic verses. A certain number of these songs are dated. I call them simply song, but in fact they are mostly what is known as *gur*, ‘mystical utterance’, a connotation of the term that developed later in the Tibetan religious tradition. They are improvisations and often given on the spur of the moment when one of the faithful asked for them.

Not long after his return to Tibet, he is said to have paid a visit to Choje Barawa, a friend of his, in Shang. This is probably Barawa Gyaltsen Pelzang (1310–1391) who is known to have made vis-

its to Bhutan on two occasions. There is an interesting story that tells how Dorje Lingpa was received by a conventional establishment after his roving about in such a country as Msnyul in the fourteenth century.

When Dorje Lingpa arrived at the Shang valley in Tibet, Barawa came to meet him bringing a pot of *chang*, a carcass of mutton and a roll of white *nambu* cloth as gifts. He said to Dorje Lingpa, “Our country Shang is a place where Buddhism flourishes. You have been for too long in Lhomon, ‘the unlit land’. Your clothes are worn out. Tomorrow morning when you come up, the monks and nuns will pay you their respects. You must dress yourself properly. Otherwise our people will be shocked. I request you and your entourage all to come well dressed.” Barawa went home. The next morning a procession came along with the chief ladies wearing tiger and leopard masks led by Lamas and learned monks. Thereupon, Dorje Lingpa said, “All the Samsaric and Nirvanic elements are much alike, but men of religion here have taken the notion of acceptance and rejection as their main religion. Today I shall sing a song. Each man must hold the hands of a woman in chain fashion!” He led the Lamas by holding the hands of Lama Tongdenpa with his right hand and the hands of the chief lady wearing a mask with his left hand. The lap parts of their dresses were trussed up on their right and left hand sides and they began to dance. He started to sing a song called ‘Brewing the year’s crop of *chang* ale’:

Say that Dorje Lingpa, the chief of impostors, has come to this land.
Say that all the (barley), the provision to last all the year round is now being used for brewing the *chang*.
Say that those who have faith in him are performing the sacrificial cake rite.
Say that those who gather here are singing and dancing joyously.
Say that those who regard him as heretical are vexed (by his presence).

This song suggests that Dorje Lingpa’s behavior must have looked scandalous especially since his friend Barawa warned him to be decent, but there is no record of what happened after the public meeting between the two.

Dorje Lingpa tried different poetic styles which witnesses to his being a fine writer. In a short poetic verse he gives instructions to himself in a self-deprecating tone,

You say you are a hermit, but you are busier than anybody else;
You say you don’t need much, but you use more things than anybody else;
You say you don’t want to take root anywhere, but you have more hermitages than anybody else;
You say you have no enemies, but you are despised by more than anybody else....

The author again writes verses in six syllables on much the same theme as the previous poem, but this time he was suffering from an illness that inspired him to write a long poem. Here are five lines from it:

You,
small minded naive one,
from beginninglessness
until now
however much you suffer
it never seems to be enough!...

The texts of the songs are found in the collected works, Vols. 18 and 19 in ume scripts, each in a different hand. They are reproductions of a manuscript set preserved at Ogyen Choling. These are beautifully executed manuscripts in the ancient style, common among the Dunhuang documents. The words, for instance, ending in a vowel have often the ‘a’ as suffix, (e.g. *bsngo’a*). Another characteristic is the *shad* in the form of two dots one on the top of the other often found in Dunhuang manuscripts. They are called *tershe* and this is invariably maintained throughout the two volumes although the texts of the songs are not, properly speaking, of the *terma* revelation.

These poetic writings certainly raise the status of Dorje Lingpa as a literary figure, a fact that so far has not been recognized. The dominant theme in his songs is of course melancholic Buddhist detachment from worldly life, but within this they often echo the socio-economic problems of real life in society.

How He Passed From This World

According to Dudjom Rinpoche’s History of the Nyingma School, Dorje Lingpa completed his service to beings in his sixtieth year. He then delivered his testament called *The Great Prophetic Declaration*, and accompanied by wondrous omens, he passed away at Traklong.

“His corpse remained [uncorrupted] for three years, during which time it sometimes continued to benefit beings by speaking and reciting four-line dedications of merit. When Dorje Lingpa’s remains were finally offered on the funeral pyre many divine images and relics appeared. With a roar of the flames, his right foot flew from the crematorium to his spiritual son Tashi Jungne, and his left foot to Thokme Gyagarwa as their share of the remains. The relics from these multiplied many times, and it appears that they lasted until later times.” (p. 792)

Used with the kind permission of Jon Oda who compiled this information from the biography by Samten Karmay and Dudjom Rinpoche’s ‘History’, quoted at the end.

Renditions of Dorje Lingpa’s poems by Jon Oda

<http://www.tealchemistry.org/where/rinpoche/dorjelingpa/index.html>



Early in the morning of the 14th of March, we were woken up by a telephone call from our project manager in Lhasa who told us that the entire city was in flames and that there was fighting, shooting and attacks all over the city. From that moment the newspapers, television stations and the radio have been speaking almost daily about

and plastic tents to the population of Namba xiang in Pingwu county, Mianyang prefecture.

ASIA's collaboration with the population and with the representatives of the local government was immediate. And it was warmly received. The people were surprised that the Tibetans were there to help them. Once ASIA had finished the initial dis-

families find themselves is serious economic difficulties.

The Olympic torch arrived in Lhasa under heavy guard and the ceremony took place quickly and under the control of hundreds of policemen. The Chinese government has placed great store in the Olympics to improve its image as a great economic power and even the choice of the date August 8, 2008 was not chosen by chance. Number 8 is considered lucky in China. However 2008 is turning out to be a very critical year with the heavy snowfalls that struck the south-east regions of China, the Tibetan revolt, the Shanghai stock market crash and the pro-

and local people more and more. The restrictive measures increase day by day as the Olympics draw nearer. The question that many people are asking is what will happen after the Olympics? Will China once again set off to become a more open and democratic country or will it close itself and take the country back to the time of the cold war and the cultural revolution?

Of course the areas inhabited by the Tibetan minority will still have to pay a very high price and access to these areas will be controlled and activities extremely limited for a long time.

For ASIA, which this year is

to continue to accompany the Tibetan people towards a sustainable development and to participate in the preservation of this thousand year old culture is still very strong for all of us. But the time has come to direct our attention to all those countries in the Himalayan area where Tibetan Culture can survive for a longer time and in peace.

ASIA-Onlus
Via S. Martino della Battaglia 31
00185 Rome, Italy
Tel. 39-06-44 34 00 34
www.asia-onlus.org



the Tibetan situation and about Tibet for months. The world press has spotlighted this forgotten part of the world which had desperately made its cry of pain felt.

The demonstrations in Tibet were quickly repressed and an iron curtain fell over all the regions in China inhabited by Tibetans, blocking all forms of communication, news or information. Many international organizations were sent away and the handful of overseas staff who remained there, including those of ASIA who are still in Derge, Chengdu, Xining and Lhasa, have seen their possibilities to move, to interact with local people and to work on projects drastically reduced.

On the 12th of May, a couple of months later, a terrible earthquake struck Sichuan province, one of the most populated and poorest regions in China, destroying hundreds of towns and villages, killing 70,000 people and leaving millions of people homeless. Thousands of children were crushed to death when their schools collapsed due to construction with substandard materials.

At precisely the same time the healthcare staff of ASIA along with some of the Tibetan staff from Derge were in Chengdu. They decided to intervene immediately and in a few days they had started to distribute rice, food oil

tribution, the organization started to gather information necessary to prepare initial and post emergency projects and to sign collaboration agreements with the local institutions. Then all of a sudden without any explanations, the whole region was closed to foreign workers and a large number of road blocks were set up to prevent unauthorized people going to these areas.

We heard the same kind of news from Derge where our healthcare staff were unable to organize training courses for doctors because the local authorities have not respected the protocol agreement signed between the Italian and Chinese governments which established the way in which this project is managed. They said that activities were suspended and that the ASIA staff had to leave.

In Lhasa the emergency project for Tsogchen county in Ngari prefecture is going ahead with the coordination of the overseas staff but only local workers are authorized to visit the area to carry out the distribution of food, clothes and didactic equipment for the 5 schools in Tsogchen county. Even here in Lhasa the restrictions are severe and while last year boasted an affluent record of almost 3 million tourists, today the city is almost deserted, many commercial activities have gone out of business and a large number of



tests of family members of children killed in the schools in Sichuan.

The Chinese government is reacting to these events in a very rigid way by issuing laws that limit freedom of movement and relations between Westerners



celebrating its first twenty years working to protect Tibetan Culture and promote the economic and social development of the Tibetan people, it is a very critical moment. Our hope and our wish

A.S.I.A Benefit Concert in Paris

June 2008

Elisabeth Crouzet

On June 14, 2008 at the Cambodge Auditorium at University of Paris, Zheni Meria presented a concert of piano of Leos Janacek Sonata I.X.1905, Bela Bartok's Fifteen Chants, Paysans Hongrois, and Franz Schubert's Drei Klavierstücke D. 946. This special event in Paris targeted an introduction of A.S.I.A. ac-

tivities to a selected cultural public, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of A.S.I.A. Zheni Meria is a highly talented pianist and works as professor of music; she has great devotion and admiration for human activities as a member of the Dzogchen Community. This concert was highly appreciated and admired.

After the great success of this first presentation for A.S.I.A with the musical magic of the pianist Zheni, there was great interest from the members of the Dzogchen Community in France to arrange more events for introducing the remarkable projects of A.S.I.A. and its members – upon the final approval of the A.S.I.A. administration – in order to open the door to new members and donors. Thanks to Zheni, our sister of Vajra, and our new musical ambassador.

The Tashi Pedeb Project

Publications by Shang Shung Edizioni in Spanish

Background

Shang Shung Edizioni was founded in 1983 to publish the precious teachings of our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Since then, SSE has played a key role in the publication and distribution of Rinpoche’s teachings. SSE’s books help Dzogchen practitioners all over the world understand and practice the teachings correctly.

In 2006, SSE became part of the Shang Shung Institute. Working together, SSE/SSI ensure that all of Rinpoche’s published materials meet strict standards for accuracy and authenticity, and are protected under copyright laws. They oversee and coordinate the publication of Rinpoche’s teachings in all languages.

The publication of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s teachings involves a great deal of skill, hard work, and responsibility. Related tasks include the translation of Tibetan texts, transcribing, revising, editing, annotating, illustrations, and artwork. This work is necessary to fully and reliably convey the teachings to students and practitioners.

Based in Merigar West, SSE/SSI work with a core team of professionals, assisted by a network of

skilled collaborators who offer their efforts as Karma Yoga.

The Tashi Pedeb Project

In 2005, the Gakyil of Tashigar South in Argentina started the Tashi Pedeb project whose aim is to insure that the books and media from the Shang Shung Institute catalogue are translated into the Spanish language. So far, 54 titles have been translated and published and approximately 10,000 copies have been distributed, mainly in Spain, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Mexico, and Peru.

The Tashi Pedeb project has recently become part of the Shang Shung Institute, integrating these Spanish publications into SSE’s publishing structure, and developing the production and distribution of media in Latin America and Spain.

SSE/SSI’s current catalog is mostly made up of restricted material for Dzogchen practitioners. The cost of developing and producing these materials is high, since their special content requires extraordinary care and attention and must be as faithful and error-free as possible. While the number of printed copies remains relatively small, collaboration from



practitioners is important in order to keep acceptable prices and high quality for the publications.

By supporting these publications one helps sustain the Teachings, facilitates their diffusion, and gives all practitioners the chance to deepen their knowledge and preserve the Teachings for the future.

There are two main forms of concrete collaboration currently available for this project:

1. Donations

High quality books like the Longsal series and The Book of the Tun and Ganapuja are expensive to produce. Donations are really important to produce these books. Become active part of our initiatives and help us to make the precious Teachings of our Master available for all interested people in their own languages. Please use our web-safe credit card payment site <http://www.shangshunginstitute.org/index.php?section=15> in order to donate online.

You are also very welcome to please contact us for precise information about the titles, costs involved and related issues. The names of all donors will be printed in the corresponding publication.

If you wish to make a donation, please contact us for precise information about the titles, costs involved and related issues. The names of all donors will be printed in the corresponding publication.

2. Karma Yoga

Skilled translators and editors who can work on a Karma Yoga basis are welcome. This work can be registered as Karma Yoga hours for SMS examinations.

Spanish language publications will soon be available through the SSI-Italy web shop.

Contacts:

Tiziana Gottardi:
books@istitutoshangshung.org
Daniel Simonelli: d.simonelli@istitutoshangshung.org

Thank you for your attention,
Best wishes,
Luigi Ottaviani
Oliver Leick
Paola Zamperini
Directors of International
Shang Shung Insitute

Upcoming titles in Spanish

The following new titles are currently ready to be printed:

- Longsal Teachings Volume 3
- Longsal Teachings Volume 4
- Teachings on Lojong, Rushens, and Semdzins
- The Book of the Tun and Ganapuja'

The following titles are being prepared:

- The practices of the Tsalung of Mandarava
- On Birth, Life and Death
- Teachings On Semde by Sodogpa
- Dzogchen Teachings at Tashigar South (26/12/2000–01/01/2001)
- Longsal Teachings Volume 5
- Longsal Teachings Volume 6
- Longsal Teachings Volume 7
- Teachings on Shitro and Yangti
- The Practice in Daily Life
- The Foundation of the Path
- The Great History of Garab Dorje, Manjusrimitra, Shri Singha, Jñana-sutra & Vimalamitra

The following titles are currently out of stock and ready to be reprinted:

- Chöd
- Cantos desde el Hospital y Otros Poemas
- Concisas Instruc. Basadas en la Experiencia sobre el Tun Corto
- Enseñanzas sobre Yantra Yoga
- Manual de Yantra Yoga para Cursos Iniciales (todo público)
- Manual de Yantra Yoga. Primer Nivel

1 This is the new edition of the Tun Book, which contains the Tibetan and English text of the different Tuns (Short, Medium, Long), Ganapujas (Simple, Short, Medium, Long), the Invocation of the Lamp, and the Namkha and Lungta practices. It contains color illustrations of the different visualizations, mudras, deities, and guardians related to these practices. It also contains the instructions for playing the bell and drum.

Archives

Merigar West is collecting newspapers, magazines or just press cuttings that talk about our Master or the Dzogchen Community.

We would like to ask your cooperation. If you know of articles that speak about these topics, could you please send to me by email (picardi@di.unito.it) the following information?

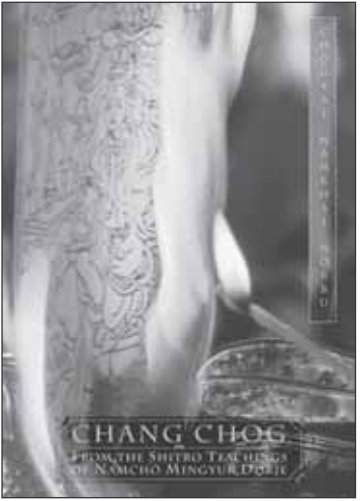
- name of the newspaper/magazine, issue and/or date of publication
- whether you physically possess the newspaper/magazine or the article cutting
- whether you would be willing to send us the original copy or a photocopy/scan of the article.

Thank you all for any contribution you will be able to provide!

New Publications

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:
Chang Chog from Shitro Teachings of Namchö Mingyur Dorje (DVD)

In our modern western world, when our father, mother, friends or relatives die, we remain helpless and disheartened witnesses of the transient nature of life without the possibility to help those who have departed and are moving on to another life. Here, going beyond the delusion that



our existence will end after death or will last eternally in some other world, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presents, for the first time in the Western world, a ritual whose aim is to purify the negative karma and obstacles of the deceased, giving them a chance of accessing a higher knowledge. This ritual embodies a new and authentic approach to death which allows us to help the deceased thanks to the special relation we had with them in our life, while providing us with the strength to overcome the suffering of our loss. Connected to the Shitro Teachings of Namchö Mingyur Dorje, this short form of the Chang Chog ritual can be performed by all those who have received the transmission and wish to help their dear ones who have passed away. It is equally valid and beneficial for those who died recently and those who departed

years ago. The DVD contains the explanation of the meaning of the different phases of the ritual along with the practice and related preparations, based on a retreat held by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in November 2007 in Merigar, Italy. In order to be able to receive this DVD one must have received the transmission from the Master. Shang Shung Institute, 2008
Euro 22.00

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:
Chang-chog of the Namchö Shitro

Short Purification Ritual for the Dead as a Supplement to the Shitro of the Space Teachings. In order to be able to receive this book one must have received the transmission of the Master. Shang Shung Edizioni, 2007
Price: Euro 4.00

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:
Chang-Chog of the Namchö Shitro (MP3)

Merigar West: 1.–4. November 2007
Recording from the restricted webcast. Only people who participated in the webcast of this retreat or who received these specific transmissions or the permission from the Master can receive this Teaching. MP3 Audio; duration: 6 hours and 32 minutes
Shang Shung Institute, 2007
Euro 20.00

Elio Guarisco:
Afternoon explanation given at the retreat Chang-Chog of the Namchö Shitro (MP3)

On this MP3 you find the afternoon explanations given by Elio Guarisco during the retreat Chang-Chog of the Namchö Shitro at 2nd and 3rd November 2007. In order to be able to receive this MP3 you should have participated in that retreat, or have receive these specific transmissions or the permission from the Master. MP3, duration: 146 min
Shang Shung Institute, 2007
Price: Euro 5.00

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:
Dzogchen Teachings: The flight of the Garuda (MP3)

Open webcast from Tashigar North: 21.–26. March 2008
Duration: 714 minutes
Shang Shung Institute, 2008
Price: Euro 20.00

You can order these items on our websites
www.shangshunginstitute.org

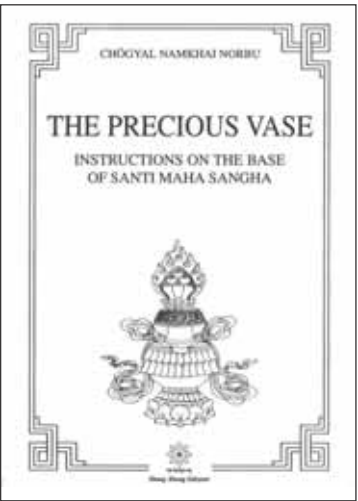
Oliver Leick
Shang Shung Institute
International Institute for Tibetan Studies

New Edition of The Precious Vase Now Available



The new edition of The Precious Vase is available on the following website <http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The Precious Vase – Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha

This book is the new Base text of the Santi Maha Sangha. Expanded on notes and quotations, it is the essential text for the study and practice of the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha training. It also contains the updated list of practices required for the Base Level examination.



MerigarWest



Merigar West

Arcidosso 58031 phone: 39 0564 966837
GR Italy fax: 39 0564 968110

merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
www.dzogchen.it

Calendar of Events 2008

August
August 1-3
Dance Course of the 6 Spaces of Samantabhadra with Maurizio Mingotti
90 € discounts for members
Starts the 1st at 17.00
Finishes 3rd at 13.00

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 17.00
Finishes the 9th at 13.00

August 11
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission – Anniversary of Padmasambhava
5.00 am local time
(Open Webcast)

August 11-18
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
“Method of Integration” from Dzogchen Upadesha root tantra “Dra Thalgyur”
(Open webcast)
Starts the 11th, at 16.00
Cost: 400 € – discounts for members

August 20-24
Yantra Yoga Teachers’ Training for authorized instructors of 1st and 2nd levels with Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico
200 € – discounts for members
Starts the 20th at 17.00
Finishes the 24th at 13.00

August 25-29
Advanced Course of Yantra Yoga 5th series of Yantra and Pranayama Laura Evangelisti, Fabio Andrico
200 € – discounts for members
Starts the 25th at 17.00
Finishes the 29th at 13.00

September
September 1-7
Teachers Training 1st level
Dance of the Vajra with Adriana Dal Borgo and Prima Mai
280 € – no discounts
Starts 1st at 17.00
Finishes the 7th at 13.00

September 2-9
Open Webcast Audio & Video
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
“The real nature of Ati Dzogchen” from the Dzogchen Upadesha root tantra “Dra Thalgyur”
Moscow, Russia

September 10
Open Webcast Audio & Video
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
A Transmission and practice of Guruyoga with Padmasambhava
Moscow, Russia

September 19-21
Yantra Yoga beginners course
Open to everyone with Laura Evangelisti
120 € – discounts for members
Starts the 19th at 17.00
Finishes 21st at 13.00

Sep. 26-Oct. 3
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
Training with the sound of the elements from the Dzogchen Upadesha root tantra “Dra Thalgyur”
Cost: 350 € discounts for members

October
October 4-8
Explanation and practice of the 1st SMS level with Jim Valby
150 € – discounts for members
4th-5th: 9.00-12.00 & 16.00-19.00
6th-8th: to be defined

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 Teachers’ Training
Reserved for authorized instructors only
Prima Mai, Adriana Dal Borgo
320 € no discounts
Starts the 19th at 17.00
Finishes the 26th at 13.00

Oct. 31-Nov. 3
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Teaching and Practice dedicated to those who have died
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 17.00
Finishes 9th at 13.00

November 14-20
Closed Webcast Audio & Video
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
“Terma teaching Kunsang Jaku by the great tertön Duddul Dorje”
Barcelona, Spain

December
December 6-8
Long life retreat practice of Mandarava
Starts the 6th at 17.00
Finishes the 8th at 13.00

Dec. 26-Jan.1 '09
Closed Webcast Audio & Video:
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat
“Dzogchen Tregchö Teaching of Jigmed Lingpa from the Instruction Yeshe Lama”
Tashigar Sud – Argentina

A Letter from Merigar West to the Dzogchen Community

Dear Members of the Dzogchen Community,
Summer is coming and the activities of Merigar continue to be numerous.

Many people have attended the courses of preparation for the Base of Santi Maha Sangha as well as those organized by the Shang Shung Institute on Tibetan medicine and Astrology with Dr. Gendun Darghay and Moxabustione with Elio Guarisco.

The retreat held by Lama Denys of the Rimé Sangha on the teachings and practice of the Lojong has just ended.

We would like to draw your attention also to some up-coming courses in our program: that of Pranayama and Kumbhaka with Laura Evangelisti, the Tsalung of Mandarava with Elio Guarisco and the course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra combined with the practice of Gomadevi with Adriana del Borgo. These will all precede the first retreat with Rinpoche in August.

This year Merigar West has decided to promote and sustain the activities of the Lings in the whole of Europe by supporting all projects that can help the Dzogchen Community to grow and spread the Precious Teachings that our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has transmitted to us.

Moreover, Merigar West is committed to sustaining a great part of the expenses of improving the webcast system, so that an ever-increasing number of members can follow retreats all over the World.

Merigar West is a gift that Rinpoche wished to give us and as practitioners it is our duty to take care of it.

We would like to use this opportunity to remind you to renew your membership, thus actively participating in the activities and the life and teaching of the Gar. Your membership fees allow the Gar to continue its activities and projects and it is above all a sign of our gratitude and great respect for what Rinpoche has created and for the Precious Teaching we have the good fortune to receive. It also represents our commitment to the continuation of the existence of the Teaching for future generations.

When you renew your membership this year you will receive the new card that will substitute the previous one issued by the different Gars and the numeration will be unified for the whole World.
We advise the Gakyils of the Lings and of the cities to contact the Merigar West office:
Anna De Sole/Merigar West Secretary
+ 39 05 64 96 68 37
merigaroffice@tiscali.it

As members you will have the right to receive a password for restricted webcasts.

If you have not received your membership number you are invited to contact the Merigar secretary. The Merigar West program is attached and for information on any up-dates you can consult the site: www.dzogchen.it

For any further information you can write to us by email:
gakyil@dzogchen.it
Thank you for your attention to these matters.
Best Wishes to Everyone
The Gakyil of Merigar West

Sustaining membership, 500 euros, gives 80 % discount on all Retreats and courses* in Europe, a free subscription to the monthly Merigar Letter online, to the four-monthly Merigar Letter magazine and to The Mirror and a 50 % discount on the Video Journal. It also gives free use of the retreat cabins at Merigar for personal retreats.

Or renew Membership:
By bank transfer: Banca Etruria, Castel del Piano GR branch, Italy
Account no. 1718 ABI 05390 CAB 72190
IBAN code: IT68 Y053 9072 1900 0000 0001 718
SWIFT/BIC code: ARBAIT33126
By postal account: With a deposit or money order to postal account

Membership	Fees	Discounts Retreats Courses *	Personal Retreats	Four monthly Merigar Letter	Books	Webcast	ISS base membership-card	Video Journal	Gift	The Mirror
Meritorious	€ 1500	100 %	100 %	***	100 %	Yes	Yes	free	Special	Both***
Sustaining	€ 500	80 %	100 %	***		Yes	Yes	50 %	Folder**	Paper
Ordinary	€ 129	20%	20 %	***		Yes	Yes			
Reduced	€ 50	50%	50 %	Online		Yes	Yes			

(*) With the exception of courses organised by the Shang Shung Institute, Santi Maha Sangha Exams and Trainings, Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra Teacher Trainings.
(**) For registrations before March 31st.
(***) Online and paper version.

The 2008 membership fees are the same as those for 2007
We would like to remind you that all paid-up members are entitled to ask for the password for closed webcasts.
Meritorious Membership, 1500 euros, gives 100 % discount on all Retreats and courses,* a free copy of new publications by Shang Shung Editions for the current year, a free subscription to The Mirror and the Video Journal, free use of the retreats cabins and a special gift.
The video webcast is also offered for free to all the meritorious members, with the suggestion of sharing this service with other practitioners.

Ordinary membership, 129 euros, gives 20 % discount on Retreats and courses,* a subscription to the monthly Merigar Letter online and to the four-monthly Merigar Letter magazine.
Reduced membership, 50 euros, is for members of the Community who have economic difficulties. This type of membership gives 50 % discount on Retreats and courses.*

In 2008 new ordinary and ‘reduced’ members will be able to deduct the cost of their membership at the time of registering for their first Retreat of the year.
Sustaining members for 2008 will have their first Retreat of the year free.

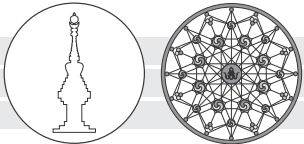
To apply for Membership:
At Merigar:
contact the office (Anna De Sole)
At the Lings and in the cities: contact the Yellow Gakyil or the person in charge

10445583, in the name of: Comunita Dzogchen – loc. Merigar – GR 58031 Arcidosso

By paypal or credit card:
paypal@dzogchencommunity.net
Credit card details can be sent by fax to 39-(0)564-968110 or by phone to (0)564-966837.

For further information contact:
The office (Anna De Sole):
39 05 64 96 68 37
merigaroffice@tiscali.it
Administration (Pia Bramezza):
39 0564 96 63 22
piabram@tiscali.it

MerigarWest



Lojong The Awakening of the Mind Heart

The retreat with
Lama Denys Tendrup
Merigar West May 9-11

Lella Guidotti
Translation &
editing by L. Granger

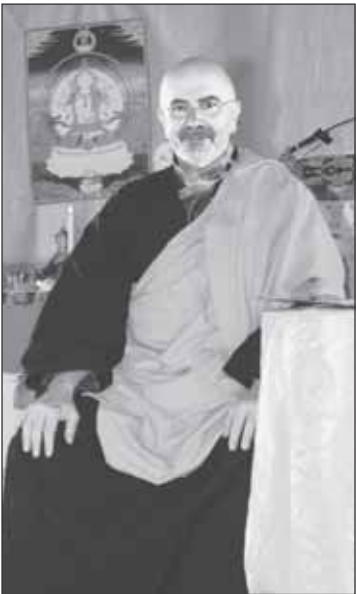


Photo: O. Soldati



Photo: O. Soldati

Lama Denys Tendrup and the Damdrog

Born in Paris in 1949, at a young age Lama Denys met Kyabdje Kalu Rinpoche and became his disciple, interpreter and personal assistant. He spent many years in retreat under the guidance of his Root Master and also received teaching from some of the greatest Kagyü, Nyingma and Sakya masters of the 20th century.

In 1979 he contributed to the creation of the first centre in the West for the traditional three-year retreat. After completing his own three-year period of retreat, Kalu Rinpoche entrusted him with the responsibility of founding a dharma centre in Savoia, France, in an old abandoned monastery that was to become the Karma Ling Institute. Kalu Rinpoche recognized him as his most senior Western disciple and in 1984 invested him with the title of Vajracharya, “Vajrayana master”.

In 1994 H.E. Tai Situpa nominated him “Lama Rinpoche” of the Karma Ling Dashang Rimé Community that had been legally recognized by the French Government.

Inspired by what he saw in Russia, Lama Denys approached Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the late nineties and requested the transmission of the Vajra Dances in order to bring their practice into the Sangha Rimé. Also with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s blessing, the Sangha Rimé built the Rimé Temple or House of Wisdom, inspired by the Temple of the Great Liberation at Merigar. During the same period, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was invited to teach the Nyingthig Mapu in order to enhance the connection between the two Sanghas. Therefore, because of all these reasons and the personal affinities between Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Lama Denys Tendrup and between

the two communities, a new form of collaboration or cooperative alliance was created called “Damdrog”, which means “Samaya Fellowship”. This term expresses the sacred dimension of the heart link and friendship between the two Sanghas.

“I am happy to be here for this retreat in this place which is so special and sacred, the mother centre of the Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. We are fortunate to be here today”. With these words Lama Denys Tendrup from the Karma Ling Dachang Rimé Community in France welcomed participants to the short but intense retreat on “the Mind-Heart Training in seven points”. Lama Denys said he had known Rinpoche for many years and had invited him to give teachings at Avalon many times. “The last time that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to Karma Ling he was asked to give the Nyamtrid Dzogchen Nyingthig and we established a heart connection which gave inspiration for the [creation of the] Damdrog. We had the idea to create a samaya fellowship. It is important that the Sangha motivated by the same inspiration, by the same spirit can cooperate. Cooperation is stronger than competition, it is understanding of interdependence and in the transmission it is a very important point.”

Those present included Lama Tcheudroup, Lama Rangdrol and Lama Tarchin, Anna the translator, the Italian Sangha (the Sangha Loka) and participants from the Dzogchen Community,

all seated in a circle or rather as Lama Denys said jokingly, “in a half moon ... a circle of sun and moon!”

And with evocative language Lama Denys started to transmit this teaching that permits one to transform a mind full of confusion and passions into an awakened mind. The text on the Lojong is a commentary by Jamgön Kongtrul, which contemplates 59 maxims by Tchekawa Yeshe Dorje, subdivided into 7 points.

We began with the practice of Chenrezi, then the preliminaries for the practice session on the first of the 7 points – a cycle of breathing and reflecting on the 4 mindfulnesses: our precious human life, impermanence, karma and suffering. Lama Denys dedicated the first teaching session to explaining the difference between absolute and relative Bodhicitta while dwelling more on the absolute. In the afternoon, before meeting with Lama Denys we divided into groups so that we could prepare questions to ask him in order to clarify some of the more difficult points of the teaching. The groups sat separately on the grass around the Gonpa in the luxurious springtime surroundings of Merigar. I listening to my companions in our group and looked at the sea of violets that seemed to be everywhere. It was all so beautiful that it could only be a dream!

After practicing Namkha Arted and reflecting on the experience, Lama Denys read us the verses by Rangjung Dorje, the 3rd Karma-

pa. Then with the invocation to Samantabhadra, the first day of retreat closed with the sadhana of Chenrezi.

The second day of the retreat was dedicated to relative Bodhicitta, the awakening of the mind-heart in relationships and in everyday life situations. An essential part of training in relative Bodhicitta is the practice of Tonglen, offering and receiving, receiving obscurity and offering light along with our breathing. At the beginning of the session we practiced with people who were close to us and then continued by training with enemies and those with whom we experience difficulties. In the afternoon we once again worked in our groups to discuss the practice and then continued with the instructions on the 7 points.

The third point consisted in transforming adverse circumstances in a path for reawakening while the fourth was training as practice for one’s whole life. The fifth was assessment, the test of the practice. Points 6 and 7 were the commitment to continue training.

On the final day of the retreat Lama Denys gave an initiation of Chenrezi and transmitted the Bodhicitta commitment with the vow of the Bodhisattva. This commitment is to live the Bodhicitta training. A Bodhisattva is a person of courage: courage to accept his/her responsibility, courage to give, to offer, to come out of the shell of the ego. A Bodhi-

sattva is a knight, a person who dedicates their life to searching for awakening in an altruistic and universal way. Taking this commitment to be a Bodhisattva is the commitment to being a Bodhisattva in training. One is aware that the path is very long but has the determination to walk in this direction, in the direction of re-awakening.

Lama Denys concluded by taking leave of us with these words.

“I am happy to have done this retreat at Merigar in the temple of the Great Liberation in the presence of many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and to express my heartfelt thanks to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who is here with us even though you do not see him. It is he who is the inspiration for the Damdrog, this link of samaya, this fellowship of the heart which is developing between our two Sanghas and which has brought us together. And for the other contacts which already exist, the seeds which have already been placed, my good wishes that they develop well”.

After the retreat there was a meeting between Lama Denys and Yeshe Silvano Namkhai, a warm-hearted exchange of gifts and good wishes for the future and the links between the two Sanghas. Then the ‘knight of re-awakening’ left for France and the gathering of the ‘courageous’ broke up with embraces and promises to meet in the future. ©

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.



Doctors and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at the ATMA symposium at Amherst College.

Photo: M. Schmookler

An Open Letter from Tsegyalgar East

To all professors, doctors, ladies and gentlemen, interested or having sympathy for the people of Tibet, their culture, history and so on, I humbly ask you.

I am a Tibetan who grew up and received all my Tibetan education in Tibet, but due to circumstances, I have passed almost all of my life in the Western world. Even so, I feel a great responsibility to protect Tibetan culture and history and keep it alive in this world.

Tibet is a very valuable and precious culture and the knowledge, basically called Rigpa'I Nenga (Tib. *Rig pa'I gnas lnga*), or "Five Knowledges", is about the Arts, Healing, Language, Logic and the Inner Knowledge. But you know and can easily see how weak the condition of Tibet and its cultural heritage is. For that reason, we founded the Shang Shung Institute, first in Italy, near the Oriental University where I worked for nearly thirty years, and then we developed it in the USA, as well as some other places.

The Shang Shung Institute of the USA is primarily concentrated on the study and development of Healing Knowledge. We have a Tibetan Doctor, Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo, who is stably living at the Institute and has already been teaching Tibetan medical courses there for three years. The first group of students has arrived at their fourth year.

Also related to the Tibetan Medicine course at Shang Shung Institute, USA, Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo, together with four other Tibetan Doctors living in the USA, and with the collaboration of Shang Shung Institute, the Dzogchen Community of Tsegyalgar East, and the Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations at Amherst College, organized an open Conference of an association called "ATMA", Association of Tibetan Medicine in America.

On the 13th of June 2008, there was an open conference of the Association "ATMA" at Amherst College, Amherst Massachusetts, and it was understood that Tibetan Medicine is something very important for the future, and that the knowledge of Tibetan Healing remains and develops purely.

We know very well that in the Western world, many superficial things are developing under the name of Tibetan knowledge. These kinds of activities destroy so much of the real precious knowledge we have, so therefore it is very important that for the survival and continuation of the precious and living, authentic healing knowledge of Tibet, this knowledge is protected in the best way. For that reason, I wish very much that all of you help and protect this knowledge as much as possible. We hope the authentic culture and its knowledge will not be only for Tibetans, but all sentient beings, and particularly all human beings will enjoy its benefit.

With many Tashi Delegs
NN.
(Chögyal Namkhai Norbu)

"Tibetan Medicine in America"

The 2008 Symposium of
Tibetan Medicine

Adam Okerblom

This June 13th through 15th, the American Tibetan Medical Association (ATMA) presented its first major public event, "Tibetan Medicine in America": 2008 Symposium of Tibetan Medicine. The symposium was co-sponsored by the Shang Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies and the local university of Amherst College. This unique event was held in two of the stately lecture halls of Amherst College, in Amherst Massachusetts. The symposium was made possible largely due to the inspiration of Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo, president of the board of ATMA and director of the Shang Shung Institute School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine; also by the invaluable efforts of Paola Zamperini, President of the board of the Shang Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies, USA, and professor of Asian Languages and Civilizations at Amherst College. After much hard work, the circumstances for the symposium arose favorably; the auspiciousness of the event greatly increased when our precious master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu graciously accepted to personally inaugurate the event.

The symposium participants consisted of numerous Tibetan physicians, including the guest keynote presenters as well as physicians residing in the local region, Tibetan medical students of the Shang Shung Institute, members of the academic community from across the country, and interested people of the local community.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu inaugurated the symposium with an opening keynote address. He described the ancient roots of Tibetan culture in the kingdom of Shang Shung, and the neces-

sity to protect Tibetan knowledge and culture today. He encouraged the participants to utilize the opportunity to learn from traditional Tibetan physicians, who carry the valuable ancient knowledge of the Tibetan Healing Science.

In the following two days the keynote speakers delivered presentations on topics of traditional Tibetan Medicine, and its current situation throughout the world. The guest speakers consisted of Tibetan physicians trained in the traditional Tibetan Healing Science both in Tibet and India. All of the presenters had extensive experience with their specialized practice of medicine, as well as with teaching and practicing abroad in countries beyond their homeland.

Dr. Yang ga, professor at the Tibetan Medicine Institute of Lhasa and board member of ATMA, presented from his current PHD research on the historical precedent of the traditional texts of the Tibetan Healing Science lineage. Dr. Kunchok Gyaltsen, doctoral student at the UCLA School of Public Health and current board member of ATMA, demonstrated the fundamental theory of the Tibetan Medicine system. He also shared his broad experience in teaching and applying Tibetan Medicine among diverse groups of patients and medical professionals, from the far East to the far West.

The presentations continued with Dr. Yangdron Kalsang, graduate of the Tibetan Medicine Institute of Lhasa, the Five Branches Acupuncture Institute in Santa Cruz California, and current board member of ATMA. Dr. Kalsang offered health tips and lifestyle guidelines for modern living, from the Tibetan medical perspective.

Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo, graduate of the Tibetan Medicine Institute of Lhasa, further expounded these topics. Citing the classic Tibetan Healing Science Text, "Remaining Free from Disease", Dr. Wangmo lectured on vital themes such as seasonal and dietary considerations for maintaining health and wellness.

Dr. Tenzin Dakpa, a current instructor at the Shang Shung School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine, provided a thorough account of the present situation of Tibetan medicine in India, and described in detail the curriculum for contemporary students at Men Tsi Khang University in Dharamsala, the largest school of Tibetan medicine and astrology outside of Tibet. Dr. Yangbum Gyal described the current condition of Tibetan Medicine inside Tibet, presenting the successes and the challenges facing modern practitioners. Dr. Tashi Rabten lectured on the opportunities and challenges of practicing Tibetan medicine in the United States, insightfully recounting his experience in the context of modern urban communities in America.

The keynote presentations of the symposium provided clear insight into the worldwide Diaspora of the Tibetan Healing Science, its burgeoning seeds across the modern world, and its role in modern society. Tibetan medicine has endured for so many centuries as a highly regarded science of healing. However today Tibetan medicine faces modern challenges. It must maintain the integrity of its ancient tradition, while adapting to share its rich benefits around the world of today. Through the works of the American Tibetan Medical Association (ATMA), and other groups, Tibetan physicians world-wide are beginning to collaborate to continue the authentic lineage of the Tibetan Healing Science, and secure its legal protection and precedence in the United States.

For the fortunate medical students of the Shang Shung Institute, the symposium was an unprecedented privilege to learn from these eminent physicians of renowned lineage. The physicians shared with the students moving accounts of their personal experience. They described their reverence for their teachers above them, their exhaustive studies and rigorous training. They shared their individual



practice, innovative research, as well as their experience within the United States. These laudable senior physicians reiterated the pivotal role of the students in perpetuating the authentic Tibetan Healing Science, and their continuing support in that work. Thus the Shang Shung Institute Tibetan medical students, representative of many different nations, developed their global perspective on the contemporary situation of the Tibetan Healing Science, and were greatly inspired in their pursuit of this dynamic medical lineage.

Thanks to the dedicated work and generous contributions of the sponsors, organizers, symposium volunteers, and of course the continual support and blessings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, “Tibetan Medicine in America” was a complete success. The Tibetan Healing Science lineage is rooted in thousands of years of history. Compared to this root, its seeds here in the West are tiny young sprouts. But as one keynote guest observed, America is the Land of Opportunity. In this fertile soil, Tibetan medicine is free to develop, to continue its ancient lineage for the benefit of people today, and for all beings. ©

Rinpoche Bestows the Initiation of the Guru Medicine Buddha

Tsegylgar East
June 1, 2008

Adam Okerblom

The week of May 30th until June 6th, 2008, our quiet Community at Tsegylgar East transformed as hundreds of dedicated practitioners and interested newcomers arrived to the birthplace of the mandala of the Vajra Dance, where our precious master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has returned to continue bestowing the Dzogchen teachings with boundless compassion and wisdom. It was, of course, an exciting time for the Community here, and very much so for the students of the Shang Shung Institute School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine. Our wonderful teacher and director of the Tibetan Medicine program, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, requested of Rinpoche to bestow an empowerment of the Medicine Buddha. We were thrilled to learn that Rinpoche had agreed, and the empowerment would commence during the upcoming retreat. Thus there was much to celebrate on the day of the initiation, as the shuttle vans delivered dozens of old friends to join the buzzing throng of beaming faces in the bright sunny yard of Tsegylgar East.

I came out to the yard from the kitchen of the Tsegyl-Bar to find the usual uproar of merriment subsided. The Vajra brothers and sisters respectfully stood back from the Gonpa, chatting in quiet tones and looking up to-



Yeshe Namkhai and Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo at the Medicine Buddha Initiation. Photo: D. Littlejohn

wards the door like excited children. Rinpoche had arrived and was inside making the necessary preparations to bestow the initiation.

I was up to my elbows in tsampa and onions, when I jumped in line to enter the Gonpa. We approached the door and were greeted by Yeshe Namkhai, who beckoned us all inside. Rinpoche sat at his multicolored throne leading the repetition of the 100 Syllable Mantra of Vajrasattva; we joined in the low hum of the chant, which swelled through the crowd and filled the Gonpa.

The Gonpa was packed full of devoted students. The air was sweltering hot, swirling with humid vapor and thick fragrant incense; sweat rolled down from the many faces gazing up at Rinpoche. The richly painted walls bathed in the streaming sunlight, their thick ribbons of

rainbow colors shining. Golden vajras, sacred syllables and luminous thigles flashed across the azure blue ceiling. From the magnificent thankas that swayed upon the walls, the fierce guardians glared from their fiery dimensions.

Rinpoche introduced this profound mind treasure of the Nirmanakaya master Mingyur Dorje, who received this terma at the age of 12 years old. In this practice, the Lotus-Born Guru Padmasambhava manifests in the form of Urgyan Menla, the Guru Medicine Buddha. We followed Rinpoche through the preliminaries of the initiation. Then a chorus of soft, high voices rose from the middle of the Gonpa as Jim Valby led a song of mandala offering to the Guru. Yeshe Namkhai and Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, bearing large vases of glowing nectar, poured into each of our

hands the golden saffron scented Water of Samaya, which greatly refreshed our body, speech and minds.

Rinpoche guided us through the practice, and then, with his assistants, began to bestow the four empowerments. Rinpoche continuously recited the empowerment mantra. Clouds of sweet incense swirled about as the energy of Rinpoche’s recitation filled the Gonpa. Rinpoche poured water on each recipient’s head as they stood before his throne. The vase from which he poured was quite small; it seemed to me no larger than a coffee cup. Yet I watched as Rinpoche empowered scores upon scores of people, over and over again, before the vase was emptied. I thought perhaps only a tiny drop was allotted for each person, however when it was my turn, the water ran down my face, and drops fell from my hair for some time. Rinpoche continued the ceremony with unwavering benevolence, as several hundred people received the powerful initiation of the Guru Medicine Buddha.

At the Shang Shung School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine, we have students from diverse countries and backgrounds. Some are established practitioners in our Dzogchen Community, whereas many are not. At this retreat I observed some of my classmates discover their own connection to the teachings, and meet Rinpoche for the first time. I feel that this initiation has greatly empowered our collaboration as students together, as we strive to honor our teacher, and the precious lineage of the Tibetan Healing Science.

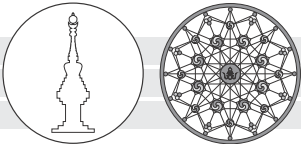
The traditional Tibetan Healing Science texts describe the self-perfected abode of the Medicine Buddha, from which he first transmitted the knowledge of the Healing Science. This is the glorious city of medicine known as “Beautiful to Behold”. Inside, the Master abides in a palace of rainbow colored healing jewels. All around are mountains and forests filled with the plants and minerals, which facilitate long life and freedom from disease.

I appreciate this image each time I come to here to study the Tibetan Healing Science from our amazing teacher Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo. And also I give thanks to Rinpoche for creating this unprecedented Shang Shung Institute program to bring these teachings to the United States. On this perfect day, when our Master is present and our Vajra Family is gathered to receive the empowerment of Urgyan Menla, we celebrate as our quiet schoolhouse on the hill transforms into the glorious city of the Medicine Buddha, beautiful for all to behold. ©

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MerigarWest



Merigar West collects information and publications

Dear Vajra sisters & brothers,

Merigar West is collecting newspapers, magazines or just press clippings that talk about our Master or the Dzogchen Community.

We would like to ask your cooperation. If you know of articles that speak about these topics, could you please send by email to picardi@di.unito.it the following information?

- Name of the newspaper/magazine, issue and/or date of publication
- Whether you physically possess the newspaper/magazine or the article clipping
- Whether you would be willing to send us the original copy or a photocopy/scan of the article.

Thank you all for any contribution you are able to provide!

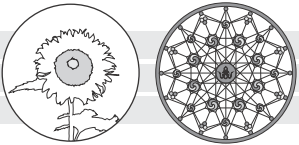
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Dancers in the Mandala Room at Merigar West during a beginners course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. The course was led by Maurizio Mingotti supervised by Prima Mai, June 21–26 at Merigar West. ▶

Photo: Elena Ihilcik



MerigarEast



Merigar East
Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

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

Errata

International contacts Merigar East
In the last Mirror on page 22, in International Contacts, there is an outdated email address for Romania/Merigar East Gar and Gakyil. It is now: Merigar East secretary email: office@dzogchen.ro and web site: www.dzogchen.ro

Merigar East needs help!

Dear Dzogchen Practitioners!
Merigar East (Romania) needs help for preparation of the summer retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche (14.–20. 07.) and SMS exam and training (21.–30. 07.). Whoever is able to come from now on and do some Karmayoga activity is very welcome, since there is a lot of work for everybody. For this reason we send a new warmest appeal to you: please participate and help!

Gakyil members for Merigar East wanted!

Dear members of Merigar East,
In July 2008 a new Gakyil for ME has to be elected. The current Gakyil consists of 6 members, but 9 are needed. As you know at Merigar East there is still no Gonpa, few practitioners live there, and our base is still Rinpocheis house in the town of the 23 August. But soon there should be: many practitioners, a Gonpa, an office, Vajra Dance mandalas, etc. It is a big work, and consequently, good skills, willingness to work paired with great devotion to the Teaching are asked. The conditions are special, but the opportunities too. All members are kindly invited to think about the possibility to work in the Community and if their circumstances permit, to use this occasion for help in a concrete way.

Candidates for the Gakyil are requested:

- to be members of the Dzogchen Community for at least 3 years and have paid their membership fee
- to be ready to offer their free time for the Community for a limited period of one up to three years, working mainly from their private homes
- to be able to bear hardship
- to be present in Merigar East at least once a month
- capable of teamwork
- to have internet access and an email-address
- to speak English, and possibly Romanian

The work of the different colors are as follows:

- Blue Gakyil: to organize all activities regarding Teaching and Retreats and the collective practices in Merigar East.
- Yellow Gakyil: to supervise the economical and financial administration of Merigar East.

- Red Gakyil: to supervise the maintenance of the the Gar, in this coming period, the building of the Gonpa, organising karma yoga.

Please direct all inquiries to office@dzogchen.ro

We are looking forward for your answers!
Warm greetings to all,
Merigar East Gakyil
office@dzogchen.ro

Upcoming

Yeshi Namkhai to teach at Merigar East

July 23, 2008

We are happy to inform you that Yeshi Namkhai will give a talk on the evening of July 23rd, 2008 in Merigar East called “Beyond Intellectual Understanding”.

We invite you warmly to participate,
Blue Gakyil of Merigar East

*

Upcoming

Beginners course of the Dance of the Six Spaces of the Samantabhadra
led by Iwana Zagroba with the supervision of Adriana Dal Borgo
July 21–24, 2008

Who can attend?

Course open to all: Members of Dzogchen Community who have received transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and also to people who have not received Transmission.

The course will start on
Monday July 21st at 17.00

The cost is 80 € with discounts for members.
For ordinary members the participation fee is 64 €, for sustaining members 16 €, for reduced members 40 €.

Important! If possible, we ask you to please register in advance by email or phone. Email: office@dzogchen.ro, Tel: +4-02 41 73 32 27

Europe

Austria

upcoming
Advanced Vajra Dance Course of the Song of the Vajra
with Adriana dal Borgo
Vienna, Austria
September 18–22, 2008

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

France

Dejamling: Ling of Infinite Beatitude
Upcoming

Calendar of summer events

Retreat of Santi Maha Sangha Base Level study and practices & course and practice of Dance 3 Vajras
with Jim Valby & Stoffelina Verdonk

from 12th to 19th July 2008
(and audio webcast Teaching
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 14 to 20 July)

Who can attend: This retreat introduces SMS Base level and is suitable for anyone interested in Dzogchen teachings and also to students of SMS.
To attend retreat and course, one should be Members of Dzogchen Community and have already received transmission of the Dzogchen teachings from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

*

The Dance of the Song of the Vajra for advanced students
with Prima Mai
from 28 July to August 1

Who can attend: Those who have a good knowledge of the steps and the arm movements of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra.

*

Breathing Course for Kumbaka
with Fabio Andrico
from 5 to 8 August

The Breathing course with the aim of kumbaka will include a review of the “complete breathing” and will also include explanations and practices on the breathing of kumbaka connected to the Dzogchen practices.

Who can attend: This course is open to Members of the Dzogchen Community who have received the Transmission of Guruyoga of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and who want to have a concrete experience of the “complete breathing” generally and kumbaka particularly and also to those who intend to concentrate on the breathing to practice Dzogchen and in particular to get ready for the training of Santi Maha Sangha.

*

Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
with Stoffelina Verdonk
from 8 (6 pm) to 10 August

Who can attend: Open to all members of the Dzogchen Community who have received transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and also to people who have not.

Place: South France, Southern Cevennes, one hour by car from Montpellier, or Millau or Nîmes.
Déjamling, Le Devès
Valbonne 30570 Saint André de Majencoules FRANCE
Phone number for the Ling:
+33(0) 467 82 50 67

(See access map and information on the web site <http://association.dzogchen.free.fr>

Accommodation:
Dormitory: 8 €/night
Camping near the house: 5 €/night
For meals plan 7 or 10 €/day (or little more): often we buy food and make meals together.

Early registration is welcome

Important: for organizational purposes we ask you to please register very soon by email:
catherineduez@club-internet.fr
For additional information Phone:
+33(0) 4 92 61 18 21
<http://association.dzogchen.free.fr>
(click on “English page here” to see all summer program)

*

Yantra yoga course – 1st and 2nd series
with Laura Evangelisti
October 9–12
in Paris

Venue: Forum104, 104 rue de Vaugirard
– 75006 Paris

Europe >> continued

Timetable:
October 9th evening: 18.30–22
(hall: crypte)
October 10th evening: 18.30–22
(hall: bibliothèque)
October 11th afternoon and evening:
14–22 (hall: crypte)
October 12th morning and afternoon:
9–18 (hall: crypte)

Prices:
120 € (ordinary membership of
Dzogchen Community)
70 € (low budget membership of
Dzogchen Community)
Free (supporting membership of
Dzogchen Community)

Contact: Arianna De Toni, Tel: 06 78 82
59 51, Email: ade_toni@hotmail.com

Germany
Upcoming
Beginners course The Dance of the
Song of the Vajra, first part
with Karin Heinemann
July 15–20
Höfen-Seminarhaus

Who can attend?
Those who have received transmission
of Dzogchen and the Lung of the Song
of the Vajra from Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu.
The course will start on Tuesday July
15th at 15.00

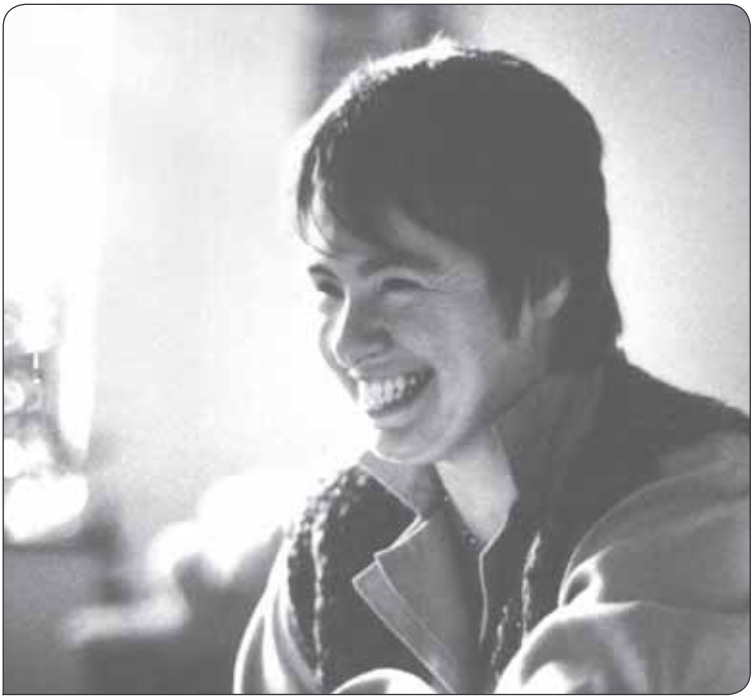
Important!
If possible please register in advance
by email or phone: Alexander Geier,
alexander.geier@dzogchen.de
Tel: +49 (0) 911-597 10 55

Location: Retreatcentre Höfen,
Germany, Hans J. Vogel, Höfen 12,
91460 Baudenbach (between Würzburg
and Nürnberg), +49 (0) 916 65 64,
HansVogel@t-online.de
*

Passages

Died: Barbara Krystek

Dear friends
Monday, May 11th 2008 in the morning
between 5 and 6 Barbara Krystek, age
55, died from cancer in the hospice in
Düsseldorf, Germany. She was very
dedicated to the teachings particular to
the Dance of Vajra. Please include her in
your practice.
Best regards, her Vajra sisters and brothers



Italy
Adzamlng Dzogchen Community
(Southeast Italy) has elected a new
Gakyil:

Blue: Luca Mastrogioseppe
staff@domiweb.it
Red: Attilio Russi attiliorus@alice.it
Yellow: Antonella Pasqualone
volpetta80@yahoo.it
*

Dancing on the Mandala in Molise ►
The activities of the Dzogchen Community in Molise, south Italy, are going ahead enthusiastically. Today the Molise group has the name “Adzamlng” which was given by our venerated Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The number of practitioners in the group has grown as well as the interest of people who are approaching the Teaching for the first time. This has been due to the courses – some of which have been open to the public – organized by the local Community over the last two years.

of the Vajra of the Six Spaces of Samanthabhadra May 31 to June 1 of this year. This was the first course given by a local instructor, Enzo Terzano, a practitioner for about 20 years, born and resident in the little local town of Guglianesi where the event was held.

A Mandala of about 8.60 m in diameter created by local practitioners two years ago hosted 16 people including a good turnout of newcomers from Molise and Puglia. The new instructor, Enzo Terzano, worked hard and attentively to make participants understand the value and the movements of this Dance. The course was held in a joyful and friendly atmosphere, created interest in all the participants and definitely left a positive impression in their hearts.

The Molise Community
*
Zhenphenling, Rome
Yoga Workshop ►
June 7th and 8th, 2008

On June 7th and 8th the first Yoga festival ever organized in the capital was held in Rome, Italy. About 50 different schools of Yoga participated in the event and people could join in workshops and also free classes in the beautiful park of Villa Pamphili.



Photo: Carmen Taurino

Zhenphenling had its own stand where Yantra Yoga and other activities of the Dzogchen Community were presented. A free class was also offered and about 40 people took part in it.
The festival was a good occasion to approach new people and contacts, and moreover to get an idea of the world of yoga outside the Dzogchen Community. Everybody was very pleased and, if it takes place again next year, Zhenphenling plans to participate and possibly propose a more exhaustive workshop on Yantra Yoga.

With our best greetings and gratitude to the Master!
The Gakyil of Zhenphenling



Romania
First Course in Bucharest ►
Yantra Yoga Course
with Tiziana Gottardi
May 16–18

We are happy to inform you that in May there was the first course organized in Bucharest in Romania. Tiziana Gottardi kindly accepted the invitation from Merigar East Gakyil and she came from Italy to hold a public course of Yantra Yoga for beginners. The course was organized in very nice hall in local kindergarten and was attended by 15 interested participants (mostly from Bucharest and other Romanian towns, but also attendants from Mauritius and Czech Republic). The course proceeded in a smooth and relaxed atmosphere and it seemed it has strengthened and inspired the new small group of practitioners in Bucharest.

With many Tashi Dele!
Tereza Starkova
Yellow Gakyil & Secretary
Merigar East



Photo: V. Pulda



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Europe

Russia

Yeshe Silvano Namkhai teaches in Russia and Crimea

by Andrei Besedin

This past spring, the Gakyil of Russian speaking countries invited Yeshe Silvano Namkhai to give teachings in Russia and Ukraine. The first three-day retreat took place in Kunphenling near Moscow (in the place formerly owned by the Dzogchen Community and called Kunsangar). Up to two hundred people gathered to listen to Yeshe's explanation of the basic principles of the Dzogchen Teaching.

In the evenings of the same days we had a chance to follow Rinpoche's explanations of Namcho Mingyur Dorje's "Sangye Lakchang", which we watched on a big screen via webcast.

On the following days, the Gakyil used a wonderful occasion to get some clarifications and advice from Yeshe about the organizational aspects of Rinpoche's visit to Russia in September 2008.

A week later, Yeshe Silvano went to Crimea, Ukraine. In a nice village by the Black Sea we had a great weeklong retreat, where we could follow the different aspects of practice. Igor Berkhin,



the 2nd level SMS teacher, explained the chapters of the "Precious Vase", which describe the attitude, and Victor Krachkovsky, the 2nd level Yantra teacher, helped getting some practical experience with Yantra Yoga, which is also related to behavior. So on such a nice background, Yeshe's four-day explanations of the night practice and the application of the Teaching proved to be most useful for the hundred some people who gathered in Crimea to follow his teaching.

Scandinavia

Vajra Family in Scandinavia

Dear Vajra Brothers in Scandinavia

We in the Copenhagen Dzogchen Community ask all practitioners in Scandinavia to write to us with contact information. We would like to start building connections between Scandinavian practitioners and create an email list with the purpose of sending out information about courses and activities in Copenhagen.

We also collaborate with Hamburg, Germany Community. They bring their mandala to our facilities and we practice together. Everybody is welcome. To give you the dates we need your contact information. Last year we had a Yantra Yoga course. This past fall we had a Vajra Dance course.

In the fall we will have a Santi Maha Sangha course. We need contact info for this. Please write to us. People outside Scandinavia are also very welcome to write us, of course.

Best Wishes,
Copenhagen Dzogchen Community
Email: chrismat@m2.stud.ku.dk

Slovakia

New Gakyil

Blue: Jan Kompis, Red: Ivana Jurisova, Yellow: Martin Mrva

*



From June 20–22 2008 there was a short retreat for the explanation of Red Garuda practice and basic principles of Tibetan Medicine with Elio Guarisco in Trencianske Teplice, Slovakia. ▲

Spain

New Gakyils
Kundusling
Blue Gakyil:
Sachiko Fullita, 663 73 29 78
sachiko_azul@dzogchen.es
Peter Guest, 607 98 81 21
peter_azul@dzogchen.es

Yellow Gakyil:
Montse Gombau, 932 17 11 58
montse_amarillo@dzogchen.es
Olaya Martínez, 651 40 47 20
olaya_amarillo@dzogchen.es

Red Gakyil:
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carles_rojo@dzogchen.es
Pablo Flores-Guerra, 663 08 77 29
pablo_rojo@dzogchen.es

Madrid
Blue Gakyil: María Arévalo,
maria-arevalo@telefonica.net

Yellow Gakyil: Sonia Chica
soniachica@telefonica.net

Red Gakyil: Déborah Murillo
debomu@hotmail.com

*

Upcoming
Shang Shung Institute, the International Institute for Tibetan Studies, and the Dzogchen Community in Spain organizes for first time in Barcelona, Spain a course of:

Tibetan Kunye Massage Level I
with Aldo Oneto

July 21st to 30th
From 10:30 to 13:30 h and 16 h to 19 h

Fee: 300 €
Location: Kundusling
Address: Passatge de la Pau 10, bis 3º
1ª 08018 barcelona metro Drassanes L3

Kunye, a massage that is taught in the Tibetan Medical tradition, is unique to that tradition. Mentioned in some of the ancient texts of the Bon and Buddhist religions, Kunye has been practiced for centuries in the Himalayan regions by Tibetan peoples. The term kunye is the combination of two words: "ku" and "nye." "Ku" means to anoint the body of a sick or healthy person with oils that are appropriate to that person's specific illness or constitution. "Nye" means to externally rub or massage crucial points such as nerves and tendons. The combination of ku and nye is a method

to cure internal imbalances and disease. The Conclusive Tantra, the last of the four medical tantras, states that the mild therapies consist of compresses, medicinal baths and massage." Kunye massage is considered a mild therapy. The practice of massage is very beneficial and does not have negative effects; moreover, it can be done by anyone, regardless of whether they are doctors, yogis, or not. For this reason, this therapeutic modality has always been practiced throughout the centuries by the Tibetan people and continues to be practiced today.

The study of Tibetan massage is structured on three levels. Each of the three levels comprises a total of 36 hours.

The first level consists of:

- A brief history of Tibetan medicine
- The principle of the five elements as taught in the Tibetan medical texts
- The principle of the three humors
- The humoral characteristics of different types of people
- The diagnostic procedure of pulse taking
- The diagnostic procedure of urine observation

- A review of cases in which massage is appropriate or contraindicated
- Finding massage points
- Measurement for finding massage points
- How to perform the actual kunye massage
- Benefits of kunye massage

To register, or for more information, please contact:
olaya_amarillo@dzogchen.es
Tel: +34 651 40 47 20,
sachiko_azul@dzogchen.es
Tel: +34 663 73 29 78

Cost: £ 128 ordinary members;
£ 32 sustaining; £ 80 reduced.
Food and accommodation £ 20 per day.

To secure your place contact Rowan Wylie rowanwylie@hotmail.com
tel: 00 44 (0) 1223 473 528

and send a non-refundable deposit of £ 30 (made out to Dzogchen Community UK) to: Rowan Wylie, 29 Almoners Avenue, Cambridge CB1 8NZ, UK

Also please come to the
Dance practice week
August 4th–10th.

Open to all who love the Dance!
At only £ 5 per night no booking fee is required but please register with Rowan or Nick Segust:
kunsellingbookings@yahoo.co.uk

**

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:

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\$ 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**.

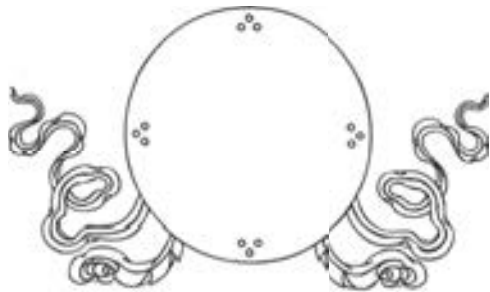
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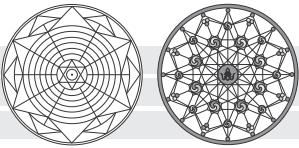


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Happy Holidays!
The Mirror Staff
Liz Granger, Naomi Zeitz and Thomas Eifler

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Schedule Conway 2008

July
July 21-28
Jnanadakkini Practice Retreat
on Khandroling
Led by Naomi Zeitz

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

October
October 20-24
Long Life Practice of the Dakini
Mandarava with Tsalung
Instructor: Elio Guarisco

For more information contact
Tsegyalgar East:
Tel: 413 369 41 53, Fax: 413 369 44 73
Email: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

**New Gakyil
and Gekö**

Blue:
Ed Hayes, Leela Whitcomb-Hewitt,
Jeff Wood

Red:
Cindy Thibeau, Paula Barry,
Jill St. Clair Riley

Yellow:
Vern Harrington, Deepak Ramachadran,
Terre Satterthwaite

Gekö: David Hayes

Upcoming
Tibetan Kunye Massage Level II
with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

July 17th-20th
Fee: \$380

Starts Thursday evening and meets all day Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday 36 PDA credits from the NCCAOM are available for this course.

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, Director of the Shang Shung Institute, who received her advanced degree from the Lhasa University School of Traditional Medicine in 1988, teaches this course.

Kunye Level second consists of:

- How to massage the points
- How to apply the oils
- Kunye massage indicated for healthy people
- Kunye massage indicated for sick people

- Kunye massage for neurological disorders
- Kunye massage for muscular problems
- Kunye massage for people with mental disorders
- How to massage points related to internal organs
- The medical properties of the application of hot and cold compresses and stones, their use and benefits.

Pre-requisite: Kunye Massage Level I

For more information please call (413) 369-49 28 or email secretary@shangshung.org

To learn more about the Shang Shung Institute of America and register online, visit <http://www.shangshung.org>

To learn more about the Shang Shung Institute – International Institute for Tibetan Studies, visit <http://www.shangshunginstitute.org>



Workshop on Mental Illness and Tibetan Medicine with Kunchog Gyaltsen, June 17 thru 19.

Photo: M Shannon

Teaching of Yeshi Silvano Namkhai at Tsegyalgar East

Diane Campbell

On the 7th of June 2008, Yeshi Silvano Namkhai gave teachings in the Gonpa at Tsegyalgar in Conway, Massachusetts. The title of the teaching was “The Base of Dzogchen.” Yeshi’s teaching throne was placed at the right hand of Rinpoche’s, and draped with colorful silks. About 150 people attended on a lovely summer day.

Offered below are some quotes from Yeshi’s teaching, along with a little of the general sense of the commentaries that followed. The words are important, but the essence of the experience remains far beyond words.

“Understand means – general information, symbolic information and experience.”

“If it’s in your mind you already know it ... (there are) not so many miracles we have to look for”, “If you hear the Song of the Vajra or the Hundred Syllables for the first time and it is familiar to you”, and “It’s no big deal – it HAS to be this way.” We recognize the teachings because we have a relationship with them from a past life. This is totally natural and nothing unusual.

“Experience has the power to give you wisdom.” Experiences come from the mind and the mind has a lot of capacity. Yeshi said that in a teaching we listen and maybe we have an experience. The experience is beyond language and words, and the experience is our own wisdom. Sometimes we have this experience and then nod our heads, saying inside “yes, that is so”. When we do this we have entered into dualism. We are judging even in the face of a pure experience. There is no need to evaluate or judge an experience. The wisdom is naturally there in the experience itself.

“When we do not recognize what we see or if it’s real we panic.” This comment was in the context of dreams and the way we can use the experiences of dreams to expand our understanding. In dreams our mental body feels the same things our physical body does, like pain, fear, etc. If we know we are dreaming (what it is – a dream / how it is – unreal) we can work with that knowledge and can use the experiences for growth and understanding in general.



Some ways to prepare for Night Practice are to do Purification of the Six Lokas or a Vajrasatva practice. The final goal is to purify on three levels – body, voice and mind. This purification helps avoid the many karmic dreams that can come in the early part of sleep. We were reminded that dreams of clarity come in the last one or two hours of sleep, and that any practice done during the dreamtime is seven times more powerful than a practice done whilst awake. Three important things to do when dreaming: examine the dream; discriminate

and control events in the dream; recognize karmic traces.

If you do a lot of Guruyoga in the daytime and have a dream of clarity, Guruyoga will manifest immediately in the dream far beyond the human condition. If Rinpoche appears in a dream and answers a question, this is your mind. Know that this is your mind and if you are really aware then the answer will come from your clarity. If an image from a practice comes to you in a dream, immediately do that practice inside the dream. Work with mak-

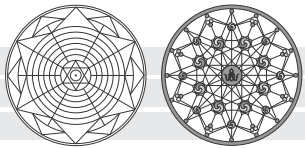
ing dreams re-occur. To do this have a dream, remember the dream and call it back. Rinpoche and Yeshi this way have received many teachings in this way.

“Relax ... means don’t give importance to a lot of aspects of your life.”

Don’t be fixated on the results of your practice and especially don’t do magic. Magic is a very strong fixation of results. Work to understand that things are unreal.

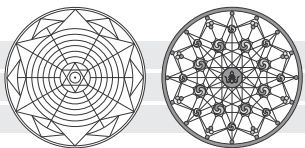
“We are all beginners...” Don’t stop at the first understanding of something. Always go deeper. We will all fail because this is our human condition. Learn from discovering our limits. Always be respectful of others.

When the teaching concluded, little children rushed the throne and climbed on Yeshi’s lap. The relaxed joy and fantastic youthful energy was a reminder to all of us that the Community is a living thing, not just serious but also loving and playful and really a family. We are forever blessed by the natural capacity, the wisdom and the profound generosity of Yeshi Silvano Namkhai. ©



Also there will be one weekend:
Vajra Dance – Om A Hum
 learning with Kyu
 July 18–19

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Words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Selecting a new Gakyil and the aim of the Gakyil

Tashigar North Gakyil Renewal Meeting, May 18th, 2008

We start with Guruyoga.

We are the Dzogchen Community and Dzogchen practitioners. The Dzogchen Community means practitioners, what they do and how they apply the teachings. In the Dzogchen Community we have the Gakyil. The people on the Gakyil serve the Dzogchen Community, not for a position. Some people become a member of the Gakyil and think, “Oh now I have a position, now I have a kind of power”. That is completely wrong, there is no such thing. We do service. I am a Teacher but I am serving, I do not have a position – this is a principle of our teaching. So it is very important for new and old people on the Gakyil to understand that. Sometimes people do not have this knowledge and they can destroy things.

Everything we do in the Dzogchen Community is part of practice. In the Teaching, we say *tawa*, *gompa* and *chödpa*. *Chödpa* means attitude, how we live and apply the teachings and its principles. When we have a meeting, the meeting is for the Community, for the people, for the Teaching, etc. You must not think this is an organization. We need some organization because we live in society. For that reason there are three colors in the Gakyil, and people take care of different actions. So it is very important that we have this precise idea, and go ahead. You remember that people can only renew and serve for three years. After three years we change and that person cannot renew and remain on the Gakyil. We renew every year because we are not an ordinary organization; we are people serving the Community. Some people think that after one, two, or three years that they are a kind of boss. To eliminate that idea, we change every year. Even though we need to change, sometimes we renew up to three years, because of people’s experience; it is not so easy with only new people always working. The Dzogchen Community has had sufficient experience; this is not something new. After we started Dzogchen Community we also started the Gakyil system, and now everybody is more or less experienced.

When we choose a new Gakyil, the old Gakyil should remain for one year to collaborate with the new people. They shouldn’t think, “Now I am the old Gakyil, I don’t care”. Even if you are not on the Gakyil, not a member of the old Gakyil, you can always collaborate. The Gakyil and in the Dzogchen Community are always in contact; it is not that we cannot collaborate. But the old Gakyil should help the new Gakyil at least for one year. To have this collaboration does not mean they must always attend meetings and follow everything. In different places many Gakyils are experienced and manage things in that way. I do not always need to explain and give advice.

I think we should choose people who more or less remain here in the Gar [Tashigar North], and then there is more possibility for a longer time. The Gakyil is a year-long responsibility and for that period you should remain and do something. Maybe this way it becomes more active. If you want to travel or something, it is not so easy. People should also think, for example if you say, “I want to be in the Yellow Gakyil” – that means you should have a little experience of how to work with money. It is not sufficient you are Yellow and somebody asks and you send all the money to them. I told you already, money is very important for the Community; it is like the blood of all faithful people. We really must not lose money. So that is one thing, you must think a little before you choose. Then Red, you know Red Gakyil means organizing, so you should know how to organize things; we have many things to do here. And Blue Gakyil, you know what that means, that Blue is also for organizing different kinds of retreats, courses, etc.

New Gakyil

- Yellow: Steven Landsberg, Natasha Gerasimova
- Blue: Marina Kashkurova, Paola Civile
- Red: Michel Dubordieu, Carlos García
- Gekö: Rolando Carrasco

In general, we are not only one color of Gakyil, but all colors communicate with each other, and very often they also have meetings. They inform each other of everything, without withholding any knowledge from each other. We have had much of this defect in general, not only here [Tashigar North] but also in different places. Human beings have a lot of ego – always thinking, “Oh, I am Gakyil, I am yellow or red, I should do this, and I don’t care about the other people of the Community or the Gakyil”. That is not good. I often receive communications between Gakyils, saying “I am Blue Gakyil, I am organizing this”, and it seems there is not any communication between the Gakyil and the Community. It must not be like this, everyone should always collaborate and inform each other. Today, for example, everybody has a telephone and they are always talking, even when they go to the toilet. Then why don’t you communicate with each other when there is something to do? It is very important that you should think a little among yourselves when you choose this Gakyil.

If you are on the Gakyil, you should take care of what you should be doing in a perfect way. This is your commitment for one year. Some people, when we form the Gakyil, they say, “Oh I want to be in the Gakyil”, and after two months they say, “Oh I want to travel and I want to be somewhere, I can ask someone to take my place” – you cannot do that. If you have that responsibility, you should take it. This is something very important, you remember, not only at this time, but forever.

Some people are already worried, “Oh but there are not nine people for the Gakyil, what should we do?” It is not necessary that there are nine people, because even if there are six or only three, more important is that everyone is active. We don’t really need quantity, but quality. So you choose and present that way, and each person reflects by him or herself. I am not choosing anyone; you must reflect and present yourselves.

[A 6 person Gakyil was selected, see photo this page]

We don’t need more people now, because this year I am going away for a little longer time. So then you must be a little aware here, not like two years ago when I went away, we formed a Gakyil and when I arrived in Italy all the news of problems came. I don’t want that again; that is not good for the Dzogchen Community. So you try to remember, you really take care of the Dzogchen Community until I arrive back here.

So this is the Gakyil. Now the new and old Gakyil need to meet a few times, talk about how to collaborate, and the new Gakyil should go ahead. This is very useful. Then



New Gakyil of Tashigar North, Margarita. Photo: N. Zeitz

we discover the best way to work for taking care of many things, between the six [or however many] people of the Gakyil, because not all people are the same, some are more expert in some things, others in other things, etc., so you try to learn and do your best in everything. It is very important that later, after one or two months, I don’t receive many emails that there are problems. When I travel I have many things to do, many things to think about, so if this kind of problem is added it becomes very heavy.

So you do your best and now we dedicate merits. ☸

Transcribed by Dick Drury
Edited by Dick Drury and Naomi Zeitz

A Morning Song For My Near-by Heart Friends

Terre Satterthwaite

Listen my dear friends there is a voice upon the wind!
It is a story composed in a melody by a thousand dakinis.
The voice is a virtual song with an orchestra of beings.
They are singing of something beyond the realm of gods.
Their hearts are filled with joy for the birth of the sun.
Are you listening as you awaken into this joyous song?
It is the song of creation beyond the concept of a creator.
Every moment is sung into the next by an ocean of beings.
Held together they are a rainbow celestial choir of pure presence.
There is no other place of listening from which to hear,
This is an ancient song which never dies, nor is never born.
Eternally hear now singing the moment of creation into your ear.
Listen and when you lend your ear surely your mind will follow.
This Pan of the pipers, is a tune leading home to your heart.
A thought casting melody for the snake like entwines of mind.
May your listening become clear and sparkle like dew on grass.
May your heart open wide and allow dancing joy to enter.
May your body feel safe and present in it’s masters temple.
And may your mind become like the wind, keeper of the song.
E MA HO - LA LA LA HO - HA HI HA HI - LA LI LA LI

Tashigar Norte

Enlightenment in the Palm of One's Hand

Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu April 25th-30th 2008, Tashigar Norte

Namchö Mingyur Dorje's Sangye Lagchang
gNam chos mi 'gyur rdo rje
sangs rgyas lag bchang

Elise Stutchbury

The newly decorated Gonpa at Tashigar Norte comfortably seated the 150 or so participants from all over the world, at this wonderful retreat, which was also heard by many more of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's disciples through closed webcast. How fortunate we are to have such a Master, and to be able to access his teachings from all around the world via webcast! And how wonderful to be present, sitting at my Master's feet, in the Gonpa at Tashigar Norte!

It had been five long years since I had last been physically in our Master's presence, then at Namgyalgar. The opportunity for me to travel does not arise frequently these days, but last year I had won a raffle that provided my international airfare to a retreat with Rinpoche, and at last I had again made the pilgrimage to Tashigar Norte, and Rinpoche. I was delighted by the Gonpa, the houses in the Gar enclave, and the lush gardens... the colors and smells. So much had changed since my first visits in 2002!

My heart was full of gratitude as I took my seat in the Gonpa on a typically hot Friday afternoon, for the beginning of the retreat. Gratitude not only to our Master, his precious transmission and teachings, but to all those Vajra brothers and sisters who have contributed so much over the years to the growth of this seemingly paradisiacal tropical oasis, and who had worked hard to insure that the 2nd of the Master's teaching retreats at Tashigar Norte in 2008 was now about to begin, with all auspicious circumstances.

After welcoming everyone from all over the world, and in all places, Rinpoche introduced the retreat with some information about Namchö Mingyur Dorje, and then explained the Three Paths of Liberation, an explanation providing context and related to the Dzogchen teachings that would be presented over the subsequent days.

In the Dzogchen Community we practice the Shitro (Zhi khro), the practice of the peaceful and wrathful deities, from the Namchö cycle, so we are already familiar with this great tertön who

lived a short but very interesting and prolific life in the 17th century, in East Tibet. What a wonderful opportunity to receive another teaching from his *terma* cycle and to learn more about this extraordinary practitioner from Rinpoche!

Here I present only a very brief summary of what our Master taught over these precious six days, with emphasis on the background biographical information, and real meaning of the title of the text, and an indication of the content, rather than on the details of the practice and Dzogchen teachings.

Namchö Mingyur Dorje was born in 1645 and died in 1667 when only 23 years of age, after discovering many important teachings, which comprise 15 volumes, 13 forming the Namchö cycle and the others written himself when he was a little older. Namchö Mingyur Dorje is differentiated by the name of his cycle of teachings, the Namchö, from another less famous master, also a tertön, or discoverer or revealed teachings, of the 17th century who lived in Kham, East Tibet, called Yongde Mingyur Dorje (Yongs dge Mi 'gyur sdo rje).

"Nam" means "sky" as in "Namkha" and "chö" means teachings. This appellation, "Teachings of the Sky" was given to Mingyur Dorje because the entire series of teachings were received when he was between 10 and 13 years old. Unlike some *terma* which are hidden in the earth element, for instance, Namchö Mingyur Dorje received these *terma* in *tag nang* (dag snang), pure visions, while looking into space. He was too young to write at the time, and so he explained his visions to his teacher Araga Karma Chagmed (A raa ga kar ma chags med) also known as Raga Asya Karma Chagmed (1613-1678), a Karma Kargyüd and Dzogchen master who soon became Namchö Mingyur Dorje's principle student and one of the main holders of this *terma* lineage. Raga Asya Karma Chagmed wrote down the pure visions received by his young charge, and later codified them.

Raga Asya Karma Chagmed was himself an important master closely involved in founding of Payul (dPal yul) Gonpa. The first head of Payul Gonpa, Kunzang Sherab (Kun bzang Shes rab, 1636-1699), was a disciple of Karma Chagmed, and he also received teachings from Namchö Mingyur Dorje. Subsequently Payul became the major center for transmitting the Namchö cycle and one of 4 main Nyingma centers in East Tibet.¹

Namchö Mingyur Dorje was recognized by Raga Asya Karma Chagmed as a reincarnation of a

lama, Tsultrim Dorje (tshul khriims rdo rje), an accomplished practitioner who had done personal retreat all his life, near Kathog (Kah thog) gonpa in East Tibet. So when Namchö Mingyur Dorje was still a young boy he went to live with Karma Chagmed, who gave him many initiations, ripening empowerments and practices for purification to awaken him, as well as teaching him to read and write. Shortly after, when the young Mingyur Dorje was 10 years old his visions began. He received teachings from Padmasambhava, Guru Amitayus, Vajrasattva and also Avolokitésvara, which he recounted to Raga Asya Karma Chagmed, who wrote them down. The Shitro was received when he was 12 years old in a *tag nang* from Vajrasattva. His pure visions continued until he was 13 years old, and all were recorded by Karma Chagmed.

After providing us with this biographical information, Rinpoche continued explaining how all these teachings of Namchö are characteristically very concentrated and direct, whether relating to Sutra or the different levels of Tantra, or action mantra to eliminate negativities, or methods for examining unusual signs and divination.

The teaching that our Master had chosen for this retreat, Sangye Lagchang, is about how we can have the realization and illumination of the Buddha directly, and how it is not to be found anywhere else, but right in our own hands. This is the real meaning of the title, "Enlightenment in the Palm of One's Hand". This text explains this directly, through the words of Avolokitésvara, who appeared in *tag nang* and directly taught Mingyur Dorje.

There are many teachings in the Namchö cycle related with Avolokitésvara, and practices of Avolokitésvara. In general practices of Avolokitésvara, or Chenrezig (sPyan ras gzigs) are very widely practiced throughout Tibet, and great Masters, such as the Dalai Lamas and Gyalwa Karmapas are recognized as emanations of Avolokitésvara. So Avolokitésvara is Gyalwa Gyatso (rGyal ba rgya mtsho), which means "Oceans of Victorious Ones, Enlightened Buddhas". Gyalwa Gyatso has one thousand arms and eyes, in order to benefit all sentient beings. The essence of Gyalwa Gyatso is the four armed Avolokitésvara. Great Mahasiddhas really use this practice of Gyalwa Gyatso, and this practice is very important in the Namchö cycle. In Tantrism we practice with the inner, outer and secret mandalas, and here Namchö Mingyur Dorje focuses on the inner mandala explaining the practice of Dzogchen, our real state, our real nature. Discover-

ing this, our realization is in our hands.

On the 2nd day, Rinpoche carefully explained some relevant Tibetan cultural background information, such as how age is generally calculated differently, increasing every Losar or New Year, rather than using birthdays to mark off years as we generally do in the West. So for example when it is mentioned in the Tibetan biography that Namchö Mingyur Dorje was 12, by western calculations he was 11 years old. This particular teaching was received when he was 13, or 12 years old, through pure visions of Avolokitésvara, in which he received direct instructions over many days.

Over the following days Rinpoche read from the text the words received directly from Avolokitésvara by the young Mingyur Dorje in pure vision and his commentary on them, as well as expansively presenting further context and explanation of these precious words, compassionately exposing the deep and essential meaning of this *terma*: the Homage, the Four Mindfulnesses, transmigration through the Six Lokas, and how to bring presence of this to daily life; the essence of how to apply Refuge and Bodhicitta for our total realization for the benefit of all sentient beings; how to purify with Vajrasattva and offer the essence of our mandala; the Guru Yoga with Guru Padmasambhava, our root teacher, which brings us to the state of our Three Vajra, the main point of Guru Yoga; relaxing and continuing with Shine - Lhagtong, Shine with visualization, how to apply and be in our state of Dzogchen, with real knowledge of our nature of mind, the essence of Dharmakaya; how to develop ordinary presence and integrate this with instant presence in order to become a good practitioner; the practice of the Purification of the Six Lokas; an essential explanation of the Four Visions perfected in our practice enabling the practitioner to manifest the famous Rainbow Body at the time of death... the First Vision, indispensable and very important for any Dzogchen practitioner to understand...

Explaining the lineage which he was transmitting, Rinpoche told the story of how he came to receive the complete Namchö cycle from the master Negyab Chogtrul Rinpoche, Jamyang Lodrö Gyatso (gNas rgyab mchog sprul rin po che, 'Jam dbyangs blo gros rgya mtsho, 1902-52) when he was 13 years old. He had traveled to this master in order to receive the Nyingma Kama (bka' ma) or oral transmission of Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha. One night during these teachings Rinpoche had a strange dream of a young man

who identified himself as Namchö Mingyur Dorje. Negyab Chogtrul Rinpoche's gonpa previously was the residence of Namchö Mingyur Dorje and also housed one of the *chortens* containing the cremated remains of this remarkable tertön, although Chögyal Namkhai Norbu did not know this at the time. After hearing about this dream from Rinpoche, Negyab Chogtrul Rinpoche agreed to give the complete Namchö cycle, which involved many more days of teachings. Our Master knew that these *terma* teachings contained instructions on Dzogchen, although it is only recently that he has studied and practiced according to this particular text, precious teachings we his fortunate students have now received. How wonderful!

Those present were able to learn and practice Vajra Dance, and Yantra Yoga, with the dedicated instruction of various international teachers who were present, and the days passed quickly. The Shang Shung bookshop offered precious publications and recordings for sale, as well as other Dharma items, ASIA sold jewelry and dance shoes, and the Mirror displayed photos of our Master. Many people eagerly browsed and purchased the items available. A Ganapuja to end the retreat was held on the Tuesday night, followed by an auction to raise funds for Tashigar Norte's continuation and development over the next year or two. Bidding was often brisk and several exquisite *thankas* and other items found happy owners.

During this retreat, I began each day with a Mandarava practice, together with a few Vajra brothers and sisters who lived next door. Such practice is a joy and one of the great benefits I discovered staying in such a vibrant Gar for a few weeks. The long hours of travel were well rewarded. My gratitude to our Master, and to all Vajra brothers and sisters of our remarkable international Community is deep and sustains me as we here at Namgyalgar prepare for our Master's return next year. May we welcome all members of our Community with as much love and care as was shown to me! ©

1 A short biography of Namchö Mingyur Dorje, in English, appears in *A Garland of Immortal Wish-fulfilling Trees: the Palgul Tradition of the Nyingma* (Ven Tsering Lama Jampal Zangpo, translated by Sangye Khandro, 1988, pp 45-52, Snow Lion ISBN0-937938-64-5). This short biography was written by Khenpo Namdrol and is taken from a much more extensive biography written by Karma Chagmed.

TashigarNorte



Yantra Yoga, 3rd series and Variations with Laura Evangelisti, May 1–4, 2008.



Advanced Vajra Dance and Teacher Training with Prima Mai, May 5–8, 2008.

Shulen of Vairocana

Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

May 9-14, 2008
Tashigar North, Margarita Island

Rosemary Friend

In the early part of May, we were blessed with the final retreat for 2008 with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu here in Tashigar North. Five weeks have passed and I don't remember now whether it was very hot, or very windy, or very fresh and probably we experienced all of these vari-

ations over that time together. Certainly it was warm enough for many to head to Playa Zaragosa for a cooling plunge.

Life here in el Valle de Pedro Gonzalez was 'moseying' (australianism) on with at least one hundred and fifty of us living here, enjoying each other, the beach, training and practice sessions and the arrival of another fifty or so Vajra kin for the retreat referred to as Shulen of Vairocana. There was a mild anticipation in the minds of some who remembered Rinpoche's words at the end of the previous retreat: there will be something interesting for older practitioners in our next retreat.

Our Master's chuckle when he pronounced that he could not be held responsible for some of the answers made by Guru Padmasambhava was repeated several times over the days of the retreat; and the content of which he was referring to was indeed challenging for some and of course perfect food for liberation of thought and feelings, presence and integration.

In fact, not only did we hear questions to Guru Padmasambhava from Vairocana, but also Yeshe Tsogyal, Queen Ponchi, a great meditator and geshe and we were once again floating in the profound sea of Rinpoche's em-

powering transmission as he delivered and added to Guru Rinpoche's replies. Selections from the original text included questions such as: "How did our illusion begin? For having total realization in this life, how many kinds of dharma practice do we need? How can all emotions manifest as wisdom? How can we liberate from suffering? Which is the method for receiving the bliss of the Teacher?"

One moment that has stayed with me was Rinpoche's comment at the end of Guru Padmasambhava's reply to Vairocana regarding manifesting all emotions as wisdom. When there is a quantity

of water, it is not easy to manifest fire – so we need the base of Dharmata.

And now here in Isla Margarita, we are thirty five at Ganapujas and still we have two mandalas for the Vajra Dance thun and some workers are building the wall at the eastern end of the solar mandala churuata for wind protection and other workers have resumed in the Gonpa and we were blessed at ram this morning with heavy rain. The air is cool and fresh, there is spirited energy and collaboration in those living here, and already this sacred land of Jnana Dakini sings for the return of our Master. ©

The Village Water Project

Margarita Island, Venezuela

Louise Landes Levi

This article is to happily announce the completion of the Tashigar North Tank Project with the purchase of the fifteenth tank and its installation the 2nd week of June. Altogether, Tashigar North donated fifteen tanks to the village with each containing, when full, 1000 liters of water. The village thus increases their

supply of water by 15,000 liters per delivery.

Again, thanks to all who participated, to those specifically who responded to the last announcement, to Yasmil and Alicia, who work at Tashigar and who ordered and distributed the tanks, once funds were provided; also thanks again to those who donated money for the village library and to those who donated their bicycles or money for the distribution of bicycles to village children.

In closing, I relate the following: On one of the last days of the last retreat at Tashigar, I no-

ticed a village girl at the gate. The guards, instructed to let no one enter (other than those participating), were blocking her entrance. I knew this girl had particular devotion to the master – since childhood she had addressed the Master as Master and attended to him on the beach (where she worked selling shells). She came from one of the poorest, indeed scandal-ridden families, in the village. She looked like a yogini, even as a child. She grew into a beautiful, young woman.

I first walked past the gate where her entrance was being obstructed. Then I remembered

a story in the Mahabharata, about Yudhishtira, the Pandava brother, who refuses to enter 'SWARGA loka' (heaven) unless his dog is also admitted (the dog later revealed as a form of the God Dharma, in the Hindu mythology and in this tale, his father, testing him).

I turned around, went back to the gate and explained to the guards that the young girl was a friend of the Master and also my friend. They let her in. She sat in the Gonpa, as the Master talked, her back straight, her legs crossed, in meditation position.

I later asked why she had come that day, and she replied that she,

who had been chosen the village queen the previous year, now must crown the new queen. The Master, and of course his wife Rosa, were giving her money for the dress she needed, no simple dress but a beautiful one in which she would appear before the entire village of Pedro Gonzales to crown the incoming queen.

I felt relieved that if our Master conferred such a gift to the village girl, so surely we also could share his capacity.

Om Bam Ho Shuddhe Shuddhe

*

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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Auspicious Project

New Gonpa in Tashigar South

Hello everybody:
As a new Gonpa has to be built in Tashigar South, we need to know how many



people are interested in creating a design and construction project, so we invite all members of the Community to contact the Gakyil to let it know your intention. Please, the deadline for contacting the Gakyil is June 20th, 2008.

This deadline does not imply the presentation of the project as such, but only to let the Gakyil of Tashigar South know your intention to prepare one. The deadlines for the final presentation of the projects will be set soon.

Delia Dos Santos (delia_dos_santos@yahoo.com.ar), Red Gakyil, will be in charged of receiving the projects and the one who will send the general outlines to the ones interested in participating.

Tashi Deleg, Gakyil de Tashigar Sur

Namgyalgar



Namgyalgar

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THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF NAMGYALGAR INVITES YOU TO THE TEACHINGS OF DZOGCHEN MASTER

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

AUSTRALIA & ASIA PACIFIC TOUR
JANUARY TO MAY 2009

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

AUSTRALIA & ASIA PACIFIC SCHEDULE

UCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND
Friday night, Public Talk / Weekend Seminar
Parnell District School Hall, Parnell
23 - 25 January

AUSTRALIA
SYDNEY, NSW
Friday night Public Talk Masonic Centre,
Goulburn St
7pm, 30 January

Weekend Seminar Sydney University Village,
Carillon Ave, Newtown
31 January - 1 February

NAMGYALGAR, TILBA TILBA, NSW
Dzogchen Retreat:
9 - 15 February

SANTI MAHA SANGHA Exams and Trainings
SMS Base Level Exam : 17 - 19 February
SMS Level 1 Training: 20 - 26 February

CALOUNDRA, QUEENSLAND
Dzogchen Retreat:
Ewan Maddock Conference Centre, Scarborough
16 - 21 March

MELBOURNE, VICTORIA
Friday night Public Talk,
7pm, 3 April

Weekend Seminar Brunswick Town Hall
4, 5 April

NAMGYALGAR, TILBA TILBA, NSW
Dzogchen Retreat:
10 - 15 April EASTER

Dzogchen Retreat:
17 - 22 April

SINGAPORE
Weekend teachings:
2 - 3 May

"THE DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS ARE A DIRECT PATH OF SELF LIBERATION, FOR DISCOVERING ONE'S OWN CONDITION AND TRUE NATURE."

Work Exchange in Namgyalgar, Australia.
Namgyalgar needs you!

If you have ever thought, "I wish I had more time for practice," come and stay at Namgyalgar!

In preparation for Rinpoche's visit to Australia in 2009, and for the general upkeep of Namgyalgar, we are asking people to come and help us with our many projects on the land.

We offer free accommodation in a dorm style environment, or possibly a private caravan, time for personal retreat, a beautiful, peaceful setting, location near to beaches and spectacular scenery. We have regular group practice, warm, friendly atmosphere and vast amount of space. We may also be able to provide food.

Namgyalgar is near Tilba on the south-east coast of Australia, 4 hours drive from Sydney and is accessible by public transport. Surrounded by forest with views to the sea, the Gar has a Gonpa


containing the Dance mandala, a communal kitchen, fully self-contained retreat cabin, a dark retreat cabin and plenty of peace and quite for retreats.

Ongoing work includes cleaning, gardening, landscaping, weed control and general maintenance.

Specialized skills we welcome include carpentry, mechanical knowledge, plumbing, and electrics. Some fluency in English is essential, as is an easygoing nature, tolerance, and love for the teachings.

As one of Rinpoche's five main Gars, Namgyalgar is very important for the continuation of the Transmission and Teachings, so if you have the possibility please support this precious gem and come and help us for a while.

Interested people should contact Nicki Elliott, geko@dzogchen.org.au



Passages

Born: Kittikhun arrived on May 8, 2008 to Chee Wong and Sutthida Laoyeepa of Singapore.

*

Namgyalgar SMS Teacher Travel Fund Raffle

The lucky winner of the prize was:
First Prize : **Madeleine Fogarty**

Karma Yoga Weekend at Namgyalgar

The 3-day weekend in June each year is traditionally a Karma Yoga Retreat at Namgyalgar, which is a time for Vajra brothers and sisters to meet and help with the care and maintenance of the Gar.

During the recent Karma Yoga weekend around 30 practitioners gathered at Namgyalgar and participated in various activities, some of which involved the physical preparation the Gar for Rinpoche's much anticipated visit in 2009.

Tasks undertaken included clearing the camping ground of sticks and debris and burning them off, as well as small tree felling, noxious weed removal, and clearance of a space for expansion and the renovation of the shower block.



Also some people did administrative tasks while the Gakyil and others held meetings to discuss plans and preparations for Rinpoche's 2009 retreats.

Apart from Karma Yoga there was time to do some collective practice, including Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga. There was also the opportunity to attend the Video webcast that included the transmission from Rinpoche of Rahula's invocation, and later

participation in some of the 12 hours practice of the Long Thun with intensive practice of Rahula on Sunday night and Monday morning.

At meal times and in the evenings people huddled together around the wood fired heaters and the open fire in the gazebo, warding off the winter chill and dampness from the rain, while sharing stories, talking, laughing, and singing.



It was a wonderful weekend with Vajra kin from Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, the Gar and other places, coming together sharing and offering their energies to support the Gar, the Community and the Teachings in the true spirit of commitment and collaboration.

Regarding the ongoing maintenance and preparation of the Gar if anyone is interested in doing Work Exchange at Namgyalgar in

Australia in the coming months leading up to Rinpoche's 2009 retreats please contact the Geko: Nicki Elliott
geko@dzogchen.org.au

Life, Death and Other Matters

Erica Rayner-Horn

I have just returned home from the wonderful retreat with Rinpoche at Tsegyalgar East, and am keeping my promise to write a few lines. I was encouraged to write by the many people I encountered at the retreat who have not seen me since my illness, and were so amazed by my obvious health and well-being, that they thought I should let you all know how well I have recovered. I realized that somehow it is easier to write about sickness and death, and overlook how important it is to share our news of recovery and return to health. So, I share my story with you, hoping it may be encouraging to those who are suffering from illness now, and knowing how important it is for us to hear each other’s stories.

In 2002 I had a dream, which led to my diagnosis with breast cancer. I was fortunate to receive medical treatment immediately, and had two surgeries right away, followed by six months of

weekly chemotherapy treatment. Practice was a central aspect of managing this difficult time, and since I often felt too ill to do formal practice, I was so grateful that Rinpoche has always taught us how to do essential practice. I discovered that no matter how weak and groggy I was feeling, it was usually possible to visualize a white Ah in a thigle, although I could remember nothing else.

One of my greatest challenges, however, was how to embrace

chemotherapy from a positive perspective, as I had great resistance to it, and would have much preferred an alternative, less aggressive, less toxic form of treatment. I had done a lot of research and concluded that, as distasteful as it may be, it was likely to be the most effective treatment for me, so I had to work to change the way that I received it in order for it to be effective. On the way to my first chemotherapy, I was struggling with this dilem-



Photo: A. Baharmast

ma, and suddenly realized that I could transform my attitude by visualizing the chemotherapy drugs being dripped into my veins as the life-giving nectars of Mandarava! After that, I had no problem, and could relax into the treatment with confidence!

Throughout this time, I felt deeply sustained by the many kind messages; visits and the practice people known and unknown were doing for me. Frankly, I was amazed by the very palpable sense of support that upheld me, and that I felt I could depend on. I am certain it had a profound affect on my recovery, and from the bottom of my heart I thank you all, and remind you how powerfully we can be of help to each other. It has taken me a few years to regain my strength and health, but since then I have completed graduate school with a Masters degree, and finished a two-year internship in psychotherapy. Today, I have completely regained my health, and am celebrating being a 5 and 1/2-year cancer survivor, giving thanks every day for my one precious life.

One more thing I would like to share with you is that I recently completed my estate planning;

leaving bequests to each of the Gars, Shang Shung Institute, ASIA, and to Rinpoche. I disclose this very personal information only because I want to encourage you to do the same, no matter how much or how little you may have. I know how hard it is to get around to doing this, but as practitioners, we know none of us are here for very long. When I finally completed this onerous task, I discovered to my surprise there is a side benefit! Contemplating being of tangible assistance to the Dzogchen Community some day in the future, helps me face that day with more equanimity, and so live this day more fully!

In deep thankfulness, I bow to my precious teacher, to the priceless teachings and to you my worldwide Community of Vajra brothers and sisters, with profound gratitude. ©

Long life and health to our beloved Master!

(Please note – I changed my name from Erica Moseley)

Worldwide Transmission days

About the Worldwide Transmission

Newcomers who want to participate in the worldwide transmission must be truly interested in the Teachings transmitted by our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and practiced in our world wide Dzogchen Community. Participants in this Transmission should try to receive Teachings from Rinpoche in the future. After having received the Transmission, they should also try to train and collaborate with the Sangha of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Originally, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had the idea of a ‘Transmission at a Distance’ because he wanted to help people in different situations, who could not travel at that time to meet the Teacher. The Transmission will enable them to practice the Dzogchen Teachings transmitted by Rinpoche without needing direct contact with the Teacher at that time.

Here is a summary of how the Live-Video-Empowerment works:

To receive the World Wide Transmission, new students need to participate with an experienced student who will host both the preliminary explanation as well as the actual practice well in advance of the event.

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

For new and interested persons, it is important to have seen the explanation by Chögyal Nam-

khai Norbu Rinpoche that is also on the videotape, in advance. They should also have the possibility to clarify any doubts about the practice on the videotape with some serious, dedicated older students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche before the Empowerment.

Exactly at the given time (see timetable) at your place, you start the Transmission Video at the starting point of the part of the Anniversary of Garab Dorje. At that moment – worldwide – students and newcomers start to practice this session of the Thun together, which ends with the dedication of merits.

We wish you all a successful practice. Please contact your local Community for details.

Global Timetable

Anniversary of 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

‘so no’

unborn

awareness

means
no

thing

first

Buddha

means
no

thing

real

view

means
no

thing

no
thing
means
no

thing:

but
no thing
is beyond
no
so
no
is beyond
words
and mind
is just
a word
so
no
is just
mind.

awareness
means
nothing

there’s no ‘ism’
in Buddha

there’s no view
in the sky

no samsara

no nirvana

no wisdom

Stephan Hill



Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Horrobridge in Devon, 1980

Des Barry

Horrobridge in Devon, 1980, wrapped in dark capes, hair flowing in the gothic wind on some Dartmoor tor,* we are an image from some ancient, dark and smoky thanka that has come to life, the photograph focused on the central Heruka, and an entourage of ferocious young dakas and dakinis, long since grown longer in the tooth.

Like an image remembered from a dream, this black and white manifestation draws other images out of memory: Longde teachings that we heard for the first time, and tried to practice in the spacious

grounds of the Gothic manor surrounded by yew trees. (Did I make that up those yew trees for effect? Maybe I did. Memory is a funny thing.)

Practitioners clutch crutch-shaped sticks to tuck under their arms; or to provide a place to rest the chin: a lot of those sticks decorated with four symbolic letters.

I remember nettle soup cooked by Martin Boord and his wife, which was surprisingly good to eat. No wonder Milarepa lived on it. And the Italian practitioners appalled at the idea of wholemeal pasta. Can't say I blame them.

I remember the Maestro in the dining room demonstrating points on the body for controlling energy; and in the teaching room, giving the lung for an entire fat volume of Chöd practices, which I'd just bought, and then him saying that it's enough to recite

the three vajras, or to sound a simple A, to do a complete Chöd. He still says that more than twenty years later.

We were all thin and young back then, and from that gathering, I went off to Norfolk with Mario Maglietti for epic rambling conversations that lasted until dawn as he advised me where to go in India to do a Longde retreat.

Those English tors, like nails at the center of a Catherine wheel, like central power points for constellations that orbit around them: this one blossoms with youthful yogis and yoginis. It wasn't that long ago, was it? ©

* Tor: a rocky pinnacle; a peak of a bare or rocky mountain or hill.

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