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Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

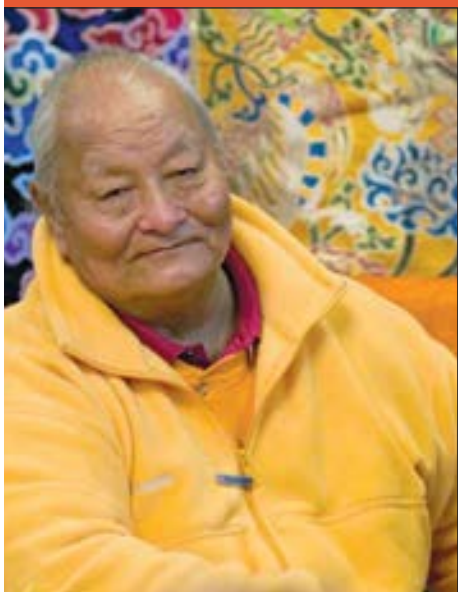


Photo: A. Wai

2008

Spain, Barcelona
November 14–20
Dzogchen Upadesha transmission and instruction “Kunsang Jaku”, a Terma teaching by the great tertön Duddul Dorje
Closed webcast
www.dzogchen.es

Brazil, São Paulo
November 26–30
Transmission and instructions of Longsal Guru Yoga of White A
www.dzogchen.com.br

Chile, Santiago
December 5–7
Weekend Retreat
www.dzogchen.cl

Argentina, Tashigar Sur
December 26–January 1
The Dzogchen tredchod teaching of Jigmed Lingpa from the Instruction “Yeshe Lama”
Closed Webcast
www.tashigar-sur.com.ar

2009

New Zealand, Auckland
Jan. 23–25
Weekend seminar

Australia, Sydney
Jan. 30–Feb. 1
Weekend seminar
www.dzogchen.org.au

Australia
Namgyalgar, Tilba Tilba
Feb. 9–15
Retreat

Feb. 17–19
Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam
Feb. 20–26
Santi Maha Sangha I Level Training

Caloundra
March 16–21
Teaching retreat

Melbourne
April 3–5
Weekend retreat



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu giving Teaching in the main temple of Kalmykia.

Photo: Ivan Shakhov

Brother country

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu visits Kalmykia

Darya Mikhaylova

After the extreme cold of August and the crowds of Moscow, Elista, the capital of Kalmykia, greeted our Teacher with summer sun and heat. Not only the weather but also the friendly, traditional Buddhist environment and people around helped our Teacher to feel as if he was in a ‘brother land’.

For these few days in the middle of September, the City in the city, a small nice village called City Chess became home for Rinpoche, Yeshe Namkhai, Fabio Andrico and all the students who had followed them from Moscow to Kalmykia.

As many Dzogchen Community members may know, our first idea was to hold the retreat in Kalmykia instead of doing it in Moscow or another Russian city. In the end, according to our circumstances, Rinpoche chose Moscow for the main Teaching, but also gave his kind agreement to spend a few days in Kalmykia and give Teaching and Initiation of Immortal Dakini Mandarava there.

Kalmykia is located in the far southeast of Russia, on the shores of Caspian Sea. It is a federal subject of Russia but in general it has a separate government (republic) with its own sovereignty and constitution. Worldwide, Kalmykia is known mostly as a world chess center because its president, the great player, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov has been president of FIDE (the World Chess Federation) since 1995. But most important for us is that Kalmykia is the only state in Europe where the dominant religion is Buddhism. You feel it as soon as the plane lands in Elista. On the walls in the airport you can notice not only the usual advertisements but also Green Tara thangkas and protection mantras. Wherever you go, you see the images of His Holiness and bright yellow Kalmykian flags with a white lotus in the center. For most of the Western students of Rinpoche who came to Elista it was really a shock to discover a traditional Buddhist environment not so far from their homes. Many of us saw Rinpoche for the first time in a traditional Tibetan

dress surrounded by monks and giving Teaching in the temple – the Gold Cell of Buddha Shakyamuni, the main temple of Kalmykia.

In his interview for television, Rinpoche said that even though he had been living in Europe for so many years, he always felt like a Tibetan and Tibetans and Mongolians always consider themselves to be one family, so in Kalmykia he feels very much like in his own country, because the culture, environment, people and attitude are absolutely familiar to him.

In Elista, Rinpoche didn’t have a free moment – empowering statues, blessing the newly built stupa, visiting sacred places in Elista, giving press conferences, audiences and meetings with Telo Tulku (the head of Kalmyk Buddhists) and the President of State. All the life of small Elista was concentrated around our precious Teacher.

The first day, September 12th was dedicated to a Lecture about Dzogchen Teaching: Rinpoche gave general information

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We are doing the principle practice of Dzogchen when we do Guruyoga and sing the Song of the Vajra. When we learn and know something about Dzogchen, we should integrate. Integration is practice, and this practice is very important once we have this knowledge. We always say we should discover our real nature; it is not sufficient to learn pujas, visualizations of deities, or how to chant mantras, etc. These activities have benefit, but they do not take us directly on the path. Life is very short, so we must do concrete practice in daily life. Otherwise we can have some nice fantasies, and if we always go after and develop fantasy, we do not realize in the end. It's a pity because we know the principle of the teachings and we should learn something concrete.

We have dualistic vision and we are like people who have a kind of illness; we have the illness of samsara and the problems of samsara. We can discover what kind of illness we have and learn the teaching. We receive the principle of how to cure that illness with the teaching. The best way to cure it is Guruyoga – the essence of all practices. There are many other practices, but we say that all others are secondary practices. If we apply Guruyoga we can have total realization and we can free ourselves from all our dualistic vision and problems. So we should do Guruyoga practice.

We should try to go to the essence of Guruyoga, not after its form, title or words. The essence of Guruyoga is like a symbol of our primordial potentiality. We use that symbol and are in that clarity. We use that method to continually be in instant presence. We should always try to remember that even if we only remain in instant presence for a short time, it is still the main practice. Then with any other practices you are not limited; if it's necessary you can apply them and if it is not necessary then you don't do them. You can do something more essential. Time is precious, so we must not lose the occasion or waste our time. For that reason we should go ahead mainly with the practice of Guruyoga.

There are many practices and methods in Dzogchen. For example, there are many kinds of semdzins that are very important to apply when you have the time, because they function in a very specific way. Semdzins and rushens are first of all for distinguishing between the mental condition and our real nature, and through that you can understand in which direction you should go. When we have certain kinds of experiences, like the experiences of clarity, emptiness, and sensation – any kind of experience that we use – we know that with that experience we develop or increase our clarity or capacity of being in the state of contemplation. In this case, the semdzins are very important. Many practitioners say, “We should practice shine,” but what is shine in a real sense? The real sense of shine is the calm state, and in a calm state, you are in the experience of emptiness. Samadhi or meditation with emptiness is not the state of contemplation, not complete contemplation. This is mainly experience, so for that reason we learn practices like shine and lhagtong. The principle of shine is to experience emptiness in the Dzogchen teaching. Lhagtong means we experience clarity. We discover that our real nature is not only emptiness; there is so much movement, movement related with our energy level that is part of our nature and also part of our clarity, so that is also related to our experience. If we apply shine and lhagtong we should understand that. When we know this, even if we do only shine, it becomes a complete path like contemplation.

When I did direct introduction with the experience of clarity, we visualized many lights, like rainbow colors, rays, many thigles, all our consideration of the dimension and everything was filled with those lights. We are in the center of these lights, and we have the experience of clarity, not emptiness. We don't need to think ‘there are lights, there are thigles’ anymore, but we did the visualization and relaxed. We were in that presence, in the presence of clarity, and this is called experience, not contemplation. Contemplation is when you observe yourself and look for who is in that presence, who notices all these lights; so you are not gazing at the lights but you are in your real nature.

The same thing with emptiness; when we introduce with emptiness, for example, all the universe dissolves in light, in our thigle and white A. The white A, thigle and our physical body all dissolve, so what remains? Only the dimension of emptiness remains, and the thigle and white A slowly become small. How we can find that moment



Photo: G. Baggi

Being present and working with circumstances

From the Dra Thalgyur Retreat,
Merigar West, October 1st, 2008

in our presence? In the immense emptiness inside, our being is very tiny represented by that white A and thigle. When we dissolve that white A and thigle into emptiness, what remains at this moment? Nothing. Everything that manifests is emptiness, and at that moment we are in a totally empty dimension, but this is not the state of contemplation; it is an experience. You notice immediately who is in this emptiness, even if the white A and thigle and everything have disappeared. Your presence has not disappeared; your presence is there; so when you are in this presence it is called instant presence. So now you see that emptiness becomes the state of contemplation; shine and lhagtong are in many of the semdzin practices.

We do not apply these one by one with ordinary methods. For example, when we visualize the white A and thigle, or only the white A on the top of our nose, we do this visualization and at that moment we relax, we have that presence, and that is part of our clarity. Then when we move this A and it goes farther away and comes back coordinated with the breath, that is not the calm state, it is movement, so that means we are dealing with the realization of lhagtong. Shine is fixation and there are no thoughts. It is very important to know with any practice, what we do is to get into total realization; so you must understand that.

Practice is always related to the three experiences, particularly in Tantrism. When you visualize a deity in front of you, or transform yourself, you are always working with symbols, transforming, and that means that you are working with clarity. So with experience, through experience, you have that realization, and you should remember that. If you have done some practice, you check and see if this corresponds or not, and then you can find the value of the practice you are doing.

So you see, in the Dzogchen teaching we have twenty-one or twenty-three different kinds of attitudes. The first attitude is that we should be like a bee, and this is the number one attitude. In summertime the bee flies everywhere, to the right, the left, to many flowers, big and small, and very tiny flowers. The bee has no limitations, it always goes to all kinds of flowers, tasting and taking nectar. We should learn the teaching in that way, until we discover our real nature. If you have not discovered your real nature after you have followed a teacher and the teachings for many

years, and you never understood that you should discover your real nature, it means the teaching is only a name and not really a teaching, and you are wasting your precious time. You should remember the aim of the teaching, the main point, and in that way you should follow teaching. It doesn't mean you should be like a bee your whole life. Some people say, “Oh, this is wonderful, fantastic, I can learn everything!” You can learn everything, but you don't need to. You should learn what you need to for total realization, to discover your real nature, and then you integrate and do practice.

There are many other attitudes you should follow, and if you like you can learn them one by one, but it's not really so very necessary. More important is your presence, not being distracted, and with your presence try to work with circumstances, try to remember these words: Working with Circumstance. You don't need to always ask your teacher, “Can I do this or not?” if you are present and you know you should work with circumstances. Working with circumstances means: “If it is good for me, it is good for others.” If I do it and there is some benefit, even relatively beneficial, that is working with circumstances. It is not that we think about the benefit only for our future or next life.

For example, a student goes to teacher and asks, “Teacher, give me advice, there is a very bad man, not normal, he wants to beat me, he told me that tomorrow he is waiting for me somewhere. What I should do?” and then what can I say? A teacher cannot say, “Do Guru Dragpur, or Simhamukha.” That is not sufficient, because if someone is waiting on the road, you can also say, “Maybe you don't go on that road, take another road,” but who knows where this person is waiting. So it means seeing the circumstances, and the teacher can only say, “You do your best, try to be present, and work with circumstances,” you have two eyes, two ears, you are walking, you can see, you can hear and you do your best, maybe before he beats you, you try to beat him, if there is the possibility. We don't know if there is that possibility, so this is called working with circumstances. Some people say, “No, we are practitioners, we need to have compassion” so they are going to walk up to that person with compassion. I am happy if you can do that, but that person is not showing you compassion. This is not good.

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Closing Remarks of the Dra Thalgyur Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Merigar West, Oct 3, 2008

I am happy we succeeded to do this retreat without having any problems and I want to communicate to all practitioners in different countries to try and do your best. Try particularly to collaborate with each other. Our collaboration is already going much better, but still we need to develop. I am sending my warm wishes to everybody. In Merigar we have a big group at this retreat, everyone wants to say something one by one, but it’s not possible, so everyone sends their wishes to all of you. Altogether they are sending their wishes and hellos to you! (Big shouts and applause and whistling)

We didn’t have any problems at this retreat because all practitioners, everybody, your attitude, everything, is perfect. That is a good sign for our practice and means that the practice is more or less alive. I also want to thank all

the organizers of this retreat very much for doing service for everybody. Many people collaborated for this retreat, and that is very positive, and we also had very good collaboration with the local guardians. This weather seems a little strange, but it has been perfect until today for our retreat. I am also very satisfied with each retreat we are doing because I know the Dzogchen teachings are very important. There have been many Dzogchen masters, for centuries and centuries, who taught and diffused knowledge of Dzogchen teachings, but there has never been anything like today. All over the globe, everywhere, we have practitioners singing the Song of the Vajra together with Guruyoga, thousands of people are singing, and not only in this hall. They are all in contemplation at the same moment, so it is something marvelous and fantastic. I am very satisfied!

I am sure that not all people who follow my teachings understand all the Dzogchen teachings perfectly, but I know there are many people who have such knowledge, not only in one or two places, but everywhere. So you see, everyday when we do these webcast connections with video there are many connections and people. All these people are learning Dzogchen teachings and trying to discover how real Dzogchen is. In history there has never been anything like this, so we must feel good about that; and so for this reason I am very satisfied. Even if some people do not understand Dzogchen and didn’t discover what it is, they do understand how being present must be. Presence is a great benefit, the problem is when we are charged up and limited. So many people are becoming a little aware, having fewer problems, and this is very important. Even if we have a worldly revolution, we can never succeed like that, but slowly our practitioners develop. That is called evolution. We must understand that and do our best. So we go ahead that way. This is what I want to say. ☸

Transcribed by Lauri Marder
Edited by Naomi Zeitz

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In general compassion is very good. If there are problems, we remember compassion, and if someone creates many emotions, etc., that person does not know those emotions are creating problems for him or herself and for others. You create benefit for that person and for others by applying compassion – that is good – but it is more important to know how to work with circumstances. In some circumstances you can find something that is not positive according to the teachings, for example, killing someone. Of course that is not positive at all, but in some circumstances killing can be much better than not killing. If you work with circumstances, you choose which is better, not only what it says in the teaching. This is an example of how you can understand many things about working with circumstances.

Sometimes it is better that you don’t always ask your teacher very complicated things like, “Teacher, tell me what I should do?” The teacher also finds it difficult to explain, but the teacher knows very well how you should work with circumstances. When the teacher explains, “You should do like this, etc.”, it may not seem to correspond with the teachings, so you must become responsible. This is how it should be for all Dzogchen practitioners. No one is controlling you or making rules, so you should learn to work with circumstances and become responsible.

You should also try to educate your children in this way. In the beginning children don’t understand, so of course you should control them, otherwise they can have serious problems. When children ask you everything and say “Why?” they are developing, judging and thinking and in this moment it is very important to explain and not say, “Oh you should do this or you can’t do that,” but help them understand which is the good or bad way. When they are interested at that moment they can learn very well. Then when they become bigger and bigger, something like ten, twelve and thirteen years old etc., then you don’t need to explain too much. If you explain too much they feel you are controlling them and you must respect their dimensions; male or female, everyone, has their dimension. When there are moments or reasons for explaining, for speaking or talking person to person, you can give advice and they learn to become responsible for themselves.

Some parents always think about the time when their child was very small, and nice, and how they liked very much to have them in their arms, even when the child is no longer a child. But the father and mother have that attitude, and always try to control the children all their lives, and then in the end they are always worried and say, “Oh, what can we do? My son or daughter still has no job, and they don’t know how to make their life.” In a real sense, the parents are always controlling the child, so the child feels suffocated and is not happy. It does not help at all – it only creates tensions between parents and children. So it is very important that you know and let your children grow up. They should make their own lives. Of course, if they need some help you are always parents, you try to help. More than helping, you do not control them, even if they do something wrong. Sometimes when there is a possi-

bility you can explain just a little, like friend to friend, like person to person, so in that way there is no problem. But you don’t help by controlling. When you do not control they can become responsible, even if they did something wrong, they can learn what is not good for them. Otherwise children never become responsible for themselves.

We, all practitioners, must also become responsible for ourselves. The teacher teaches you to be present, to try to work with circumstances and if there are tensions, to free them and try to be relaxed. Many people also say, “Yes, but I never succeed in being relaxed,” even if the teacher has explained many times. They say, “Yes, I heard the words, but it doesn’t help very much.” If you do not bring this awareness into your practice, of course it doesn’t help, it only remains intellectual; but you always think that this or that is important. The teacher repeats saying, “Remember the words of Buddha. Buddha said, “Everything is unreal, life is like a big dream,” and you think, “Yes, I heard that so many times, but it doesn’t help,” so you must understand and observe well. It doesn’t work because you do not apply what the Buddha said; you do not deal with this knowledge, so of course it doesn’t work. This is really very important, seriously. If you are doing a little practice of Dzogchen at least, I am not saying you can have realization totally, completely, immediately, but you may notice that your life becomes a little simpler – before you had so many concepts, so many complicated things, when this diminishes, life becomes a little lighter and you do not feel so heavy. That means the teaching is helping you, at least you are integrating just a little, but of course if you integrate more and more, you can have much more benefit.

So many people say, “When I do this practice, which kind of signs of practice can I have?” that means like a little realization. The first sign of all is that life is less heavy, less complicated and confused. That is a very good point, so even if you have no particular signs, you can be happy and you can also develop your practice more. Also, in general, you have so many problems with people, and then slowly these problems disappear and relationships become more harmonized. That is also a sign of your practice, it doesn’t mean that all the people in the world are becoming more aware or compassionate. Shantideva explained that it is not so easy. In the Bodhisattvacharyavatara he explained: there are many thorns over the whole countryside and you cannot walk anywhere, so you want to cover the entire country with a carpet in order to walk around, but this is impossible. That shows how our dualistic situation is. But it is simple – you try to get very good shoes, you put them on and walk and you have no problem. That means that even if you can’t control the whole countryside, you can control your two feet; that is much easier.

We know that in that way, tensions can liberate completely. Sometimes you have a friend and, for example, you think, “He or she was very close to me, was my friend, but now I don’t know. There is something he or she is not telling me, it seems he or she is not happy with me.” You have this kind of idea which becomes the root and you show some aspect of tension, even if you don’t want to. It automatically comes out, and your friend thinks, “Oh, my friend

has a strange way of looking at me, of talking, etc.” Now your friend is also worried. Then you both develop that tension, and in the end you want to have some reason for you to be angry with him or her, and you think “Why?” or “What can that be?” or is it some kind of jealousy. You can find so many things and in the end you become enemies. So you see many things develop that way. Even if someone is angry with you, and you did something bad to that person, you know it is important to respect the dimensions of other people, so you become aware and respect their dimension, not showing your tensions, and slowly that person also becomes calm and can liberate. So you see, as we say in the teaching, everything is interdependent.

You should not always think, “I am innocent, he or she is the main person who created problems.” This does not exist. If there are problems between two people, both have some reason for this problem, but we never see or know that because we all have very strong egos. We always think, “Oh, I am innocent; I did not do anything, only he is the guilty one,” and of course when you go on in that way, tensions develop, so it is very important in daily life that we try to be in calm state. A calm state depends on our awareness, not giving too much importance to this or that, which is the root of fear, confusion, attachment, etc. I am also saying that it is a good sign for practitioners if you have none of these kinds of problems.

In this teaching *tagtsed* (*rtags tshad*) is explained. *Tag* means sign, and how signs of the benefit of that practice manifest. Signs are important in any practice we do, the experience of that practice should always manifest. If we did not do something well, of course nothing manifests, but if we did something well, they will always manifest. People think something manifests, people think something like visions, or hearing something abnormal. In the teachings it says *nyam*; *nyams* mean experiences. When we do practice with the elements, one of the five elements, for example, when we are relaxed, totally relaxed and that element is totally relaxed or perfectly harmonized, then we can have a sign, or some visions, or we hear something, also there can be a feeling in our mind and condition, because we have the three gates of body voice, and mind.

At the body level we can have visions, in speech we can have sounds, also with our clarity we can have something like rainbow colors or something, or at the mind level, we can feel very happy even if there is no reason, we enjoy very much. Even if there is no reason to laugh, we laugh alone – those are examples of *nyams* of the practice. *Nyams* are positive because, for example, if you make a fire there is smoke, because that is its characteristic; fire makes smoke, practice manifests its *nyams*. When there is no smoke it means the fire is not getting bigger or developing, so when there is no experience even in your mind or your sensation, that is not good and you should check your way of doing practice. ☸

Transcribed by Lauri Marder
Edited by Naomi Zeitz

Yeshe Silvano Namkhai

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Yeshe Namkhai introduces the 2nd European Gakyils and Lings Meeting

Merigar West, Saturday September 27th

Usually when we arrive at the point of taking some responsibility in the Dzogchen Community, we need to have some minimum qualities to do this. First of all we need to understand that we need a stable base, a stable understanding of the principle of the Dzogchen teaching. So at least we should discover that we have to go beyond the idea of working with hierarchy and rules. This is the first step. Working with hierarchy and rules is very easy. It is basically what most of our relationships in society are based on. Usually we are into some type of hierarchy based on power and money in common society. Just think about what car you are driving, what house you have, what position or role you have at work, for example. Or if you are not working from 9 to 5 and are freelance, you have to face how to sell yourself so more or less; it's the same.

In this context we need to understand that the Dzogchen Community should not be based on these values because the principles of the teaching are not based on the idea of having a career. This is the main point. Having a career is something connected with power and with money, in normal society. The Dzogchen Community should take a little bit more care about teaching, rather than having power or a career or making money.

First of all, we should be present about this understanding – all our relationships with each other should not be based on money or power that means we should not evaluate our friends, our Vajra brothers and sisters, in this way. We know very well that it is very difficult to avoid judging – accepting and refusing – because our mind always works in this way. If we have a relationship with somebody, we immediately have a relationship with our concept more than with the person. Concept means that any kind of relationship gives us some feelings, some emotions. These emotions always fight against ourselves because if we feel friendly, or angry, or if we love someone, basically we are dealing more with ourselves than with another person. If you think well, when we have a fight with someone there is always a thought beyond our feeling. For example, we feel anger towards someone and immediately, if we start to observe this anger, we find something connected with our judgment, with our concept.

If, for example, we are at a Gakyil meeting and someone starts to complain about everything – usually about something complicated, difficult, something that has to be settled, something that isn't easy, this type of bureaucratic and complicated vision

– then immediately we feel angry and say that Rinpoche said we have to go on and somehow we will try to go on. But in the end, if we look at our anger, our feelings very well, we find, in general, that we don't like bureaucratic things. We will find that there is something in this person's attitude that we don't like but it is not connected to this person but more to our general idea, our concept of being bureaucratic, complicated and so on. Then from our first feeling, we observe that we have something with this person, and then we discover that basically it is our concept, not this person. And if we relax more and observe this general idea, this concept, we discover that behind it that there is something more general about ourselves in the end. So we should work with this, not trying to stop our anger towards this person.

It's useless to try not to fight. Not fighting means we stop something for five minutes then the person says something more and we get angry and fight even more. So we need to discover what is behind our feelings. Behind our feelings are our concepts. Our concepts are always very strong. We will always find that our concepts are a lot more important than anything else in life. We are very attached to our ideas so if I hate bureaucratic things for sure my idea of hating bureaucratic things is more important than hating the person in front of me, even if it is my parents, or my lover or my teacher. It is exactly the same. In the end our concept is always more important. This is why we have fights in Gakyil meetings; we fight with each other even if the spiritual path is more important. In the end it is always about our ego.

We always say that everything comes from our ego because we project it into everything. We project using concepts. Concepts are the main problem so if we want to do something good, first of all we have to understand that everything is connected with concept. And for everything that you have a feeling for, for sure there is a concept behind it. It's not something that is new. The circumstance, the situation that provokes your feeling is new but behind it there is always a very strong concept that you have always had since the beginning. You have been slowly building this concept since you were a child and it is ruling your life.

When we say that we should not be conditioned by our passion it does not mean that we should not be conditioned by this temporary feeling. It means we should not be conditioned by our concept. It is just our illusion that outside of us there is something terrible happening that



Photo: Catia Ciccone

makes us feel so bad that we start to fight. Sometimes one word is enough from those we care the most about, like our parents, or our husband or our wife, for us to get totally mad. It's because behind this we have a very strong concept that is stronger than anything else in our life. It is the reality, not something that is outside of us. It's very strange. If you think about it well, how can it be possible that something outside of us can be stronger than what is inside? It's very simple if you think about it. Obviously something inside of you is stronger. And what is inside of you? Your concept, your ideas, that's all. You don't have anything else.

We always say that everything is unreal. What does this mean? It means that it's all based on concept. We have hundreds of thousands of concepts that are our reality, but our reality inside is stronger than the reality outside because we get attached to it. This is the main point. We say we should be relaxed when we have meetings, or face our problems or do something good. When we try to do our best, our best, most of all, is being present. Being in ordinary presence. I'm not talking about instant presence that is something more. First we need to have a stable base which means that at least we need to understand what ordinary presence is. Ordinary presence means that we are able to observe this concept. And sometimes we can say that these concepts are not so important for us and we accept something from outside because we are not projecting in that moment. This is the main point. If we are able to do this then we won't have fights or conflicts. They naturally disappear.

How does this famous self-liberation work? We say observe, recognise and self-liberate. Recognising is halfway. Usually we say first of all just observe then it liberates by itself, but to liberate by itself you need to recognise something which is that you have

inner and outer vision. Inner vision is your concept and outer vision is how you project it. When you destroy this, it means at least you understand that this is your real vision, your karmic vision and in that moment you start to observe and when you observe, you don't have feelings. There is nothing to feel. If you think well, what can you feel? What is left? Almost nothing. You have no attachment, no strong feeling and if, for example, this person is talking and talking about bureaucratic things, you know that it is you hating bureaucratic things while someone else likes them. So it's totally relative. The moment you understand this there is nothing to feel. So it is just someone moving his mouth. This is more or less what we mean when we say 'relaxed state'.

A relaxed state is very important to start to practice something like shine. At least we need this. We can create a very nice illusion by going to a nice place, sitting, sounding A or doing *sem-dzin* or something and pretending to do shine. But if you take shine more seriously, it is more at this level. Then at the second level, after you understand this calm state, you should integrate movement that is more about experience, trying to integrate all this into your normal life. Trying to coordinate movement and your presence at the same time, working together.

When you are in the Gakyil, taking some responsibility, it's basically like you are taking teaching seriously. At least you want to make your base very stable, not just something you talk about but something you are seriously doing, trying to take into your life. If we do this, there is no conflict because there is no concept, no projection; we do things very smoothly and in a relaxed way. Instead, if we have conflicts, first of all we should stop and observe and say, "Probably I am doing something wrong at the level of understanding the teaching,

not at the level of relationships." It can't be that it is only someone outside of me, someone around me, creating so many problems. It is always about myself. Then if I arrive at a certain point, a certain level of disappointment, for example, I feel really sad, disappointed, I can't go on, and it is always connected with our vision. Then when we observe very well, we find that there is something wrong in our vision.

I am saying this in a very simple way because you know that in the last few days Rinpoche has not been very well physically although he is teaching anyway. Instead of two hours he did an hour and a half on the first day [of the retreat] and today an hour and forty minutes that is very rare. Usually he has no problem to do two hours. This kind of meeting is important to understand that we have to collaborate and work together because the Teacher will not last forever. You can also see that this time – a lot of people can see because the teaching is going by web-cast – that he is getting older. So it is time for us to do something more serious, taking things a little more seriously from a personal point of view. Not only saying, pretending, sitting in front of the teacher, receiving teaching and then living passively. Now it's time to be active and show that we are really taking care of this transmission.

We don't need to buy land. We don't need to build gonpas. We don't need any of these things. No one needs them. In the real sense we don't need them, we need them because we want to keep this transmission alive and we want to make people have the possibility to become realised. This is the main point. Remember that Rinpoche has always said that, "We don't buy land to grow potatoes". This is a famous phrase that he has used many times because this is the main point. And also on the other hand we don't need to organise things perfectly. This is something that

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

people also have a strange idea about. We need to do things correctly, according to the principle of the Dzogchen teaching, not to the principle of society.

For example, if we want to organise a retreat very well, accommodation for people and so on, we can hire a company and they can do it very well. There are thousands of companies who can do it better than us. But this is not the main point. The main point is not confirming the rules of society. We don't care about making money or having power in society. This is something we are totally not interested in. If we were interested in these things do you think that Rinpoche never had the possibility to go into politics? We had possibilities hundreds of times, we had a lot of possibilities but we never did any of these things because they are not the main point. The main point is to give people the possibility to follow this teaching and to keep the transmission alive.

The main point for us is to have a stable base. If we have a stable base it is easier to avoid conflict, otherwise the only way to go on is to work with hierarchy and rules that basically means money and power. These are two aspects, one of which is more connected to an organisational point of view and the other with the financial and motivational point of view. But it's not right. It's more the style of society. We work with circumstances but we don't have to be slaves of these circumstances.

When this place [Merigar West] was built, Rinpoche worked a lot. I was very young and we worked here every day in the summer. We had no money. At that time Rinpoche was starting to work at the university as a professor and we spent all our money to support this place. We used to be here all summer working all the time and at the Serkham [Yellow House] we worked with our hands rebuilding everything. Then we planted trees. We had no money but the idea was staying together, working together, trying to do something with this principle and only in action can you see how this works.

It makes no sense for us to hire someone and then look at this group of people working and say, "Ah, they did well," or "They did something wrong." Who cares? It's more about us having this

possibility to work together, find a way, working correctly with circumstances and understanding what the principle of the teaching is and applying it. If we apply it correctly, everything becomes easier. If we don't apply it, then [the situation] becomes exactly like society. Or if we apply it only halfway, that is, we only pretend to apply it; there are always a lot of obstacles and fighting. So it is important to try not to do things halfway. Try to do things completely, something correct. Then if we can't achieve it, it doesn't matter.

We make mistakes and we also have to give people the possibility to have their own dimension for making mistakes. Let someone make a mistake. Sometimes this is harder than doing something by ourselves. Many times we start to do things because someone else would do it wrong and we can't leave it this way. We can't accept someone doing things wrong. Sometimes it is better to respect someone's dimension and let them make a mistake.

Rinpoche always gives responsibility and often he gives it to someone who is very young without any experience. Leave it the way it is, just because they are innocent. Think about this word. Innocent means at least like a child, very young, it means a person who doesn't have any idea, doesn't have any real projection. At least we try and he or she will make a lot of mistakes. But many times this is a kind of example. If you do things from your heart, it's better than doing something complicated with a lot of your personal feelings and projections. When you work a lot at this level, then even if things are done correctly, in the end you have everyone with bad feelings, a lot of fighting and a lot of difficult situations.

So sometimes it's better for us to be spontaneous and do things naturally. Be a little bit more innocent. Try to have more pure vision. This means being a little more direct. We know we have to do something, we know what the principle is and we try to apply it. And then, for example, if we make a mistake or something goes wrong, or people start to think that we are arrogant ... because what happens typically is that if someone has just arrived in the Dzogchen Community, he immediately has the feeling that

Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

Teachings 2008 on Rigpai Kujuug, the Six-line Vajra Verse

November 14–16
Berkeley, California, USA

November 19
Mexico City, Mexico

November 22–24
Baja, Mexico

November 28–30
Tashigar Norte, Isla di Margarita, Venezuela

December 7–8
Milan, Italy

December 15–19
Merigar West, Italy

he has to imitate the Teacher and immediately tries to do this. And then, of course, he does some things wrong, makes some mistakes because he has no experience. That is why Rinpoche has always said that older students should help younger students. What does this mean? It means that from an older student's point of view, they should try to help when there are mistakes. It means that older students can see what kind of mistake will happen and can try to help to correct. On the other hand, older students should always remember the experience they had the first time they met the Teaching. Then they got older and didn't have any more fresh feelings, experiences. Try to look at these young students and understand how they feel when they have just entered the Dzogchen Community. This is very important.

Younger students [should be] exactly the same – just like a mirror. They should look at older students with respect and try to understand what is good of experience – but not in terms of [considering that] someone is older so he will not make a mistake – just the way in which things were built, were created, what the style of the Dzogchen Community is. This is the main point. If we

Teaching Retreats with

Yeshi Namkhai

Rigbai Kujuug, The Six Vajra Verses

The Six Vajra Verses (Rigbai Kujuug)

Rigbai Kujuug is an Atiyoga teaching introduced by Vairocana into Tibet in the 8th c.

Rigpa is the state of knowledge, the presence of the pure state of awereness. Kujuug refers to the cuckoo, whose song in Tibet is a sign that nature is beginning to breathe again after the cold winter. When the cuckoo sings everybody is happy. This precious text is one of the oldest in the Dzogchen tradition.

In this teaching retreat, Yeshi Namkhai will also refer to Dorje Sempa Namkha Che, another essential Dzogchen text, and show how focusing only on our intellectual knowledge is often our main obstacle to understanding.

Berkeley, CA November 14–16

Friday, 7–9pm
Sat. & Sun., 10 am–12 noon
Dondrub Ling, 2748 #D Adeline Street
Berkeley, CA 94703
Phone: 510. 644. 2260
For details, www.dzogchencommunitywest.org
Authorized Yantra Yoga instructor Naomi Zeitz will offer an introductory class during this retreat.

Baja California Sur, Mexico November 22–24

Tsegyalgar West
Contact Elisa Gonzalez at secretary@tsegyalgarwest.org about costs, retreat schedule, and accommodations.
Authorized Yantra Yoga instructor Paula Barry will offer an introductory class during this retreat.

presented by
Tsegyalgar West and Dzogchen Community West Coast

can achieve this, then it becomes very easy to do everything in the Dzogchen Community. Even very big things like things that change the history of the Dzogchen Community or things that change society.

[However] if we do it at our level of vision, it means, for example, that I [say that I] know everything. I come to the Gakyil and say that I have a lot of experience in financial stuff or in business. I know everything and we should do things like this. This is totally wrong because it is not possible. If we do it in the same way, it doesn't work because this is not society.

So the main point is to understand circumstances and to work with them. Work correctly with circumstances and try to do what makes sense. Together. ©

Transcribed and edited by Liz Granger

Errata

There was an error in the last line of the teaching by Yeshi Silvano Namkhai in the last issue of The Mirror, #93, page 5. The last line should read ordinary presence and not instant presence. Please see below.

“If we can keep our state of observation a little bit, like meditation, and not go directly into this vision of the church or whatever you see, and we keep this state of observing the relation between the candle, the incense and this vision, in this understanding we have a kind of presence called ordinary presence.”

Our apologies!
The Mirror

>> *Kalmykia* continued from page 1

about the differences between Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen and explained the view, path and fruit of Dzogchen Teaching. It was useful not only for newcomers, but also for old students who were attending the small Kalmyk retreat and felt more and more like beginners.

The next day Rinpoche gave the Initiation of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava and explained how to apply this precise method for long life in daily life. And again it was a great gift not only for Kalmyk people – a lot of stu-

dents came to the initiation from other countries, even from England and France.

We usually hear from Rinpoche that in a traditional Buddhist country most of the people are more interested in receiving blessings and empowerments than in teaching and developing knowledge. All who attended the retreat could notice it also in Kalmykia. But there were also a lot of people who were sincerely and devotedly interested in teaching, and in this case tradition: culture, attitude and behavior be-

came a perfect base for developing knowledge of Dzogchen.

Rinpoche and Yeshi Namkhai spent hours and hours talking with Telo Tulku and Kirsan Ilumzhinov about developing knowledge in Kalmykia not only through giving Teaching, but also via cultural and social projects. At the end of his visit Rinpoche said that we should do our best, work together, share experience and collaborate as much as possible. Answering questions about the future of Kalmykia, Rinpoche said that the main point was to go

ahead, be courageous and never abandon hope, as has been said in old Tibetan song:

When we are going up and up in the valley
And the snow is falling down and down,
But even though the snow is falling down we don't worry
Because after the snow there will be sunshine. ©

Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

>> continued from page 1

Namgyalgar
April 10–15
Retreat

April 17–22
Retreat

Singapore
May 1–3
Weekend retreat



TIPA, Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts from Dharamasala

From September 26th to October 5th, 2008, four artists from the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA) of Dharamasala were invited to Italy by ASIA to carry out a public awareness project called: “A Journey Through Tibetan Theatre, Cinema and Painting.” The purpose was to educate and increase awareness among the public of the need to safeguard and protect a culture in danger of extinction.

TIPA performers realized theatre workshops with Italian students and performed Lhamo Opera, traditional

dances and songs. It was a valuable opportunity to spread the knowledge of Tibetan traditional art and culture and to promote its encounter with the modern world.

In the meantime Andrea Nasca, ASIA America member, during a journey to Dharamasala visited TIPA and had the chance to be present at the wonderful performances of the students. The following article describes Andrea’s visit to the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts.

Keeping Tibetan Musical Heritage Alive: An exploration of the workings of TIPA

on our visit to McLeod Ganj, Himachal Pradesh, India

When you walk down TIPA Road, as we did on a regular basis, from our guest-house in Dharamkot to the center of McLeod Ganj (what most people refer to as upper Dharamasala), we passed by a long, moss-laden wall with a multitude of lungta (prayer flags) swaying above it and monkeys running across it. As you reach the end of the wall, there’s an elaborate Tibetan style gate with painted ironwork, concrete and golden figures aloft. This is the home of TIPA, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts.

I knew that ASIA is responsible for the sponsorship of students at TIPA, so I had emailed them about coming to visit. On our way down one day, we stopped in. We were graciously met by Kelsang, who is the liaison with our ASIA staff in Rome, and by Wangchuk, the director.

As we sat in the waiting room, we noticed a painting of someone – it looked familiar to me. When we met with Wangchuk (and had tea, of course) he informed us that the painting was that of none other than Thangthong Gyalpo. I was very excited, as I remembered that he was responsible for developing the Ache Lhamo, the traditional Tibetan opera, as a way to communicate many things to people who could not read. I don’t know about you but to me, Thangthong Gyalpo is one of the most interesting figures in Tibetan history. He is considered to be a drubthob, one of the famous Mahasiddhas of Tibet (see, “Dzogchen Teachings in Gutenstein, Austria,” 1998, by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu). He is also known as Mahasiddha Chagsampa or ‘iron bridge builder,’ as he performed great feats of construction over vast rivers in Tibet, back in the 14th century!

Several days later, we met with Kelsang who fit a grand tour for us into his busy schedule. This was after I attempted to help him find some Western extras for a music video they were shooting over several days, for students not only learn traditional arts but are encouraged to create modern compositions, as well. We started by having lunch together in the mess hall, which is where all the staff and students eat together.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama founded TIPA in 1959, the same year he fled into exile to India. This indicates to me that the preservation of this aspect of Tibetan culture was of the utmost priority to him. There are about 100 people residing in the compound consisting of about 60 students and 40 staff. Both Kelsang and Wangchuk emphasized that together they were very much like a big family; Wangchuk said he cared for all the students as if they were his children.

Upon arriving at TIPA, you’re likely to see young students walking around practicing their instruments, playing cricket or heading off to their next class. We were very fortunate to be able to look in on the various classes that afternoon, including about 40 young women practicing the amazing vocal acrobatics of the Lhamo or traditional Tibetan opera. The sound is hypnotic and ethereal, a bit like Native American chanting with a celestial vibrato. We then listened and looked in on several young men in the auditorium who were energetically practicing an elaborate routine that involved dancing, drumming and singing. This reminded me of the talent required



for something like the Cirque du Soleil, for example, where artists must be able to perform multiple disciplines at once! Following this, we visited a class of students playing a stringed instrument with mallots, like a kind of xylophone or harpsichord. We also visited the shop where the costumes are sewn, as well as the special box seat reserved for HHDL for the annual Lhamo Festival in the spring, where all the opera companies are invited to perform. Some Lhamo performances can be as much as nine hours in length but when enacted in the West, shorter stories of one to two hours are chosen.

ASIA sponsors a full third of the TIPA students. TIPA originally received funding from the Tibetan government in exile but they are moving toward a self-sustaining model of operation. They raise funds through performances and by selling costumes and instruments (which are all handmade at TIPA in their arts department) to other institutes. I asked Kelsang what is their highest funding priority. He replied that there are six new and very talented female students that have recently been accepted, who are proficient in the Lhamo, the dance and playing instruments, who are in need of sponsorship for a couple of years to complete their training (so, if you are interested in becoming a short term sponsor, please contact ASIA).

Highly competitive auditions are held annually and only about 10 out of 100 applicants are accepted into the school. They range in age from about 9-24. They enter as beginners and as they progress through about 12 years of training, they become senior students or instructors. There are both girls and boys dormitories and they live entirely in the compound, focusing intently on developing their talents and preparing for life as professional performers. If there are students who decide that they want to start

a family, they are given separate housing to do so, so that they can continue their studies.

The director informed me that one of their other top priorities is to get a new auditorium built, as the current one is in shambles. Although built only 20 years ago, the paint inside is peeling, the ceiling panels are falling down, and there is insufficient lighting and absence of a proper sound system. As they are charged with representing the entire Tibetan nation in exile, they feel the quality of the facility should match the quality of the performing arts that are nurtured and conserved here. They have put together a million dollar proposal to build a suitable venue. Imagine going to see a famous Italian opera at The Metropolitan Opera, in New York, and having birds flying over your head and a bare concrete floor under foot!

We felt extremely fortunate to have been invited to a performance, which took place mainly for the visiting governmental dignitaries that were here for various meetings to check on all the different aspects of operation. The performances were just amazing, of the highest quality. Shall I describe it for you? How I wish more people could experience these amazing performances! It is fantastic that ASIA was able to host the Lhamo in Italy recently.

The first performance began with six women in fantastic costumes of pink and blue blouses, hair braided with colored ribbons and adorned with turquoise and coral beads, huge star-shaped gaus and beaded necklaces. This song originated from the central plateau of Tibet and involved tribute paid to the local spiritual leader, as well as lamenting the loss of him upon his death. In addition to singing and dancing, the six men who joined the performance also played the traditional Tibetan guitar. Again, imagine a combination of operatic vir-

tuosos, who can not only sing and provide theatrical elements of story but who also dance and play instruments, simultaneously. Wow!

The source of the second routine is East Tibet and was an enactment of brides and grooms relishing in the virtues of their spouses to be, as well as their lovely and handsome appearances and dress. This act included musical accompaniment by a sextet ensemble of various traditional instruments. The costumes were very elaborate and colorful, including cone-shaped hats with bright red fringe and there was a lot of playful vocal interplay between the male and female performers.

The next piece also hailed from East Tibet. The commentator informed the audience that Tibet has a very rich musical tradition with songs for all occasions such as spiritual ceremonies, marriages, death and aspects of daily life. This was a construction song, whose purpose was to motivate and inspire those involved in building the monastery. The men and women danced and sang. Props for construction tools, such as picks, shovels and dampers were also used as percussion instruments and provided the rhythm for the dance. In each performance, sometimes only the men or women sang, and other times there was a kind of exchange between them. A trio of stringed instruments played with a bow accompanied this act.

Another act involved playing out the song and dance involved in choosing the most auspicious time for planting crops, the labor involved in tending them, on through to the time of harvest and the ensuing celebration and libation involving the satisfaction of having collaborated to obtain a successful harvest. The celebration involved imbibing on chang and reveling in the fruit of

>> continued on next page

Translating Taranatha from Tibetan

Susan Schwartz

This year's Training for Translators from Tibetan (TTT) took place at Merigar West in the last third of July and the pleasantly hot and dry days of early August, ending just on time for the Summer Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the Jewel in our Sky. In the course of the three-week period, the group ranged between five and ten students, with Fabian Sanders guiding us as instructor. In addition to Fabian (a Northern Italian with German ancestry), the participants included an Australian who had made the long journey to Italy just for the course, a Brit with an endearing Manchester accent, an American appliqué thanka maker based in Milan, a Russian information architect living in New York, an American living in London and just about anywhere else in the world where there is a Gar or a Ling, a Czech studying in Vienna, two bona fide Italians, and myself, an Austrian-American just back to the West after a year in India and Thailand. At times we were also graced with the presence of Dina Priymak, another native Russian.

We continued to translate the text started in the 2007 TTT: Jonang Taranatha's account of 59 siddhas who transmitted the seven instruction lineages. Their wildly unpredictable and subtly instructive life stories took us through the vast expanse of Oddiyana and the forests of eastern Orissa. For twenty days, we immersed ourselves in the namthars of the siddhas and unraveled a motley cast of characters that included kings, queens, barmaids, bird hunters, panditas, arhats, dakinis, and yoginis.

The format was straightforward: Arriving at class at 9 a.m. every morning, we would spend the first two and a half hours translating independently, but each of us working on the same passage. Except for a few brief conversations on or off topic, this was a quiet time for concentration. Each of us had brought a

laptop equipped with the necessary tools for Tibetan translation: Word with the appropriate fonts, dictionaries such as the Tibetan Translation Tool and the Illuminator, Acrobat Reader, a variety of reference resources supplied by Fabian, and access to wireless Internet. Occasionally, we would speculate in awe on how hard it must have been to translate in the days before computers.

Scanned images of original hand-carved woodblock pechas are hard to read – not only because certain characters are nearly indistinguishable from others, but the ink is uneven as well. So the first step is to retype the text. Although this process is highly prone to the introduction of errors, it is a good way to become familiar with the text before actually beginning to translate. Since even slight changes to the spelling of Tibetan words can yield an entirely different meaning, less careful typists like myself at least get to learn a lot from the grueling and often embarrassing experience of translating a fantasy text based on words that are not really there. Thankfully, in a group setting such as this one, each word is later analyzed in detail, and errors are discovered.

While spoken Tibetan is often said to be a fairly simple language, its scriptural counterpart is anything but. Partly for practical reasons (carving a woodblock pecha was no small task), words or expressions are often truncated and grammatical markers implied. The same goes for subjects and objects representing the agents and instruments of an event or expression. Even verbs might be dropped. And if you think it might at least be possible to hang your hat on delimiting marks like periods and commas, you guessed wrong. There are very few parallels between Western and Tibetan punctuation. With these factors in mind, we were very grateful to have access to Fabian's extensive knowledge of the Tibetan language as well



as his understanding of Buddhist history and the teachings embodied in the transmission lineages. When we got stuck while translating, he was always there to give us a hint that would help us move forward.

The real fun began when we went over the fruit of our solitary efforts in the group, taking turns reading the source text and explaining our interpretation of it. It can be a humbling process if you discover that you misunderstood the meaning of the words, but at the same time, it provides plenty of opportunities for letting go of preconceptions and gaining a real appreciation for others' insights. At times, we were collectively stumped, and found a need to pick apart the sentence in question, weigh alternatives, and debate differing opinions until finally the moment of "Aha!" arrived and the ambiguities dissolved. Of course, throughout the three-week period, a few uncertain words remained, but on the whole, the TTT group found that these were far fewer than in the previous year.

In the afternoon session, we would repeat the sequence of independent translating followed by group comparison and review. Meanwhile, in the two-person beginners' faction, the more experienced person assisted the newcomer with skills such as pronunciation and basic grammar. While we were translating in the morning, Fabian would join them to go over what they had studied and give them new material.

With some fluctuations among the individual participants, there seems to be a natural four-year cycle within the TTT group, this being the second and admittedly less experienced "crop." The

first round, from 2003 to 2005, was attended by more seasoned translators and resulted in the publication of English and Italian editions of Rinpoche's book *On Birth, Life, and Death*.

The Training for Translators from Tibetan is organized and sponsored by Shang Shung Institute as part of its efforts to develop aspiring translators. For-

berries were just beginning to get ripe. Some of us found that the exercise might have made it easier to integrate the intense physical and mental exertion of sitting in front of a computer all day.

There is no question that each of the participants made tremendous progress in their ability to translate from Tibetan. We found the structure of the course to be very effective as it promotes both independent work and the ability to draw on the resources of a group setting. Beyond encouraging us to translate our strong interest for the Tibetan language to a skill that can be of use to others, we learned the meaning of collaboration on many other levels as well.

For myself, as a newcomer both to the TTT and to the Dzogchen Community as a whole, I



Some of the translators with instructor Fabian Sanders relaxing at lunch. Photo: S. Schwartz

unately for the participants, SSI covers the costs of the course – a real help considering the expense of taking off work, travelling to Merigar, and paying for food and lodging. And of course Merigar staff also provided logistics support and space in the room next to the Mandala Hall.

Despite of the fact that it takes nearly an hour, this year's participants frequently took advantage of the beautiful walk up (and down) the hill from Arcidosso rather than driving. Though steep and at times arduous, the trail took us past fragrant bushes of yellow Scotch broom blossoms and through fields abounding with delicate purple butterflies. By the end of the course, the black-

found the course an exceptionally rewarding experience and a very inspiring introduction to the vast Mandala of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

We all hope to meet again next year, but in the meantime we will work on completing the translation on the Taranatha text over the Internet. Al Veda, our resident IT expert, is contributing a Wiki interface to facilitate the process. We have divided the remaining chapters among us and the other members of the group to ensure accuracy and consistency will review each section. It will be slow going, to be sure, but just like walking up the hill to Merigar, one step at a time brings us to the goal. ©

>> TIPA continued from previous page
their labors. This performance typified what I see among Tibetans even today – that they are a culture of people who place great value in community and collaboration. In McLeod, you never see homeless Tibetans, begging or starving. They work together and take care of each other. This is very much to their credit, as it is due to this diligence and dedication to one another that has fostered the survival of their cultural identity, as a whole.

A romantic ballad sung by four golden chuba-clad men with fur and brocade hats and playing the traditional guitars followed. The song was about how the men likened the qualities of their beloveds

to the purity of the lotus blossom and involved appropriately soothing and peaceful melodies.

The source of the next performance dates back to the 11th century, and was started in West Tibet. It is a tribute to Milarepa and the people believed that this dance would bring good fortune to the village in which it was performed. This was the most acrobatic of all the routines, involving women dancing with drums, while twisting and swinging them over their heads as they did partial backbends, and then coming around to beat the drum with each energetic movement. The men danced with bells and were clad in super long sleeve blouses and web like belts with large

pompoms on them. The men did amazing dances that could be described as a cross between break dancing, Russian style and whirling dervishes. This level of talent really would be appreciated by anyone who would see it.

Following this was a guitar duo with one man also singing a song that is considered the cultural symbol of Tibet and which included singing the Mani and other heartfelt sentiments.

Lastly, we witnessed a modern composition that was dedicated to their courageous countrymen and women who have recently risked a great deal in order to peacefully demonstrate in Tibet, in the hopes of bringing about

some justice and humane treatment of Tibetans. The song goes, "If we don't sing and dance for them, then for whom?" It was a very powerful performance involving all of the artists, about 35 of them. They finished by singing the Tibetan national anthem, with many audience members standing and joining in.

From 1997 ASIA has supported TIPA through the Long Distance Sponsorship Project, to maintain the traditional patrimony of arts and performances preserved by TIPA. In fact, a full third of their students are sponsored through ASIA donors.

With 25 Euros it is possible to support one of the young artists

who live and study at TIPA. The sponsorship covers the student's board and lodging at school, medical assistance and educational material. If you wish to start a sponsorship you can find information directly on the ASIA website www.asia-onlus.org or apply to the ASIA office in Rome by emailing adozioni@asia-onlus.org

I sincerely hope that you will one day have a chance to experience this amazing art form. It is truly unique and enjoyable. ©

Thank you,
Andrea Maria Nasca, ASIA

Shang Shung
Institute Austria
News

We have a very new Gonpa and Shang Shung Institute office in Austria. This is the first Dzogchen Center for the Austrian Dzogchen Community with a beautiful, comfortable and large Gonpa. It is located in a former schoolhouse in eastern Styria near Sinabelkirchen, where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu held a retreat in 2002. It also hosts the new office of the Shang Shung Institute with a library, shop and exhibition of Buddhist statues. It is a large place in fantastic surroundings. From now on, regular activities of the Dzogchen Community and the Shang Shung Institute will be held at this place. You are all welcome visit our new place, to join our practice meetings or to attend one of our seminars. (see Mandarava Tsalung retreat with Elio Guarisco Dec 5–8, 2008)

We also have new T-shirts (see: <http://www.ssi-austria.at/shop/shope63.php>) and various massage oils on our website (see: <http://www.ssi-austria.at/shop/shope61.php>)

Also the book Longsal Volume 8 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is ready to be printed!

Tibet Day in Huettenberg, Austria
20th anniversary of the International
Shang Shung Institute

Huettenberg, 6th of September 2008

The clear dark blue sky and the brilliant late summer day offered a gorgeous view over the valleys in the Austrian mountains and the colorful landscape. From one of the rocks a huge painting of Guru Padma-sambhava looks into the village of Huettenberg.

In the music center, many Tibetans and Italians worked in a relaxed and friendly way, the intense smell of Tibetan incense pervaded the place, prayer flags were hanging everywhere, and Buddhists statues never seen before in the West were shown. Why was that happening?

The small village of Huettenberg in Carinthia in Austria is one of the very few places in Austria that is very much connected to Tibet and Tibetan culture. It is the birthplace of Heinrich Harrer, whose life was shown in the film, “Seven Years in Tibet”. In Huettenberg there is also the very interesting and fantastic Harrer Museum with a large section dedicated to Tibetan culture.

For these reasons the International Shang Shung Institute chose this place to be the initial

point of the celebrations for its 20th anniversary.

More than 150 people came to attend the various offers of our Tibet Day:

Fabian Sanders gave a talk about the “Treasure or Tibetan culture”, Gino Vitiello gave an introduction to Tibetan Medicine, and a group of ten Tibetans made a great performance of Tibetan dances and sang beautiful Tibetan songs. The visitor of the Tibet Day also had the possibility to attend workshops about Tibetan cooking, games and art. Many people also took the chance and received a Ku Nye massage, the Tibetan massage applied in Tibetan Medicine. We were very pleased to welcome Miss Carina Harrer, the widow of Heinrich Harrer as our special guest at Tibet Day.

Geshe Tenzin Dhargye also presented the program of the planned activities related to Tibetan Medicine, which will start in November 2008.

One of the crucial aspects of this event was the meeting of the three mayors of Arcidosso (place of the



Photos: Oliver Leick



Photo: Wolfgang Horn

Shang Shung Institute of Italy), Gersdorf (place of the Shang Shung Institute of Austria), and Huettenberg (place of the Harrer Museum). The three mayors got along very well immediately, exchanged gifts and information, and finally agreed on an intensive collaboration in the future. This international collaboration will hopefully be very fruitful for the Shang Shung Institute and for the communities.

Thanks to the staff of the Shang Shung Institute, who came all the way from Italy to Austria, and the smooth collaboration with the Tibetan musicians and dancers, the Tibet Day was really great and an incredibly harmonious and interesting event. ©

Oliver Leick
Shang Shung Institute
www.shangshunginstitute.org

SSI USA Update

Dear Friends,
The Shang Shung Institute of America is pleased to report a busy and active period. The new class that started this Fall is now well integrated, and will be joining the class of 2012 as of spring semester 2009. Our student population has grown steadily, and we look forward to successfully increasing our number of students come Fall, 2009.

During the past few months, we've seen the successful completion of the Basic Level of our first California Kunye Therapy Program offered at Dondrubling in Berkeley, California. Additionally, we offered Intermediate and Advanced Tibetan Language Intensives in Conway, MA, which were attended by both students and local residents. As The Mirror goes to press, we will be offering a Tibetan cooking class in the Tsegylgar East kitchen, on November 2.

In December, the Shang Shung Institute is happy to present a free public lecture and weekend workshop with Dr. Lhusham Gyal at Amherst College in Amherst, MA. Dr. Gyal is a prominent Tibetan Scholar visiting from the Tibetan Medical College of Qinghai University in Tibet. He is currently Dean and Associate Professor of the Qinghai University's Tibetan Medical College, and his visit to Western Massachusetts is a rare opportunity for students of all

levels of interest to learn practical Tibetan medical knowledge from a highly skilled scholar of Tibetan medicine.

The schedule for this very special series of events is as follows:
Free Public Lecture:
Thursday, December 4th, 4–6 pm
Paino Lecture Hall, Earth and Science Building, Amherst College

Transporting the Elixir: A Look at
Tibetan Medicine Inside Tibet

Tibetan Medicine is one of the most ancient practices of healing known to humanity, dating back nearly 4,000 years. Until quite recently this ancient wisdom was practiced throughout Tibet virtually unchanged, as its knowledge was handed down through generations of lay and monastic doctors. Today, carried by the Tibetan diaspora, practices of this ancient healing wisdom are being offered in the West as an alternative to mainstream medical practices.

As a result, Westerners have begun to adopt it as a complementary medicine. But how is Tibetan Medicine practiced in its native homeland today, especially given China's economic development over the past 30 years? What are the strengths and cultural constraints that could influence this practice's effectiveness?

This talk is co-sponsored by the department of Asian Languages & Civilizations, Amherst College, and the Shang Shung Institute.

Weekend Workshop:

Friday, December 5th, 4–6 pm
Sat. & Sun., December 6th–7th, 9:30 am–12:30 pm & 2–5 pm
Paino Lecture Hall, Earth and Science Building, Amherst College
Cost: \$110 for whole weekend / \$60 per day for Saturday or Sunday, includes Friday (20% discount for students)

Foods and Gems: Tibet's Wealth of
Practical Prevention for Modern
Daily Life

In this workshop Dr. Lusham Gyal will present the healing properties of common foods and gems as taught in Tibetan Medicine. Emphasis will be put on how to use both foods and gems in simple everyday ways to protect and balance the health. Friday will be an introduction to the workshop, while Saturday will focus on nutrition, and Sunday on precious stones.

Saturday, December 6th:

In Tibetan Medicine diet is considered the foundation for both maintaining health and treating imbalances. It is understood that each individual food has a differing level of the five elements. Every type of grain, meat, dairy product, vegetable, and fruit can be analyzed individually based on its specific composition of the five elements and how it will effect the five elements of the human body. With this knowledge, the relationship of these two can be brought to a perfect balance. The result is a properly functioning digestive system, the ultimate

means of a long and healthy life. This topic will provide essential information on what foods to eat based on one's individual condition and the season.

Sunday, December 7th:

Gems are one of the eight medicinal substances in Tibetan Medicine. In Tibetan culture jewelry is very important. In part, jewelry is worn to decorate and beautify, and it is also used to display social status. However, the origin for wearing gems in Tibetan culture comes from its application in medicine. Traditionally gems were worn on specific points to help restore the health, for preventative measures, and to protect against negativities. This topic will offer simple ways to use jewelry and gems in everyday life based on ones individual health needs.

For a map of the college please visit: <https://www.amherst.edu/map/index.html>

Coming in Winter, 2009

The Shang Shung Institute presents the advanced level of our two-part 500 hour Tibetan Kunye Therapy training with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo and Dr. Yangdron Kalsangat Dondrubling in Berkeley, California. This advanced intensive will complete the Kunye Therapy certification requirements for students who attended the summer 2008 basic level course.

The 500 hour Kunye Therapy certification course constitutes

the Shang Shung Institute's most extensive Tibetan Medical teachings yet offered in the West Coast region of the United States of America. The course presents extensive hands-on training in the methods of Tibetan Kunye massage and gentle external therapies, as well as an in-depth study of Tibetan medicine theory and principles. The course runs from January 5, 2009 through February 10, 2009. It will be held at Dondrubling in Berkeley, California in collaboration with the Dzogchen Community West Coast Gakyil.

Advanced Level 500 Hour Training
January 5–February 10, 2009
Dondrubling
2748 #D Adeline St
Berkeley, CA 94703, USA

Visit our website for up-to-date information about the exciting courses and events offered by the Shang Shung Institute of America. At www.ShangShung.org, you can register for intensives and programs, pay for memberships, give donations, and order items from our webstore, including a full selection of Chögyal Namkai Norbu's books, CDs, and DVDs.

Please contact the Shang Shung Institute secretary at secretary@shangshung.org or by phone at +1 (413) 369-4928 for more information or to register for any of these events. ©

Shang Shung Institute

International Institute for Tibetan Studies

The Shang Shung Institute is very pleased to announce a new webstore for purchases in the Americas which now includes all “reserved” items including CD’s, retreat MP3’s, DVD’s, and practice booklets which support the many teachings (reserved books are not only for specific practices) transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Shang Shung Edizioni New publications



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Teachings at Sinabelkirchen

When we speak of the Dzogchen teaching, first of all we need to understand what Dzogchen is: we must understand that Dzogchen is not a teaching but is our real condition. Dzogchen means the totally perfected state, which means that we have three primordial wisdoms and three primordial potentialities. Since we already have these, everything is perfected. If we are really in that condition, then we are no different to the Buddha or a Bodhisattva and realised beings. It is not enough only to have an idea of this, even to have just a small experience. Of course it is useful to have this small experience of the Dzogchen state but then there are ways to increase this knowledge, which means that there is the possibility of integrating all our existence of body, speech and mind into that state. We apply this practice day after day, becoming more and more familiar with it, and in the end we have total realization.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Ati Treasury of Contemplation

The Ati Treasury of Contemplation, First Level of the Santi Maha Sangha Training, originally written in 1992, was translated into Italian and published in 1994, on the occasion of the first retreat of the Santi Maha Sangha Training given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Merigar. Subsequently new sec-

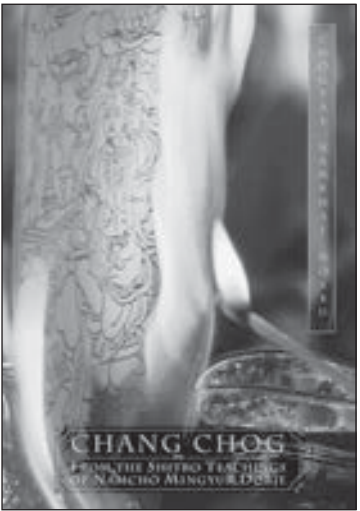
bu. The webstore also continues to carry “unrestricted” items including public books, DVD’s, CD’s, ritual items and incense.

We ask that you please honor the following protocols so that we can continue to efficiently offer our many special items supporting the practice of Dzogchen and the preservation of Tibetan Culture: In order to buy any “Unrestricted Items” you must either be a current member of the Dzogchen Community or the Shang Shung Institute. Preliminary membership to the Shang Shung



tions, especially those on tantric practices, were added and their translation appeared in a separate booklet made available to practitioners. More recently, the book has been again reviewed by the Author and amplified with many new quotations. The translation of the complete new edition is presented here.

It is absolutely necessary that practitioners, who have taken the SMS Base Level examination and taken the SMS First Level Training with our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, purchase & study the new English edition of the SMS Level One Text. Rinpoche has added many new things. Adriano Clemente has re-translated the text working closely with Rinpoche. The new text is more clear, precise and complete. This new English text must be the basis for making new translations of SMS First Level into any other languages. To obtain this book please contact orders@shangshunginstitute.org, specifying your name, and where and when you participated in an SMS First Level Training. Then you will receive information on how to purchase the books.



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Changchog of the Namchö Shitro - A Short Purification Ritual for the Deceased

Here Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presents a new and authentic approach to death and after death embodied in a ritual whose aim is to purify the negative karma and obstacles of the deceased and to

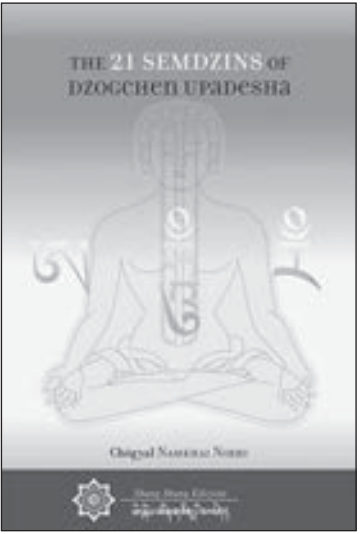
Institute is \$ 7 and you can add one to your cart if it is your first time buying in the year. In order to buy any “Restricted Items” you must be a current Dzogchen Community member, have received transmission from the Master, and have the specific lung transmission of the practices with mantras. If you would like to buy a closed webcast retreat MP3, you must have also participated in that particular webcast.

By becoming a member of the Shang Shung Institute you show your interest in the preservation of Tibetan culture and support our various activities.

give the deceased a chance of accessing to a higher knowledge.

This approach, in addition of being one of the best way to help the deceased, provide us with the strength to overcome the suffering of having lost our dear ones, and with the sense that we can do something for our beloved ones who have died, making use the special relation we had with the during the life, through this ritual.

Connected to the Shitro Teachings of Namchö Mingyur Dorje, this short form of the Changchog ritual can be easily performed by anyone who has received its transmission and wishes to help his or her deceased father, mother, friends or relatives.



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Twenty-one Semdzins of the Dzogchen Upadesha

The twenty-one Semdzins of the Upadesha series of Dzogchen teachings are one of the main practices for obtaining a precise understanding of the state of contemplation in non-dual presence or rigpa. The great master Longchenpa gave a detailed explanation of the twenty-one Semdzins in the *Theg mchod mdzod*. It was on the basis of this text that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu taught and gave a commentary on the Semdzins during a retreat held at Merigar West over Easter 1989. These teachings constitute the fundamental core of this book, which also comprises explanations taken from teachings given in July 1977 at Prata, Italy. The Semdzin Yugu contained in the

Please visit our USA Webstore at: www.shangshung.org/store

You can continue to visit the Shang Shung Institute’s Austria and Italy Branch webstores for purchases outside of the Americas:

Austria:
<http://www.ssi-austria.at/shop/shopframee.php>
Italy:
<http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org/cart/>



Yeshe cooking in kitchen at Shang Shung Institute, Conway MA, USA.

Tibetan Cooking Class

In the Tsegyalgar East Kitchen

Sunday, November 9, 2–6 pm
\$35
(Includes dinner served at 6 pm)
Taught by Yeshe Tsomo Lag

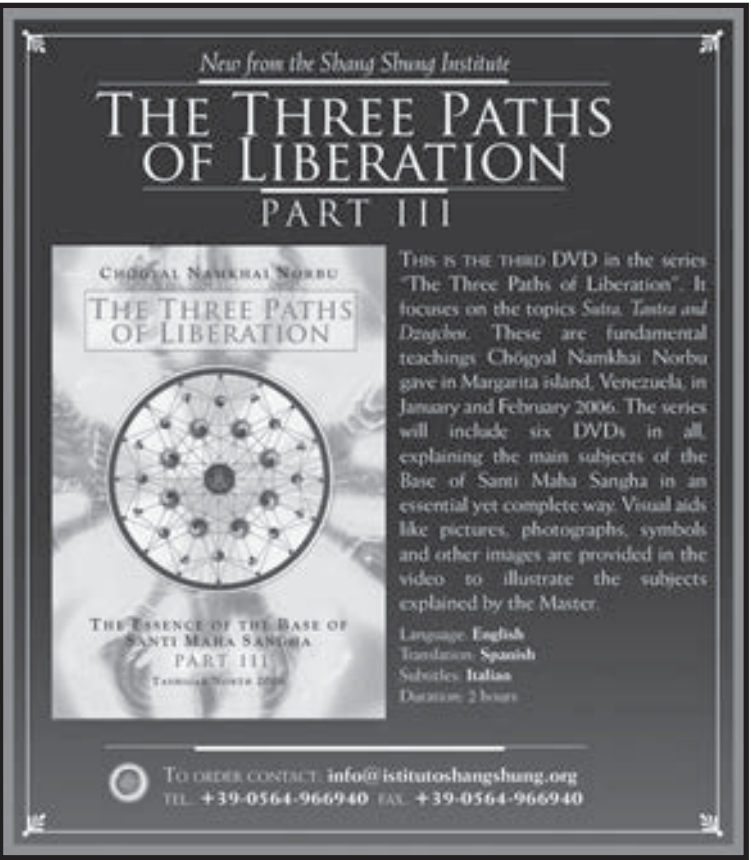
In this class we will explore the properties of various foods and methods of cooking from a Tibetan Medicine perspective. We will cook a variety of traditional Tibetan dishes and share the meal at the end. Space is limited. To register contact Miranda at secretary@shangshung.org

and to the ancient siddha of Uddiyana, Aryapalo.

The Outer, Inner, and Secret Practices of The Guru Wisdom Dakini (Bla ma ye shes mkha’ ’gro ma’i phyi nang gsang gsum las byang), received in a single dream in 2007, contains the texts of the outer, inner and secret ways of applying the practice of the Guru Wisdom Dakini or Jñanadakini.

The Dream of the Mandarava Cave (Manda ra ba’i sgrub phug nang gi rmi lam) also known as The experiential instructions of Shrintra (Shrin dra’i nyams khrid) is the account of two dreams in which the author witnessed a Ganapuja of Mandarava led by the yogini Shrintra and received clarifications.

You can find these books in the webshop <http://shop-it.shangshunginstitute.org>



The Vajra Dance

10

Interview with
Adriana Dal Borgo
and Prima Mai

Two Internationally Authorized
and Main Vajra Dance
Instructors

Mariya Stepanyk
for The Mirror

Mariya Stepanyk: Can you tell us about the new music of the Vajra Dance by Costantino Albini. What is new in the sound and timing?

Adriana Dal Borgo and Prima Mai: We actually have two new melodies for the Vajra Dance. Roberto Cacciapaglia has created new music for the Song of Vajra Dance and is close to finish his music for the Dance of the Six Spaces and The Three Vajras Dance. Roberto integrates the voice of our Master in his music, as we hear it in the music of Matteo Silva. What have mainly changed are the sounds, which are the choice of the artist or musician.

Costantino chose instruments based on indications Rinpoche received in his dreams. Costantino applied sounds in the Dance of the Six Spaces related to the Six Lokas and the elements, as Rinpoche once mentioned as a possibility.

In the first music by Matteo Silva, which we have used until now, the timing is correct but the singing of the chorus was not always precise.

MS: You finished working on the new DVD of the Vajra Dance. Tell us about your impressions.

ADB & PM: We had fantastic work and collaboration. Please buy it! It may be available at the end of 2008.

MS: Many people do not have local teachers of the Vajra Dance so they are unable to check movements with the old DVD version. What is better, to wait for a new video or do the Dance according to old version and later correct the movements?

ADB & PM: In general the purpose of the DVD is for reference and support only. It is not a substitute for a course lead by an authorized instructor. If there is no local instructor in your city, you can either organize a course inviting an instructor close by or go where a course is offered.

The actual DVD is still valid for reference. The new DVD will be more accurate. We know that the Vajra Dance is in continuous progress. For example, in 2006 we had the last modifications working with Rinpoche, which are mainly related to palms, timing and subtle movements.



Photo: Paolo Roberti

MS: Have you finished learning the Dance of Space? Can you tell a little how this Dance differs from the other three Vajra Dances? When will you teach this Dance of Space?

ADB & PM: In 1994, I (Prima Mai) taught the Dance of Space of the Twelve A's in Moscow for the first and only time. In the Dance of Space it is possible, but not necessary, to dance on the Mandala as we know it now. It is practiced for example standing in front of an offering of Ganapuja or a sacred statue, etc.

We have not developed it further yet because the circumstances have not yet matured according to Rinpoche.

What Rinpoche mentioned once in relation to the Dance of Space is that one must have first matured well the knowledge of the movements of the Vajra Dance and be able to dance harmoniously in the state of contemplation and integration.

MS: What can you advise for not getting attached to the Vajra Dance practice or for forming a kind of separated group of Vajra Dance practitioners?

ADB & PM: It is the same principle as in all our practice as Dzogchen practitioners. We try our best to apply practices to discover our real condition and integrate this knowledge also in our behavior. One important point, we think, is to respect all practitioners and collaborate with each other.

The Mandala represents our internal and external dimension, also in the sense of the whole Dzogchen Community. Our intention in the Vajra Dance is to dance and practice harmoniously together, so it makes no sense if we don't apply this principle in our daily life. Otherwise what is practice for?

MS: Can the Vajra Dance be shown to people who don't have transmission? (TV program or concert, etc.)

ADB & PM: The general public can see the Vajra Dance, but, as usual, it is important to know the real intention behind it and if it corresponds to the real sense of the Teachings.

The Vajra Dance also works as a *Thogdrol* (giving cause for liberation through seeing, hearing, etc.) if the practitioners have matured true understanding of the principle of integration and precise knowledge of the movements.

If one has the idea to organize a public event or demonstration you must absolutely first contact the Shang Shung Institute, which is in charge of the correct presentation of the Teachings outside the Dzogchen Community, and the local and main instructors of the Vajra Dance.

MS: If a person wishes to practice at home, he or she needs a whole Mandala or just few sections?

ADB & PM: To have the total function of the practice of the Vajra Dance it is necessary to have a complete Mandala. For the purpose of memorizing the different aspects of the sequences of the steps, it is possible to also have just a section of the Mandala. To



Photo: Paolo Roberti

practice all possible sequences of all three Vajra Dances, you need to have at least one third of the whole Mandala.

It can also be possible to divide a used and worn out Mandala into three parts, and to sell or auction it for the benefit of the Dzogchen Community.

Also there is the possibility to make a "String Mandala", remembering again that it has not the full function of a Mandala.

MS: At Teacher Training courses do you see many good Vajra Dancers. What are the main criteria you use to choose who becomes a Vajra Dance instructor?

ADB & PM: The main points are precision and harmony in the movement and time. Also we consider the capacity of communicating and collaborating in a group and the way of relating to others. For us an instructor should have the ability to dissolve conflicts or tensions instead of creating them. More or less all this is important.

Also we consider where local instructors are needed, according to the country, the interest and the number of practitioners. Where there is higher request, there we might need more local instructors.

The local instructor becomes the reference for developing the practice in a correct way through offering courses according to his or her possibilities. (Weekends, weekly sessions, monthly practice retreats, etc.)

We would like to end this interview by expressing our gratitude to our Master who gives us the chance through these precious Teachings to develop true knowledge for the benefit of all sentient beings. ©

Merigar West, September 2008

Calendar of Special
Days for the Dance
of the Vajra with
the Vajra Dance
Clothes

Dear Practitioners of the Vajra Dance, For a few years now we have been producing the Vajra Dance Clothes, the source of which is Rinpoche's dreams. According to the indications given by the Master, these special clothes should be worn on particular occasions and so we would like to indicate some special days when we can meet on the Mandala to experience the harmony of the Vajra Dance enriched by this precious ornament:

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's
Birthday (December 8)

Yeshe Namkhai's Birthday (July 3)

Anniversary of Garab Dorje
(March 11, 2009)

Anniversary of Ayu Khandro
(March 21, 2009)

Anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava

Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa

Retreats with the Master in the
Gars

Teacher Trainings of the Vajra
Dance

Inauguration of new Mandalas

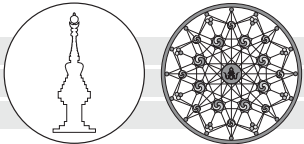
With our best wishes,
Prima Mai and Adriana Dal
Borgo

Vajra Dance Clothes Project
vddress@yahoo.com



Training Mandala.

Merigar West



Merigar West

Arcidosso 58031
GR Italy

phone: 39 0564 966837
fax: 39 0564 968110

merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
www.dzogchen.it

Calendar of Events 2008

November

November 4-10
Vajra Dance Course, 2nd part
Margit Martinu supervised
by Adriana Dal Borgo
280 € discounts for members
Starts 4th at 5 pm
Finishes 10th at 1 pm

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
Mandarava Long life practice retreat
Starts the 6th at 5 pm
Finishes the 8th at 1 pm

December 15-19
Yeshe Silvano Namkhai
Rigpai Kujyug, the Six-line Vajra Verse

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

upcoming
The Dzogchen Community of Merigar West is pleased to announce the next Teaching Retreat to be given by

Yeshe Silvano Namkhai
Rigpai Kujyug,
the Six-line Vajra Verse
15th–19th December 2008

The Six-line Vajra Verse is called the *Rigpai Kujyug*. *Rigpa* means the state of knowledge, the presence of the pure state of awareness; *Kujyug* is Tibetan for cuckoo. In Tibet the cuckoo is considered to be the symbol of the reawakening of nature after the freezing winter. When the song of the cuckoo is heard everyone is happy because the ice and snow finally begin to melt, spring arrives and plants flourish. Because of

the symbolic significance of the cuckoo Vairochana used it in the title of this Ati Yoga Teaching, which he introduced into Tibet.

Yeshe Silvano Namkhai, son of the great master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, founder of the International Dzogchen Community, was born in Tivoli, (Rome), in 1970. At a very early age he was recognized as the reincarnation of Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Wangchug, an important Dzogchen Master who died during the Chinese occupation of Eastern Tibet. He was the tulku of the village of Galenting and maternal uncle of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Yeshe Namkhai attended the Faculty of Philosophy of “La Sapienza”, Rome University and then the Faculty of Engineering at Bologna University after

which he worked as a manager and business consultant.

Since 1998 Yeshe Namkhai has been working for the Dzogchen Community, offering the professional skills he has acquired in this field. Understanding the enormous potential of the Internet, he set up the web-cast system of transmission for the benefit of all those who want to follow the Dzogchen Teachings.

Since 2002, Yeshe Namkhai has been promoting collaboration for the development of the Dzogchen Community and later, as Director of the International Gakyil, he revised the organizational structure according to principles of efficiency and collaboration, thereby obtaining a considerable growth of the Community itself.

In August 2007 he went to Tibet where he had clear and important visions. When he returned to Italy he stopped work, understanding that his job, like that of his father, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, is to keep the Teaching and the Community alive for the benefit of beings and for future generations.

In 2008 he began to give lectures and Teachings in various parts of the world, mainly on Milam, the Dream Practice, and on the Base Level of “Santi Maha Sangha”, teachings and practices edited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his students.

Yeshe Namkhai is married and has a son and a daughter.

The first Teaching session on Monday 15th December will be in the afternoon from 16.00–18.00. On the following days the Teaching is programmed for the morning from 10.00–12.00. The cost for the whole retreat is 200 Euros; the cost per day is 40 Euros. The usual members’ discounts apply.

During the retreat there will also be an introductory course to the “Eight Movements” of Yantra Yoga and a course of the Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra which will finish on Saturday 20th December.

Info: Merigar West Secretary
+39 0564 966837
merigaroffice@tiscali.it
www.dzogchen.it

To all Gakyils and Lings from Merigar West

Dear All,
With the aim of improving our communication, Merigar West has created a specific email account, for each Ling and Gakyil in Europe.

We would like that these emails were to be used for all the communication amongst Ling/Centre/Gakyil and the Gar.

In order to receive that relevant access information and the passwords, please reply to this message by indicating the name of the referring person and of the Centre/Ling.

All the emails have been included within a mailing list (mwlings@dzogchen.it) that each Centre could use in order to automatically forward the messages to all the other Centers including Merigar West.

As we mentioned at the last Gakyil meeting on September 27th, this has been done in order to facilitate the creation of a new network of fast and efficient information exchange, which does not need updating or modifying each time the composition of Gakyil changes.

Thanks for your collaboration!
Merigar West Gakyil

Santi Maha Sangha Fourth Level Training in Merigar

Lidian King

In early October, a group of twenty-six highly motivated and dedicated students of Rinpoche gathered at Merigar West to present themselves for the Santi Maha Sangha Level III exam (given by two additional members Jim Valby and Adriano Clemente); and Level IV Training offered by Rinpoche. We came from all parts of the global community – as far as Japan, North America, South America, Asia, Russia and Europe. In order to qualify, one must have thoroughly completed all the previous levels from Base through Level III, both in practice and study. One must also have offered karma yoga service in various capacities to the Dzogchen Community and have maintained positive behavior with respect to all aspects of involvement in Community life. There have been many obstacles to overcome on both the individual and Community levels for us to proceed with this very special



Participants at the Santi Maha Sangha Fourth Level training.

Photo: Jaček Machowski

and precious program of Kama Teachings, carefully prepared and generously offered by Rinpoche. Many of us had the pre-exam butterflies-in-stomach syndrome in anticipation of demonstrating our knowledge and experience of the Semde Series of Dzogchen. Happily, everyone passed!

While the “real” world was experiencing a financial meltdown beginning with the US stock markets, followed soon by Global markets, in our training here we were once again brought back firmly to the truth of the uncertainties of samsara and the dream-like magical illusion of

our world. In a matter of days trillions of dollars of wealth on paper evaporated like so much steam. But here at Merigar, we enjoyed the beauty of autumn and a warm “Indian Summer”, while the locals in the Monte Amiata region were celebrating the harvesting of the chestnuts and marvelous porcini mushrooms. The golds and reds of the leaves that will soon fall were a reminder of the endless cycle of the seasons, something to enjoy while it lasts but knowing it will soon pass, and that everything is truly just an ornament of the Real Condition.

We gathered in the Gonpa for

a week, often for two sessions a day, while Rinpoche tirelessly offered the extraordinary teachings and methods based on the Longde Series of Dzogchen. Although Rinpoche was recovering from a bad cold, he was most generous with his time in order to assure that we students really absorbed these important instructions. At the end, we celebrated the full moon Ganapuja with other Community members. Many of us then dispersed to distant regions of the world. We thank Rinpoche deeply from our hearts! May we all meet again next year in Merigar West! ©

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.

Moscow

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Photo: Aleksey Novgorodtsev

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's visit to Russia

September 2-9, 2008

Andrei Besedin

Imagine a megapolis. You jump out of a crowded subway, walk across a busy street, then you come to the biggest marketplace in the city. You find your way through endless stalls of cheap clothes, street food kiosks, enter a massive building... and enter another dimension. You see hundreds of people you've known for ages – and newcomers too – and you all enter a spacious hall together. This is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's retreat in Moscow.

Thousands of fortunate people came to meet the precious Master and listen to his teachings on the real nature of Ati Dzogchen. "Thousands" is not a typographical error –more than 2000 registered at the retreat, though some could come only for a few days, so in general every day we had about 1600 people following the teachings. For many of Rinpoche's students from Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic countries it was a rare occasion to meet the Teacher in person, as traveling abroad for a retreat is not an easy task here

(yes, sometimes the number of Russians on retreats in Tashigar Norte or Merigar East can be the subject of friendly jokes – but you should have been in Moscow to see the Russian-speaking Community in its real vastness!).

Rinpoche gave teachings based on the Root Tantra "Dra Thalgyur", continuing the series of retreats on Vimalamitra's commentary to this Tantra, which he so graciously is giving this year. For eight days he gave a very detailed commentary on the shulen (question-answer) about the state of Dzogchen, explaining various topics – the four mindfulness, the qualities of the teacher, the importance of Guruyoga, experiences, night practice and bardo, the four chogzhags and four nangwas. On the last day he summarized saying that teaching is like food, to sustain your life you have to integrate with it everyday life, and gave detailed advice on practice in our daily life.

After each teaching session was finished, the retreat program continued. The organizing team



Photo: Ziedonis Rengitis

did their best to provide the possibility to train and integrate understanding of the precious teaching and the collective practice in the most favorable conditions before going out to a crowded and noisy megapolis. Ten Mandalas for the Vajra Dance were full of practitioners, studying Vajra Dance with five teachers; Fabio Andrico explained the most essential things of Yantra Yoga; Adriano Clemente explained the Drajor system of transcription and corrected our inventions in collective practice melodies; Santi Maha Sangha

teachers explained the practices and there were two additional thuns of Yantra Yoga practice a day for those experienced yogis and yoginis who still hadn't had enough.

But even though there were so many of us there, there was still enough free space, so we hope that in future more and more people can come to follow another such retreat in Moscow, which may probably take place next May.

At the end of the retreat, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave small presents to the organizing team, and they expressed thanks to him for his precious teaching and to Yeshe Silvano Namkhai, whose help during the organization was invaluable. At a certain moment, when the situation with the organization might have become critical, Yeshe came to Moscow and helped us with the management this project, giving very precise indications, which in itself was a perfect teaching. ©

Photo below: Aleksey Novgorodtsev



Training with the Sounds of the Elements from the Dzogchen Upadesha Root Tantra Dra Thalgyur

Merigar West, Italy, September 26-October 3, 2008

Cheh Goh

Coming to Merigar to take part in a teaching retreat is now more an event to me than it used to be. Living ten thousand kilometres away from Italy, having a heavy work commitment, and a general shortage of available funds for travel, a retreat with Rinpoche in person has become a luxury.

So I planned my trip carefully at best I could. Not only did I arrange for a roof over myself and a bed at night, I also borrowed a heavy duty winter coat to cover me in the day. That was not an exaggeration. The weather plunged from 35 to 10 degree Celsius overnight in the middle of September, and the forecast was ominous, at least for me who has now got accustomed to the hot and humid climate of Singapore.

The journey to Merigar was smooth with military precision. I arrived at the Gonpa at Merigar and sat down precisely 5 seconds before the Maestro Chögyal Namkhai Norbu started the webcast with the familiar, “Good day to everybody and everywhere.” Webcast is great. Taking part in a retreat in person is incomparable!

The change of season, according to Traditional Chinese Medicine, as well as many other Oriental medical systems, is a time when the human body is susceptible to the “invasion of negative energy”. Moreover, the Monte Amiata area was being visited by the “tra montana”, a cold wind that blows down from the north and caused the terrible drop in temperature. This wind has the terrible effect of drying up the humid autumn soil, causing a general drop in the yield of the beloved Porcini mushroom which usually grace the dining table at this time of the year. More critically, however, many people were feeling unwell as a result, and unfortunately, Rinpoche was similarly affected, too. It was clear from his voice that he was not 100% in good health, and this was a general concern for all.

However, Rinpoche was above such problem. On the first day, Rinpoche told us the Tibetan saying: when our stomach is full and the sun is shining, it is easy for us to be spiritual. This saying definitely touched a raw nerve as I did not have a proper meal while traveling, and was freezing outside the Gonpa. It was a real test trying to feel spiritual!

Rinpoche also recounted his experience of traveling to Sweden many years ago, of how at the border, because of the strange group of people who had different strange personal belongings and French, American, Italian and British passports, the custom officers became suspicious. The entire group of people, including his son Yeshe, was retained in the prison. Then he continued the hilarious ending with the prison officer having to wait for him to finish a game of Monopoly with Yeshe in order to “free” them. Moral of the story: if you relax, you will come off better even when there are some difficulties!

After explaining about the principle of transmission on the second day, Rinpoche started on the Dra Thalgyur instruction for the integration of the sounds of the elements from day three. He explained the background of this root Tantra of Upadesha, and its importance. This was followed



Photo: Igor Kopanov

by details of the “sound training” from the root text.

At the end of the third day’s teaching, I felt a general sense of despair and gloom creeping into the atmosphere. It was explained that for obtaining the result of the practice, a practitioner with high capacity needs the same number of days as his or her age. A practitioner with medium capacity needs the same number of months as his or her age, while those with low capacity, the same number of years as their age is required. Long after the teaching ended in the morning – and many days after that – I could hear people talking about doing long life practice in order to live up to 140 or 150 years old, so as to complete the practice of the natural sounds of the elements because they are already 70 or 75 years of age now!

Funnily enough, the sense of concern actually became a bit of a theme over the next few days. There were many numbers and figures related to the way the practices are to be done, and specific instructions on the practice with the various elements. It confirms my own, and other people’s suspicion that we really need a very large number of years of practice to get some result from this particular teaching. Never mind about the eventual ability to save airfares by the accomplishment of fast walking – some of the side effects, or signs, of the practice – we just need to reassure ourselves that we stand a good chance to get out of this Samsara!

The cold but sunny and dry weather continued till the end of the retreat. Everything was smooth and pleasant, and the Merigar Gakyil, the organizers and the karma

yoga workers deservedly won the praise of the maestro on the last day. It is always wonderful to find a retreat as well organized as on this occasion, and that all the pieces fell into place seamlessly.

Immediately after the retreat ended, there was some heavy downpour, and many places also experienced some hail storms. This is nothing compared to the hurricane and tennis ball size hailstones that hit the nearby town of Seggiano in September, a freak phenomenon that destroyed over 60 olive trees in the path of the swirling wind. The rain brought good news to the gourmet: the fresh Porcini mushroom was back on the menu.

How marvelous that the satisfaction of this trip extends well beyond the teachings and meeting of old friends, to living in Toscana in general! ©

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Germany

Winter Program 2008–2009

Tibetan Language course for beginners

with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants

Part 1: November 8 and 9

Part 2: November 22 and 23

Nürnberg

190 Euro for the whole course, discount for members 160 Euro

Info and registration:

Barbara Schwesig,

Tel: +49 170-9147532,

Email: nuernberg@dzogchen.de,

barbaschwe@web.de

*

Collective Practices of Dzogchen Community

with Alexander (Sasha) Pubants

November 15–20

Afternoon of the webcast with Rinpoche

(starting at 2 pm)

Nürnberg

The three practices of long life, Purification of the 6 Lokas, Shitro, Guru Yoga with Guru Garab Dorje and Practice of Green Tara.

104 Euro (ordinary) with the usual discounts for members; early bird discounts 83 Euro until Nov. 3

Info and registration:

Barbara Schwesig,

Tel: +49 170-9147532,

Email: nuernberg@dzogchen.de,

barbaschwe@web.de

*

Practice Retreat of Green Tara

with Karin Heinemann

November 22–29

Ettlingen

Info and registration:

Bianca-Maria Heinkel,

Email: bianca.heinkel@dzogchen.de

*

2009

Yantra-Yoga Intensive for Advanced Yantras and Pranayamas of the

1st–3rd Groups

with Elke Glander

January 2–6

Höfen

1st and 2nd group and the preliminary practices should be known.

176 Euro (ordinary) with the usual discounts for members; early bird discounts 88 Euro until Dec. 12

Info and registration:

Alexander Geier, Tel: +49 911-597 1055,

Email: alexander@dzogchen.de

*

Retreat of Long life practice and chudlen of Jnana Dakini Mandarava

with Sasha Pubants

February 25–March 8

Höfen/Germany

Part I: Course of learning the practice, February 25–27

104 Euro (ordinary) with the usual discounts for members; early bird discounts 83 Euro until Feb. 13

Part II: Practice Retreat with Chudlen, February 27–March 8

Info and registration:

Barbara Schwesig,

Tel: +49 170-9147532,

Email: nuernberg@dzogchen.de,

barbaschwe@web.de

Greece

Gakyil in Hellenic Dzogchen

Community for the year 2008/2009

Yellow Gakyil:

Athena Katsilerou

akatsilerou@yahoo.gr

Kostas Mihalopoulos

kmtempo2@yahoo.gr

Red Gakyil:

Anna Maragoudaki

info@dzogchen.gr

Sofia Daskaroli

sofia_d@dzogchen.gr

Blue Gakyil:

Kassandra Svoronou

Ioanna Papadopoulou

(communication)

iopapad@gmail.com

The e-mail address to contact the

Gakyil is: dzogchen_gr@yahoo.com

Hungary

Upcoming

Santi Maha Sangha Base Seventh

Lojong Retreat

with Oliver Leick

November 28–30, 2008

Budapest

The Hungarian Community is happy to announce that Oliver Leick will lead a Santi Maha Sangha Base Seventh Lojong Retreat in Budapest from November 28 until November 30, 2008.

The program will be held at:

The Buddhist High School,

(IX. district Börzsöny street 11)

Prices: 32 Euro for members, and 64 Euros for non-members, who have transmission from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Italy

Yeshe Silvano Namkhai visits Zhenphenling, Rome

October 4-5, 2008

Sergio Quaranta

In the name of the Dzogchen Community of Rome

During the weekend of October 4th and 5th, Yeshe Namkhai came to Rome invited by the Gakyil of Zhenphenling. Yeshe had offered to give teachings on The Six Vajra Verses by Vairocana, an essential and condensed text on Dzogchen.

Almost one hundred people were present at the Ling of the Roman Dzogchen Community, some of them visiting from Merigar, some completely new to the Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu but most, of course, from the Community of Rome.

In the mornings Yeshe explained the principle and essence of Dzogchen in a language that could be understood by people with little knowledge of Buddhist terminology. He explained what the three paths of liberation are and how they work, how they relate to the three aspects of human beings, how they can be applied according to circumstances and especially how a Dzogchen practitioner utilizes all methods when needed, without any conceptual limit.

He talked about the real nature of the individual, with the non-dual aspects of the purity of its base, yet with the potentiality of manifesting infinitely. He spoke about instant presence and ordinary presence and how the two are related it was a continuous, intense flow that brought everybody into a state of strong presence, emotion and deep con-



tact with the Teachings. He really made a strong impression on all present.

In the afternoons, after the collective practice, he generously offered advice more oriented towards the place and the local community. He right away pointed out the strong and less strong aspects of the situation in Rome. Reminding us about the previous visits of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Teachings he gave at Zhenphenling, in particular the formal initiation of Mandarava, Yeshe made us realize that there must have been a precise reason for that, so we should apply that practice, and all practices related in general more to female energy, and develop them.

He also invited us to practice in general more intensively, to go beyond routine, to break certain limits that we tend to transfer within the practice frame. In general he made us aware of time passing and what point the Community is at right now, and that the fruit of years and years of Teachings given by Rinpoche should now show concrete results through us practitioners.

We could all see the strong commitment of Yeshe Namkhai, his devotion to the Master and the incredible work he is doing. We once more reflected on Rinpoche's generosity and total

dedication, on the incomparable fortune that we happened to meet by finding ourselves in this mandala.

Words are words, they have limits as we know very well, so I don't really want to say much more besides giving heartfelt thanks to Yeshe Namkhai, his family, our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and all the people that helped and will help in the future collaborating with the community to make the boat safe. ©



Yeshe Namkhai at the University of Rome

Paolo Ferraro

On October 7th, the city of Rome woke up to a wonderful sunny day, what those who live in the city love to call a classic "Roman October".

The train carrying Yeshe Namkhai from Grosseto (a small town in Tuscany where he lives with his family) arrived at the central station in Rome at 11.45, five minutes ahead of time, almost an impossibility in Italy!

The seat of the Faculty of Oriental Studies of 'La Sapienza' University (the most prestigious university in the capital, founded in 1303 according to the wishes of Pope Boniface 8th), is only a few hundred metres from the station, just five minutes walk.

On the occasion of the opening of the academic year, Prof. Donatella Rossi, professor of Religion and Philosophy of East Asia, had invited Yeshe Namkhai to give a 'lectio magistralis', an opening lecture, on Buddhism.

At 1 pm, in a hall packed with about 300 students – there were so many that some of them were sitting on the floor – Yeshe Nam-

khai started to speak, explaining the key concepts of Buddhism with clarity and in a simple way. He began with a significant introduction to Sutra and then touched on tantra and the path of self-liberation.

Yeshe also emphasized the positive effects that the Buddhist approach had had in his work as a business consultant and then pointed out how important it was for a team to work in a dynamic but, at the same time relaxed way in order to avoid stress and, as a result, the emergence of useless conflicts.

The students were favourably impressed and fascinated by Yeshe's way of teaching which was able to integrate theory and experience.

After about three quarters of an hour, when Yeshe Namkhai finished speaking, there was a long and enthusiastic round of applause and a few students overcame their understandable shyness and came closer to his chair to have "direct" contact with him. Some practitioners also had the fortune to listen to the lesson and enjoy the presence of Yeshe in Rome.

Sincere thanks to Donatella Rossi for having made this event possible and, most of all, to Yeshe Namkhai for having given us this wonderful day. ©

Europe >> continued



Kunkhyabbling, the new Ling in Italy

We have great pleasure in announcing the creation of a new Ling in Puglia and Basilicata (also called Appulo-Lucano) in south-east Italy which our precious Master has given the name ‘Kunkhyabbling, “The All Pervading Ling”. As Rinpoche suggested we will hold the inauguration on November 1st and then have the election of the Gakyil. Whoever would like to join us is very welcome.

The Ling is situated in the area of Ostuni (BR) near Cisternino in the Valle d’Itria, at the centre of a triangle formed by three townships each belonging to a different province: Cisternino township in Brindisi province, Locorotondo township in Bari province and Martina Franca township in Taranto province.

In the name of all those at the new Ling, we send warm greetings.
Giovanni Rosato
giovanni.rosato@alice.it



Vajra Dance in Torino, Italy

Our very own local Vajra Dance Teacher, Cosimo Di Maggio on the sunny weekend of October 11-12, held the first Vajra Dance course of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra for beginners. Helped by the teacher’s patience and clear instruction, it was joy to all to develop greater confidence on the Mandala and knowledge of the dance. The course helped develop enthusiasm for the practice in the community and we were

reminded that the dance is wonderful practice to harmonize body, speech and mind. We felt more harmonious in the group after the weekend of practice. The group also relaxed with a shared picnic in the park enjoying the last embers of summer in Torino.

Gakyil of Torino (Turin, Northern Italy)



passages

Married: Cosimo Di Maggio and Maree Ploetz were married in Torino, Northern Italy, on October 9th, 2008. They met in Merigar in the summer of 2007 during the SMS Base retreat.

“I wondered why Cosimo was following me around during the Karmayoga afternoons. He surprised me by taking pictures with me carrying around a rake and shrub cutters. I wondered if he might have been interested in me. Later I found out he was a gardener and had bought a new digital camera. When we met a light flashed...it wasn’t the camera flash but my heart lighting up. For Cosimo there was no doubt about a future together when Bruno told him I was a hard worker and good at mixing concrete. It is wonderful being in a relationship with another practitioner and sharing this dimension of experience together. The Master’s teachings are a great base for the relationship.” – Maree

Passages

Died: Elena Girotti died suddenly in a road accident in Venice in September.
This poem was written by Louise Landes Levi in her memory.

A friend of practitioners, in the Amiata area & in Venezia, where the master taught on many occasions, not just to US, he said – he said the nagas were also present –, a friend of poets & dancers, died in Venice a few weeks ago . She had paid a last visit to Mt. Amiata, returning to Venice to study Indian dance before relocating to China, where she lived, having graduated fr. The University of Venezia in oriental languages.

The last week of her life she spoke of her dead, her mother, her friends & she asked repeatedly for a copy of Namkhai Norbu Rimpoche’s translation of the Tibetan Book of the Dead. The book was with her when she was hit by a car, on the LIDO – her body carried in the air to its death on impact – but disappeared, it cld. not be found among the belongings she carried ‘al mare’..

Practitioners who knew her did the xitro at the appointed hour. Rimpoché also said he wld. remember her in the November practice for the dead. Elena was 32 years old. I wrote these poems for her – instantaneously, only later realizing indeed that Dzog Chen teaches, most uniquely – through vision (light) & sound.

The
image of Elena is of
a body in suspension... flying, meeting
death, on impact, what were her thoughts?

I know it’s possible to be conscious in
such a circumstance/ what

saved me, to whom, to what,
my life dedication, paradigm of saintly
figures, yet alone, on the sacred
planet, on the wheel of
the way, turning -
a wealthy

woman
insists the water is
pure, but does not see that
the stream is dry/ I search for Elena,

my tears are hot, my grief immense,
I see her, or I see IT in the olive trees, I go to
the trees for solace, the trees & cypress,
the old church, the
one w. the
domes,

I concentrate
on the deep drone, of the night
sound, of the dusk sound, Elena
is in the sound, she is
slowly awakening to a new
dimension, now she is
ageless, we are
ageless,

Awakening

(in
the
sound)

upcoming

The Venice Dzogchen Community is organizing
A course of the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
With Adriana Dal Borgo
Friday November 28–Sunday 30

The course is for beginners and is open to everyone even those who do not belong to the Dzogchen Community.

Timetable

Friday November 28: 16.00–19.00
Saturday and Sunday November 29 & 30: 10.00–13.00 and 15.00–18.00
Friday afternoon and Saturday morning the course will be held at the Sala Libertango near the San Basilio stop (Dorsoduro, Veneia) while Saturday afternoon and all of Sunday it will be at the gym of the San Girolamo School near the Venice Jewish ghetto.
Cost: 30 euro.

For information and enrolment contact:
Marco Baseggio,
tel. 0410994079, mob. 3483432069,
email: marco@casabaseggio.it
Giovanna Carraro,
tel. 041721034, mob. 3460291778,
email: giovannacarraro@gmail.com
Giuliana Giromella,
tel. 0422331241, mob. 3401473878,
email: giuligiro@alice.it

News from Venice, Italy by Giuliana Giromella

There were beautiful sunny days during the Mandarava Retreat with Nina Robinson in Venice October 1–13. Around twenty people participated in the retreat with devotion and enthusiasm.

The retreat took place at Marco Baseggio’s house for two days and then on Saturday and Sunday when there were more people in a wonderful penthouse between Campo del Miracoli and S. Giovanni and Paolo.

Nina Robinson patiently and readily explained over and over all the sections of the practice with the mudras and the Dadar.

Everyone worked together for the success of the Retreat. There was a small lottery that collected some funds to fill the coffers of the Venetian Community.

Thanks to the Master’s precious Teachings, and the patient help of Nina, the Venetian Community rediscovered the joy of being together and, most of all, the importance of practising together.
Long Life to the Master!



Europe

>> continued

Lithuania

The Lithuanian Dzogchen community is happy to announce a retreat of Shine and Lhagthong and 2nd level of Yantra Yoga (Humkara’s breathing) led by Igor Berkhin and Viktor Krackovsky 25th of December to 1st of January

Location: The retreat will be held in the resort town Birstonas (about 50 km. south/west of Vilnius).

Price: 60 euro for the whole course.

Please note: The retreat is only open for members of the international Dzogchen Community and for people who know Russian well enough to be able to follow the retreat without translation.

Accommodation: there is a possibility to stay directly at the place of the retreat. A place in a double bedroom costs 15 euro per day. Meals served three times a day – 9 euro.

Please send your registration to dzogchen.lt@gmail.com

For more information please contact: Jurga +370 68 74 34 26 or Normante +370 69 94 57 09

Poland

Seventh Lojong Seminar with Oliver Leick in Warsaw May 2008

Marek Macko

At the end of May, the Polish Community was happy about the possibility of deepening the knowledge of the Seventh Lojong. Oliver arrived on May 22nd and that evening an open lecture about Shang Shung Institute was held. We had called the lecture “The Culture of Ancient Tibet” for a more comprehensive public announcement.

Then from May 23 to 25, we learned Seventh Lojong. The Seven Lojongs are very important practices because they are preliminary and fundamental practices for gaining Dzogchen knowledge. For that reason, Rinpoche included them in the Base of Santi Maha Sangha. This Lojong has three parts and the first of them is closely connected with Tummo practice. So in this case for doing the practice precisely, we should have some practical knowledge and



capacity of holding the breath in Kumbhaka. We need to learn Kumbhaka from Yantra Yoga.

There were practitioners in our retreat who hadn’t yet gained the basic knowledge of Yantra Yoga or for whom Yantra Yoga is not that easy. In this case, Oliver’s knowledge and experience proved very useful. He has been a student of Rinpoche for many years and told us how he had got involved in yoga and later met Rinpoche. Firstly, he learned the full yoga breathing (known also as bottle breathing) which is fundamental for Yantra Yoga. So for him it was like entering the Path of Breathing (equivalent of life). Then Oliver taught

us some simple methods for getting a little taste of Kumbhaka and Parlung (very soft effortless kumbhaka), experiences of sensations, of clarity and of emptiness, which are connected with the three parts of this lojong so that we could discover the bare natural presence through them.

Of course this kind of teaching and instructions during the retreat in Warsaw were only an introduction for doing some weeks of personal retreat to get some real experience. For most of us the guidelines that we have received will allow us to do this practice more elaborately, when we have both possibility and time. ©

Portugal

Dzogchen Community in Portugal

In the beginning of this year, some of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s students started gathering in the Lisbon area to practice together. To support it, we decided to create the Portuguese Dzogchen Community and a Gakyil. Currently, we meet regularly for Yantra Yoga, collective practices, studies and teachings on webcast.

We have also created a website: www.dzogchencommunity-pt.org

Our contact is: comunidade.dzogchen.portugal@gmail.com

Lídia Ferreira (Red Gakyil)

New Gakyil of Portugal

Yellow Gakyil: Luis Fataca, luis.fataca@gmail.com

Blue Gakyil: Sandra Alcaria sandra.alcaria@gmail.com

Red Gakyil: Lidia Ferreira sherabsalma@gmail.com

Spain

Dear Vajra Sisters and Brothers, Dzogchen Community of Spain is happy to announce and invite you to the Dzogchen Teaching Retreat:

Kunzang Jaku The Rainbow Body of Samantabhadra

with our beloved Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

November 14th to 20th 2008 in Barcelona

The cost is 320 euros (discount for members)

To register or for more information, please contact:

olaya_amarillo@dzogchen.es sachiko_azul@dzogchen.es

*



Passages

Married: Matthias Schmal-Filius (Austria) and Sachiko Fullita (Peru) were married on September 12, 2008 in Vienna, Austria. Sachiko is on the Blue Gakyil in Barcelona.



Chöd Retreat with Constantino Albini

September 10-15, 2008 Barcelona Spain

Last September 10, 2008 on Padmasambhava Day, a Chöd course taught by Constantino Albini started in Barcelona, Spain.

To get to Kundusling, you have to go up many stairs which lead to this marvellous place very close to the sky, where the noise and chaos of the city do not exist anymore, and where seagulls like going and eating the rests of Ganapujas, or sometimes they even seem to stop to listen to the teachings as, in this case, the Chöd.

Approximately 15 people attended the course. There was a very relaxed and joyful atmosphere. The Spanish Community is very active and enthusiastic in the organization of the Ling, which opened last year.

Costantino guided us kindly, day after day, through this lovely practice, unveiling to us the profound teaching of Machig Labdron, while talking about prajnaparamita and much more.

He answered gently and patiently all our questions from his vast knowledge and experience. He has the gift of communication with the others and he transmits the lineage of our Master in a very pure manner.

At the lunch break, between sleep and conversation, he delighted us with a very special and beautiful music.

We all started getting familiar with the practice, and little by little, we were able to follow the melodies and pronounce the text correctly. The thun sessions became longer as time passed and the group harmonized more and more everyday.

On September 15, the last day and full moon, Constantino expressed his desire to go to the monastery of Montserrat to visit our Lady of Montserrat.

After that, a group of practitioners went on a trip to Montserrat, having the feeling that both the great Mother Tara and this Madonna had the same qualities.

The course ended in the evening with a last thun and a Ganapuja, after which all of us, more inspired and united, went back to our daily lives with a little more knowledge and much more gratitude.

After only 5 days of practice we have been able to taste the flavor of such a powerful practice and have learned so much.

Now we have to practice with the damaru and the bell, as Constantino told us, and sing and do this practice from the heart with all our passion and devotion. We wish the attachment to the body is lessened and that a step more is taken towards the place beyond hope and fear.

We are walking on the path and, as our precious Rinpoche always tells us, sooner or later we will make it.

Thankyou Constantino. We look forward to seeing you soon. ©

UK

Kunselling, Wales

Mandarava Retreat

There will be a Mandarava retreat with Nina Robinson at Kunselling in Wales, UK from Friday 28th November to Monday 1st December (inclusive). It’s best to arrive Thursday evening if you can for an early start on Friday before breakfast.

Nina will be clarifying the new melodies for Mandarava as transmitted by Rinpoche last August in Merigar. She will also be showing the mudras and for

those who don’t have a dadar, we will be making dadars.

The practice will include chud len breathing and diet (optional).

So far as diet is concerned, there will be a simple diet of oats/stewed fruit and yoghurt for breakfast; lunch and dinner will be rice/barley with vegetables and/or fish.

Dadars: If anyone wants to make a dadar, please let me know. I shall buy the coloured ribbons and sticks.

Do let me know if you would like to come.

Contact me on: allanjudith@googlemail.com

Cost: The cost of the course is £ 30 per day inclusive of food and accommodation.

Accommodation is shared either in the farmhouse or in our retreat cabins. For those who need it, I can send travel information to Kunselling.

Best wishes, Judy Allan (Blue gakyil, Kunselling, UK) allanjudith@googlemail.com

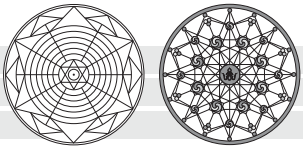
Programme:

Practice, early morning before breakfast 10 am tun

3.30/4 pm tun

Evening – dance, yantra, personal practice.

Tsegyalgar East



upcoming
Yantra Yoga
Deepening Our Experience of The Eight Movements
with by Paula Barry
Saturday Nov 16, 2008

Cost: \$ 40
Location: Tsegyalgar East Gonpa
Schedule: 9 am–noon, 3–6 pm

Contact:
Tel: 413 369 4153
Email: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

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upcoming
Worldwide Transmission
Tsegyalgar East Gonpa

Friday November 21, 2008, 8 pm
Explanation of World Wide Transmission

Saturday Nov 22, 2008
Video of Rinpoche’s explanation 6 am
World Wide Transmission 7 am

More information:
Tel: 413 369 4153
secretary@tsegyalgar.org

*

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

upcoming
Dream Yoga Workshop
taught by Michael Katz
Saturday & Sunday, November 22 & 23

Cost \$ 80

Daily Schedule:
Saturday, 10–1, and 3–5
Sunday, 9–12 and 1:30–3:30

.....

In this workshop we will incorporate use of the Dark Retreat Cabin. Individuals who wish to spend the night in the cabin should sign up in advance. Also on Saturday at 7 am there is a World Wide Transmission and this will be incorporated into the workshop as well.

To reserve space in the Dark Cabin contact David Hayes:
geko@tsegyalgar.org
or (413) 230-8305.
To register for the workshop contact Asruh: secretary@tsegyalgar.org or (413) 369-4153.

Tsegyalgar East Blue Gakyil



Mandarava Tsalung Retreat with Elio Guarisco, October 24–28, 2008. Photo: Joey Mella

Contacting the NYC Dzogchen Community Gakyil

Email addresses to answer Your questions and invite Your suggestions.

In line with the worldwide Dzogchen ‘organizational’ structure – messages can be directed to specific areas of enquiry as follows:

1. **Finance** – including donation and fund raising queries:
nydzogchenyellow@gmail.com
2. **Practice/event Scheduling** – including your suggestions for practices:
nydzogchenblue@gmail.com
3. **Care of the Center** – including Karma Yoga offers of help:
nydzogchenred@gmail.com

There is also a **General Enquiries Email:**
nydzogchen@gmail.com

We encourage you to use this new messaging structure to convey suggestions and questions to make it as easy as possible for you to commit, help, engage and participate fully in the happenings at Kundrolling.

For a current events schedule, including Ganapujas, visit our website:

www.nydzogchen.com

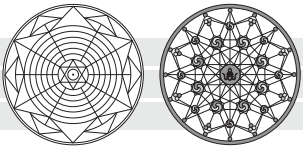
Here, you will find links to the bookstore at Tsegyalgar, and gars and links around the world, including Merigar to access Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s retreat schedule.

Love and best wishes
The New York Dzogchen Community



Dream Yoga Weekend in NYC with Michael Katz, September 20–21, 2008 Photo: M. Katz

Tsegyalgar West



Tsegyalgar West	ejgon@hotmail.com
Baja California Sur, Mexico	At Tsegyalgar West itself: betilupema@hotmail.com
	http://jardindelosnaranjos.org/

Upcoming teaching retreats and courses at Dondrub Ling, Winter 2008–2009

Teaching retreat with
Yeshe Namkhai
Rigbai Kujuug
(The Six Vajra Verses)

November 14–16
Rigbai Kujuug is an Atiyoga teaching introduced by Vairocana into Tibet. Rigpa is the state of knowledge, the presence of the pure state of awareness. Kujuug refers to the cuckoo bird, whose song, in Tibet, is a sign that nature is beginning to breathe again after the cold winter. When the cuckoo sings everybody is happy. This precious text is one of the oldest in the Dzogchen tradition.

Schedule
Friday, Nov. 14 7–9 pm
Saturday, Nov. 15 10 am–12 noon
Sunday, Nov. 16 10 am–12 noon

Cost: \$ 108; \$ 80 for members
To register, contact
aha@dzogchencommunitywest.org

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Long Life Practice of Dakini Mandarava with Tsalung retreat
with Elio Guarisco
November 12–16
This practice course is open to members of the International Dzogchen Community who have received at least the transmission of Guruyoga from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and preferably also the transmission of the practice of Mandarava.
Cost: \$108 (per-session fee also available)
To register, please contact Carlos Mena at nicanagua@yahoo.com or 510-292-6391

*

Introductory Yantra Yoga course
with Naomi Zeitz
December 5–7
For more information or to register, please contact Stefanie Kim at 707-319-7600

*

Mandarava Practice retreat
with Nina Robinson
February 16–28, 2009
For more information, please contact Margaret Bradford at vajrapamo@yahoo.com

Mexico
Pelzomling, Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Mexico DF

Yantra Yoga
with Marisa Alonso
October 31st – November 2nd, 2008
Tonalli

Program:
• Lungro Selwa (the nine purification breathings)
• Tsijong (loosening the joints)
• Lungsang (the eight movements for purifying prana)
• Sambo jorwa zhiden (rhythmic breathing)

Place: Tonalli
Donation: \$2,600 a person (20% discount to the members of the Dzogchen Community)

Include:
• Lodging the days October 31st and November 1st
• Dinner the 31/10, breakfast, lunch and dinner the 1/11, breakfast and café break the 2/11, tea and café for all the period.
• One class of Yantra Yoga the 31/10, two classes the 1/11, one class the 2/11. (2 & 1/2 hours each class).

*

Yantra Yoga
with Marisa Alonso
November 3rd to 6th in Mexico Df
Retreat open to the persons with previous knowledge of the Yantra Yoga

Program:
• First group of yantras
• pranayama of the first group of yantras
• second group of yantras
• pranayama of the second group of yantras
• the vajra wave

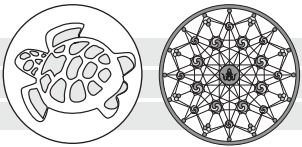
Place: Pelzomling
Time: 7 A 9:30 P.M.
Donation: \$ 1,200 a person (20% discount to the members of the Dzogchen Community)

20% additional discount to the participant for the two retreats

For reservation, ask for the inscription form to:
email: pelzomling@hotmail.com

For information:
email: pelzomling@hotmail.com
cel: 044 55 1755 1362 or 044 55 3899 0960

Tashigar Norte



Tashigar North /Finca Tashigar	Prolongación de la Calle Bolívar	Tel: 0058 0295 2580332
	Valle de Pedro González	secretary@tashigarnorte.org
	Isla de Margarita	www.tashigarnorte.org

Dear Sangha:
We are pleased to announce the new members of **Gakyil Caracas** 2008/2009:

Blue: Eliana Iannece Civile
Yellow: Berthnelly Pacheco
Red: Jamilette León

Email: elgakyilcaracas@yahoo.es

The Gakyil of Caracas
Venezuela

New Gakyil Peru

Red: Luis Alberto León Bacigalupo
Director
Blue: Max Petersen
Yellow: Inés Briano.

upcoming
The Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
with by Carmen Rivas
November 23–27, 2008

Tel of the Secretary: 00 58 295 2580032
Email:
tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

upcoming
Dzogchen Teachings
Yeshe Namkhai
Rigbai Kujuug
(The Six Vajra Verses)

November 28th to 30th, 2008

The Six Vajra Verses are called Rigbai Kujuug: “rigpa” is the state of knowledge, the presence of the pure state of

the conscience. In Tíbet, the cuckoo is considered like the symbol of the nature that comes back to flower after the cold winter. For this reason, Vairocana used the cuckoo to entitle this Teaching from the Ati Yoga.

Tel of the Secretary: 00 58 295 2580032
Email:
tashigarnortesecretary@gmail.com

Tashigar sur



Tashigar South

Comunidad Dzogchen Tashigar

Calle pública S/N

Tanti 5155

Pcia. de Córdoba

Argentina

Phone & Fax: 0054 - 3541 - 498 356

tashigarsur@gmail.com

Calendar of Events 2008/09

December
December 15th-17th
Course on the 2nd level of Yantra Yoga with by Carolina Mingolla and supervised by Fabio Andrico
Cost: U\$S 30

December 18th-23rd
Course on the 1st part of the Song of Vajra with by Nélide Saporitti
Cost: U\$S 70 (discount to members)

December 26th-January 1st:
Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
“Dzogchen Tredchöd Teaching of Jigmed Lingpa from the Instruction ‘Yeshe Lama’”

January
January 3rd-7th
Course on the 1st level of Yantra Yoga directed by Jimena Piedra and supervised by Fabio Andrico
Cost: U\$S 40 (*)

January 5th-8th
Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam
January 9th-13th
Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training
Cost: U\$S 130

January 15th-21st
Course on the 2nd part of the Song of Vajra with Nélide Saporitti
Cost: U\$S 70 (*) (discount to members)

January 22nd-27th
7th Lojong Retreat led by Marisa Alonso and Ricardo Sued
Cost: U\$S 35

(*)
Both courses on Yantra Yoga: U\$S 65
Both courses on the Dance of the Song of Vajra: U\$S 125

For more information:
secretaría@tashigar-sur.com.ar

For registration:
cursos@tashigar-sur.com.ar

upcoming
The Gakyil of Tashigar South is pleased to announce
Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam
January 5th to 8th, 2009

Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training
January 9th to 13th, 2009

Cost: U\$S 130

Although applications to sit for the exam should be done three months before the exam itself, this time the deadline will be more flexible, as the announcement has just been made.

(0054) 03541-498356/885
secretaría@tashigar-sur.com.ar

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Chile

December 5–7, 2008
The Gakyil of The Dzogchen Community in Chile is happy to announce the Dzogchen Teaching Retreat in Santiago de Chile from December 5–7, 2008. Rinpoche will celebrate his 70th birthday in Chile on December 8 !!!
The Retreat will take place at the Radisson Hotel in Las Condes Community of Santiago. Rinpoche will stay in Chile from December 1–9, 2008.



The Program:
Friday, 5 of December, 16:00–18:00
Introduction to The Dzogchen Teaching
Saturday, 6 of December, 10:00–12:00
The Dzogchen Teaching

Saturday, 6 of December, 16:00–18:00
The Dzogchen Teaching
Sunday, 7 of December, 10:00–12:00
The Dzogchen Teaching

More information: **www.dzogchen.cl**

Cost: The price is 90.000 CHP (60.000 CHP before 15 of November). For registration please contact Yellow Gakyil of Chile:
amarillochile@gmail.com

Hotel Radisson – **www.radisson.cl**
Hotel Plaza El Bosque – **www.plazaelbosque.cl**

Hotel Intercontinental – **www.intercontisantiago.com**
Apart Hotel Aconcagua – **www.aconcaguaparthotel.cl**



Apart Hotel La Sebastiana – **www.lasebastiana.cl**

You can book transportation on the web site of the hotel or at the airport of Santiago – Taxi official 15.000 CHP .

Please, check currency rates here:
www.bcentral.cl/eng/index.htm

Konstantin Korotkov
Tel/fax 56-2-474-4782
Mobile 56-9-9479-8062

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



Namgyalgar

Dzogchen Community in

Australia

PO Box 214 Central Tilba

NSW 2546

Phone/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668

secretary@dzogchen.org.au

www.dzogchen.org.au

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Australian Tour 2009

For detailed information about all events in Australia (Pricing, Meals, Accommodation, Travel, etc.) Please go to the **Events** page on the Namgyalgar Website at:
www.dzogchen.org.au

Online Registration is now available. Please read procedures and details at the Event Registration button on left of the Events Page. Please note that catered meal orders and childcare enrollments are required 2 months in advance of the main retreats.

To register and pay for events at the discounted Membership prices, members of overseas Gars are required to use the Offline Registration Forms for each retreat. These can be downloaded from the Namgyalgar website – go to the Event Registration button on the Events page and read through the information concerning registration where you will find the offline forms.

Season Pass for Members of Overseas Gars
Namgyalgar is introducing a special “Season Pass” for members of overseas Gars. The Season Pass includes attendance at all of Rinpoche’s teachings and public talks in Australia, excluding the Santi Maha Sangha Exam and Training.

A Season Pass costs AUD \$ 1500.

To purchase a Season Pass, download an offline Registration Form and indicate your request for a Season Pass. Your Membership details will be verified with your Gar before the Pass is issued.

Inquiries:
Namgyalgar secretary
Tel / Fax: 02.44.737668
Email: **secretary@dzogchen.org.au**

upcoming
Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Examinations
at Namgyalgar, February 17–19, 2009

Registration
Please download and read the document of the Shang Shung Institute “Guidelines for the Santi Maha Sangha Examinations” available at: **http://www.dzogchen.it/index.php?section=18**

For Information about travel to Namgyalgar, Accommodation, etc and Registration Forms for the Exam and for repeating the Level One Training please go to the Namgyalgar website at: **www.dzogchen.org.au**

If you have any questions concerning SMS study and Exam Registration please contact the SMS Coordinator of your Gar.

Namgyalgar General Inquiries:
The Secretary
Tel: 61.02.44737668
secretary@dzogchen.org.au

upcoming
The Complete Harmonious Breathing Courses
with Fabio Andrico
Sydney: February 2–5
Melbourne: March 27–29

Fabio’s breathing courses around the world have been very successful. Now Namgyalgar is pleased to be organizing Fabio’s breathing courses in Sydney and Melbourne. The courses are useful for practitioners to deepen their capacity for the practice of Tsalung and Kumbhaka and you don’t have to be a dedicated Yantra yogi/yogini to benefit. The courses are open and useful for everyone.

Who wouldn’t like to increase their ability to cope with the pressures of modern life? Most people living in the city could benefit from learning to deepen and control the breath with the aim of calming the mind and reducing stress. So tell your work buddies, friends and family to come along.

For further details about the events go to: **www.dzogchen.org.au**

New Gakyil in China

Blue:
Yungzhung Jalwa QQ616150536
mobile 15302633516
Kunga Legpa QQ 294353927
kungalegpa@gmail.com
Wesly Guo QQ 654732467
thevoidone@hotmail.com

Red:
Wesly Guo QQ 654732467
Tracy Ni QQ 785960784

Yellow:
Kunga Legpa QQ 294353927

Chinese Forum:
http://www.wuyangzhijie.com/forum/
English Forum: http://groups.yahoo.com/group/dzogcheninchina/
Website: www.atiyoga.net

The Story of the Rainbow Body of Mkhan po A chos

‘Ja’ lus pa Mkhanpo A chos

Tetsu Nagasawa

In 2001, an elderly Tibetan lama in the Kathmandu Valley, named Lama Konchog, remained in the state of *thugs dam*, meditative equipoise, for one week after he stopped breathing. After the cremation, there appeared a great number of relics of various colors (*sku gdung/ring bsrel*), which I had the great fortune to observe. These were like shining jewels, resembling turquoise, pearls, ruby and others, and were still in the process of transforming and proliferating. In Tibetan Buddhism, this type of transmutation of the physical body during one’s lifetime or after death is one of the signs of great accomplishment. This is true particularly in the Rdzogs chen tradition, where there are different signs of realization related to the body, including the rainbow body, the reduction of the body to atoms, and the manifestation of relics.

According to Bdud ‘joms Rinpoche’s *History of the Nyingma Tradition*, among the first twelve lineage masters of the Heart Essence (*snying thig*) division of Rdzogs chen in Tibet, four attained the rainbow body and seven displayed the manifestation of relics and other signs of accomplishment. Even the modern era has witnessed many incidents of rainbow body. I will give an account of the most recent case that happened 10 years ago.

In 1998, a great scholar and saint in Kham named Mkhan po Achos attained the rainbow body. He was born in the fifth month of the earth tiger year (1926) at Klu mo rab in Nyag rong region of eastern Tibet, and started his study at Klu mo rab Monastery at the age of 14. After completing his study of Rnying ma pa texts there at 20, he went to study at Se ra Monastery in central Tibet. At 26, he started to receive tantric initiations and special Rdzogs chen instructions from his root master Bdud ‘joms Rinpoche, and he diligently put them into practice for the rest of his life. Af-



ter returning to his birth place Klu mo rab, he served as the Mkhan po of the monastic college (*bshad grwa*) there. After retirement, he continued to stay there and concentrated on his practice.

Mkhan po Achos was a master of great accomplishment who showed signs of his achievement. One day in the wood dog year (1995), six people visiting his place locked the door of his house from outside and went out to finish some business. When they returned, to their amazement, the Mkhan po was standing in the garden outside of the house. When asked how he came out, he simply answered, “I came out the door.” The door was locked, just as before, and the window was firmly closed without having moved an inch.

From the water monkey year (1992), Mkhan po Achos stayed in a meditative state for a very long time. His disciples, annoyed and wondering if the Mkhan po was actually in Samadhi or unconscious, consulted with Mkhan po A khyug of Ya chan, who confirmed that it was the sign of a great Rdzogs chen practitioner, and not a loss of consciousness. According to Tshul khrims gya mtsho, one of his close disciples, Mkhan po’s memory had also become short. For example, it seemed as if Mkhan po had no idea if he had been to toilet for the day.

In the seventh month of the earth tiger year (1998), many auspicious signs appeared around his place. Local people saw two rainbows standing up from the right and left side of his house, straight up to the sky. People heard very beautiful sounds and melodies for many days, as if a young girl with a sweet voice was singing and talking. From outside, this appeared to be coming from within the house; but those who entered the house felt that it sounded like it was coming from the sky above. A white bird that had never been seen before came and stayed there for seven days, without showing any fear.

At around two o’clock in the afternoon on the seventh day of the seventh month of the same year, Mkhan po Achos passed away. He had shown no signs of illness, and passed reciting the Mani mantra with his rosary in his hand. At seven o’clock in the evening of the same day, his close disciples took off his clothes to put on a monk’s robe. To their great surprise, his skin had no wrinkles and was shining with a pinkish color like that of a young child. They noticed that his body seemed to have become a little smaller. From the next day on, every time one of his disciples went inside the room to make an offering of butter lamps, the body became smaller and smaller. Not knowing what to do, a disciple

World Wide Dzogchen Transmission

There are three days each year when the practitioners of the international Dzogchen Community practice Guruyoga together simultaneously and receive transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. These days are the anniversaries of the main Masters of the Lineage of Dzogchen Teachings. It is important to understand the meaning of transmission and how the practices work. An information and explanation evening is held with experienced practitioners to learn the practice so that one is able to participate in the transmission method that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is making available for those who are interested in the Dzogchen Teachings.

“When we are doing this practice together we are unifying in the same state, that famous state in Dzogchen teaching called the primordial state; that means teacher and students are all in that moment in the primordial state, so in this way there is a possibility to transmit. For transmission there is no distance, if you are far or near it doesn’t matter because knowledge of transmission is beyond time and distance. So for this reason we can use this method.”

The next WWT is the Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa on the 22nd of November 2008.

went to see Mkhan po A khug of Ya chan for a consultation on the tenth day of the same month. He was advised that the matter should be kept secret for seven days, adding that it was absolutely necessary to keep breakers of samaya vows from entering the house and touching the body.

On the eighth day after Mkhan po’s passing, his four close disciples and two others went to the house and removed the monk’s robe, which was standing on the bed. They found nothing there. Not a hair nor nail was left behind

This incident of Mkhan po Achos’s attainment of the rainbow

To attend World Wide Transmission, contact the Community in your region.

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

Saturday 22nd November 2008	
01.00	Wellington, Auckland
02.00	Hawaii
03.00	Fairbanks
04.00	San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver
05.00	Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
06.00	Chicago, Mexico City
07.00	New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana, Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa, Lima, Quito
08.00	Caracas
09.00	Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, Rio de Janeiro, Santiago
12.00	GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon
13.00	Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva, Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw
14.00	Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Vilnius, Johannesburg
15.00	Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad, Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent
16.00	Kabul
17.00	ODDIYANA, Islamabad
17.30	Delhi, Bombay
17.45	Kathmandu
18.00	Dacca
19.00	Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon
20.00	Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth
21.00	Tokyo, Seoul
22.00	Brisbane, Vladivostok
22.30	Adelaide
23.00	Kamchatka, Melbourne, Sydney

body was soon reported in the local newspaper of Khanze, and the article was later reproduced in the China’s Tibet.

The above summary of Mkhan po Achos’s biography is from the first part of the author’s article titled “Eaten by Primordial Wisdom: transmutation of physical body in the Rdzogs chen tradition”, to be published in PIATS, and is based on the biography by Blo bzang snyan grags,

Rje ‘ja’ lus pa mkhan po a chung rin po che’i nang gi rnam thar mdor bsdu bzhugs so and the later study made by Mkhan po Tshul khrims blo gros, Mkhan chen a chos rinpoche ‘ja’ lus su dengs tshul rtsod gcod byas pa. ©

Poems

Flavia Tommasini, 2008

MARE

Con gesto
imperfetto e sbadato
fai scorrere la sabbia
tra le dita

ascolti il mare...
la sua risposta è infinita,

scorre la sabbia
fra le dita

SEA

With a gesture
imperfect and careless
you let the sand run
through your fingers

you hear the sea...
its answer is infinite

let the sand run
between your fingers

MADRE

In te Madre
c’è tutta la Terra
c’è ancora,
c’è sempre
dopo anni che te ne sei andata

in ogni madre
ci sei tu Terra
con il tuo sguardo di mia madre azzurro.

In you Mother
the whole Earth lives
still there
always there
years after you’ve gone

in every mother
it’s you Earth
Yours and my blue mother’s glance

Enemies and Friends

Elio Guarisco

*May all beings be endowed with happiness and its cause,
May all beings be free from suffering and its cause,
May all beings be endowed with happiness which is devoid of suffering,
May all beings be in a state of equanimity beyond attachment for friends and hatred for enemies.*

These four lines express the so called four immeasurable thoughts or Brahmaviharas of love, compassion, joy and equanimity respectively, which are the base of the conduct in Mahayana Buddhism. The behaviour of a Dzogchen practitioner should also somehow reflect such conduct.

However, our attitudes are often the opposite of these immeasurable thoughts. Instead of wishing happiness for others, we wish their disgrace; instead of feeling compassion for the suffering of others, we think they deserve it; instead of feeling joy at the happiness of others, we feel jealousy; instead of treating all others as the same, we discriminate among superior and lower.

Especially, the way we relate with others is opposite to the impartiality implied in immeasurable equanimity. Based on a sense of a separate self, we begin to distinguish others into three categories: friends, enemies and people whose existence and vicissitudes we ignore. Friends are very important to us – we see that children start to look for friends at a very young age. It is natural that we have a different relationship with people we have known for long time, we often meet and live with. It would be unnatural if it were not so. Yet to invest in an exaggerated way on friends and those we like will eventually lead to our excluding those whom we don’t consider friends from our life.

For friends we are ready to do everything, we are also ready to lie, to steal and sometimes even to kill. Thus, friends may even become the cause for perpetuation of our negative karma at times. In extreme cases we also commit suicide for our beloved



friends when we loose them or when they leave us of their own will.

We spend a lot of our energy and time taking care of relationships with friends as if such relationships were very important. We spend a lot of our time in socializing with them, without realizing that in that way friends take away from us the opportunity of using our life in a meaningful way. Slowly our life fades away and our friends also abandon us.

We consider friends and dear ones as someone that has been and will always be in such a role, but we forget that friendship is a relationship that builds up simply because some secondary causes and circumstances in life come together. These secondary causes and circumstances are always subject to change and sometimes they can completely turn around the type of relationship we have with others. Not only that, life circumstances can cause separation from friends. For example, when we change the place where we live or our job, we separate from our friends and eventually we forget about them, or we remember them only seldom or meet with them only once every several years.

Friends can turn into enemies as well. This is not uncommon. For example, a dear friend may become an enemy when we fall involuntarily in love with his girlfriend, or when we become a threat to his or her economical security, or when we become a psychological threat for him. There are so many circumstances that can turn friends into enemies, and not over a long time, but suddenly in a matter of days, hours and even minutes. When this happens, the person we loved so much, the person of whom we were ready to ignore his or her shortcomings and defects, the person who appeared so nice to

us, turns into an ugly person that we cannot stand anymore.

For example when we love someone, at first the excitement of the relationship makes us accept everything of that person, good and bad. Later, with the passing of time, when the relationship becomes difficult, we start to see only faults in him or her and in the end we are not able to live with that person any more. We separate and when that happens the nice friend tries to take away everything from us - money, house, even pet dogs we owned together. The scene turn utterly ugly.

Speaking about such relationships, Milarepa said, “At the beginning our wife seems like an angel, later she starts to look at us with a corner of her eyes in a mood of reproach and in the end she becomes a devil”. This could be said of our husband as well. And that is how our cherished relationships come to an end.

Instead of having such exaggerated attachment to friends, we should be more relaxed in such relationships. To be more relaxed does not mean that we are not loyal to the relationship, or that our ways of relating to our friends are erratic and unstable, that we are faltering. To be in that way would also be an expression of our egoism. But it means to see relationships with friends within the whole context of our life, weighing up what is of definitive importance to us and what is not.

When we have friends, it goes without saying that we have enemies, Having enemies is also a type of relationship with others that many people like to cultivate. When others do not share our same opinions, our same political party, our same social milieu, then they are seen as different, as not belonging to the circle of people we love and care for. People who are different from us are enemies. We consider someone as an enemy on the base of certain momentary circumstances of our life. Once that person did something bad to us, or to our friends and now we cannot accept them.

Although enemies seem so real that at times we would like to erase them from the face of the earth, in truth enemies can change into friends very quickly, more quickly then we could ever

expect. For example, if in time of need an enemy opens his or her mind to us, showing us kindness or a good gesture, that person can immediately become a very close friend and the old motive of our animosity is soon forgotten.

Moreover for a spiritual practitioner, enemies are not always negative, because in confronting them, we can see the mechanism of our mind, our own limitations, that maybe we would not be able to see otherwise. Confronting enemies one can observe how stable one’s spiritual practice is. That is why sometimes in the spiritual teachings it is said that to find an enemy is like finding a treasure. So enemies at times can be much more valuable than friends. Then why do we not cherish enemies as we cherish friends?

Much more important than the relationship with friends and enemies is the relationship with spiritual companions. Any other kind of relationship ends as we leave this world but the relationship with spiritual companions continues till one achieves realization. But who are the spiritual companions?

First of all we should recognize that all humanity and all beings are one’s spiritual companions. In fact, when speaking of spiritual companions Jnanapada, an amazing Indian siddha, who was the forefather of one of the two most famous lineages of the transmission of the Guhysamaja Tantra, said that all sentient beings are one’s spiritual companions since they all have non-dual awareness innate in themselves.

Also Lilavajra, another important siddha, said that all sentient beings are one’s spiritual companions because they are none other than the manifestation of one’s own innate non-dual awareness and are thus not to be regarded as “others”. In all of them the essence of enlightenment is present and so they are the buddhas of the future.

Manjusriyashas, one of the Kings of Shambhala, when speaking about six kinds of spiritual companions also places them among them all sentient beings as they all have the nature of Vajrasatta, that is, the nature of the primordial state.

Thus by spiritual companions we should not just think of a closed circle of people. All beings that exist in our dimension

or universe have to be considered as general spiritual companions, towards whom we have the commitment to work for their awakening.

Naturally, spiritual companions become closer and more important as they are close to the spiritual path one follows, and the closest are those who share the same vajra master, that is, the master who introduced one to one’s real and authentic nature. The relationship with these is most delicate. Spiritual followers often have great consideration and respect for their teacher and they do not hesitate to make sacrifices and large donations to the teacher. But when it comes to their close spiritual companions, they do not have the same consideration and respect. On the contrary, they often criticize their fellow practitioners, attributing them with faults and misdeeds of every sort. Instead of collaborating with them, they enter into competition. That is our ordinary attitude based on our ego.

Recognizing close spiritual practitioners as one’s indispensable aid on the path to realization, without considering some to be inferior and others superior, we should train in having a pure and sacred view toward them. A pure and sacred view means that we see them in a positive way, we recognize that they are buddhas, maybe with still some obscurations but nonetheless buddhas and appreciate them as sacred as any other aspect of life.

Revealing to them the knowledge one has acquired from the quest for spiritual realization, one makes them all intimate friends towards whom there is neither attachment nor aversion. This relationship based on understanding, openness, and mutual collaboration appears to be one of the most meaningful relationships we can have in our short life. ©

TOSCANA	TRAMONTO (DI CALDO E DI GUERRA)	SUNSET (HEAT AND WAR)
“Guardare il vento” nel frusciare alato dei pini di Maremma	Stremata la terra di caldo e di dolore saluta l’ultimo raggio di sole lontano colorato segno d’amore	The earth exhausted by heat and pain kisses the last sunray a distant coloured mark of love
più in là il mare ancor non visto già udito di lontano	and further on is the sea not yet seen but already heard from afar	
ritrovare come fermo il tempo in suoni antichi	rediscovering how time stops in ancient sounds	
mai spenti mai finiti	never extinguished never extinct	
di vite sempre uguali mai le stesse	in lives that are always equal never the same	

Reviews

22

Yantra Yoga
The Tibetan Yoga of Movement

A Stainless Mirror of Jewels
A Commentary on Vairocana’s
The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra

By Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,
translated by Adriano Clemente

Tom Garnett

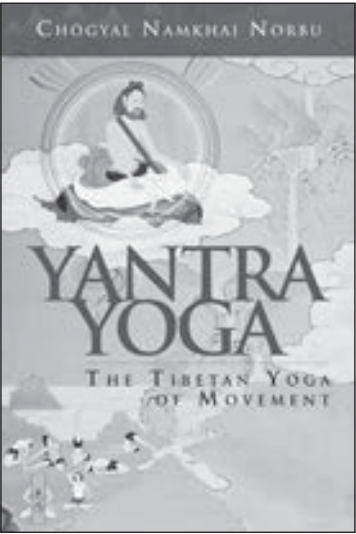
What a delight to review this magnificent publication! Containing history, theory, practical instructions, illustrations, and the full background of the practice of trulkhor (‘khrul ‘khor), this book reveals what yantra yoga is in the Tibetan tradition. However, readers should be warned that in spite of the title this is not a yoga book at least as that genre is understood in the current market place. Further, this is not a self-help book, as that genre is understood in the current market place. In fact, in the current market place this book is *sui generis*. There is nothing like it. That is why you should read it even if you never plan to do yoga.

To my knowledge this is the first and only full translation and explanation of the root texts, traditional written commentary, supplemented with contemporary explanations of a classic lineage of trulkhor (‘khrul ‘khor) published in a Western language. The specific text, *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra* (‘phrul. ‘khor nyi zla kha.sbyor), derives from the great eighth century siddha Humkara who transmitted the teachings to “Padmasambhava, who then transmitted it to Vairocana in Tibet.” While employing in part some of the positions or asanas of hatha yoga, even though the root text long antedates any extant hatha yoga texts, the work situates them in a much wider space. As Chögyal Namkhai Norbu writes, “Yoga originally means ‘union’, but *naljor* really means knowledge of the primordial condition. ‘nal’ means ‘original’ or ‘authentic’; ‘jor’ means to ‘discover’ or ‘posses’ this condition. Accordingly, the true meaning of the word ‘naljor’ is to discover our real condition.” Employing the three vajras of body, voice, and mind this profound practice can only be properly understood in the context of Dzogchen. Though the relative siddhis and great siddhis that result from the practices are clearly described, the ultimate aim is the supreme siddhi of “total realization.”

The breadth and level of detail are welcome and a contrast to many translations from the Tibetan these days. The book contains an excellent forward by Adriano Clemente describing the translation and assembling of the work; a preface by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu describing the lineage of transmission; an introduction by

him about the fundamentals and context with an superb description of the relationship between energy and breathing; a translation of the brief root text, and then a detailed commentary on all the movements, variations, and breathings titled ‘A Stainless Mirror of Jewels; Commentary to the Union of the Sun and Moon Tantra,’ written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1976. Additionally, Adriano Clemente has translated another text by Vairocana, ‘The Overcoming of Obstacles and the Benefits of the Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra (‘Phrul. ‘khor nyi zla kha sbyor gyi ‘gyi ‘phrang sel phan yon dang bcas pa) “from which have been taken the descriptions of the medical benefits of each exercise.” There are five appendices covering such topics as “the functions of the five pranas,” a description of the chakras, “the yantras related to various aspects of Buddhist practice”, notes from an early yantra yoga class taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on preparatory loosening exercises, and a list of the benefits of the yantras organized by the relative conditions they affect. The book has a full index as well as over 340 detailed end notes. For any who have studied yantra this is a deep reference space to which they will return again and again. For those who have not practiced this profound method it is a full picture of the precision and depth of this way and an invitation to enter this practice in an experiential way.

However, as Adriano Clemente, the translator, emphasizes, “It is indispensable to receive oral instructions from one of the authorized instructors of the Dzogchen Community founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.” This work exists in a living tradition without which the words and sentences are scratches on paper. That living tradition, while including clarification of the details of the methods, goes beyond them and reveals the life that animates this way. Beyond the relative and clear benefits for the practitioner, there is the aim as shown in the Dedication of Merit towards the end of the book, “By this merit may all beings free themselves of illusory thoughts, emotions, and karma and attain the primordial land of Samantabhadra where self-arisen wisdom always shines.”



The level of detail in this work is extremely helpful. For each yantra there are descriptions and illustration of the basic movement, the movement for training, and movement for progressing. The breathings are described in clear language and charts for the breathing accompanying the movements are provided. The end notes add even more detail. Even if you have studied yantra yoga for years, you will find yourself referring again and again to these pages.

By the excellence of the translation and the fullness of details this work can nourish the understanding of practitioners everywhere. For some there is a recurring tendency to constellate the teachings into our little, comfortable world views and thereby domesticate them. For some there is another recurring tendency to make the teachings exotic, other, strange, and quite separate from our actual experience – a sort of confrontation. This work does neither and shows respect and fealty to the tradition while delivering the meal that is needed straight from the oven.

This work represents an enormous collaboration and our gratitude is deep to those who have devoted the years of effort it represents. First, naturally, to our master, the author and lineage holder, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who mastered, transmitted and taught this way for years; and then the translator, Adriano Clemente. But also the primary yantra yoga teachers, Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti, who have introduced thousands of students to yantra and trained numerous yantra yoga teachers and to many, many other students who have given their time, study, and efforts to make this work come together. It is a model for future efforts. ©

Bø & Bön

Ancient Shamanic Traditions of
Siberia and Tibet in Their Relation
to the Teachings of a Central Asian
Buddha
Dmitry Ermakov
Vajra Publications, 2008

Alfredo Colitto

This book is a serious documented study of academic value but at the same time not dull and can even be read by a public who is not specialised in the topic. Dmitry Ermakov himself admits that he chose to write from an “internal” point of view, that is the point of view of a scholar who is not uninvolved in the subject matter but rather participates in it. As an example, concerning the history of the teachings, in particular those of Yungdrung Bön, the author has chosen to follow the dating suggested by traditional Bön texts even though there is no proof that they are exact, basing himself on the principle that there is not even sufficient proof to show that they are wrong. And often, in his study of rituals, his observations on based on first hand observation even when it contradicts work done previously by other scholars of the same subjects.

Chapter XV is particularly interesting in which the author cites the works of the Indian scholar Tilak (1856–1920) and some recent scientific discoveries to support the theory according to which the cradle of Aryan civilisation, and possibly of the whole human race, is found in the Arctic. The theory is not new but the way in which Ermakov recon-



structs the relation between prehistoric migrations and the development and transformation of religions, philosophies and traditions is interesting.

The book is divided into chapters which deal with different thematic aspects of the two traditions being examined and include history, geographical locations, purification and healing rituals, the cult of the deer, “white” magic and destructive magic, the spread of Bön in Eurasia as well as other topics.

One of the author’s aims is to clarify once and for all the widespread misunderstanding according to which Yungdrung Bon is considered to be a type of Tibetan shamanism committed to animal sacrifice and black magic which only later on took on some aspects of Indian Buddhism in an attempt to justify itself in the eye of Buddhists. Comparing the traditions of the Buryatian Bø Murgel and Tibetan Bön from a historical, mythological and ritualistic point of view shows that this is not so. ©

b o d h i
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How to play Sho

Adriana Dal Borgo

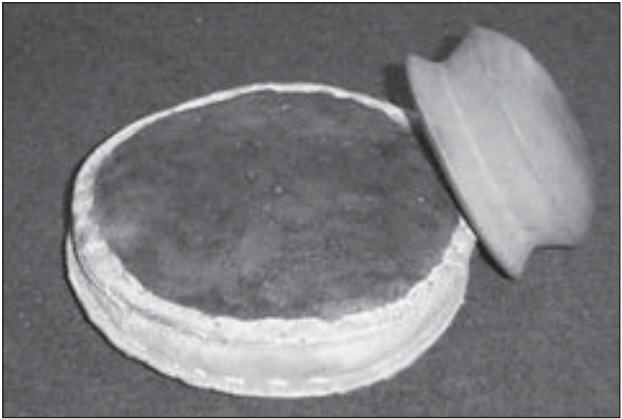
Sho is an ancient Tibetan game. Players sit on the ground or around a table.

Number of players:

usually three but if you play in four you make two teams.

Materials you need:

- two dice (in Tibetan they are called ‘Sho’ from which the name of the game comes);
- a wooden bowl;
- a round cushion which, in Tibet, is made of yak skin and filled with yak wool. This is used as a base for throwing the dice (photo 1);



- a set of 64 shells. Instead of shells you can use pebbles, seeds, etc. You place the shells in a U shape with the cushion in the middle (photo 2);
- nine coins or wooden sticks for each player. The coins for each player should be equal but easy to distinguish from those of other players.

How to play

In turn players throw the dice making them roll around inside the bowl and then turn the bowl upside down on the cushion.

The next player lifts the bowl to see the dice, being careful not to move them. If the bowl moves the dice when it is lifted, the player who threw them can choose to throw them again.

If the player who threw the dice gets distracted and lifts up the bowl himself, his throw will not count and it will be the turn of the next player.

Tibetans playing the game used to ‘call’ the numbers with a

special language and associate a series of superstitious phrases to ward off bad luck with each number¹ ...

Object of the game

To complete the course with all your counters before your opponents.

The first throw of the dice

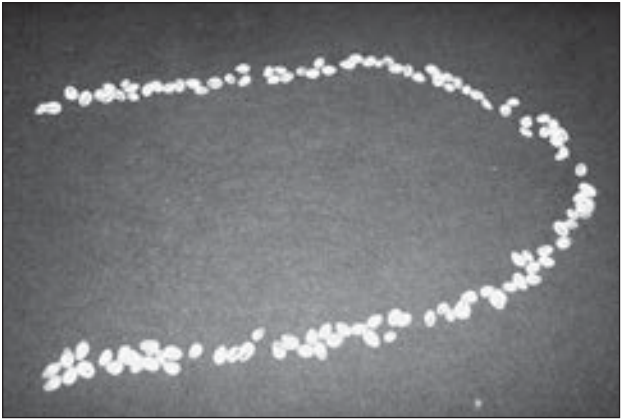
With the first throw each player places two counters along the line of shells, counting as many spaces from the first shell as are shown in the sum of the numbers on the dice (e.g. If 1 and 4 come up, the player would put his two counters after the fifth shell).

If a player gets a double 1 on his first throw (in Tibetan they say ‘para’), he can put three counters in the second space or

portant in arriving at the final result.

Uniting the counters: if the space indicated by the dice is already occupied by your own counters (or those of your team), they can be put together and can go ahead together. It is an advantage to have a big group of counters because it is more difficult to attack and has a greater possibility of taking your opponent’s counters. A move that lets you unite several counters gives you another throw of the dice.

Taking your opponent’s counters: you can take them by landing on a space occupied by your opponent’s counters but only if the number of your counters is the same as or more than the number of your opponent’s (otherwise the space cannot be oc-



cupied). The counters taken are removed from the game and have to start all over again. The player who ‘takes’ has another throw of the dice.

Special situations

Para: when ‘para’ comes up, that is 1 + 1, the player throws the dice again. At this point he can:

- a) sum up the two throws and move his counters the corresponding number of spaces (e.g. if on the second throw he gets 3 + 2 = 5, he moves 2 + 5 = 7)
- b) choose to move two counters separately (one counter moves 2 spaces and the other 5).

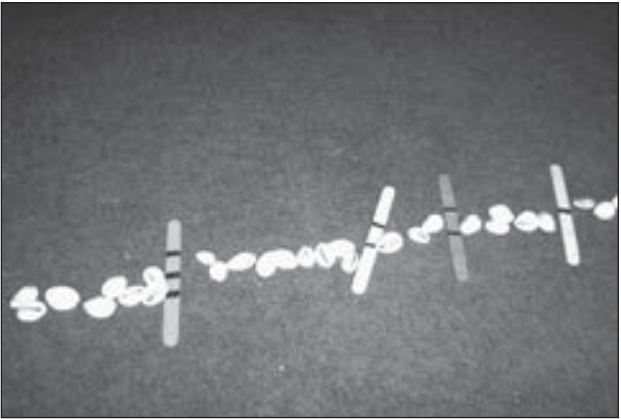
The object and ending the game:

The first player to complete the course, taking off all his counters, is the winner. The best way to win is to take off all your counters together in a group.

The last throws of the dice are the most difficult because in order to take off your counters, the

numbers of the dice thrown have to be the same as the number of spaces to the end of the course (e.g. if a group of nine counters are 7 spaces from the end of the line of shells, the only numbers on the dice that let you win are: 1 + 6, 2 + 5, 3 + 4. A result over 7 doesn’t count).

Strategic choice of accepting the result or not: when there are 14 spaces to the end of the course and only from this point on, a player can decide to accept (and thus move his counters forward) or refuse the number that comes up on the dice. Some numbers are more likely to come up (for example 7 which is the sum of several combinations, 1 + 6, 2 + 5, 3 + 4) while others are less likely (the only possibility for 2 is 1 + 1); so by positioning your coun-



ters, for example, 7 spaces from the end of the course gives you a greater probability of winning with the counters that are at least two spaces from the end with a single throw of the dice.

Gu Sho

This variation of Sho allows more players to participate. They play in three teams with three players each (in Tibetan ‘Gu’ means ‘nine’).

The materials for the game are the same except for the counters which are three sticks for each team (each team has a different colour to distinguish it from the others). Each team marks its sticks in order that each player recognises his own (for example by marking one, two or three notches on it) (photo 3).

How to play: the sticks are distributed alternating the three colours and then you start to throw the dice in turn as in Sho. Each player should remember which stick is his and can move only that one.

Unlike Sho, you can only put one stick on the course at a time with the first throw of the dice and you can occupy a space which has already been taken by one of the opposing groups.

As in Sho the rules for uniting counters and taking your opponents’ counters are the same. When two or three counters of the same colour/team unite, each time a member of that team throws the dice, he moves the counters together thus moving much faster towards the final half of the game.

At the end of the course each group can decide if they want to take off their counters separately or unite them to take them off together (keeping to the rule, however, that the number that comes up on the dice must be the same as the number of spaces left to go out). ©

- 1 Numbers and names in the language of the Masang (a class of beings who, according to Tibetan beliefs, rule over games).
- | | |
|----|-------|
| 2 | Para |
| 3 | Sug |
| 4 | Dzig |
| 5 | Kha |
| 6 | Ndrug |
| 7 | Ri |
| 8 | Sha |
| 9 | Gu |
| 10 | Chu |
| 11 | Thog |
| 12 | Chala |

International Gakyil

New International Database for the Dzogchen Community

Dear Gakyils of the Gars and Lings of the Dzogchen Community all over the world!

Please send your updated membership lists for the year 2008 as soon as possible to The Shang Shung Institute at Merigar. Your list is needed there for the new database, which the Institute is creating. It would accelerate their work if you could help them by sending all possible data now to: Salima Celeri, s.celeri@istitutoshangshung.org Thank you in advance and many greetings, Karin Eisenegger-Koppensteiner (Red IG)

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How I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Susana Dultzin Dubin

It was 1976 when my best friend invited me to a meditation retreat with the great Zen master Roshi Phillip Kap-leau. He was in the beautiful town Tepoztlan where I live, one hour south of Mexico City. This is how I began my practice of Buddhism and I found it to be a great way of working with my mind and my self.

Some years later I had the good fortune of meeting Swami Muktananda who became my second guru and introduced me to the wisdom of Kashmir Shaivism from India. It changed my perspective on life and my practice acquired another dimension.

And my third great teacher was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. My husband Lennart and a group of people who had been working together for several years and doing research into the different and best spiritual schools, had met Rinpoche in Paris and invited me to meet Rinpoche in Conway, Massachusetts in the United States. I was so impressed when I heard him explain the view and transmit the Dzogchen Guruyoga and other teachings. It was extraordinary!

I immediately connected with Rinpoche and knew those were the teachings I needed. We were amazed at the way the Sangha responded when Rinpoche said it was important to buy the old schoolhouse in Conway to create a Dzogchen Community Center there. In a few hours the money was raised to buy it, by auctioning the gifts we all brought to Rinpoche from different parts of the world. I had never participated in such an event. Outside it was snowing quite strongly and inside there was so much heat and excitement! This was the winter of 1993.

The next year, a group of twelve Mexicans went to Nepal to participate in a retreat with Rinpoche and invite him to

come to Mexico for the first time. He saw that we were a serious group of practitioners and, in a few months, we organized his first retreat in Mexico City. We rented an elegant and beautiful place surrounded by the great Chapultepec Park. There were almost 300 practitioners and after the three-day retreat we were all amazed at having such a wonderful teacher with us in our country! Rinpoche was also very happy, except for the pollution in the city, so he told us that if we wanted him to come again, it would have to be outside the city.

We organized his second visit in Taxco, where most of Mexico's silver is mined. Built in the mountain, the city has a magical quality and, with Rinpoche's teachings, it acquired an extra special feeling. There were more than 300 practitioners there as well, and we were all so grateful that Rinpoche had transmitted, with his great wisdom, Guruyoga and much more!

At this time his wife Rosa also came as well as Fabio and we all enjoyed our time together. We went to the Caribbean Ocean after the retreat as a friend loaned us his beautiful house near Cancun. We took them to some of the great Mayan temples and archeological zones like Tulum, where we sat on the floor and chanted the Vajra Song in such a special place!

We swam in the cenotes, which are like caves with water running inside them, as the Yucatan peninsula doesn't have surface rivers; they are all under the earth. Rinpoche loved to swim here as well as in the ocean.

Rinpoche found that some of the Mayan words are similar in Tibetan and felt a strong connection with the Mayan culture. He then asked us to find some land for a Dzogchen Community Gar surrounded by this magi-



Rinpoche's first visit to Mexico with Susana, Lennart and their sons Ahron, Uriel and Nataniel

cal Mayan tradition! At that time it was not possible, as we did not have the means to buy one. And now we have acquired one in this beautiful area, where we have the second largest coral reef in the world!

We are all so happy to have in Mexico a Gar in Baja California, although it is very far away for the people that live in the center and south of the country, since Mexico is very big and travel is difficult for the majority. That is the reason why we want to have another property for many more people to participate.

Pelzomling, in Mexico City, with the active Gakyil that has been working in the last years is very important. A few years ago, they organized a special retreat with Rinpoche in Valle de Bravo. Last year Jim Valby lead a great practice retreat in Mexico City. Rinpoche has been to Baja several times where practitioners from the United

States and a few Mexicans participated. We have had Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance workshops with several very good teachers and, we are planning on inviting others for this and next year.

The Sangha is growing and working in our daily practice and we all want the teachings to flourish in this wonderful country.

I hope many of Rinpoche's students and teachers can come and help us build the Dzogchen Community in Mexico. I would like to offer to the committed practitioners who could travel to Mexico, a room in my home in Tepoztlan. We could practice together as well as with the Sangha in Mexico City.

Of course, the invitation is open for Rinpoche and his family to come when they can.

Thank you so much Rinpoche and Rosa for everything you give us!



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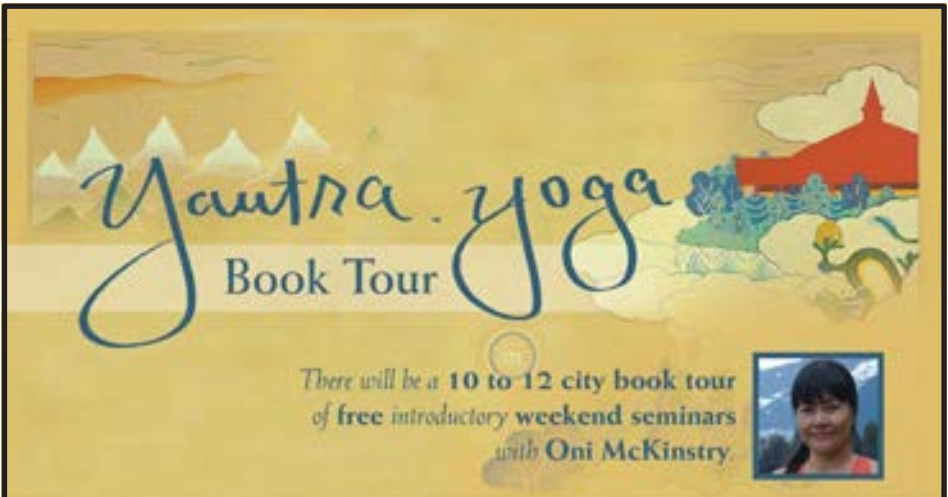
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ANCIENT TIBETAN YOGA
ALIVE IN THE WEST

The Tibetan Yoga of Movement Published by Snow Lion Publications Ithaca NY

YANTRA YOGA:
The Tibetan Yoga of Movement
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu translated by Adriano Clemente
122 pages, 45 line photographs,
100 line drawings

Yantra Yoga offers the practitioner an intriguing new approach to awareness practice and will serve to enhance one's physical health, energy, and mental balance. Called the Union of Sun and Moon energy, it is a dynamic system of movement. Profusely illustrated with drawings and photographs, Yantra Yoga presents Tibet's tantric yoga tradition as taught by one of its master exponents, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Yantra Yoga's movements, exercises, and methods of concentration are all based on an eight-century text whose translation is included, illuminated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's commentary. Detailed charts for the timing of the breathing exercises are also included.

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