

# THE MIRROR

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## Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: M. Farmer

**2009**

**Australia**  
Caloundra  
March 16–21  
Teaching Retreat

**Melbourne**  
April 3–5  
Weekend Teaching Retreat

**Namgyalgar**  
April 10–15  
Retreat

**April 17–22**  
Retreat

**Singapore**  
May 1–3  
Weekend Teaching Retreat

**Japan**  
May 8–10  
Weekend Teaching Retreat

**Russian Federation**  
Moscow  
May 15–19  
Retreat

**Germany**  
May 27–31  
Teaching Retreat

**Romania**  
Merigar East  
June 12–21  
Teaching Retreat

**June 2–28**  
SMS Base Exam  
**June 29–July 6**  
SMS I Level Training

**Italy**  
Merigar West  
August 7–17  
Rinpoche's Personal Retreat

**August 10–16**  
Retreat

**Sept. 4–14**  
Vacation in Sardegna

**Oct. 2–10**  
Retreat



Rinpoche teaching in the Gonpa at Tashigar South.

Photo: N. Zeitz

## “Don't go too much after titles of teachings”

Dzogchen Tregchöd Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Tashigar South, Argentina, December 26, 2008 to January 1, 2009

**Paul Sablich**

I have arrived to the conclusion that the best way to end a year and start a new one happens in a teaching retreat with our precious Master. The end of 2008 was crowned again with his limitless wisdom and compassion, in this opportunity, from Tashigar South in Cordoba, Argentina. An inclement and warm sun greeted us, while intense and prolonged summer rains greeted others. Christmas festivities were on, a nice excuse to share time together and enjoy a show with some improvised but joyful dancers. It is thus that this time of the year becomes not only an opportunity to be physically closer to Rinpoche and our Vajra brothers and sisters, but also, above all, to receive instructions on what the Master said is the main teaching in Dzogchen: Tregchöd or Total Relaxation

in the Presence (its name in the Upadesha series). Maybe trying to explain what Tregchöd is in a clear and precise way, as Rinpoche does, would be too daring. Nevertheless, I would like to comment some passages and events of this wonderful retreat which caught my attention.

At the beginning of the retreat, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said, “...having dualism vision is not main problem. The problem is we do not know how our real nature is, and we are not in that condition. Then all our karmic, ordinary vision becomes very concrete for us.” Then, problems and suffering become “real”. Nevertheless, the Teachings become an incomparable tool to discover or enter Dzogchen knowledge and dwell permanently in such non-intellectual

knowledge. This is the main practice, like drinking water: an activity made more to enjoy rather than to live. Naturally, Rinpoche is absolutely conscious of our still limited condition, which is why he presents us with a range of practices that we can apply to overcome our different limitations and recognize our true condition. One of them is known as Yeshe Zangthal and was transmitted to us during the second day of the retreat: through experiences of emptiness, clarity and joy we can discover Instant Presence. At the same time, that calendar day was New Moon, auspicious date to perform Ganapuja. Our patient Master explained once more the simple version of it, so all could take part in this banquet of limitless offerings and strengthen our Samaya. Later, the day

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### Teaching



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Dzogchen Teachings are related to transmission. We do not learn Dzogchen only through intellectual understanding. In this case, transmission becomes important. What is transmission in Vajrayana teaching? In Vajrayana you need to receive initiations with any kind of practice and teaching. If you don't receive initiations at least you need to receive the transmission of the lungs of all mantras. It doesn't mean when you receive a lung all is perfect. A lung is a kind of permission. You can recite mantras and produce the recitation of mantras. To make the recitation complete you need initiation, transmission of lung and instruction – all these three. Then you learn how to do the practice as well. This is generally done in Vajrayana teaching.

Dzogchen teaching is part of Vajrayana. Vajrayana, for the most part, is the path of transformation. That is the reason for the initiations. For example, if you are following sutra teaching, you don't need any initiation. You only need to do something like refuge and, in the Mahayana system, cultivating bodhicitta. You can study and learn everything related to the teachings in a more intellectual way. So you can see the difference.

We can have initiations related to the Anuyoga tradition in the Dzogchen teaching, but introduction is most important in the Dzogchen teaching. Introduction does not mean that the teacher explains, and then you listen and understand something. When we speak of transmission we speak of three kinds, and these three kinds are related to how this teaching originally arose. We say *gong da nyen gyü* (*dgongs brda snyan brgyud*) in Tibetan. Gong means direct transmission, so that means when we are in a state of dharmakaya we directly receive that understanding and knowledge. For example, when we say Vajradhara or Samantabhadra, and how the teaching was transmitted historically, we understand that all sambhogakaya manifestations received that transmission directly. Direct transmission means beyond words, beyond explanations, beyond visualizations like mandalas, deities, and pure dimensions.

That is the principle when we say *masam jöme* (*ma bsam brjod med*). *Masam jöme* means we cannot explain because it is beyond words; sometimes it means we cannot even think that. If we are generating a mandala and deities, we are doing that with our mind. That is not beyond mind. So *masam jöme* means it is beyond all this; it is the transmission from the dharmakaya and that is the origin; but then that transmission is received by sambhogakaya, and sambhogakaya transmitted it to nirmanakaya. Sambhogakaya means all manifestations through the essence of elements. So there are forms, different kinds of manifestations, and we say that the pure vision or sambhogakaya is transmitted to the nirmanakaya and from the nirmanakaya to our condition.

Many mahasiddhas, for example, even if they live in the human condition their capacity is not limited like an ordinary human being. They have the capacity to go and be beyond time, and for that reason they can have contact with sambhogakaya manifestations. Some people in our condition have some fantasy. These people say they have visions of sambhogakaya. It is not easy to have these visions; if you have those visions you can manifest the quality of sambhogakaya, even nirmanakaya, and then you must manifest like mahasiddhas, not only having sambhogakaya vision. In general we call this fantasy.

Sambhogakaya manifestations or visions are not fantasy. Some people take substances like drugs and say, "Oh, I have sambhogakaya visions." That is complete samsaric vision, not sambhogakaya vision. You are not respecting your energy level. You are charging your energy and then you have these kinds of aspects. You charge and charge, again and again, and then one day you explode. One day you finish your life and that is sambhogakaya for that person. So then you can understand what fantasy is.

You can understand the capacity of nirmanakaya manifestations like Guru Padmasambhava and all mahasiddhas. They have contact with sambhogakaya manifestations and receive transmissions. It means the real initiations you receive through sambhogakaya, through manifestations. You do not receive initiations by someone explaining that you should do this or that. That is ordinary oral teaching. There are oral teachings that started with Buddha Shakyamuni and for years and years Buddha taught these teachings everywhere. Everybody listened and heard what Buddha said. This is called oral teaching. When the teachers today explain for hours and hours what we should do, that is oral teaching. Maybe they are not just like Buddha Shakyamuni, who is a totally realized being, but even if they are not realized we consider them so, and we listen and receive oral transmission. This is called oral transmission.

Even though the books of very ancient teachings no longer remain with all the complete teachings but only



Photo: A. Chlimper

## Dzogchen and Direct Transmission

### Day 2 – The Dzogchen Tregchöd Teaching of Jigmed Lingpa from the Instruction of Yeshe Lama

Tashigar South, Argentina, December 27, 2008

some words of the root principle of the teachings called *nyengyü* (*snyan brgyud*), these are still oral teachings. For example, when Garab Dorje started Dzogchen teaching generally it is said that there was no Dzogchen teaching, and that is why he started to teach Dzogchen. But what it really means that there were no tantras and lungs and original books of Dzogchen teachings, like today. It does not mean there were no *nyengyü* or oral teachings and some important words, etc. *Nyengyü* teachings existed at the time of Buddha Shakyamuni and even before that. There were twelve or thirteen very famous teachers of Dzogchen in ancient times. All the teachings we have today, and most Dzogchen tantras, were not originally taught by Garab Dorje, but by many of these twelve teachers who transmitted and taught in different epochs.

But of course, the condition of our world and human beings in the human condition is always within time and time changes with circumstances. There have been many dark periods and also of periods of different kinds of teachings, and when the dark periods start then all teachings disappear. A few *nyengyü*-like things remain, because *nyengyü* does not require books or representation on the material level. *Nyengyü* remain in the mind of some practitioners or realized beings. Realized beings exist in any moment everywhere, sometimes manifesting openly and sometimes not. That is an example of *nyengyü*.

*Da yig* (*brda yig*) means with symbols. Teaching with symbols developed very much in tantrism in Vajrayana. In tantra, for example, the mandala and deities are all symbols, not the real condition. It is also the use of symbols when we do Guruyoga and the visualization of the white A and thigle. When we use that symbol, we can have the realization the same way that the mandala and deities, all the symbols, are developed. Even the manifestation of deities, how many arms and legs they have, what they hold in their hands, etc., everything is a symbol and represents something. That is why tantrism developed very much with the use of symbols.

In the Dzogchen teaching symbols are also very important. Sometimes if a teacher needs to explain to help the students understand such things, then by using symbols, people can understand much better. For example, one of the symbols used in Dzogchen teachings is the mirror. If we want to know the relationship of mind and nature of mind, explaining with words is not easy, but we can have a more clear idea by giving examples with a symbol. For example, we say nature of mind, our real condition, is like the potentiality of the mirror. We know that the mirror has infinite potentiality and for that reason anything we find in front of mirror can manifest instantly that reflection. We don't need to put any program in the mirror.

That means that infinite potentiality means going beyond any kind of program. That is the example of our real nature and our real nature has infinite potentiality. That is how we explain primordial potentiality, as sound, light and rays - just like the nature of the mirror. The mirror can manifest good or bad. The form, color and shape of the object in front of the mirror manifests perfectly. Even

if there is a small mirror, when you look in the mirror you can see the reflection of a gigantic mountain. It is impossible to put that gigantic mountain in a small mirror. But it can manifest. That is why we say infinite potentiality. So reflections are like our mind level. At the mind level we are judging, thinking and creating so many things. That is the example of different kinds of reflections, good or bad.

Now you think a little, what is the relation between that reflection and the mirror? Mirror means the potentiality of mirror, you cannot say there is no relationship between the reflection and the mirror, and then you can understand how that corresponds to the relationship of our mind to the nature of mind. It is just like that. You see how symbols function and help us to understand many things. Symbol and oral transmission are mainly for the direct transmission. We say there are three transmissions that are not independent, but they can be independent for some people. If someone did a lot of practice in a previous life and has knowledge of teaching, it is not necessary in this life that something like direct transmission is done. It can be that the teacher only explains orally that knowledge and that person wakes up. So in this case, it can be that oral transmission is independent. It can be the same way also for symbol transmission. We are not at that level. It is very difficult for us to be at that level.

In history there were some people who had this experience. For example, in ancient times, Manjushrimitra went to argue with Garab Dorje. He did not go to Oddiyana to learn and receive teachings from Garab Dorje, but when he asked Garab Dorje some questions, Garab Dorje used some words to explain, and through that oral transmission Manjushrimitra immediately woke up and became one of Garab Dorje's most important students. That is an example, so these kinds of students do exist. Also in Tibet we have history of these kinds of students, but it is very rare.

We mainly use direct transmission in Dzogchen Teaching. That is the principle taught by Garab Dorje. We have the three statements of Garab Dorje. Those statements are the conclusion of Dzogchen teachings, they are how we enter into and apply Dzogchen knowledge. How can we have realization of Dzogchen? Everything is related to these three statements of Garab Dorje. In the three statements of Garab Dorje, the first statement is direct introduction. That means the teacher introduces directly to the student. This is the Dzogchen way, not the tantric or sutric way. We introduce Dzogchen teaching, the real knowledge, which is beyond explanation. For that reason, the teacher cannot explain and introduce with oral transmission, but still the teacher explains for hours and hours to make the students understand how to have the knowledge and in which way one can receive direct transmission. The teacher also gives examples with symbols, so oral and symbol transmission function together. So this is how direct transmission is used in the Dzogchen teaching. ☸

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz



Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

## Dharma as Experience

Excerpt from teaching at Tsegyalgar West  
Baja California, Mexico  
Rigbaï Kujuug, The Six Vajra Verses  
Nov 24, 2008

Yeshi Namkhai gave this explanation at Tsegyalgar West in Baja, California. In this teaching Yeshi wanted to explain how it is possible to utilize aspects of modern society to explain Dzogchen, in this case he was specifically referring to the New Age trends that are particularly dominant in North America.

Now we will do an interesting exercise because sometimes things manifest by themselves. We understand that we cannot always relate in the same way, for example, Buddha needed to change his speech and the way he communicated with people; Buddha changed his speech, form and everything, relative to the different kinds of people and beings he addressed. Now I will take a text that I came to by chance because of a series of dreams I had in Moscow. These dreams were connected with the idea of a better understanding of the Prajna Paramita.

The study of the Prajna Paramita is definitely not my natural attitude because I am not a scholar at all. My character is exactly the opposite, so for me it was very strange to have these dreams about such a complicated text. It is complicated because I do not find it easy to memorize all these kinds of texts that are connected with behavior – behavior meaning that you work from logic on one side and you define a rule that reflects with some precise behavior and that behavior has symbolic meaning. Then you follow all the activities written step by step. The Prajna Paramita has this characteristic. You know very well the heart of this text is the heart sutra, but in the heart sutra it is written exactly the opposite. It says: “There is no nose, no eyes and in the end there is no dharma”, which means that in the end we try to integrate all as we always do as the final goal in Dzogchen.

What is important is that sometimes we get into the understanding of things, but eventually we transform because we work with mind, so it is very important. That is why we study the Precious Vase as the first Santi Maha Sangha text; we study this because we need to understand that we have three paths of liberation. We understand and work with all three paths. It is not that we take this path like a category and say it is like this or that, or in the end we say what is the nice or bad aspect of each and then choose something with our mind. And in the end we choose what we like but what we like is just a concept, something totally relative. If we work this way we don’t go into the meaning.

For example, this text that I found on the Internet is a series of experimental sessions of lectures and meditation. We usually

have this attitude to take texts, of course there are people who are so brave they even take a text like the Rigbaï Kujuug, and start to invent meditation from this, but generally people are more respectful; especially professors from universities. They take a sutra text and start to do meditation and say that if we don’t apply it, it makes no sense. They understand there is some activity to do.

How does it happen that sometimes people even understand some of the meaning? For example, in this case, I do not know who this person is and it is better I do not say the name, but he understood something and he said, “In this exercise I am giving in a Buddhist center, we will do meditation considering the first 5 letters of the Sanskrit alphabet that has more than 20 letters.” So this fellow works with the Prajna Paramita, the wisdom sutra, and takes this alphabet and for each letter he finds the connection in the wisdom sutra. But he says, “For the purpose of this exercise I decided to use experience as the translation of dharma. “ He thought to do something with the understanding of dharma as experience, which is interesting for someone who is working at the university and working with the wisdom sutra. For some reason he thought if he substituted the word dharma with the word experience, it would make a totally different meaning and sense.

That is why I found this in a very complicated way, which I will explain later. But it is important to understand how it works. He took this alphabet, the first five letters or syllables which are A RA PA SA NA, which is also the Manjushri mantra, A RA PA SA NA DI DI DI DI; you do a very strong DI like you do with the Tara practice. So for each of these syllables he found an explanation in the wisdom sutra. For example, with the letter A, which is the same as the Tibetan A, but of course in Sanskrit it is not written like Tibetan. He says that this A is the door to the insight of all dharmas that are not produced, which means they are not born from the very beginning. So it means dharma, from the letter A, from the vowel sound, and therefore it means all dharma comes from the sound of the letter A. Without being born. This is the same meaning we have in Dzogchen. That is why we sound the letter A. And then he says, “But how do I substitute the word dharma with experience?” He gives a very interesting explanation and he says, “So rather than thinking for instance that there is in-breath and out-breath,” why is he talking about breathing? He is talking about breathing because they do meditation, sutra style, and they go and meet together and breathe



Yeshi Namkhai teaching in Baja, California, Mexico November 2008.

Photo: P. Barry

thinking they have to open their minds and feel emptiness or shunyata. At the maximum they arrive to this understanding.

Eventually he did a correct substitution because he says, “I don’t have to think about in and out-breath, we can reflect that there is nothing called breath, there is just the experience of the physical sensation of breathing.” From a physical point of view that is correct. Also for a Dzogchen practitioner it is correct. We don’t give importance to what we contemplate; we just accept the state as it is. We understand it is a state. Unfortunately then he speaks only about the physical sensation of breathing. So immediately we understand what the path of renunciation is; it means to work with the body. But we are Dzogchen practitioners so we don’t limit to the point of only physical breathing. What is breathing? Breathing is life. So what is the difference between understanding the meaning of the letter A in this context that he explains, even totally intellectually, and what we are doing? There is no difference. If you understand the path of renunciation then we can do this in the same way, we can join this meditation group and do exactly the same. The difference is that maybe they still continue to think there is body, but we know that the body is just a vision, but the method is correct because we are not thinking that in and out breath makes some thing, we just know that breathing is part of our life. Our body is connected to this breathing and this letter has certain kinds of power, which is the origin of unborn dharma.

What is dharma? Dharma is experience because we know that beside reality there is the second type of vision, the vision of the experience of the practitioner. At this point when we get these two understandings, immediately the third understanding appears, pure vision. If we are Dzogchen practitioners we can interpret it like this. This is something totally new age that you can find in any place on the Internet.

I am trying to explain this because people are very much connected to the idea of form. If

someone very cool comes with some books in a very nice meditation center, and then starts to talk like this and maybe he looks nice and a lot of people think he has knowledge, let’s do what he says, but the main point is to understand what we are talking about.

This is about the first letter. This scholar tried to go a little deeper, but of course there is a limit of understanding of the approach of renunciation. Instead of thinking in terms of the feeling that this is my body, try to think in terms that there is a physical feeling. What does this mean? Instead of thinking that this is my body, try to think about the nature of the feeling itself. This is the nature of body. If we get the nature of body and since everything is connected, when you discover one you discover all, and immediately you must discover the nature of mind. This is why sutra works. When you really understand the meaning of sutra, then sutra works perfectly, when you understand the nature of the body then you can understand the nature of mind. Immediately. It cannot be different. All has to manifest. We have three existences and all three should manifest at the same time. “Focus on the experience that is the flow of sensation and perhaps mental activity, rather than extrapolating from experience something solid,” he says. That means focus on experience itself, leave it as it is, instead of focusing on the idea of the experience. So it’s correct. It is what I explained until now.

Then there is the second letter RA. “It is the door to the insight that all dharmas are without dirt.” What does this mean? This means that there is a third vision called pure vision. This is the main meaning. Something done once might be pleasant, but done a dozen times may be unpleasant. That means you get bored. One day the same thing that may thrill us may bore us. Experience is just experience and therefore it is pure. This is correct. It means if we understand that experience is just experience, the vision of a practitioner, then this vision immediately becomes a quality and a kind of wisdom. It is one of the wisdoms of Buddha. Even

this fellow understood this part of this text; what we are talking about. This is not different from Dzogchen.

He goes on and after RA, which is the understanding of real experience, then there is the understanding of our limit. There is no time or space. PA is about this. Then it is very interesting when he goes on to explain PA. PA is a little tricky in the sutra of wisdom. It says that PA is the door to the insight that all dharmas have been expounded to the ultimate sense. For me how he gets the meaning is incredible. He says, “Try to say something about sensation totally out of the meaning”, but at a certain point he says, “If I look down at my body this is simply a sensation of sight. If we are looking behind the mirror to see if we see the object inside the mirror, we only find the mirror.” So somehow he understands what the real meaning is. We all have illusion. Somehow simply from changing the word from dharma to experience he gets a different understanding. First of all this means that we are very much conditioned by words. So when we study Buddhism, like a professor, it’s enough to change to have this little understanding, this knowledge, or one second of wisdom that gets this connection that dharma can also be experience. Immediately this sutra makes totally difference sense.

This is what Rinpoche always says. We don’t have to be attached to words. We have to go beyond this vision of form; words are form. That’s all. Then there is SA, for example. It is the door of the insight that decrees. The birth of any dharma and so on; it’s about being reborn. The important part is that he reflects about experience and discovery. “Once we start thinking about this experience or that experience, my experience or yours, we are already dividing up these things.” Which means it’s not a matter of yours and mine. It’s vision. In general we have insight of vision, because these are all doors, gates to understanding, these 5 letters. Why does this all come? If I go to the text for sure I do not find this written. He just

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Interview with Yeshi Namkhai

by Susan Carol from Destino Los Cabos Magazine  
<http://www.destinomagazines.com/index.html>

Baja California, November 2008

**Susan:** In our newspaper we cannot go into too much depth about the teachings, but I would like to know something about you as a teacher who has come to Baja. It is very intriguing to Mexicans and Americans to know that this [the Dzogchen Community] is going on here. I wanted to ask, since you are a business consultant, how did you get on this path that finally led you out into the world to teach?

**Yeshi Namkhai:** It was always this way; there has been no change really. About how I experienced change in a more traditional way, to say that someone has this kind of change [experience] like in the movies, when you start off in a certain way, you have a climax and everything changes and then you can connect yourself with this experience and you suddenly have empathy and so on; it is not like this. When you have something deep, it is always deep. Then there is the right moment to do something and you see that you have to do it and you do it, otherwise you don't need to change anything. This is the main point. But time is passing and the Dzogchen Community is quite widespread. We have 6000 members around the world.

**S:** Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is your father. Were you raised under this umbrella of teaching and the Tibetan way of life? Was it pervasive in your home?

**YN:** Well, no, but of course if your father is Tibetan you will know something about Tibetan culture. I lived mostly as a normal Italian. Then when it was the moment, I chose the way I preferred. So I did both. I grew up with certain values connected to the Asian tradition; values connected with friendship, with understand-

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understands the sense of experience. This means that the way we learn, the way we deal with words, with visions of karma, are totally relative. It doesn't mean that he did a fantastic study and he found the real meaning of this sutra. It is not written in the sutra that we should interpret it in this way. Simply he had some understanding and understanding manifests in this way. This is the way we manifest.

So when we say we should keep the transmission pure it means from one side we have to work with text. To be precise and not inventing, not going around and saying that Dzogchen is this and inventing something. From one side we take the text and the other the commentary and we work precisely with this. ©

Transcribed and Edited  
by Naomi Zeitz

ing of life and death, values that are a lot different from common Catholic values. In Catholic values you have different images. In the Catholic religion the metaphysical is stressed, something outside of yourself. In Buddhism it is a lot more the inner side. So you work a lot more with your inner vision. At this point, I integrate both; I live respecting totally the Catholic religion. As a matter of fact, the Dzogchen Community respects the Catholic religion, but we know we are interested in this path and we continue with this knowledge. I am not trying to influence my children because it makes no sense and in the end they will decide what they want. This teaching is more connected with knowledge; you need to have this knowledge to discover this knowledge. It is not about believing something or not. You choose to believe and this is a totally different approach. So for this reason I grew up with this attitude and I do the same with my family.

**S:** What happened along your path that caused you to come out and teach, like here in Baja?

**YN:** Dreams are particular to this transmission lineage. Of course everyone deals with dreams because they are part of our lives; half of our life we spend sleeping. We cannot pretend to develop our practice while we are working or traveling, so of course we need to develop while we are sleeping. This is the main point, but besides this we can say when we are dreaming we are in a state that is not limited, so it is easier that we may have some clarity and understanding of the future. I already had dreams some time ago about this place. But you cannot always leave everything and go. If you have a family then you have to take care of your family, your wife, your children, and you try to do all that is possible for both. You try to take care. When I saw that time was passing and the Community was growing a lot, I thought maybe I would try and help a little bit. This was what happened. It was a natural progression. That is the main point. And it is progressing in a way that it was thought of from the beginning.

**S:** Is Dzogchen something special to this generation?

**YN:** No, this teaching is very ancient. But it is always revealed differently because we live in time and space and time change every time; we ourselves are different and even the teacher is different every time, but the essence should be the same. So traditionally we say when there is a reincarnation, it is like liquid in the cup. When the cup breaks you take the liquid and it goes in another cup, which is the body of the new teacher.



Yeshi Namkhai teaching in Moscow.

Photo: I. Shakov

But it does not really fit with the understanding of Dzogchen; Dzogchen doesn't work like this. It is not such a physical thing. It makes no sense that we are going and checking [for reincarnations]. I was in Tibet in the summer of 2007. I went to my monastery and there were some monks who knew me in the previous life and so on and I recognized a lot of things from my previous life there, but really I did not even tell them because I thought it is not good. You say that and then they start to worship, and they start to worship the object without understanding the teaching. They had also received teaching from my father. It is much more important that you understand the teaching than you attach to this object. Nothing changes if an object is recognized, but something changes if you understand what is the meaning of this teaching. Then you discover it is your path and you already follow this path. So a lot of things because obvious and normal, because a lot of people do some chanting, some mantra, and this mantra you recognize and you start to chant and you feel something special and then people think, "Oh that is incredible that I feel something special", but it is obvious if you spend all your life doing this at least you should recognize something if it's your path. If you really did this your whole life of course you will recognize it. But then you don't give it too much importance; you try to understand in this moment, this life, what you have.

**S:** It seems that teacher like you always get groups who want to attach and be literal about your teachings. How do you reconcile that with what you are doing now?

**YN:** This is the normal attitude of people. An attitude of grouping, and being literal is a natural thing, so you have also this side. It is important to understand the meaning and when you understand the meaning you try to apply. Of course you can always make a

mistake. No one is perfect. Maybe you are perfect and you realize and you have enlightenment, but this probably happens at the end of your life, if you are lucky. Or maybe it takes many lives. This is what Buddha said. We try to go into the essence, to the understanding, and then, of course, people have different situations, different conditions...some take two minutes, some two years and some two lives to understand something very simple.

**S:** How about the rabbis, ministers and priests. Do they accept your teaching? Do you encounter resistance to your teaching?

**YN:** This kind of situation is very high level. This is more a public situation, where you have different kinds of meetings. Of course my father did that. Already within the field of Tibetan Buddhism we have this aspect and sometimes problems. Tibetan Buddhism is divided into four main schools and we don't support the idea of creating a school or belonging to a school. So we already are a bit strange for them. Traditionally it has been thought that my father belongs to the Nyingmapa School. At this big ritual called the Kalachakra in Graz, Austria, with His Holiness the Dalai Lama they gave my father a place of respect in the Nyingmapa section. But he said, "Oh maybe I have problems with my knees" and he tried to go where all the people were sitting, but of course in the end they could not accept that and prepared a chair and everything. There is this idea of respect and the teacher must sit higher and so on, but he decided to do things differently because he does not want to be categorized in a school, etc. We don't care, but other people care. If they see he is sitting in the Nyingmapa section, they will think they have to fight and struggle.

My father created a meeting for Pope Paul the XI and His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He organized all so that they could meet. He was the man that organized also for the Karmapa, another

important figure in Tibetan Buddhism. The Dalai Lama is head of the Gelugpas, the biggest school, and the Karmapa is the head of the Kagyupas. My father made possible a connection between the Vatican and the Tibetan tradition many years ago.

**S:** So your father is the founder of this tradition?

**YN:** Yes, at least of this Dzogchen Community. In Buddhism we say there are three jewels: the Teacher, the Teaching and the Community. I am part of this lineage. Before, one of my father's teachers was his uncle, and I am a reincarnation of this uncle.

**S:** When did you discover that?

**YN:** Rinpoche knew this from one of his dreams from the Longsal cycle. He had this dream of meeting my mother and then I was born and so on. Then once he sent out a Christmas postcard with my picture saying Happy Christmas, and one of the main leaders and teachers of the Sakya School saw my photo and recognized me as a reincarnation of my father's uncle. That is part of a very famous lineage called Jamyang Khyentse. It is a very ancient lineage and one of the first five in Tibet. But then of course some are recognized because they really have something and some are recognized because the monastery needs a guide, someone to sit on the throne. Usually I don't talk very much about this.

**S:** What was it like growing up with this knowledge?

**YN:** Of course it is not easy because you have all these people saying, "Oh I hope you come at least one day before I die and I can see you". It was like this in the summer in Tibet and there were these old men and women waiting to see me before they died. Of course for them it is very important.

**S:** How did you handle that?

**YN:** You go there and make them happy, of course. You dress Tibetan, you do what they want;



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at least before they die so they die happily. This doesn't mean they really understand something about this teaching, but at least you make them happy. Of course when you realize and understand this when you are 20 years old, it is not easy to accept. Maybe when you are 30 and you have a family, maybe you can accept it a bit more easily. You are more ready to do something like this. For sure I did not go when I was younger, I was not ready to do something like this, to face this kind of situation.

S: So is there are teachers trained with you who lead the Community, or do people only gather when you are around or how do they get together?

YN: Really we don't have this precise idea of 'teachers'. Some groups have this kind of structure but this is more Lamaistic. In this case someone is called Lama, and that person has intellectual knowledge. You are working and you have an exam and when you pass this exam you are allowed to teach. We try to see if there is a clear sign and then when things need to manifest they manifest by themselves. We do have a course called Santa Maha Sangha that is a typical Buddhist course of study, because if something is not clear then at least it is clear what you need to say. You can follow a book and there are some study texts.

My father is a very famous researcher, and besides all the books he has written, he is one of the most famous researchers of Tibetan history and culture in the world. He is the most famous person in the world after His Holiness the Dalai Lama regarding Tibetan Culture. He has written the most about the source of Tibetan culture. Most people think it comes from Chinese culture, but this is not true. It is a lot more ancient. He wrote a lot, he taught a lot about it and then in the end his version was realized as the most realistic. In the beginning when he came to the west no one believed him. Slowly, he became famous as a researcher and whatever he does he uses a scientific approach. Not really like others, who just tell some stories.

Now he is working on a very famous text called the Dra Thalgyur. This text, the Dra Thalgyur, is the most ancient text for Dzogchen teaching. There are some commentaries. This text is difficult to read, it is even for a Tibetan to understand the meaning. So he collected all the commentaries he could find, as well as writing his own. He is not saying these are his ideas, but he is explaining the text in general. For example, in the book he is writing now, he uses different colors indicating which commentary it is. For example, if you are talking about the commentary of the direct students of Buddha, like Vairocana, then my father indicates Vairocana's commentary with the color red. Then the other commentaries are in other colors and he adds his commentary

in black because he wants to be very humble and with his commentary he says generally maybe this text means this or that. He is teaching like this and he teaches a lot from these kinds of texts via web casts.

So it can be interesting for anyone who is interested in Dzogchen. The idea is we don't close and we don't say this is my Dzogchen. It is a very ancient tradition and we can say the way Rinpoche [my father] received understanding, is very typical of the Dzogchen Community Longsal terma. So the way he receives understanding is typical, but we never say this is my Dzogchen, because if you go around on the Internet you find everyone is talking about Dzogchen now. Rinpoche was the only and the first in the west to talk about Dzogchen. Also his lineage is totally connected with Dzogchen and Rinpoche is also recognized as the emanation, which means the mind of and not really the body of, an ancient teacher in Tibet called Adzom Drugpa. If you do research you will discover that this teacher was not monastic. He used a system of teaching and living together because Dzogchen teaching has the characteristic that if the teaching does not fit to the reality [daily life] something is wrong. If it reveals in time and space, it has to reveal perfectly, fit perfectly.

The first place that Adzom Drugpa organized was called Gar, which in Tibetan means place. He meant a place where you can develop knowledge. In the same way, Rinpoche created the Dzogchen Community. At the end, it also fits today. But at that time it was something crazy. Now it is normal.

For example, one of the students Adzom Drugpa accepted when she was running away from Chinese persecution was Rinpoche's grandmother. She had no idea of receiving teachings, absolutely no idea. She had a totally different kind of life, she was totally into the world of money, married to one of the richest Tibetans in the region and she really didn't care about the teaching. When she was running away from the Chinese and she couldn't find any place to hide. She had help from one family and then she met Adzom Drugpa's son and she received a lot of teachings. After a while this little child came out and she recognized that he was an emanation of her teacher, Adzom Drugpa. Still now when Rinpoche is giving a certain Tara practice - there is one form of Tara that is yellow, very common in Buddhist tradition for money and wealth, and called the Odser Chenma manifestation, which is a Tara with a sun at the back and so on – he is giving instruction he received from his grandmother. His grandmother was very humble, but she wrote something about her experiences with her teacher and during instruction. She had dreams about this manifestation of Tara. Rinpoche has done

## Earth Ox Year

for my vajra brothers & sisters

Hail, to the herd instinct moving us in unison through winter's thick and thin over razors edge between this or that crest. One-pointed focus tames brute force of cloven hoofs to the grindstone, heads bowed intently with nostrils flared — our horns poised to strike the bullwork of obstacles shored up against realization or imagined enemies. For, we are the earth-movers, who graze with ease among sticks and stones where nothing grows except a sweet determination to succeed!.

Best Wishes to all this coming year,  
Jacqueline Gens  
Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

this version of the practice he received from his grandmother for his whole life. His grandmother was a very good practitioner. Rinpoche discovered this text and he had a lot of dreams that he wrote down. So today when we do Odzer Chenma practice, we do this version precisely. This is somehow unique. Everyone does Tara practice. It is very common. When you don't know what to do, you do Tara, they say in the Tibetan tradition. But one of things is that we try and be correct in the lineage because it means there is direct contact and something meaningful.

S: You were saying in the teaching about how the body comes and goes but the mind stays in tact. Is that how you put it? How do you put words around what the mind is?

YN: Mind is more the access to understanding. There is not really an idea of something outside. There is just an illusion that there is something outside in the real sense. We have this illusion because we do not understand vision. We have body and immediately we believe in the sensation of body, but it doesn't mean when we have feelings and ideas that these feelings and ideas are real. For example, for us when our husband or wife has a relation we feel bad. This feeling bad can also create cancer for example. How many people have this problem? But this is the same reality as touching your body in the end. This means it is vision only and if it is vision there is no idea of something. It's mind. First you recognize mind, what kind of nature it has. Then maybe you can discover there is something else. Maybe you discover something so extraordinary that maybe today it is better not to think. This is what we say is kept secret. All this visionary area of this tradition says, "Oh the dimension may not only be one, there are six main dimensions with eight families and all these that are presented are terrible. Just imagine something that is different from our conception. For some beings it is normal to eat each other. Or there are beings

that do not have certain kinds of limits. For us it is totally different at this point. We feel fear. It easier for us to think of something similar to how we are. So if there is mind, it is a general consciousness and this is very easy to think. But we don't know if this is true. First we have to understand how is mind, what is the nature of mind, and then maybe we can discover something more. This is the main point.

This view is not so different from most cultures. Every culture is looking for something. There are a lot of cultures that also use substances to discover consciousness and understanding, like the shamanic approach and so on. The point is if you are still in the limitation of what you see, you discover only what you see. If you understand this is only one of the possibilities and you discover nature of mind, then you probably discover all. It's by chance that shamanism discovered this side and in the other part of the world someone discovered something else, but as they are limited in their vision they only understand this. If you see a bottle like this you think a bottle is only like this. You cannot recognize the nature of bottle. The bottle contains liquid but if you are into the nature of this object, even if the bottle is bigger or smaller, you can understand it can contain liquid.

S: Would you say the only way to understand these concepts is to study other concepts? So maybe you can see there is a similarity?

YN: In our normal way it is a little like this. We observe, also through a scientific method, and then through observation we can define a law. We can say the bottle is like this. It is something you can immediately understand when you are traveling. In this place Coca Cola is made like this, in another country it is not in plastic but in glass, and then you discover that Coca Cola is different in different places; but until you travel you do not discover that. I don't even speak about mind. Even Coca Cola can be different. Something so common and something for which there

is publicity all the time, even this you can discover this is different. Then you discover it has a different nature, you have to go into the nature of what you are drinking instead of just looking at the bottle, and like this maybe you discover.

S: When you were in the business world, which is very contrary to what we are studying with the Dzogchen teaching, how did you keep yourself balanced?

YN: I have to say this is totally wrong. I mean all people think like this. I had a very fast career because I had a totally different approach to business. I became the youngest manager in my company and my company is a big international company. It has something like seventy-four different companies all over the world. It is huge and it is based in the northeast of Italy. My section worked with IT systems, information technology, and I was a very young manager because I had a totally different approach to the business. I really did not work with the idea of making more profit, but with the idea of balancing all the main aspects. When you have a company today you discover the companies that work better are the ones that have correct balance between profit, customers, internal activities, knowledge and the growing of knowledge. So people have to feel good in their company. You don't make people happy with money. You make people happy when they feel fine and are satisfied with their job and also from the other side, when they learn something. We spend most of our time working and if we don't learn anything it becomes very difficult to work. So I always use this modern and holistic approach.

S: Not having the profit concept, did you get the organization to move that way and did they see the benefit?

YN: Also if you sell only for profit, the first time you may sell and the second time you won't sell anything. Anyway you need some

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intimacy between customer and supplier. In the modern world you have to work like this and then it is more about collaboration, in the end. And I was always into building the relation of collaboration. Maybe today you don't make the profit, but after two years you notice that still you have a relation, and relation means we are both surviving. You can't make money all the time. Sometimes it is more about surviving. Also when you see your company instead of being twenty people, it becomes two hundred people. This is fine. Somehow you help two hundred families. You gave jobs to two hundred people. This is a very common approach. Harvard Business School calls this system a balanced scorecard. This is a holistic approach. In Italy it is not very common, not very diffused, so I was a little bit in the group of people applying a more modern approach and technology. Basically I apply the basic approach from the teaching. They fit perfectly. I just said, "Ah, this comes from the Harvard Business School and it works like this because someone understood in the end we cannot only make profit. We have to take care of people. So they invented this system and it works. In the US it works perfectly." It also worked in Europe. I was lucky because my boss was interested in working with the idea of culture, not really with profit.

Also I was invited to do strategy with companies, not only for technical issues, like how to make this company alive. Maybe a company was on the market and now it has problems. Of course I was in a more technical area, but anyway, you have to attend a meeting. You arrive at the strategy meeting and there is the president of the company and the owner, mostly the owners in the European reality, and they look at you and say, "And your boss, when is he coming?" "No really it's me", you say. And then they start to look very badly at you. They are thinking, "This very young man, what does he want?" Anyway I started to work and after one hour I say yes, but I am married and I have two children and they say, "Ah, this is already something." They recognize at least you have some life experience. Then they ask where you come from and they realize that you are from a mixed culture and that is good and then they notice that maybe you drive very far to get there, and you can man-

age your family, drive around for your work, all this is good. Then they start to understand that you are not so stupid. After that, in the end, they start to trust a little. The point is at the end they ask, what is the difference between you and others because you are doing better than they are. They could not get what was different. "Oh, maybe I am Buddhist, that is why." "Oh", they say, "I am interested in that too." And then I discover all are interested. Because they understand there is an approach that is connected to human vision. Not only to worshipping something. It is more active. They recognize that and they say, "Oh this is good, I am very interested."

**S:** Do you think people understand that Buddhism is a way of life and not a doctrine?  
**YN:** It depends. Some understand and some not.

**S:** So you are just leaving your corporate business life and are going to do teaching full time?  
**YN:** I do what is needed really. I don't think I will leave or not. If I want to go back to work I have plenty of offers. I don't have problems in that area. The main point is I do what is needed now.

**S:** You are the main teacher other than your father?  
**YN:** No, no. My father is the teacher. I am only helping. It is different. I am not going around saying I am a teacher, absolutely not. If you start doing this then the questions arise, like where are you, what are you doing, what is your lineage, what are your plans for the future, what is your strategy. I am not at all interested in this. I try to do something useful if I see there is some need. If there is not anymore need I can live perfectly doing something else because it is easier. For sure it is easier to work than teach, without a doubt.

**S:** Why is that and what is easier?  
**YN:** Because when you are teaching you are miserable. This is the main point. At least on this path it works like this. You need to understand what the real problem is, what the nature of the problem is. How can you understand the nature of the problem without having experience? Someone tells you, "Oh I have this problem, I lost my parents, I have this problem with my wife, my husband, all this attachment", how can you understand this? It is



Photo: S. Carol

not only that you read a book and you are in a nice place and you do meditation; you need to have experience. And when the teaching is manifesting you have experience anyway. So it's not easy. You are supposed to overcome this, no? To show how you can overcome. So you need experience.

**S:** I never heard a teacher say that before but it probably is more difficult to be a teacher than to live life. I don't think regular people would think that.  
**YN:** It's not easy. Imagine if you have four or four thousand students. How many things would you need to know? There are things that are universal. There are things that are absolute and relative and you need to be able to help on both sides. We have a dualistic vision. It's not enough you say, "Oh it's like this, it's perfect", but if I don't say the right word for you in this moment, you don't get what I am saying. We communicate through language and words; words are limited. Experience is beyond words. Experience is something you have to try yourself. It is not that simple. You cannot be too young or not have life experience. If your community is made of normal working people, you also need to have this experience. That is our teacher, our founder, he is not working now because he retired, but he worked all his life. There are not many teachers like my father. He worked all his life and had so much success. How can you teach if you don't know what modern life is? You come from

the cave and stay there in your golden temple and what do you know? Nothing. You dress in Tibetan or Hindu style and you go there and they make some music and what do you know?

**S:** So you feel you have to take care of the Dzogchen Community at this point?  
**YN:** Of course if I say I recognize 'The Three Jewels', that does not mean I only recognize the Teacher. I have to take care of each one of the three aspects. If I see that here there are a few people who need help, I try to come here. Before there were two thousand six hundred people in Russia and there had not been retreats for years until I went there. They had problems to organize retreats. Russia is not an easy country. Russia is not easy for permission, and they are against all religious organizations. Now we are trying to organize. You see, for example, there are one thousand people waiting in Russia and you cannot go because you do not have a visa. So I went there to see what the possibilities are and in the end we went to this Buddhist state in Russia. This is the first time we had something like that and I was very happy. When we had this meeting with the president of Kalmykia, the president said he was very impressed because he never saw a lama working. Rinpoche said, "Yes imagine, for many years people were criticizing me because I drove a car, imagine if they knew I was working and using a laptop on line, instead of writing by hand

in Tibetan." It is like this. For us it is normal. We integrate into life. For others it is better to dress a certain way and have a certain distance. Our path is connected with the way of integration, so we have to have this experience of modern life.

So I decided I would like to have important experiences in my life, not just work 9-5 and do nothing, have no responsibility and so on. So as soon as I had the possibility I started to run as fast as possible because I thought maybe one day I have to help, at least I want to know what life is. It's like if someone is saying, "Oh, I don't like communism or capitalism", I had friends who said, "Oh these people are rich with their nice cars, but I don't like these people, they are horrible", and I said, "Oh yes, I had this nice car and it is better to drive a nice car." It is up to you to understand the nature of these things. It is obvious that to live more comfortably is better, and then you don't know if you will always this possibility, so when you have, to try to enjoy. You enjoy without thinking and when you have it.

**S:** Well we have come to the end. Thank you for graciously sharing your time and it will be nice to share this with our readers. ©

Transcribed by Naomi Zeitz  
Edited by Naomi Zeitz & Liz Granger

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went on with an interesting video of Asia Onlus.

Our retreat continued the next day, starting with Guruyoga of A and Song of Vajra. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche stressed the importance of reciting it once and again in order to discover through it, our true nature. Also, the connection and interest that practitioners must have in relation to the Teachings was manifested when

Master asked: "Which is the first capacity, most important for following Dzogchen Teaching? Reply: Your participation".

Rinpoche's work never ends. He commented that it took him several years, working day and night to copy and revise a commentary of the Dra Thalgyur Tantra, until it was perfect (and he is still revising it). And, what do we work for? We work in order to discover our true Nature. In doing so, we

discover the whole universe in its totality..."when you discover one, you discover all" quoted our Jewel of Space on the fourth day of the retreat. Also, he asked us to train in not following our thoughts, since that is the origin of all our troubles. Only in the state of Instant Presence we will be beyond all mental conditioning, without changing anything. In this way, it is mind that must obey us and not the other way around. Therefore, when we ask ourselves "who am

I" we must answer: "I am my potentiality, my instant presence." That day ended with a moving and inspiring video of the story of Namgyalgar. In it, Rinpoche said "everything is possible. Maybe a little complicated, but possible", a quote we should have always in mind. Later, we could enjoy two funny anecdotes of the Master, related to the moment of singing Song of Vajra and its "summoning power" in cows and elephants!

And speaking about animals, metaphorically speaking, Dzogchen practitioners correspond to eagle category according to a Semde text. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche said at the beginning of the fifth day of the retreat that a small eagle is perfect while it is inside the egg and when it comes out it is ready to fly. In the same way, the progress of practitioners is very fast, which is different to other paths of liberation. So, in

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# Australia Celebrates The Master’s Return

Jan Cornall

Rinpoche’s return to Australia after a six-year absence was marked by celebrations across the whole country. In a timely coincidence Australia Day was in full swing – a national holiday which celebrates the arrival of the first fleet of English convicts on 26 January 1788. Indigenous Australians call this day ‘Invasion Day’ as it marks the beginning of the destruction of the nomadic tribes, which have inhabited this continent for over 10,000 years. Fittingly that evening just below Rinpoche’s bird’s nest apartment looking out over Darling Harbour, a public concert with Indigenous songs and dances was projected on a large screen hanging over the water. At 9 o’clock outside Rinpoche’s window, a huge fireworks display lit up the sky for fifteen minutes with Fabio recording on video from the living room. The Sydney Gakyil couldn’t have planned a better welcome.

On the Friday night in a grand hall at the Masonic Centre Rinpoche gave his public talk to an attentive crowd. Those of us who haven’t seen our Master since 2003 stood pinching ourselves and hugging old friends. Rinpoche’s teaching was strong and powerful, covering the basics of the Four Noble Truths, the difference between Sutra, Vajrayana and Dzogchen and giving simple techniques for practice in daily life, like making a commitment to simply be present for one or two hours a day. He also remarked that those who come to the Dzogchen teachings most certainly have a previous connection with Dzogchen. Many of us I know, who have arrived at Dzogchen by accident or strange coincidence share an unmistakeable feeling of having arrived home. Of course in Sydney as in other places, many follow the Master fervently then drift away into other parts of their lives. Some lucky ones however find that not only the teachings but the teacher arrives right back on their doorstep. On this occasion the hotel concierge where Rinpoche was staying

happened to be an old student of Rinpoche’s who was very active in the Sydney community in the go’s. One day he woke up to find not only his Master staying in his hotel but he was reunited with Vajra brothers and sisters he has been sorely missing in his life. It is strange how far away from one another we can sometimes feel, only to find we are just living in the next suburb.

After the talk as the public went on their way with Rinpoches’s strong words and presence imprinted in their minds, a bunch of old Sangha friends ended up in China Town eating and drinking and remembering old times. Mark Farrington (just in from London), Sydney/ Canberra community members and organisers: Tony, Twii, Heather, Trevor, Meg, and Jonas (concierge) Alatheia, Pamela, myself and others had much catching up to do – so much can happen in six years! .

Next day at the Sydney University Village our weekend retreat began. Rinpoche arrived and got straight into explaining how we can apply the Dzogchen teachings, expanding on the introduction he had given the previous evening and emphasising the importance of Guru Yoga. Not far into the teaching I wrote in my notes in capitals – HOW YOU CAN REALISE? APPLY WHAT THE TEACHER HAS TAUGHT!

The importance of this rhetorical question is not lost on me and I reflected on what a joy and privilege it is to be reminded personally by Rinpoche to apply the practices he so tirelessly teaches us year after year. Each time you hear these reminders it seems there is a deepening, as if you are hearing it for the first time or in a different way to before. Some of us noted afterwards –“Rinpoche is teaching exactly what we want to hear! How did he know this was my question?” Answer: HE KNOWS!

After lunch Elise Stuchbury explained the Short Thun to newcomers and following a delicious afternoon tea spoke about the international community, while Tony Laurent showed clips from



Rinpoche's arrival in Sydney.

Photo: P. Kapp

the Dzogchen Community video journal – Buriatia, Merigar, Margarita Is, Rinpoches travels to Tibet in 1997, and more. Also playing at the bookshop was the long awaited video history of Namgyalgar beautifully woven together by Graeme Horner and Lynn Geary. It shows archival footage of Rinpoche’s teachings and travels to Australia from the mid eighties, the buying of the land and the development of the gar until 2003.

On Sunday morning Rinpoche explained more about daily practice. He said, “We think when someone does one hour of practice per day that is very good but what about the other twenty-three hours? We must integrate twenty-four hours a day by going into the essence”. Here I wrote in capitals: OUR LIFE BECOMES PRACTICE!

He also said “Try to learn the essence of the teaching, not going after intellectual study but using what we learn. The most important is Guru Yoga. Wake up with Guru yoga, go to sleep with Guru Yoga. Integrate the four moments of sitting, standing, sleeping and eating, then we have possibility for realisation.”

He explained also in a simple way to do practice of the night and a twenty-four hour dark retreat. I’ve read and tried many times to do the practice of the night bringing the A up from the heart to the throat and so on.

This time Rinpoche said, “As you go to sleep, rest in the presence of A.” Doh! I got it! I tried it. I had a dream, not profound, not lucid, but an experience of bliss. An experience, aha, that’s something! I will try again tonight and the next and the next. And this time I won’t give up and say – “Oh, but it doesn’t work for me.” I will continue until it does!

At the end of the teaching as we sang the Song of Vajra I remembered many other times and places I had sung this wonderful song. Most recently at the funeral of Carmel Lennon, another long time practitioner we hadn’t seen for many years. She was there in Kyneton in 1989 when we stood singing around Rinpoche as he sat in a small cave at Hanging Rock. I remember singing it at midnight in the gonpa at Namgyalgar at the Millennium New Year when the first web cast went out to the world community. And in 1990 in the smoke filled medicine room at Merigar just before The Dalai Lama visited. At Wat Buddhha Dharma in the wild days of endless chod practice around blazing bonfires and long Guru Dragpur sessions when Rinpoche was recovering from his cancer. And now we were singing together again as if it was yesterday.

Lucky for us, Rinpoche is in Australia for three months with several retreats planned. There will be a lot of reminiscing and remembering going on. When

some one important returns into your life it is easy to become reflective, maybe even nostalgic and yet when the master arrives again in person every thing wakes up in his presence. Colours are more vibrant, sounds more subtle, taste more exquisite – everything comes into an intense focus. You wonder where you have been all this time, what have you been doing with your life, how often you were present and how much of it you spent distracted, going after goals and striving after achievements you realise in the end will have no lasting value.

Without the teacher to remind me I sometimes forget and yet it seems the circumstances of life always bring me back to the practice. When love doesn’t work out, I come back to the practice, when I get a bad review I remember the practice, when success just doesn’t have the same zing it once had, I come back to the practice. In reality the Master is always present in the practice. But when the Master is in residence at our gar we come back to the practice big time, and we relish the precious moments we have with him. We give thanks he is with us again and we hope we can continue to go ahead in a positive and constructive way.

“We go ahead,” Rinpoche said as we were taking the hotel lift to the car that would take him on the long drive to Namgyalgar. “We go ahead.” ©

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Dzogchen teachings the principle of Kadag and Lhundrub is stressed since the beginning: the main point of the teaching is the discovery of our true nature, rather than accumulation of merits or purifying. Naturally, Rinpoche said that does not mean these latter are not important or necessary, but rather, relative. Equally, a Dzogchen practitioner must not be interested in building artificial compassion. Being in the state of Guruyoga is at the same time supreme purification and true compassion.

The next morning two beautiful rainbows crowned the sky, an omen of the powerful teachings we were about to receive that day. The four Chogzhag were the main subject of the sixth day of the retreat and, maybe, the hardest to understand. They represent the condition of Dharmata. The first three Chogzhags are because we have three existences, we need to relax body, speech and mind, all three. The last one is related to visions: “When you are in your real nature, visions good or bad, there are no any differences, both are visions... visions are ornaments

of the primordial state, visions are not problem, there is no difference between pure vision and impure vision, problem is our attachment, our attachment is in ourselves, not outside”... Later, after sunset we shared a nice New Year dinner with all practitioners and we had the chance to participate in an auction to raise funds for Tashigar South. It was a very exciting moment we shared with Rinpoche who delighted us with his calligraphy. We received 2009 toasting and very happy, with folk songs typical of some countries and dancing until ear-

ly hours. I have to mention that auction collected an important amount of money to cover the many needs of the Gar. Finally, during the closing of the retreat on the first day of the New Year, the advices for daily life from the Master, as well as the lungs for different practices, arrived as invaluable tools to manage our relative condition and advance in a practical way toward realization. In order to celebrate the end of these Teachings we did a Medium Ganapuja, followed immediately by a lottery, full of fun and surprises.

The assembly of all these experiences in the brief time of a week reaffirms me in considering that the best way to end a year and start a new one is a retreat with Rinpoche and the Vajra brothers and sisters. Infinite thanks, precious Master, for always trying to make us open our eyes and “see” our real condition!

PS. By the way, the title of this retreat was “Dzogchen Tregchöd Teaching of Jigmed Lingpa from the instruction of Yeshe Lama”. ©

Translation: Regina Robles





## ASIA's projects in Tibet: Perspectives for 2009

Andrea Dell'Angelo  
Director of ASIA Onlus

**D**ecember 2008: almost 10 months after the tragic events in Lhasa, we returned to the Tibetan autonomous Region and Amdo.

The main aims of the mission were to meet the ASIA staff – Tibetan and ex-patriot – who had remained there during this extremely difficult period, monitor the projects that were underway, verify new projects to present to donors for 2009 and verify the future of ASIA's projects in China with the authorities.

The impact on Lhasa is very sad to see.

In recent years the city has suffered more drastic modernization and destruction. Old Tibetan houses have been destroyed and their place taken by buildings in modern Chinese style. The strongest impression was to see Lhasa completely under military control. Soldiers, roadblocks, soldiers posted on the roofs, armoured cars in the heart of the sacred city are something difficult to get used to.

The hotels and restaurants are empty and there are very few Chinese and Western tourists. Discontent, fear and frustration

of the health project financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which had been suspended since May because of the disorders that took place in Lhasa and in all the areas inhabited by the Tibetan minority. The local authorities had refused to renew the permits for our staff, which had had to return to Italy. Once we were in Lhasa we managed to obtain authorization for them and the medical coordinator arrived in Chamdo on December 1st to start up activities again involving training and furnishing equipment to the clinics of the district and to the villages in the county.

Unfortunately due to the great tensions that continue to exist in all regions and to the new repressive measures of the Chinese government, we were not able to monitor some of the ongoing projects in the eastern areas of the Tibetan Autonomous Region.

Leaving Lhasa we went to Xining where one of the most important seats of ASIA is located and started our mission to Amdo.

We left for Dongche where ASIA has built a primary and middle school, a Tibetan medi-

culate heat in order to heat the rooms and the classrooms.

At the moment there are 70 students and several teachers, two who come from Lopen Tenzin Namdak's college in Nepal.

After checking all the work we prepared the second phase of the project – which we hope to be able to complete during 2009 – to build the kitchen, refectory, offices and a separate building with 9 rooms to be used for practicing the most esoteric teachings linked to Dzogchen.

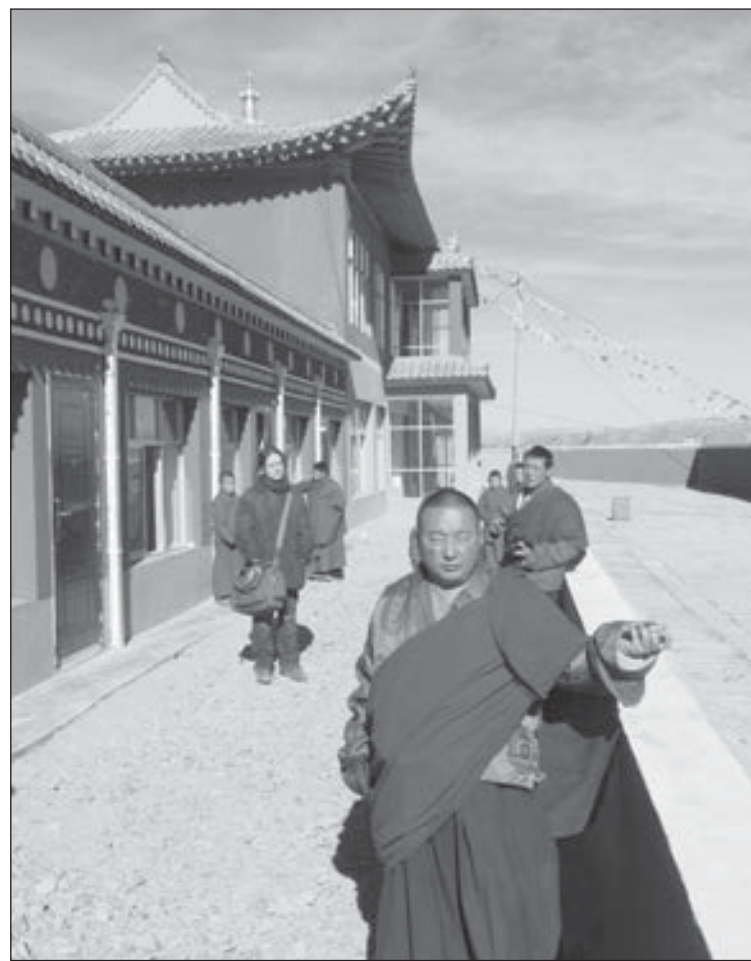
We collected all the documentation in order to start up a distance support project for all the students at the college who will attend the study and practice courses for nine years.

The scholastic perspectives of the village, however, are very difficult. As soon as we got to the school we discovered that the government authorities intended to close the Dongche School – the first school built by ASIA and inaugurated by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 1997.

In recent months, in Hainan prefecture the government has drawn up and is putting into operation a new policy for educating the Tibetan minority called the "Combining Education Policy". This reform plans to eliminate all the Tibetan village schools and to group all the students from the primary, middle and secondary schools in a small number of schools. The primary schools will be concentrated at the district level, the middle schools at the county level and the secondary schools in the prefecture capitals. The schools will be large barracks with 2000/3000 students, housed in enormous modern buildings devoid of any type of historical, cultural or environmental context.

The aim, so they say, is to give equal opportunities to all students and to improve the quality of education. But actually, the results will be to bring up the new generations far from their cultural and family surroundings. It is unthinkable that the culture and traditions of a people such as the Tibetan people can be transmitted and preserved only through scholastic teaching. The culture of a people is transmitted from the first days of life by living in one's own cultural ambient, observing, learning and experiencing one's own customs and traditions handed down in the course of centuries, from generation to generation.

Of course we tried to get them to change the decisions made about Dongche. After numerous meetings with the authorities of the county they decided that the Dongche School would not be closed and would remain a primary school. The middle school students will be transferred to the



Singkhri.

county school. We tried to convince them to leave the Dongche middle school, too, but up to now we haven't succeeded and meetings and negotiations are still under way.

It is important to remember, for example, that this year one of the Tibetan students from Dongche who has followed all the courses from the nursery up to the middle school at this school and then attended secondary school at Gonghe, with distance support through ASIA, won first prize as the best student in the whole of Qinghai province and has been admitted to the university of Peking. This student is not the only one to have obtained excellent results and many students from Dongche have obtained brilliant results thanks to the training courses organized by ASIA. This is proof that these types of schools work and guarantee a modern education in a rural environment and are accessible to all students whether from farming families or nomadic ones.

Then we went on to Tongde where ASIA has been working for several years with the Nyingmapa monastery of Sangkhri to publish all the texts used at the study colleges of this school. The first phase of this project was concluded at the end of 2007 with the publication of 3000 sets of twenty volumes each, for a total of 60,000 volumes which were distributed to students from the Nyingmapa colleges in Qinghai and Sichuan.

Seeing the success of this initiative and the requests coming from all the regions in China inhabited by Tibetans, a second phase of the project for the publication of 12,000 sets for a total of 240,000 volumes was presented to the Dutch embassy and financed in May 2008. Unfortunately, up to now, we had not managed to start up the project again and finally in December af-

ter having gathered together offers and estimates, we finalized the contract with a printing press in Tienjin for the publication of the entire 240,000 volumes. The printing work should be finished by June 2009 and then the texts will be distributed to 160 Nyingmapa colleges in Sichuan, Qinghai, Gansu and Tar.

At the same time, we verified the start of a second project with Sangkhri monastery, again financed by the Dutch Embassy, which plans to construct a building with 10 classrooms for courses and 12 rooms to accommodate the 300 students who are registered at Sangkhri College. Even this project that should have started in May 2008 had been blocked up to December and finally now after various meetings and after having prepared the new architectural designs is in the phase of starting and should be completed by December 2009.

Another very important project is the clinic of Ane Kandroma, a famous lady doctor and Master who lives near Lake Kokonor. Here, several years ago, ASIA built a traditional clinic specializing in medicinal baths. Since Ane Kandroma was very well known in this area, the number of patients immediately began to grow and required enlarging the clinic and accommodation for the health staff. The second phase of the project was presented to donors and financed in May 2008. Unfortunately the local government decided that all the buildings near the lake had to be destroyed. We do not know when and we do not know if owners who will be expropriated will receive indemnity. Due to this uncertain situation, the second phase of the project was not started and through meetings and discussions ASIA has been trying to obtain permission from the government to rebuild the clinic in another area and to

>> continued on the following page



Derge school.

were the feelings that we met every day when meeting old friends or walking in the streets.

In Lhasa we started up a three-year health project jointly financed by the European Union. The project will provide three year training for medical staff from Panam County in Shigatse prefecture.

The fact that we obtained authorization for our expatriate staff and for starting up activities for this important project meant a great success at this particular time in which most international organizations have been forced to leave the country.

In Chamdo prefecture in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, we also restarted the activities

cine clinic and, in 2008, the first Bonpo study and practice college in Hainan prefecture. The college was completed in September and, thanks to the contribution of the Dutch Embassy, ASIA has constructed a building with 14 rooms for 72 students, one with 12 rooms for the teachers and older students and another with 6 classrooms for courses which will last nine years and will cover subjects ranging from grammar to astrology and medicine, study of the Sutras, Tantras and Dzogchen.

All the buildings have been constructed using techniques that is energy saving and that make use of bio-architecture; with solar walls which accu-



## Khamdogar Project Update

### History

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

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

Near Khamdogar, in an area called Dedrol, there is a cave in which Atha Lhamo, the daughter of Master Changchub Dorje, lived and practiced. After a long period of inactivity due to the Cultural Revolution, the nuns have managed to build a small monastery and take up their spiritual activities again. At the moment there

are 66 nuns who live in retreat for long periods without contact with the outer world.

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

Concerned about this situation, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche asked Tsegyalgar East and ASIA to help this community in order to preserve the Teachings transmitted by his Master and provide aid to the practitioners there.

### Activities

- 1) Building a small study and practice college. Estimated cost \$71,533 USD.
- 2) Construction of an aqueduct. Estimated cost \$55,636 USD.
- 3) Restoration of the old temple where the Chorten of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje is preserved. Estimated cost 463,594 USD.
- 4) Restoration of the printing house (The original woodblocks of Changchub Dorje's Dogchen teachings are stored here – the roof is falling in and water threatens to damage the contents) and the Chortens built by Rigdzin Changchub Dorje. Estimated cost \$55,636 USD.

### Long Distance Sponsorship

ASIA has started a program of Sponsorship at a Distance for the 66 nuns who live in retreat at Dedrol Gonpa.

The objective is to contribute to maintaining all 66 nuns by 2008. This objective has been met, thanks to all of you who have become new sponsors. Thank you!

However, 19 of these sponsorships are temporary and we need to find individual sponsors for these people by the end of 2010.

We continue to fund raise for the other aspects of the project.

### What you can do

Make a Tax Deductible Donation

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

Receive a genuine quartz crystal sphere with the longsals symbol engraved within, for making a donation (\$150 minimum) or by starting a sponsorship now!

Each sphere comes with a light base that emits rainbow lights throughout the crystal.



### You can make a donation

securely and easily via paypal:

- 1) Go to [www.paypal.com](http://www.paypal.com)
- 2) Log in or open a new account.
- 3) Click on "Send Money" tab at top of page.
- 4) Send money to [asia-usa@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:asia-usa@tsegyalgar.org)

### Become a Sponsor

With \$300 USD per year you can provide food, basic medical assistance, educational materials and everything necessary for a nun to have a decent life within the monastery. Right now, these practitioners do not have enough food and their health is in very poor condition. You can make payments according to your circumstances such as: automatic monthly bank drafts of \$25 each, payment by credit card through PayPal in full/biannually/quarter-

ly or by check made out to "ASIA" and sent to:

ASIA, Post Office Box 124,  
Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA.

If you would like to help spread the work about these projects, please request Khamdogar brochures and/or a copy of the Khamdogar DVD by emailing [andreamnasca@yahoo.com](mailto:andreamnasca@yahoo.com).

We are sending brochures and the DVD to each North American local Gakyil and practice group. We encourage you to share this information with anyone you think might be interested in helping with these projects. ©

Thank you very much for your collaboration and many tashi deleks to you.

ASIA America board members and staff

Association for International Solidarity in ASIA, Inc.

ASIA, Post Office Box 124,  
Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA

Phone: 413.369.4153,

Fax: 413.369.4473

[andreamnasca@yahoo.com](mailto:andreamnasca@yahoo.com)

[www.asia-ngo.org/en/](http://www.asia-ngo.org/en/)



Khiugmo.

>> continued from previous page

make them pay indemnity. Up to today, we have not been able to find a solution, but we hope that in March the project will finally be able to start.

ASIA is still managing a lot of ongoing projects in Qinghai and other projects should start up in the course of 2009. To that end we have met with all the authorities in Qinghai who have assured us that ASIA is very respected at the local level and that the projects are welcomed and will be able to continue without problems.

During this mission it was not possible to get to Derge because the entire prefecture of Ganze was closed to foreigners. For this reason ASIA had to close two important projects – the sanitary project financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a project for creating 10 water systems in 10 villages in Derge county and for the improvement

of sanitary conditions for the local population. In spite of the difficult situation, we managed to complete the first two buildings of the Derge School and during this period we bought all the equipment for the classrooms and the dormitories. Then the equipment was transported from Chengdu to Derge and delivered to Khembo Sonam who is in charge of the school.

2009 will be a very complicated year for Tibet, for the Tibetan people and for the non-governmental organizations that work in these areas. This year there are three anniversaries: the celebration of the 60th year after the long march of 1949, the 50th anniversary of the insurrection in Lhasa and the flight of the Dalai Lama from Tibet, and the 20th anniversary of the massacre of Tiananmen Square. As the month of March slowly draws nearer the tensions are growing and with the aim of preventing

uprisings or disorders, the Chinese government has deployed a huge military machine.

In spite of this, ASIA will continue its humanitarian, peaceful and non-political commitment in favour of the Tibetan people who today more than ever need your support. ©

Rome, January 2009

### ASIA Onlus

Via San Martino della Battaglia 31  
00185 Rome, Italy  
Tel +39.06.44340034  
Fax +39.06.44702620  
[info@asia-ngo.org](mailto:info@asia-ngo.org)  
[www.asia-ngo.org](http://www.asia-ngo.org)

### Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

>> continued from page 1

Oct. 23–30

Shitro Khordas Rangdrol Retreat

### Spain

Nov. 13–17

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

### Venezuela

Dec. 4–11

Dzogchen Longsal Longde Teaching Retreat

Dec. 26–January 3

Mandarava Tsedrub Chüdlen Retreat

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## Shang Shung Institute Report from 2008

Oliver Leick



2008 has ended and we would like to give you a short report of the activities related to translations and publications:

- In 2008 we published three books for the public, the book “Birth, Life and Death” in English and in Italian. The third book “Longchenpa’s advice from the heart” has just gone to press and is now available.
- In summer 2008 we held the fourth Training for Translators from Tibetan at Merigar. We offered two classes, one for beginners and one for more advanced students with Prof. Fabian Sanders leading both classes.

- In autumn 2008 the latest book from the Longsal series, “Longsal Vol. 8”, was published.
- Our main translators – Elio Guarisco, Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby – met several times and continued their translation work on the Mejung Tantra. This text should be published in the second half of 2009.
- Elio Guarisco completed his work on Rinpoche’s new book about “Moxa”; this book should be published in the first half of 2009.
- Donatella Rossi has worked in a very concentrated way on the

- translation of the book “Light of Kailash, Vol. I”. Now the text is in the process of editing and hopefully will be published by spring 2009.
- This year work on the book “Yantra Yoga – the Tibetan Yoga of Movement” was completed and Snow Lion Publications finally published the book in November.
- At the beginning of 2008 Nancy Simmons became the new editor for the Public Books Project and is working editing the books.

- The international Shang Shung Institute has spent about 45,000 Euro for the Ka-ter Translation Project, and about 20,000 Euro for the Public Books Project.
- In 2008 the international Shang Shung Institute spent a huge amount of money for the translation, the editing, the production and the publication of books for the public and the Dzogchen Community. These activities could only take place with the support of everybody.
- In order to be able to continue our work we need your support. The Shang Shung Institute is working on many different projects and we are active for the preservation of Tibetan culture in various fields.
- Please join our activities also in the future by offering donations or by becoming a member of the Shang Shung Institute.

- We also would like to offer you some really wonderful and unique items. On the website of the Shang Shung Institute Austria you will find several Donation Packages with marvelous and extraordinary statues. We offer statues that have never been seen or made available in the West before, like statues of **Changchub Dorje, Adzom Drugpa, Jigmed Lingpa, Longchenpa, Vajrapani, Dorje Yudronma** or **Yutog Gonpa**. We have the wonderful and huge statue of Samantabhadra Yab/Yum in stock again. If you would like to receive one of our unique statues as a present for your donation, please have a look, check it out and enjoy.
- You may find a really exquisite gift for a friend or for yourself.

Oliver Leick  
Shang Shung Institute

## Membership in the international Shang Shung Institute

Become part of the responsibility

The international Shang Shung institute is dedicated to the preservation of Tibetan culture. You can share our engagement and commitment so become member of the Institute and help us. As a member you have access to all our products and activities, you support the institutional mission of the Institute, and you will also contribute to make the unique treasure box of intrinsic wisdom and understanding of Tibetan people accessible also for future generations.

We offer four different kinds of membership (the prices in dollars apply to the North-American users):

1. Preliminary Membership: 5 € or \$ 7
2. Ordinary Membership: 50 € or US \$ 70
3. Sustaining Membership: 108 € or US \$ 160
4. Meritorious Membership: 360 € or US \$ 500

### Preliminary membership 2009

In order to be able to purchase some items from our shop one must be member of the international Shang Shung Institute.

The preliminary membership is a limited membership and no commitments regarding the Shang Shung Institute are being taken with this membership. This kind of membership is just a mandatory requirement to purchase any of the products offered by the Shang Shung Institute.

The membership lasts from your first purchase until the 31st of December of the same year. It is not renewed automatically.

Actual members of the international Dzogchen-Community do not need to get this preliminary membership. The free access to the web shop of the Shang Shung Institute is a free service to all actual members of the International Dzogchen Community. In order to receive restricted material of our web shop one has to be an actual member of the international Dzogchen Community and one must have received the transmission of the Master.

Price of the membership: 5 € or 7 US \$

### Ordinary membership 2009

The membership lasts from your payment of the membership-fee until the 31st of December of the

- same year. It is not renewed automatically. Ordinary members have the right to attend the annual general assembly of members. Each ordinary member receives
- a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside or the “Merigar Calendar” for 2009/2010;
  - a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI;
  - free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world;
  - full access to our web shop.
- In order to receive restricted material of our web shop one has to be an actual member of the international Dzogchen Community and one must have received the transmission of the Master.
- Price of the membership: 50 € or 70 US \$

### Sustaining membership 2009

- The membership lasts from your payment of the membership-fee until the 31st of December of the same year. It is not renewed automatically. Sustaining members have the right to attend the annual general assembly of members. Each sustaining member receives
- a crystal with the logo of the Shang Shung Institute printed inside OR the “Merigar Calendar” for 2009/2010;
  - one item – a CD, or a DVD (produced by the SSI), or a book (produced by Shang Shung Edizioni) – from our website of your choice for free;

- a very nice and useful time scheduler for 2009 called TEAM-WORK (25,5 x 17,5 cm);
  - a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI;
  - free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world;
  - full access to our web shop.
- Please make your choice!
- In order to receive restricted material of our web shop one has to be an actual member of the international Dzogchen Community and one must have received the transmission of the Master.
- Price of the membership: 108 € or 160 US \$

### Meritorious membership 2009

- The membership lasts from your payment of the membership-fee until the 31st of December of the same year. It is not renewed automatically. Meritorious members have the right to attend the annual general assembly of members. Each meritorious member receives
- 10% discount on all courses and seminars of the ISSI;
  - a crystal with the SSI-logo printed inside or the “Merigar Calendar” for 2009/2010;
  - a crystal with the A printed inside;
  - one item – CD, DVD (produced by the SSI), or books (produced by Shang Shung Edizioni) – from our website of your choice for free;
  - a luxury ballpoint pen of the SSI;

- a very nice and useful time scheduler for 2009 called TEAM-WORK (25,5 x 17,5 cm);
  - a beautiful leather notepad of the SSI;
  - a calculator of the SSI;
  - full access to the web shop;
  - free mailing of these gifts to everywhere in the world.
- Please make your choice! In order to receive restricted material of our web shop one has to be an actual member of the international Dzogchen Community and one must have received the transmission of the Master.
- Price of the membership: 360 € or 500 US \$

You can get your membership in the webshop of the SSI Austria, the webshop of the SSI Italy, or the webshop of the SSI USA. In each of these webshops you can pay with your credit card on our web safe sites.

The staff of the international Shang Shung Institute wishes you all a very happy and prosperous new year and many TASHI DELEGS!

Very best wishes,  
Oliver Leick  
on behalf of the international Shang Shung Institute  
[www.shangshunginstitute.org](http://www.shangshunginstitute.org)

The International Shang Shung Institute of Tibetan Studies organizes

## Two Tibetan Medicine Courses

on the following Subjects:  
Geriatrics, menopause and osteoporosis in Tibetan medicine and an Introduction to the three humors, the seven types of personalities or nature and their diet and behavior  
April & May 2009  
Led by Doctor Namdol Lhamo

After getting a Bachelor of Science degree at Delhi University, Doctor Namdol Lhamo sat for an entrance examination and was selected to attend a five-year course of Traditional Tibetan Medicine at the Tibetan Medical and Astrological College of Dharamsala from 1998 to 2003. After a year of internship at Men-tsee-khang branch clinics in Delhi and Bylakuppe, she attained a Bachelor’s Degree in Tibetan Medicine (Menpa Kachupa) in 2004. Then she worked as consultant Doctor in Bangalore and neighboring places for about 4 years, until she was recruited by the “Medi-

cal Text (Gyud shi) Translation Department” of Dharamsala in May 2008, where she is currently working together with other five doctors.

### Geriatrics, menopause and osteoporosis in Tibetan medicine

Date: April 24th–26th  
Timetable: 10 am–13 pm with tea break from 11,15 to 11,45 3 pm–6 pm with tea break from 16,15 to 16,45  
Location: Merigar West Program:  
1st Day: Geriatric care in Tibetan Medicine

2nd Day: Menopause and its care in Tibetan Medicine  
3rd Day: Osteoporosis and its care in Tibetan Medicine  
Registration fee: 150 euro  
Please register by April 15th at: [courses@shangshunginstitute.org](mailto:courses@shangshunginstitute.org)  
Tel: +39 0564966940

### Introduction to the three humors, the seven types of personalities or nature and their diet and behavior

Date: May 1st–3rd  
Timetable: 10 am–13 pm with tea break from 11,15 to 11,45 3 pm–6 pm

with tea break from 16,15 to 16,45  
Location: Merigar West Program:  
1st Day: Understanding of three principle energies or humors (nye-pas) and their etiology  
2nd Day: Seven unique psychophysical nature (7 rang- bzhin) and introduction on pulse examination  
3rd Day: Practice on determining your unique personality and, diet and behavior  
Registration fee: 150 euro  
Please register by 25th April to: [courses@shangshunginstitute.org](mailto:courses@shangshunginstitute.org)  
Tel: +39 0564966940



# Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

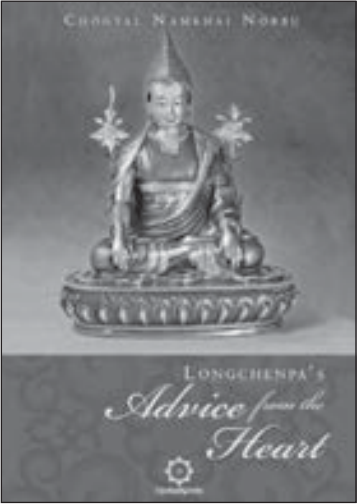
Transcribed and edited by Elio Guarisco  
Shang Shung Institute 2008

The teaching that follows is an excerpt from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's introduction to Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart published recently by Shang Shung Institute.

## The Path: the Essence of the Practice

The Path refers to the knowledge that arises in us upon the discovery of our real nature. At the moment of discovering one's real nature, certainly there is no difference between oneself and Samantabhadra. But Samantabhadra dwells permanently in that state, while we remain in that state only for two seconds or so and then immediately fall into dualistic vision. Therefore, we need to apply the practice in order to slowly develop our capacity.

At the beginning, we may dwell in our real potentiality or real nature for five or ten seconds in a period of twenty-four hours. Then, applying the practice more



and more, we may be able to remain for some minutes, then for some hours, thus becoming Dzogchen yogins.

To be a Dzogchen yogin is to no longer be conditioned. Although one lives a normal life, one dwells in the state of instant presence, one's real nature. Even if, at the beginning, we have no capacity to remain in a state of instant presence, at least we should not be distracted. Our problem is that we are always distracted. For that reason the advice is given to always be aware, to be present. Being present also enhances our capacity for presence, till at a certain point one can be present continuously twenty-four hours at a time.

Some people think that if they were to maintain presence al-

ways, they would not be able to do anything else. This is not true. We can do everything when we are present, even work. Actually, if we are present it is much better because we do our work more precisely. Problems arise when we are distracted. For example, if we are distracted while preparing a meal, when we cut the meat we may also cut a finger.

There are different ways in which we can practice, in a ritual way or in a more simple way, but the crucial point is to be present. When being present we should also relax because if we are not relaxed we charge ourselves up and this leads to an accumulation of tension. Accumulation of tension is the cause of many problems. When we are present we can discover the roots of problems such as attachment and fear. Thus, it is very important that we try to apply the practice with an emphasis on the essence of the practice.

When practice is mentioned, some people immediately conceive it as chanting mantras or praying. These are also aspects of practice. Others have the opposite attitude; they are attracted to the Dzogchen teaching because they think in Dzogchen there is nothing to do and one can be free. It is true in Dzogchen there is no obligation to do anything in particular. One is totally free, but

within the frame of being aware and undistracted. If we are distracted we will encounter many problems. Some people, feeling they have a modern outlook, say they are attracted to Dzogchen because the Dzogchen principle is not linked to pujas, or chanting in a religious style, and they dislike chanting and so on. It is important to recognize these attitudes.

If one wants to follow Dzogchen, one must be completely free, unconditioned by opinions; only then can one discover one's real nature and deal with every situation. It does not matter if a practice involves chanting, a rite or a religious form. It is up to us, if we wish to participate in it or not. It is not indispensable that everything we do in terms of practice be strictly in accord with Buddhist tradition. We can integrate all kinds of traditions if they are necessary and prove to be useful. But integration does not mean taking something from here and something from there, and creating a mixture by putting these different things together.

That amounts to creating confusion not integration. Integration means that first we have discovered our real nature and dwell in it. Now we are in the center of our total dimension; if we need something we can make use of

it, no matter what tradition it belongs to.

Some people pay exaggerated attention to names and titles of teachings. In reality all teachings are relative in the sense that, if at a certain moment of our life we need them we apply them. If we don't need them we don't apply them. For example, people who are agitated need to coordinate their energy; others who are ill need to overcome their illness; still others who are affected by negative provocations need to get rid of them. In these cases, we must apply certain practices in order to overcome these problems: these are relative practices. When we need them and we have the transmission, we can apply them. We have a nice example to illustrate this point. If you have a raincoat that you like very much for its color or cut, you wear it when it rains. If you were to use this raincoat when it is not raining just because you like it, people would consider you strange. It is not a sensible thing to do. It would mean you do not know how to work with circumstances. Relative practice means that we use it when we need it, and thus it is beneficial for us. \*

# Twelve Step Buddhist

Darren Littlejohn

Beyond Words Publishing  
20827 NW Cornell Road, Suite 500  
Hillsboro, OR 97124  
<http://www.beyondword.com>  
503-531-8700 Phone  
503-531-8773 Fax

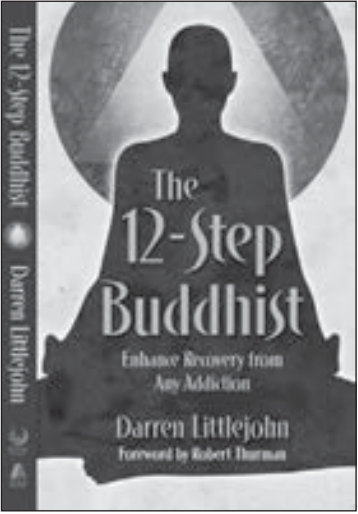
K. B. Heaney

It is quite an honor to review Mr. Littlejohn's book. I have not met the gentleman but am quite taken with his words and thoughts. I am qualified to write this piece as one who is something of an authority on the treatment of chemical dependency and as a dedicated student of the 12 Step Methodology and (with more than a little embarrassment I admit to being) a mediocre practitioner of Buddhism and Dzogchen. Which is to say that I am familiar personally, intellectually and clinically with the subject of the text.

In a classical piece of apocrypha from the oral history annals of the World of Addiction/Recovery, it has been stated that the Swiss psychiatrist-mystic, Carl Jung, described alcoholism as a low level search for God. This may not have been Jung's words but it does provide an apt description of the text. Darren Littlejohn does two remarkable things in this book. First he offers a travelogue though the dark region of ego, alcohol, self and drugs, where

deep underneath is a desire for spiritual essence. In the second and larger part of the book, he offers a text that quite artfully blends the practice of the Twelve Steps and Buddhist thoughts and activity. Mr. Littlejohn experiences suffering and then finds a way to turn the wheel and generously offers to share this with the world. A patient who saw the book in my office remarked "Littlejohn should have written it in a shorter form so I could get to the good part right away. I can't wait for relief."

Mr. Littlejohn has accomplished a rather remarkable literary feat with this volume. He has told an intimate and personal account of his own life and the development of addiction and his efforts to achieve recovery. In the process he explains his use of the systems of change through 12 Steps and Buddhism. Mr. Littlejohn allows the reader to understand the dire and bleak life that he was brought to by his substance use and how he came to use the spiritual system of the 12 Steps (first created



by the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous) to permit an escape from the hell state of addiction.

The reader follows in the next movement in the Author's life, as he relapses and resumes the path of recovery that leads him through a host of attempts to build a spiritual life, from the self-help rooms to the zazen cushion and finally up to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, his Root Guru.

The book has several chapters that increase the reader's knowledge base on the enormous topics of the book. Mr. Littlejohn explains the cost and complexity of addiction in a manner that is compassionate and comprehensive for a book of this size. He informs the reader of the current understanding of the addiction process and what different treatments are available. He next looks critically at 12-Step (AA, NA, etc), the strengths and weakness of this approach. He

explains how the social and spiritual sides of these systems work. Finally he offers a Primer on Buddhism itself in one chapter.

The core of the book is Mr. Littlejohn's review of each of the 12 Steps, offering explanation of the working of the Step and then tracing the Buddhist principles that are present. This allows an individual to integrate and deepen the understanding of the Step process and to find unity in these systems. He provides the reader with specific Tibetan perspective on the core concepts to the Step and to the overall 12-Step systems. He provides guided meditations, inner dialogues and explorations for each of the 12 Steps.

It is hard to imagine that the reader, no matter what level of experience or expertise in 12-Step or Buddhism, would not be enriched and benefit from a close reading and employment of the multitude of practices that Mr. Littlejohn has provided. The text allows the reader to deepen understanding of these two systems and see how much connection exists between the two methods.

I was somewhat skeptical of any author's ability to maintain understanding, respect and appreciation for both the 12-Step and Buddhist systems. This is the heart of the challenge for such a cross-cultural examination. Mr. Littlejohn is more than up for this type of task. His writing expresses a genuine gratitude for



the teachings that he has received whether in the Meeting Room or the Gonpa. I have encountered several other attempts along these lines and the sad fact is that the writer often presents an arrogance for having out grown the lesser vehicle for the higher, more esoteric one. Never is that intent or tone present and as such it make this book infinitely more readable and useful. It is quite clear that Mr. Littlejohn has traveled the road, hit the bottom, paid his dues and most importantly reaped the rewards from dedication and commitment to using these systems to transform himself.

I not only recommend it, but I will try to implement it in my hospital, where I am the Clinical Director, and into my private practice.

In a letter written in 1961, shortly before his death, Dr. Jung wrote to the co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill Wilson. He congratulated Wilson on the achievement of the AA society and stated that he had always felt that humans sought union on the deepest level. In the Dzogchen tradition this might be called the non-dual state, beyond hope and fear, the release from the dream and distraction. This would seem to be the point where the roads of the 12 Steps and Buddhism join. I believe that The 12-Step Buddhist will help others to reach that place. ©



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 2009

## March

**March 16–21**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**  
Caloundra, Australia – open webcast

**March 21–22**  
*Anniversary of Ayu Khandro*  
Worldwide Day for Dance of the Vajra  
Dance of the Song of the Vajra Retreat

**March 27–29**  
Gomadevi and Dance of the Vajra practice retreat  
With Enzo Terzano

## April

**April 3–5**  
Course of the Dance of the Six Spaces  
With a local teacher

**April 10–15**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**  
Namgyalgar, Australia – open webcast

**April 10–13**  
Green Tara retreat with 21 Invocations and Ozer Chenmo practice  
With Costantino Albini

**April 17–22**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**  
Namgyalgar, Australia – open webcast

**April 17–22**  
Dance of Song of the Vajra revision course  
With a local teacher

**April 24–26**  
Tibetan Medicine course  
Geriatrics, menopause and osteoporosis in Tibetan medicine  
With Dr. Namdol Lhamo

**April 25–26**  
Course of Santa Maha Sangha Base Chapter 5 of The Precious Vase  
With Costantino Albini

## May

**May 1–3**  
Chod practice retreat  
With Elio Guarisco

**May 1–3**  
Tibetan Medicine course  
The 7 types of personality & balancing the humours through diet and behaviour  
With Dr. Namdol Lhamo

**May 7–10**  
Santi Maha Sangha First Level course  
With Jakob Winkler

**May 16–17**  
Yantra Yoga: the Second series and Pranayama  
With Tiziana Gottardi

**May 15–19**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**  
Moscow, Russia – open webcast

**May 23–24**  
Course of Santi Maha Sangha Base Level  
Guide to study and practice of the Second part of The Precious Vase  
With Costantino Albini

**May 27–31**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**  
Cologne, Germany – open webcast

## June

**June 1–11**  
Mandarava practice and Tsalung retreat  
With Nina Robinson

**June 12–21**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**  
Merigar East, Romania – open webcast

## July

**July 1–5**  
Yantra Yoga Third and Fourth Series  
With Tiziana Gottardi supervised by Laura Evangelisti

**July 8–12**  
Dance of the Song of the Vajra Advanced Course with Jnana Dakini practice  
With Prima Mai

**July 16–19**  
Xitro explanation and practice retreat  
With Nina Robinson

**July 24–27**  
Yantra Yoga First and Second series in-depth course  
With Laura Evangelisti

## August

**August 1–8**  
First Level Teachers’ Training of Dance of the Vajra  
With Adriana Dal Borgo and Prima Mai

**August 10–16**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**

**August 17–22**  
Dance of the Song of the Vajra course part 1  
With Margit Martinu with supervision

**August 24–31**  
Teachers’ Training of Yantra Yoga  
With Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti

**August 28–30**  
Gomadevi explanation and practice retreat  
With Enzo Terzano

## September

**September 15–20**  
Dance of the Song of the Vajra advanced course  
With Adriana Dal Borgo

**September 25–October 1**  
Dance of the Song of the Vajra course part 2

## October

**October 2–10**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**

**October 23–30**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Dzogchen Teaching Retreat**

**Upcoming:**  
**Explanation and practice retreat of the Short Thun of the Inner Practice of Guru Jñanadhakini Gomadevi combined with the Dance of the Song of Vajra**  
Led by Enzo Terzano  
27–29 March 2009

**Requirements:** having received the initiation of Gomadevi or Jñanadhakini, or having received the transmission of the Mantra of the Essence (also via webcast).  
The course is also open to those who don’t know the Vajra Dance and intend to practice Gomadevi. The course is free.

\*

## Kunye course at Merigar

Song T. Park

A Kunye course was held at Merigar from January 2nd through 9th of this new year 2009. There were eight participants. Most of them had already studied and practiced Tibetan Kunye massage before. Seven participants graduated and received Diplomas of the Kunye International School (Traditional Tibetan Massage School of the Shang Shung Institute). Aldo Oneto did an excellent job teaching this course.

He impressed all of us by both his deep knowledge and very modest and caring way of relating. All of us had a very nice time, learning Kunye in great de-



Photo: L. Dumcheva

tails, giving and receiving fantastic massages throughout the course. We all felt more balanced and energetic toward the end of the course. Everything was taken care of and very well organized. All of us expressed our intention to further our knowledge and practice and requested to have intensive Kunye study camps sometime in the future. We were very glad to have this opportunity to deepen our knowledge and practical understanding of this marvelous system.

Having had studied many different systems of healing and massage, I was very impressed and fully appreciated the subtlety, complexity and effectiveness of this massage. The amazing

richness of Kunye methods and the variety of techniques provide the possibility to heal, balance and alleviate many disorders of body and mind through regulation of energy.

We all hope that Kunye courses will continue to develop to benefit all those who will be able to have a wonderful opportunity to experience Tibetan culture and the healing methods of Tibetan Medicine. We all felt deep gratitude to our Master, for making this possible by creating Shang Shung Institute and founding the Dzogchen Community. ©



Photo: L. Graf

## Introduction to the SMS Base

Paolo Ferraro

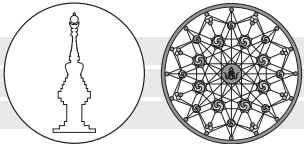
About twenty practitioners followed this introductory course to the study of the Base of Santi Maha Sangha led by Fabio Maria Risolo in Merigar West from January 16 to 18. Although at the beginning the students were a little apprehensive of the complexity of some of the philosophical concepts that they had to understand and learn, they gradually became more and more courageous and started to take the initiative thanks to Fabio’s way of explaining simply and clearly. Fabio alternated ex-

planations on how to approach study of the Base in a correct way with short practice sessions on the 7 Semdzin. He outlined the general principles of “The Precious Vase” and stressed the importance of understanding the sense of the SMS that goes far beyond simple intellectual understanding. In fact, the intellectual effort that is required to learn the contents of “The Precious Vase” is not an end in itself but a means to understand the extraordinary significance of the Dzogchen Teaching.

Heartfelt thanks to Fabio for encouraging us to go ahead in our study of the Base! ©



# MerigarWest



## Swept up by a hurricane

Elisa Copello

The retreat at Merigar given by Yeshi Silvano Namkhai was like being “swept up” by a hurricane, by a flood of irrepressible energy, by an approach which, besides being profound and compelling, counterbalanced in a detailed and precise way the teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, “his Master” whom he continually refers to with respect and devotion. He gave us many guidelines to reflect on in order to verify our real level of knowledge and presented the teaching in an original way - at times it seemed deliberately provocatively - in order to reawaken those who had sunk into a type of overly conceptual knowledge that does not really correspond to the real sense of Dzogchen.

Starting with an explanation of the Six-line Verse of the Rig-bai Kujyug, he went deeply into and clarified various aspects of the base, the path and the fruit, elaborating in particular on “nature” and “vision” and quoting repeatedly from “the Supreme Source” as well as many other texts on which he commented with wisdom and precision. Yeshi said that after the many years that the Master has been trans-

mitting us his teaching with sacrifice, compassion and devotion, now is the time for the fruit to manifest, especially at the level of behaviour. Our behaviour should no longer be that of a bee buzzing from flower to flower or of a deer remaining isolated in a cave to “have a living experience of the teachings”, but rather that of a lion able to express his strength not only at the personal level but most of all at the level of the entire community. The community should show that it has really understood the meaning of behaviour and act according to circumstances, based on its own awareness and clarity. Only in this way will our beautiful Gonpa not be just a ‘museum’ filled with valuable paintings and *thangkas*, but a temple where we live the real sense of the teaching day after day, practising in harmony, overcoming inevitable conflicts by looking in the mirror of others and avoiding falling into the limits of hierarchy and bureaucracy.

Then he shared several personal moments of his life with Rinpoche with us, such as when the Master tried out the steps of the Vajra Dance with him as he received it through his dreams, and the episode in which Yeshi discovered that the Master sings the Song of the Vajra in a particular way which is difficult for us Westerners to distinguish and put into practice. Another episode that I found touching was when Yeshi,

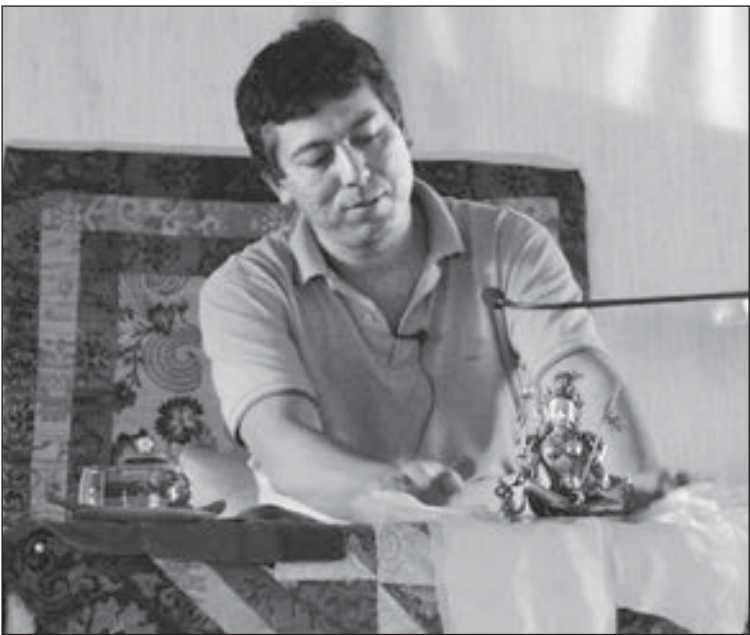


Photo: M. Lascombes

who at the time was in his early teens, described how and why he no longer called Rinpoche “dad” but rather “Master”.

He repeatedly emphasized the absolute uniqueness and essential qualities of the teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who, besides transmitting the three series of Dzogchen, has up to now gathered all his *gterma* and *gonter* teachings received through dreams or pure visions into the eight volumes of the Longsal. Referring to this Yeshi surprisingly confided in us that the Master is the Nirmanakaya manifestation of Dakini Gomadevi, even though he has taken a male body in this life. In fact the Master embodies

all the qualities and energy of the Wisdom Dakini. How fortunate we students were to have received the transmission of these unique and precious teachings in such a direct and essential way! For this very reason, Yeshi pointed out, it is important for all of us to practise Gomadevi, the expression of the path of joy and pleasure, one of the two principle ways of undertaking the path. In fact, Yeshi explained that there can be two approaches to the path: through suffering or through pleasure and, as proof of his statement, read and commented on several quotations from volumes two and five of the Longsal series, from the commentary to “The Precious

Ship” and from “You are the eyes of the world”, a Dzogchen text by Longchenpa translated into English under this title by Kenard Lipmann and Merryl Peterson, assisted and inspired by Rinpoche.

Later Yeshi also spoke about the Sangha pointing out that young students should work more at the level of energy to bring fresh new vitality to the community while “older” students should work principally on the level of the mind. In this way the two “vital forces” of the community could work together, integrating with each other yet leaving space for new students to express themselves and giving the possibility to older ones to share their own experiences and knowledge with others. Even though he was often tough, at times critical and cutting, Yeshi also knew how to create a relaxed atmosphere, a dialogue that was frequently enjoyable, completely informal and anti-conventional which really made everyone feel at ease.

At the end of the retreat he reminded us to put our trust in our own state of perfection and in our potentiality and to do our best, as Rinpoche always says, trying not to be always conditioned by our emotions.

Thank you Yeshi for your words of wisdom and may your first retreat mark the beginning of a long journey for the benefit of all beings. ©

## New space for activities inaugurated in Grosseto

On Wednesday January 28th, a new space for activities under the umbrella of the Shung Shung Institute was inaugurated in the town of Grosseto, the provincial capital of the province that is home to Merigar West. The town is about 50 km from Merigar and the space is located in a quiet shopping area in the south of the town, surrounded by the Mediterranean pine trees that are typical of the Maremma area. It is also next door to Yeshi Namkhai’s Grosseto office.

The Hall was big enough to hold a Vajra Dance Mandala and practitioners from Grosseto were joined by others from Merigar to launch activities there

with a Gomadevi practice and the Vajra Dance. The practice was followed by a session of explanation and practice of the Dance of the Three Vajras with Adriana Dal Borgo. Later in the morning, everyone toasted the opening of activities with sparkling wine and snacks.

The Hall, which belongs to the local council, will be available to the Institute on a regular basis and Grosseto practitioners have already set up a programme of Vajra Dance courses over a series of several weekends. Today was the starting point for a series of activities which we hope in the future will attract more interested people and present more aspects of Tibetan culture and the Dzogchen Teaching to a wider public.

Many thanks to Luigi Ottaviani for arranging the use of the Hall with the local authorities and to Egle Purtulyte whose enthusiasm and hard work helped to make the inauguration possible. ©



Photo: P. Ferraro

**upcoming courses**  
Saturday April 18–Sunday April 19  
**Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra – 2nd weekend**

Saturday May 9–Sunday May 10  
**Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra – 3rd weekend**

Saturday June 13–Sunday June 14  
**Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra – 4th weekend**

Centro Commerciale Gorarella  
via Papa Giovanni XXIII  
Grosseto

For information contact:  
Egle Purtulyte: 3200845539  
[egle.purtulyte@gmail.com](mailto:egle.purtulyte@gmail.com)  
Paolo Ferraro: 0564412850 3395059162  
[paoloferraro70@gmail.com](mailto:paoloferraro70@gmail.com)

### Accommodation Service at Merigar

Information for people who intend to come to Merigar for retreats or to follow courses

If you are looking for accommodation, airport transfer, local car hire or only logistic assistance, you can contact the following information and reservation service:

### Accommodation Service

(Information available in English, German, French and Italian)  
Information service and reservation of accommodation during retreats, local transport, & logistic solutions:

Christina von Geispitzheim

Email: [accomodationservice@gmail.com](mailto:accomodationservice@gmail.com)

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.



## Longsal Thugthig of Jnanadhakkini at Namgyalgar February 2009

Teaching on “Lama Yeshe Khadro'i Thugthig: The essence of the heart of Guru Jnanadhakkini and simple practice of Guru Jnanadhakkini”

Jean Mackintosh

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu made a triumphant return after a five year absence, to Namgyalgar, the Gar of the Pacific Rim. Although hot and very dry from lack of rain, Namgyalgar was spruced up and looking good for Rinpoche's visit. Twelve or so dedicated practitioners had been staying at Namgyalgar for four months or more preparing everything for the visit and as well practitioners in the cities had also been working for the last year on preparations for all aspects of the visit.

At Namgyalgar more tanks were installed for water storage, camping areas prepared, a new wood fired pizza oven, the solar

covered by the eight auspicious symbols drawn in white flour on the road by Rabgyi Lama and his friend the thanka painter Urgyen Sonam, a local Tibetan. Rinpoche and Rosa were driven up over the symbols to a welcoming group at the door to Gawaling. Rinpoche sat on the verandah for some time as people came to welcome him back to Namgyalgar. He was offered white scarves and gave blessings to those present before going inside to rest after the long drive. The day was very hot and windy and there were very bad bushfires in other areas of the country some not so far from Namgyalgar. But as Rinpoche arrived the black clouds came over



Flag Pole with Gawaling in the background at Namgyalgar.

Photo: G. Horner

power upgraded and a new commercial kitchen was constructed. Gawaling, Rinpoche's residence, was upgraded with a renovated bathroom, changes to the ceiling of the lounge room to make it warmer and a new heater.

Rinpoche and Rosa arrived from Sydney by car. Everyone was waiting to welcome them as they drove up from the main gate through Namgyalgar to Gawaling. The road was lined with prayer flags. On the saddle there was a flagpole of prayer flags made in the traditional way by our monk, Thupten Rabgyi Lama, with the sun and the moon in colored wood on the top and a skirt of colors covering the start of the flags as they fanned out from the pole and blew strongly in the wind. As we looked up the mountain to Gawaling, there was another of these mirrored at the top next to Rinpoche's house. Practitioners lined the road waving flags of the five colors as the car passed by. Just on the last ascent to Gawaling the road was

and a light blessing rain began to fall.

The first day of the retreat soon arrived and people came from cities all over Australia. From overseas there were practitioners from Italy, China, Singapore, USA, Montenegro, France and Israel.

There was an emotional welcome for Rinpoche as the Director of the Gakyil as Catherine Simmonds formally greeted Rinpoche back in Namgyalgar Gonpa after such a long absence. Sustained and loud applause followed, as this was a special arrival for the Australian people just like rain after a long drought. And of course it rained again after Rinpoche began teaching. The small plants and trees in the garden began to soak up the moisture and came to life again as did the presence of our Master in the Namgyalgar Gonpa. The teachings and the practice of Jnana Dhakkini given by Rinpoche spread a wonderful feeling throughout Namgyalgar



Photo: G. Horner

and everything began to flower, the plants and the practitioners and a delightful happiness has remained since his arrival throughout his visit.

The teaching on “Lama Yeshe Khadro'i Thugtig”, The Essence of the Heart of Guru Jnanadhakkini and simple practice of Guru Jnanadhakkini” began with an introduction and simple Ganapuja together. This retreat was webcast around the world with over 1000 connections coming in. The webcast also went out to individual practitioners in China with instantaneous translation.

On the third day there was the introduction of transmission and the *tön wang* (*don dbang*) of Lama Yeshe Khadro. Rinpoche said *tön wang* (*don dbang*) means going in the essence. The *tön wang* (*don dbang*) of Jnanadhakkini is done in a very simple way. First there is the teaching, then the instruction and then the transmission. Rinpoche talked about his dream in which he dreamed of a statue of Gomadevi. He understood the statue to be a real wisdom manifestation and after singing the Song of Vajra at the place where he was, it began to change into something resembling Tiananmen Square where a large crowd of people was singing the Song of the Vajra. This dream came to him in 1985 in Singapore.

We received the instruction of the practice of Lama Yeshe Khadro'i and the transmission of Thuntshog and the following day the introduction to the state of Jnanadhakkini. At the end of the retreat we learned the beautiful melodies that accompany the Ganapuja and we all did the Ganapuja with Rinpoche to end this retreat.

Rinpoche's message during the retreat was to stay in the essence of the practice.

About 200 people attended this retreat and learned this practice. Rinpoche's advice to us was to use this instruction and to practice this so that it becomes alive.

The atmosphere in Namgyalgar became so joyous as Rinpoche

gave so much of himself and people from all countries mixed together in such an open and loving atmosphere.

This atmosphere culminated in Losar celebrations, which were truly wonderful. I went to Mystery Bay to swim at 6am in the darkness of Losar morning,

all stood in a group and sang the practice of Odzer Chenma. As we sang these mantras the sky turned pink and then a pinpoint of strong orange light appeared through a cloud. This grew bigger and bigger until it was a large round sun and the light shone like a road across the water to



Losar at Mystery Bay, Jean Mackintosh in the center.

Photo: G. Horner

and already there was a group of thirty people there swimming and standing around in the dawn light. I was amazed as the water is quite cold but on this magical morning many people were swimming and the water was quite warm. After the swim we

shine on the sand in front of our group. It was a magical morning and the whole day that followed seemed enchanted. Rinpoche's visit has brought the light back to Namgyalgar. ©



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Adriana Battisti  
Jewelry & Accessories



ab@desdeelsur-ab.com.ar - www.adrianabattisti.com.ar  
TE: +54-351-6441022 / +54-351-488-0994 / Cel. +54-9351-156 120 092  
Skype: adrianabattisti



# It's very easy not to take an exam

Griselda Gálmez

On January 5th, after the profound Teachings of Tregchöd given by our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu were finished, the Base Level Santi Maha Sangha exams in Tashigar South began. During four days from 10am until 1pm, we could see students waiting to enter the little Gonpa and demonstrate their knowledge and understanding. Generally they were silent and seemed calm, but we who did not take the exam knew they probably felt insecure, a little tense and maybe they were discovering how many things did not remember and needed to consult in The Precious Vase. So we kissed him or her saying some encouraging words and then we enjoyed the exquisite breakfast prepared by practitioners in the nearby kitchen.

Really it's very easy not to take examination...

Meanwhile the student has entered the little Gonpa where the examiners were waiting. There awaited two SMS Base Teachers, Ricky Sued and Grisha Mokhin, and a 2nd level Yantra Yoga Instructor, Marisa Alonso. All of them very serious and precise practitioners and a very precise board of examiners, but also gentle and smiling.

Maybe for this reason the faces of the students looked radiant and smiling when after the exam they exited the Gonpa. It was not necessary to ask the result. The happy face was enough and we embraced him or her and invited them to drink a coffee and celebrate. It was exciting then to in-



Santi Maha Sangha First Level Training Tashigar South.

Photo: A. Pearl

vestigate how he or she felt during the exam or which questions they were asked.

Meanwhile, another student enters the Gonpa and the cycle repeats, generally in the same way. Twenty-three practitioners presented for the exams and they came from different cities and countries: Costa Rica, Peru, EEUU, Venezuela, Mexico, Russia and Argentina. Some of them are old practitioners that felt this exam was like a debt with themselves, others were new practitioners who discovered the Teachings recently, but felt a powerful respect and enthusiasm for the Teaching and the Master.

Consulted about the recent experience, a new practitioner answered:

"This visit to Tashigar was incredible for me. It is the first retreat where I met Rinpoche in person. I was studying the SMS and I took the exam....I could answer what I knew from the heart, but I couldn't answer another questions so, I was ready to leave and say to Marisa, Grisha and Ricky, "Please, do not worry for me." It is really great to have studied, to have had the experience with you, to hear the Master' ....At the end I passed and now I am doing the Training and feeling very happy" (F. H.)

Others practitioners with more experience wrote:

"For me, the fact of take the base level exam means to make a bigger commitment to the Teachings "(C. N.)

"To take the Santi Maha Sangha surpassed my expectations.... Once more I confirmed the correct view of the Teaching and the importance of the Sangha to navigate in this Ship. I can not explain what, but something inside me changed from this exam..." (S. H.)

Certainly, it's very easy not to take an exam, but this comfortableness means nothing if we compare it with the joy and emotion of those who have studied, collaborated with the Community through the Karmayoga, and who have used their time and resources to get a better understanding.

How compassionate our Master is, how clear his explanations are, and how generous he is with

his time, work and Teachings! Almost fifty people including people from Holland, Spain, Poland, Italy, Chile and Bolivia, participated in the Training.

All the people who had the fortune to live at Tashigar South during this Santi Maha Sangha program felt like it was a celebration and our Master decided to close it with two activities to relax and enjoy. The first one was watching videos with the wide and marvelous landscapes of Tibet, his people, his beautiful songs and dances; and the second one was a picnic, altogether with Rinpoche and Rosa, eating a traditional Argentinean barbecue and playing under the cool shadow of the great pines and the blue sky of Tashigar South. ©

**Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart**  
By Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
Euro 12.00  
Transcribed and edited by Elio Guarisco  
Shang Shung Institute 2008

This book contains a new translation of Longchenpa's Thirty Words of Advice from the Heart and the edited transcription of the commentary given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during a retreat in November 2007 in Barcelona, Spain. Longchenpa Trime Öser was one of the most important Dzogchen masters of Tibet and his scriptural learning and realization were equal to those of the famous saints of India. With his clear introduction to the principles and practice of Dzogchen, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu sets in context the thirty words of advice and then proceeds to explain each one in a way that is relevant to us in our time.

**TIBETAN CALENDAR**  
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**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**

- ◆ Yantra Yoga
- ◆ Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light
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- ◆ Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State
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MerigarEast



Merigar East

Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005

Constanta

Romania

phone: 0040 746 26 08 61

office@dzogchen.ro

www.dzogchen.ro

Membership News

Dear Vajra Family,

Recently you received a letter from the Merigar West Gakyil talking about one Merigar in the whole Europe, having two places with two faces – Merigar West (MW) and Merigar East (ME). The idea of having one Merigar suggests also having one budget and one membership policy for both Gars. There are the same membership fees, members can attend retreats and courses according to their preferences and the same discounts apply in both Gars.

At present, for legal reasons, each Gar is a separate non-governmental organization and so European countries are divided into two groups:

Countries situated in the Western part of Europe pay their membership fees to Merigar in Italy: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom.

Countries located in the Eastern part of Europe and near ME, pay their membership fees to Merigar in Romania: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Lithuania, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey.

For practical reasons membership fees should be paid according to this administrative division.

We kindly ask you to send membership fees for the year 2009 to Merigar East by the end of March 2009 (in the attachment you can find specific information about membership types and corresponding fees), using our new bank accounts:

*In Euro*  
UniCredit Tiriac Bank SA  
30, Constantei Str., bl. H1a  
RO-905500, Mangalia, Romania  
Swift Cod: BACXROBU  
ASOCIATIA CULTURALA COMUNITATEA DZOG-CHEN  
IBAN: RO50BACX0000000267513001

*In Lei*  
UniCredit Tiriac Bank SA  
30, Constantei Str., bl. H1a  
RO-905500, Mangalia, Romania  
Swift Cod: BACXROBU  
ASOCIATIA CULTURALA COMUNITATEA DZOG-CHEN  
IBAN: RO77BACX0000000267513000

We would also like to inform you about activities plans and concerns for the year 2009 in ME. As you probably know the task number one in ME is to build the Gonpa on our land with mandalas, stupas, roads and gardens in the shape of Longsal according to vision of Yeshi Namkhai. The hardest part of this entire task so far has been to get all the necessary permissions to start the actual construction work. By spring we are going to start the project by building the roads and making the gardens.

On the land of ME at the moment the wooden barn is being rebuilt and in spring 2009 it will be ready to serve as a shelter for karma yogis and people doing personal retreats. Inside there will be a bathroom with toilet a small

kitchen and a nice, isolated room. ME is searching for karma yogis who are ready to stay there.

In the end of February (27th, 28th and 1st March) we have organized a weekend of Yantra Yoga course for beginners in Oradea (close to Hungarian borders).

ME is collaborating with the SSI to raise awareness amongst the local people. In May 2009 there will be events to present Tibetan medicine, culture, food and dance in Romanian big cities like Bucharest and Constanta, and also in the village 23 August, which is about 3 km from the Gar.

From June 1st to July 8th we will be very happy to welcome our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in ME. From June 12th to 21st there will be a teaching retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Later in the month the SMS Base Exam will be held (22nd-28th June) followed by the 1st Level Training (29th June-6th July). The ME Gakyil is looking for experienced people ready to take part of

the responsibility for organizing these events.

For general information, please contact **office@dzogchen.ro**

For questions regarding courses and activities organized by the Blue Gakyil, please contact **blue@dzogchen.ro**

Regarding Karma Yoga or any kind of help for the Gar, please contact **red@dzogchen.ro**

For any question regarding membership, please contact **yellow@dzogchen.ro**

*Warm greetings to you all,*  
Gakyil of Merigar East  
**www.dzogchen.ro**

Temporary guardian needed

As the preparations for the construction phase of the Gompa and Gar's infrastructure at Merigar East go ahead, there is need for a reliable, fearless and dedicated individual or, even better, a couple, who can stay as guardian(s) of a relatively isolated place at the community land, ideally from spring until the summer retreat in June (but a minimum of 3 weeks), to discourage local thieves by their presence.

Food is provided and accommodation is in a barn (used to store different tools and things and as a dormitory during the summer retreats). In recent months it has been transformed into a livable place, with a separate room, toilet and shower, and with water, equipment for cooking, electricity and a wood-fuelled heating stove coming soon. It is a 15min walk from the Black Sea shore, 3 km from the village (where the Geko lives).

The person we are looking for must communicate in English (best also in Romanian),

be familiar with semi-outdoor conditions and be able to help in the Gar with daily work.

This is a Karma Yoga offering, plus also a possibility to do a part-time personal retreat and experience unforgettable days in the middle of the 'sky-mandala', as Rinpoche said of this place once.

You can see some pictures of Merigar East at:  
<http://picasaweb.google.com/grzegorzladra/MERIGAREAST>  
**Passage?authkey=YXMOH6rinzs&feat=directlink**

Please send all questions, details and applications (along with your local Gakyil's statement on your behavior), to **red@dzogchen.ro** or **geko@dzogchen.ro**

Team-leaders and helpers for summer retreats

The Gakyil of Merigar East is looking for experienced people willing to take part of the responsibility and help with organization of the summer retreats

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as a team-leaders or helpers.

If you are interested to be a team-leader for the Teaching retreat (12th–21st June) or Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training from (29th June–6th July), please send your short skills description to **blue@dzogchen.ro**

Regarding Karma Yoga or any kind of help for the Gar, please contact: **red@dzogchen.ro**

Sponsor a project

As you all already know, here in Merigar East we are preparing the land of the Gar for the construction process. Therefore we are using the barn, which up to now is the only building on the land, as a place to stay for people who would like to spend some time here and help us.

We have created a living space inside with a room, toilet and kitchen. We still need some equipment and therefore we ask you to help, sponsor and donate for these projects!

Right now we need some funds for 3 small projects:

1. The shadow project – we are planning to build a small wooden construction with a straw roof in classical, rustic style for the summer retreat here. Those who have already visited this place may remember the “sky mandala” conditions as quite strong sun and windy. Therefore we are going to construct a shadow area connected to the barn to give people the possibility to rest comfortably. We are going to use wooden beams and a straw roof made by the local villagers. The whole construction can be taken down before winter easily and used over the following years.  
Cost of the project: 260 euro
2. The stove project – for the barn we need a little wood fuelled heating stove. As the nights on the land might be quite fresh even in April, we have decided to use the stove as a source of heating for the people who will live there.  
Cost of the project: 250 euro
3. A clearing saw – our land is situated in the middle of the fields in completely agricultural scenery. To maintain it we definitely need some professional tools. One of them is a good clearing saw for cutting the weeds, grass and other plants growing here very quickly.  
Cost of the project: 500 euro

*We would be very thankful for any donations!*

If you send a money transfer do not forget to note which project you are donating to.

*Donating more then 50 Euro you get Merigar East special t-shirt.*

For all details concerning payment possibilities (bank transfer or paypal system), please contact the yellow Gakyil (**yellow@dzogchen.ro**).

You can easily find our bank data on our website **www.dzogchen.ro**

The Merigar East Gakyil

Europe  
Austria

Vienna  
**Upcoming**  
**Yantra Yoga 2nd & 3rd group**  
with Laura Evangelisti  
March 5–8

On the 5th and the 6th of March there will be only one evening session on each day. On 7th and 8th there will two sessions a day.

Location: Kriterion Yoga Center, Reiserstrasse 16, 1030 Wien

Costs: 135,- with the usual discounts for members

Info and registration: Honza Dolensky  
+43(0)660/521 9699  
**jandolensky@centrum.cz**

\*

Vienna  
**Upcoming**  
**Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra, Part 1** with Rita Renzi  
April 8–13

Location: Shambhala Tai Chi Center, Bennogasse 8A, 1080 Wien  
Costs: 280 Euros with the usual discounts for members

Info and registration: Honza Dolensky  
+43(0)660/521 9699  
**jandolensky@centrum.cz**

Czech Republic  
**Upcoming**  
**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat** with Jim Valby  
April 21–30  
Contact: **blue@dzogchen.cz**

First new ling in  
Czech Republic

We have the pleasure to announce the first new ling in the Czech Republic has been founded. Rinpoche said about it: “I am very happy with your wonderful news. It is really a very important thing. The name of your Ling is: Phendeling (Benefit and happiness)”

The opening ceremony took place on 15th November 2008 and is the birthday of the Ling. We would like to express deep gratitude to our Master for his support and blessings in this project.

The Ling is located in South Bohemia, a very beautiful part of the Czech Republic, in a protected natural reservation,

the hills nearby reaching 1089 metres above sea level. Our house is standing completely alone, the nearest neighbour is about 300m away and it is 100m from a road which makes it accessible even in winter.

Distance: Prague 157 km, Brno 215 km, Linz 106 km, Wien 221 km.

The Ling's website is under construction, the link will be posted soon. Directions on how to arrive there are included.

*You all are all very welcome in Phendeling!*  
*With warm greetings*  
Czech Gakyil

Denmark  
**Upcoming**  
**Yantra Yoga 1st Series Course**  
Led by Christen Norre Bundgaard under the supervision of Laura Evengelisti  
April 1–5  
Contact: **chrismat1@m2.stud.ku.dk**



# Europe

>> continued

## France

Paris  
**Upcoming**  
**Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners**  
led by Laura Evangelisti  
March 20–22

Friday 20, 18:00–21:00  
Saturday 21 and Sunday 22, 10:00–18:00

Cost: 120 € (ordinary membership),  
70 € (Reduced membership),  
24 € (Sustaining membership)

Place: Le Magasin  
144, avenue Pierre Brossollette  
(3, impasse de Châtillon)  
92240 Malakoff

How to go there from Paris:  
*Métro*: line 13, Station Malakoff or  
Station Châtillon-Montrouge  
Bus: Line 194 or 295 (from the station  
“Porte d’Orléans”, south of Paris):  
Station Augustin Dumont

Registration  
Early registration is welcome.  
For additional information and to regis-  
ter please contact:

Elisabeth Dong:  
**elisabethdongparis@hotmail.com**  
Web site of French Dzogchen  
Community:  
**http://association.dzogchen.free.fr**

\*

Marseille  
**Upcoming**  
**Course of the First Part Dance of the**  
**Song of the Vajra**  
with Stoffelina Verdonk  
April 27–May 3

Who can attend?  
This course is open to everyone who has  
received the Transmission from Chögyal  
Namkhai Norbu and is a member of The  
Dzogchen Community, this year 2009.

Schedule:  
Friday 27th April 6 pm to 8 pm  
Other days: Every morning from 10 am to  
1 pm. Afternoon training and practice.

Location: Studio de Danse Palama  
Centre Commercial La Parade, Chemin  
de Palama 13013 Marseille, France.

Prices: 280 Euros with usual discount  
for Dzogchen Community members:  
Ordinary member (20%): 224 Euros  
Sustaining Member (80%): 56 Euros  
Reduced Member (50%): 140 Euros

Information & registration:  
Please register as soon as possible and  
be precise if you want to do Pawo or  
Pamo.  
In order to receive an access plan,  
please contact:  
**francoise.casabianca380@orange.fr**  
Address: 137 avenue de la Panouse  
13009 Marseille, France  
Tel : + 33 (0)4 91 82 16 03

**South France Solar Mandala**  
**Inauguration**  
The brand new South France Solar Man-  
dala will be inaugurated during the in-  
ternational day of the Vajra Dance, 21st  
of March.

For those who are interested in sharing  
this event with us in the countryside,  
please ask for details of our 5 day pro-  
gram from:  
Michel Touveron,  
**michel.tou@cieldazur.com** or  
Nicole Morineau:  
**morineaupeju@yahoo.fr**

## Germany

Cologne  
**upcoming**  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**teaches Dzogchen**  
May 27–31

The retreat will start on the 27th at  
6.30 p.m. and end on the 31st at 12  
a.m.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will teach in  
English.  
Translation into other languages can  
be organized.  
Please contact: **gakyil@dzogchen.de**

Program of the Retreat  
Teaching sessions with  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
May 27, from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m.  
May 28 – 31, from 10 to 12 a.m.

The main teachings will be accompa-  
nied by explanations of the transmitted  
practices and by courses and practice in  
Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance, which will  
be held in the early mornings and after-  
noons. There will also be information  
and talks from ASIA and Shang Shung  
Institute, two NGOs that are dedicated  
to supporting Tibet and preserving the  
Tibetan culture. All these courses and  
the information are included in the  
entrance fee.

Please bring cushions and blankets to  
sit on. Chairs are also available.

Retreat location: Gürzenich Köln  
Martinstraße 29–37, 50667 Köln

The place for the retreat is famous in  
Germany. It is called “Gürzenich” and  
you will find photos here:  
**www.koelnkongress.de**  
Please click on Gürzenich.

It is in the middle of the city and near  
to the central station.  
Restaurants and cafes are nearby.  
The Rhine, Germany’s longest river, is  
also close by.

Costs and registration:  
If you pay before 1 May, you will get  
early bird discount:  
Non-Member: € 224, later € 280  
Meritorious: € 0  
Sustaining Member: € 48, later € 60  
Ordinary Member: € 179, later € 224  
Reduced Member: € 112, later € 140

The price for Non-Members includes the  
membership fee (ordinary or reduced)  
until the end of the year, if you wish.  
This membership will not be automati-  
cally renewed.

To be a member of the international  
Dzogchen Community allows you to  
take part in the retreats and webcasts  
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or in the  
courses with the usual reductions for  
members. It is valid all over the world.

The registration becomes valid when  
your payment is received on the follow-  
ing bank account:  
*For the bank transfer:*  
Dzogchen-Gemeinschaft Deutschland e.V.  
Stadtsparkasse Duesseldorf  
Account number: 110 478 91  
BLZ: 30050110  
*For transfers from other Euro-Countries:*  
IBAN: DE40300501100011047891  
BIC: DUSSEDDXXX  
Reason for payment: “retreat”

Withdrawal:  
If you cancel 14 days or less before the  
retreat begins you must pay € 30 ad-  
ministration charges.

Traveling: Here is the information on  
how to get there:  
**http://www.koelnkongress.de/w**  
**Englisch/locations/guerzenich/**  
**anreise.php\_**

And here you will find the map:  
**http://www.koelnkongress.**  
**de/wEnglisch/locations/guerzenich/**  
**downloads/Anreise\_Guerzenich\_**  
**8-07-pfade.pdf\_**

Cheap flights to Cologne are available  
with TUIfly, Germanwings and Air  
Berlin. Also you can take the (fast)  
trains, ICE, IC, Thalys, etc.  
It is cheaper if you book early!

Accommodation:  
You should book your accommodation  
as soon as possible because Cologne  
(Köln) is an international city with many  
events, especially in May. So it could be-  
come difficult and expensive to find any  
accommodation, if you wait too long:

*Beds or Rooms*  
\* “Station Hostel Cologne” is a private  
hostel with beds from 17,- to ca.  
30,- Euro per night, depending on the  
numbers of beds in one room  
**www.hostel-cologne.de**

\* A bit more expensive but still cheap is  
the: “Hostel am Rheinauhafen”  
**www.am-rheinauhafen.de**

*Apartments*  
\* Rooms and cheap apartments you  
can find here  
**www.hk-hostelling.de**  
\* For private pensions and apartments  
you can look at **www.babk.de**,  
**www.bed-and-breakfast.de/zimmer/**  
**hotel-koeln.htm** and  
**www.koelner-pension.de**

*Hotels*  
\* If you are looking for a hotel, it’s best  
to book at http: **www.hrs.de**  
You may find the “hrs” website also in  
your language! (**www.hrs.it** or **www.**  
**hrs.ru** – just try out). The prices for  
a room in hotels start with about 50  
Euros per night.

\* Good hotels you may also find at  
**www.hotelreservierung.de**

For more information on registrations  
and payments, please contact:  
Dzogchen Gemeinschaft Deutschland e.V.  
Helga Betz  
Lindemannstraße 12  
40237 Düsseldorf  
Telephone and Fax: 0049 (0) 211 682657  
**office@dzogchen.de**  
**www.dzogchen.de**

Updated Information can be found  
here: **www.dzogchen.de/retreat-2009**

All information is subject to  
modification.

\*



Dance of the Song of the Vajra part 2 with Karin Heinemann in Berlin, Jan. 2009. Photo: M. Möhle



## Passages

Born: On the 3. January 2009 Arik Wido  
was born, son of Matthias Nielsen née  
Lützen and his wife Katrin. Red sunrise,  
snow, sun, wind and rain were accom-  
panying the birth.

## Greece

**New Book in Greek**  
Hellenic Dzogchen Community is happy  
to announce the publication of the  
book: “Dzogchen, the Self-Perfected  
State” translated in greek.  
Greek title: «Τζοκτσέν, η Κατάσταση της  
Αυθόρμητης Τελειότητας».  
Publisher: “Fysiki Teleiotita – Elliniki  
Koinotita Tzoktsen”.

Warm regards,  
The Greek Gakyil



**House For Sale**  
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and Seggiano



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Email: **sangiorgimara@tiscali.it**  
or Tuscanary: **ritarenzi@tuscanary.it**



# Europe >> continued

## Hungary

### Budapest Retreat with Yeshi Namkhai

January 9-11, 2009

Zoltan Cser

Our Community invited Yeshi Namkhai to Merigar East during Rinpoche's first level Santi Maha Sangha course, and he accepted our invitation for a weekend teaching. The weekend was right after the New Year at the beginning of January, so we were busy preparing everything, while trying to keep the *trekchöd* principles that Rinpoche was teaching via webcast in those days. After Yeshi's arrival on Friday, there was only a little time to rest and the course started at the Budapest Buddhist University in the main hall, which is a part of, as we call it, an art deco stupa. More than 200 people gathered to see Yeshi



Yeshi teaching in Budapest.

Photo: Z. Somogyvari

and listen to the first day of the teaching, on the famous Heart Sutra from the Dzogchen perspective. The explanation was extraordinary; how Yeshi explained the logical connection between the path of renunciation and the one subject, the so called I, and the many outer objects, and then between the path of transforma-

tion and the many subjects and objects, and at the end the connection between the path of self liberation and the neither subjects nor objects.

On the second day we enjoyed the explanation about the real meaning of Phowa, an explanation that closely followed the previous day's teaching. Here the

main emphasis, as Yeshi pointed out, was the body, speech and mind level of understanding of this practice. In the evening Oliver Leick shared a joyful presentation about Shang Shung Institute and also Yeshi said some words about the archive project.

The third day, as the fruit, Yeshi gave a brilliant explanation

about the Longsal Upadesha, Introduction to the State of Ati, the text from Vairocana. We could understand that if we use the four contemplations of Semde, not step by step, but from the beginning together, that this way is a profound Upadesha method. After the teaching, since it was full moon, there was Ganapuja with the participation of more than one hundred people, which also served as a final celebration of the course.

On Monday we practiced Phowa together, Yeshi clarified some doubt, and after he kindly answered our questions.

Before leaving for Moscow we managed to visit Rinpoche's favorite bath together, relaxing in the hot water, and smiling into the face of the very cold and foggy weather.

Thank you Yeshi, for showing us how to integrate presence and awareness into daily life in a very intelligent and relaxed way, and also thanks to all the Community members from Slovakia, Czech, Austria, Italy and Russia who took part in the teaching. ©

## Italy

### HH Dalai Lama in Venice, Italy

Anna Lessana

On Tuesday February 10 we had the great joy to receive the Dalai Lama in Venice on the invitation of the local authorities wishing to confer honorary citizenship on him. This had been requested by the signatures of a great number of citizens of Venice and its surrounding areas that had been collected by several associations promoting the initiative.

The act was warmly welcomed knowing the selflessness, the moral and cultural integrity and extraordinary humanity of the 14th Dalai Lama arising from his study, meditation and continual asceticism. As the Dzogchen

Community of Venice we wanted to receive him in the warmest and most enthusiastic way possible and on the invitation of and with the participation of the organising committee, we decorated the façade of the S. Angelo Hotel on the Grand Canal where the Dalai Lama was staying by hanging up 5 coloured prayer flags that we had sewn.

Giovanna had got hold of a gigantic image of Padmasambhava and put it up on the façade along with the eight auspicious symbols and Tibetan flags offered by the municipality of Venice. Vera and Marco helped in the preparations and the entire Community participated to make the event successful.

While the Dalai Lama was going into the Town Hall, our oldest practitioner, Anna, feeling the need to pay homage to him, greeted him with "Namo Guru-



Photo: G. Carraro

bhya". His Holiness smiled and re-lai Lama in front of her for the peated the invocation to her with a whole day keeping at heart the contented and positive expression. joy and the peace that his presence Anna was deeply moved by this experience had instilled in her. change and had the image of the Da-

Lastly, Anita, the small daughter of Alessandra and Marco offered a *katag* to His Holiness from the crowd.

In spite of the rain and the high level of the water, everything went ahead in the best possible way.

There was a very light-hearted moment when the Dalai Lama, seeing that the water was high in Venice, said he was a little worried because he didn't know how to swim.

The wonderful event of his presence for receiving honorary citizenship offered a ray of light for respect of human rights among the peoples of the world.

It was with a smile that he left the Venetian Lagoon.

We pray for the Long Life of His Holiness and of all the Masters! ©



Photo: G. Carraro

### Yantra Yoga in Venice

by Giuliana Giromella

Accompanied by rain, snow, wind and even a bit of salt water, a course of Yantra Yoga was held in Venice from January 31 to February 2 led by Marco Baseggio with supervision by Laura Evangelisti.

The course was excellent and challenging, a period of revision and check-

ing that was very useful for the Venetian yantra yoga practitioners who were encouraged to continue and improve their practice.

Practitioners went over the Tsadul, Lung Sang and the first group of yantras with their relative pranayama, preceded by lots of warm-up exercises.

There were even practitioners from Udine and Bologna for the course and for part of it several people who have

not met the Master yet but have shown great interest in yantra yoga.

Marco was patient, precise and attentive to the observations made by Laura whose presence was a great help to all those present.

The course took place partly in the Libertango gym near Campo S. Baseggio and partly in the gym at the Renier Michiel school near the Maravegie bridge.

A final toast in the historical Venetian tavern called "da Codroma" gave a happy ending to the course with a promise to meet again with Laura in the autumn to do another revision course.

Our thanks to the Master for this wonderful opportunity! ©

\*

Rimini  
upcoming  
Yantra Yoga  
Led by Michele Salvatore under the supervision of Laura Evangelisti  
April 17-19  
in Desal Ling, Rimini  
Open to All

Contact:  
michelesalvatore@hotmail.com

\*

Naples



Yantra Yoga Advanced Course with Gino Vitiello. Every Tuesday from 8:30 to 10 pm in Namdeling.



# Europe

>> continued

## Lithuania

**upcoming**  
Lithuanian Dzogchen community is happy to announce the **Santi Maha Sangha base retreat** with Jim Valby from 10th to 19th of July in Vilnius  
The details of the retreat will follow.

Greetings  
Gakyil of Lithuanian DC

**Netherlands**  
New Gakyil  
Red: Vera Taihuttu, [red@dzogchen.nl](mailto:red@dzogchen.nl)  
Blue: Marc van Westreenen, [blue@dzogchen.nl](mailto:blue@dzogchen.nl)  
Yellow: Andy Hodge, [yellow@dzogchen.nl](mailto:yellow@dzogchen.nl)  
Secretary: Madina Tanekeyeva, [info@dzogchen.nl](mailto:info@dzogchen.nl)

**upcoming**  
**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat** with Jim Valby  
April 10–19 in Amsterdam  
More information will follow. Saturdays and Sundays there will be two sessions. Teaching on weekdays from 19.00–21.00  
For registration and information: [info@dzogchen.nl](mailto:info@dzogchen.nl)

**Russia**  
**New Russian Mirror Team**  
Coordinator – Kirill Shilov  
Editor – Andrei Besedin  
Information from Russian speaking community – Nataly Kim (Darya Mikhaylova)  
There is large group of translators and editors.

Moscow  
**upcoming**  
**World Day of Dance of Vajra and Vajra Dance Weekend**  
March 21st  
Kunphenling  
\*  
**Yantra Yoga Course**  
with Viktor Krachkovsky  
March 28–April 5  
9 breathings, Lungsang, Tsijong, Tsandul, 1–5 group of Yantras and 1–4 group of Pranayamas, Vajra Wave  
Registration: [www.rinchenling.ru/form](http://www.rinchenling.ru/form)  
\*

## Yeshe Namkhai in Moscow, Russia

Ivan Shakhov

We were excitedly waiting for Yeshe Namkhai’s visit to Moscow in January of 2009. His tremendous energy always brings development and maturing of our understanding of Rinpoche’s teaching and always something happens in the Community that brings very positive and intense changes.

Two months before the visit he told us he was going to teach the Upadesha of the Total Behavior of Equal Taste in Moscow, and that he had dreams connected to his previous stays there.

Yeshe said that our Gonpa should definitely be the place for this teaching and no matter if it is big or small, but this was the place connected to transmission.

The Gonpa of Moscow Community is a very nice place on the rooftop of five-floor building, which is full offices, but it is isolated so the Community has no problem to do different activities. Here we have the possibility to use the roof for having fun on warm days and performing the Vajra Dance when the weather is nice. Needless to say, in January it is freezing.

Though very good for our daily needs, the Gonpa is quite small



Yeshe Namkhai teaching in Moscow

Photo: I. Shakhov

and would not accommodate all 300 people that intended to participate in the retreat. Fortunately, we had an opportunity to rent a hall on the 1st floor, that we connected with video and audio to the Gonpa to make it a single space for the teaching. So, Yeshe stayed there giving teaching and people could listen and watch him downstairs.  
He started the first day with explanation of the difference between three paths of liberation. We all have a strong tendency towards the attitudes of sutra and

tantra and very much believe it to be the real way the teaching should be, and therefore we do not understand Dzogchen, which is beyond these limitations.  
For the retreat he prepared a large booklet, which besides the root text of upadesha contained the commentary on Kunjyed Gyalpo and his dreams related to this teaching, which he had in Moscow and Berkeley.  
The Upadesha of the Total Behavior of Equal Taste is Rinpoche’s terma, contained in the 8th volume of Longsal Teach-

ings. It describes fabulous methods of how a practitioner can learn to self-liberate all five emotions. Starting from the emotion of attachment, which we can, self-liberate by understanding the nature of enjoyment, Yeshe gave vast explanations of all upadesha, bringing the meaning to a much wider understanding than we could gain from just reading the text.  
On the evening sessions we performed the Guruyoga of Kunjyed Gyalpo together, the practice connected to Vajrasattva,

**Open Yantra Yoga presentation**  
with Viktor Krachkovsky  
April 8  
\*  
**Open Yantra Yoga Course**  
with Viktor Krachkovsky  
April 10–14  
“YY as a way to coordinate life energy”  
Contact: [pil\\_tt@mail.ru](mailto:pil_tt@mail.ru)  
\*  
**Fabio Andrico teaches Pranayamas**  
May 23–27  
Kunphenling  
Retreat on Pranayamas of Yantra Yoga  
Contact: [thalwa@gmail.com](mailto:thalwa@gmail.com)

and Yeshe did his best to explain all the details of how we should apply the method – doing visualization, working with sound, etc. He paid a lot of attention to clarifying the experiences people could have.

Yeshe seemed very relaxed and joyous during these days of teaching, showing that the practitioner of Dzogchen has a completely different attitude and behavior from what the practitioners of sutra and tantra have. We have all heard it numerous times from our Teacher, but still tend to fall into very limited vision of Dharma. ©



Vajra Dance Course with Luda Kislichenko Kunphenling, December 26, 2008–January 4, 2009.



2nd part of The Song of Vajra St. Petersburg with Luda Kislichenko, December 9–17, 2008.

### THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International  
Dzogchen Community of  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

**Main Office:** PO Box 479, Conway, MA 01341, USA \* Tel: 413 369 4208 \* Fax: 413 369 4473 \* [mirror@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:mirror@tsegyalgar.org) \* **European Office:** The Mirror, Istituto Shang Shung, Podere Nuovissimo, GR 58031 Arcidosso, Italy \* Tel: 39 32 98 86 52 92 \* [lizmirror@tiscalinet.it](mailto:lizmirror@tiscalinet.it) \* **Editorial Staff:** Naomi Zeitz, Tsegyalgar, Conway, MA, USA \* Liz Granger, Istituto Shang Shung, Arcidosso, Italy \* **Literary Editor:** John Shane \* **Advisors:** Des Barry, Adriano Clemente, Anna Eid, Barbara Paparazzo, Jim Valby \* **International Blue Gakyil Advisor:** Fabio Andrico, *International Publications Committee* \* **English Language Advisor:** Liz Granger \* **Layout & Design:** Thomas Eifler \* **Web Site Managers:** Thomas Eifler, Malcolm Smith \* **Printer:** Turley Publications, Palmer, MA, USA \* **Distribution:** Tsegyalgar at Conway, MA, USA \* **Subscription Rate/6 Issues:** \$35 US available through Tsegyalgar; 30€ through Merigar \* **Visa and Master card welcome** \* **Online Mirror:** [www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com) \* **All material** © 2009 by The Mirror \* **Reprint by permission only** \* We reserve the right to edit all submissions.



# Europe Russia >> continued

## Retreat with Yeshi Namkhai in Saint Petersburg

Anna Osipova

Saint Petersburg, the second largest city and Dzogchen Community in Russia, hosted a retreat with Yeshi Namkhai through cold winter days of February 7–9 2009.

Peter the Great founded Saint Petersburg in 1703 by as “a window for Europe”. Rinpoche visited Saint Petersburg only once in 1992, and we were all looking forward for this particular retreat with Yeshi Namkhai that in some sense would reintroduce the teaching to our Community.

The place of teaching was rather special. It was the hall of a secondary school – with children’s drawings on the walls, large toilets with no individual cabins, and the school bell ringing every 20 to 40 minutes even on weekends. Around 140 people gathered in the hall with white walls and large windows. Some faces haven’t really appeared in the Community for years, you can only meet them abroad, at the other side of the planet at retreats with Rinpoche, but not at home. You can trace them down also through webcasts, but they were all physically present at this teaching.

The first day was about the Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen approach to knowledge. But these foreign words like Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen were no longer words with a lot of concepts inside – they were part of our experience, daily life. Yeshi explained how we demonstrate sutric and tantric approach in our behavior, and how this approach limits us at the same time. Through these examples it was easy to recognize ourselves, our friends and our life, because these examples were so natural and close to what we are.

The second day was Phowa, a teaching that many of us seemed to know. Guruyoga, oh, that is simple, just remain in presence. I remembered a nightmare that I had just before the retreat: I was falling asleep and thought to myself – oh, falling asleep is like little death, imagine it is the moment of death. So what do I do? The answer comes right away – guru yoga. But what really is guru yoga? That was my nightmare. The teaching of Yeshi that day was exactly about what you are instead of what you do in that moment, in a dream or a situation that we consider “real”. From this explanation of Phowa it was clear that a teaching and its methods is not a technology, but a vision of our real nature and application of methods in accordance with our situation in a particular moment. Our real nature or guru yoga is the supreme Phowa. Teaching is not a technology, but a living knowledge unified with life and death.

The third day was on Longchenpa’s text that only few had

ever read. This was advice for daily life. But again, there was no distance and time in the real sense between what Yeshi explained as the teaching of a monk who lived through difficult times with no internet, office work and stress, while our life that is made of all of this. During those moments one could really have a vivid understanding of “how it is”. Yeshi’s teaching is not based on classical phrases, but relies on real experience.



Yeshi Namkhai with students in Sangyeling

Photo: I. Shakov

Yeshi introduces another dimension Rinpoche’s teaching. He tries to avoid “buzz words” that “old practitioners” know, that in some sense has lost its meaning like leaves lose their color in late autumn. Yeshi gives that fresh flavor to the topics that

we all seem to know since we have heard it so many times.

During the traditional Gakyil meeting, Yeshi gave some simple, valuable advice on collaboration. The Dzogchen Community is not a kind of hierarchy, where there are old practitioners with merits and new practitioners with no merits, where we all practice the teaching of one teacher, we should not fall into groups that practice more Yantra Yoga, or Santi Maha Sangha, or Vajra Dance.

Looking back on this retreat, the first thing that comes to my mind is that it was fun. Instead of the traditional somber Buddhist view that life is suffering, Yeshi clearly demonstrates that there is also enjoyment. There were things that we simply did

together with Yeshi – lunch at a home style restaurant where there was one big table for all of us to share, a visit to the Hermitage museum in group, and a spontaneous concert at the end of the teaching. During the official closure of the retreat our team leader spontaneously said, “Dear Yeshi, thank you, this retreat helped us to overcome the tensions between us.” And these were not just words, we really felt that way, at least at that moment. Of course tomorrow we’ll fight, but today we aren’t really in that dimension.

Besides, notwithstanding that the weather of Saint Petersburg that is more adapted for the life of penguins, not humans, we hope that Yeshi felt warm with us. At least we had this warm feeling. ©

## Serbia

New Gakyil

Yellow: Radomir Markovic

lale@ittv.co.yu

Red: Ivana Radicevic Karaman

radicevic.iva@gmail.com

Blue: Jelena Zagorcic ela.z@eunet.yu

## Spain



Yantra Yoga Supervision with Gloria Pinsach supervised by Laura Evangelisti February 9–12, Kundusling Barcelona.

23rd–29th May  
**Dance of the Song of the Vajra, Part I**  
with Stoffelina Verdonk  
To book, please contact Rowan Wylie  
Tel: 01223 473 528  
Email: rowanwylie@hotmail.com

6th–7th June  
**Jnana Dakini Weekend**  
with Sally Field  
To book, please contact Mike Beddard  
Tel: 0781 5299976  
Email: mikebeddard@gmail.com

8th June–16th July  
**Personal Retreat Time**  
To book, please contact Nick Segust  
Tel: 02920 652 866  
kunsellingbookings@yahoo.co.uk

17–19th July  
**Introduction To Meditation**  
with Oliver Leick  
To book, please contact Mike Beddard  
Tel: 0781 5299976  
Email: mikebeddard@gmail.com

24th–30st July  
**Karma Yoga with Six Lokas Practice**  
To book, please contact Colin Ellar  
Tel: 0208 737 0347  
Email: colin.ellar@blueyonder.co.uk

U.K.  
Kunselling Programme  
April–July 2009

10–12th April (Easter)  
**Xinas practice**  
with Colin Ellar  
To book, please contact Mike Beddard  
Tel: 0781 5299976  
Email: mikebeddard@gmail.com

13–19th April  
**Karma Yoga with Xinas practice**  
To book, please contact Colin Ellar  
Tel: 0208 737 0347  
Email: colin.ellar@blueyonder.co.uk

1–4th May Bank Holiday  
**Yantra Yoga – Beginners Course**  
With John Renshaw  
To book, please contact Mary Duckett  
Tel: 07717 432339  
Email: treemonkey73@hotmail.co.uk



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secretary@tsegyalgar.org  
www.www.tsegyalgareast.org

# Karma Yoga Help Needed on Khandroling

Beginning This Spring!!!

Dear Vajra Family,  
Tsegyalgar East invites the Dzogchen Community to participate in a marvelous opportunity on Khandroling, the sacred land of the Dakinis and birth-place of the Vajra Dance. Spanning 220 acres (89 hectares) of picturesque hills, streams, a pond, meadows, fields and forest, Khandroling offers Dzogchen Community members a place to deepen their connection to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s Dzogchen transmission.

The Gakyil of Tsegyalgar East is undertaking a large development project on Khandroling. First and foremost, we are building a house for our precious Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, on this land where he has received and offered many profound teachings. We will begin the construction on Rinpoche’s home this spring near lower Khandroling.



Rinpoche’s house.

This project offers us all a great opportunity to serve and collaborate with Rinpoche and the Dzogchen Community. It is a most fortunate occasion!

We need your help! The Gakyil of Tsegyalgar East is looking for dedicated volunteers to offer karma yoga. Help will be needed beginning this spring with the preparation of the land for Rinpoche’s house. The Gakyil is willing

to provide room (a bed in the Tsegyalgar East dorm, or tenting) and board as well as discounts on retreats in exchange for a serious work commitment. Karma Yoga positions include both skilled and unskilled laborers. Some jobs include: electrician, carpenter, painter, manual laborer, gardener, cook, etc.

At the same time we are working on the house for Rinpoche we will be actively involved in a variety of other very important work projects on Lower Khandroling, as mentioned below. There will be no lack of work and activity for skilled and unskilled karma yogis. We hope very much that this effort will be a great collaboration from all corners of our Dzogchen Community.

Rinpoche has indicated that Khandroling will become a pilgrimage site for the Dzogchen Community. To fulfill this vision, the Community will renovate a farmhouse and barn to serve as a support for the Teachings and the Community. This will include a Gonpa, guesthouse, and office space. In coming years, the Community will finish the construction of several retreat cabins. Finally, the crown structure for Khandroling will be the completion of a large Vajra Hall to protect a Universal Dance Mandala.  
We welcome all current Community members to apply. Please feel free to email Ed Hayes, the Khandroling Development Director, with any questions or for a karma yoga application.  
**edhayes13@yahoo.com**

Many Thanks,  
The Tsegyalgar East Gakyil and  
Khandroling Development Team



Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat with Jim Valby  
February 7–9 2009 at Tsegyalgar East.

Photo: N. Zeitz

New York  
**Santi Maha Sangha Retreat**  
with Jim Valby  
May 15–17, 2009  
  
At Kundrolling  
151, West 30th Street, Suite 403, Level 4,  
New York near 7th Avenue and Penn  
Station  
212-564-1024  
**www.nydzogchen.com**



EVERYONE READS THE MIRROR!

TsegyalgarWest



Tsegyalgar West

Baja California Sur, Mexico

ejgon@hotmail.com  
At Tsegyalgar West itself: betilupema@hotmail.com  
<http://jardindelosnaranjos.org/>

# Proposed Job Description

and Qualifications for Hospitality  
and Outreach Manager(s)

The Dzogchen Community in Los Cabos, Baja Sur, Mexico seeks an individual or couple who will reside on our mountain property (Tsegyalgar West) near Los Cabos, and provide outreach and hospitality services, as well as supervision for hospitality-related tasks performed by others.

Preferred candidates are members of the Dzogchen Community. Fluency in English and Spanish is absolutely required. Minimum time commitment is one year; two years is preferred.

The hospitality/outreach manager(s) will be compensated with room, board, and a modest monthly stipend, plus use of Gar vehicles. Residence is in a scenic

natural area with old trees, river pools, and wildlife. Within thirty-five minutes there is the international airport of San Jose del Cabo and the old Mexican seaside town of San Jose. Within 50 minutes is Cabo San Lucas, a popular tourist town in Baja Sur. Surrounding this peninsula is a World Heritage Biosphere Area, with 22 species of whales and plentiful marine life.

If you are interested in this position, please contact the Secretary at Tsegyalgar West  
**tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com**

Thank you!

# Chöd Retreat with Nina Robinson in Baja California, Mexico

by Joel Crisp

The sun rises on a green mountainside as 10 people gather to dance. The view from the Mandala extends for kilometers up and down the valley. The practitioners from Europe, Mexico, and the U.S. have gathered here in the mountains above the resorts of Cabo, Mexico to listen to the kind wisdom of Nina Robinson. She is leading us in a 10-day Chöd Retreat, and everyone in the group of 18 appreciates the importance of this gathering to deepen our experience of the teachings of our precious Master. The world’s largest Gar is still buzzing from Yeshi Namkhai’s visit last month as we sit down to delicious meals of mostly organic food. Hot showers, swimming in the mountain pools and Dharma movie-time help to soften



Nina Robinson leads Chöd at Tsegyalgar West in Cabo, Mexico.

Photo: J. Crisp

our stay in this beautiful wilderness. Thank you Nina for our silent moments of presence under Rinpoche’s favorite tree. And thank you Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for...Everything. ©



## Tsegyalgar West

### Mandarava in Dondrubling Berkeley

Carisa O'Kelly

We were very fortunate this February to participate in a ten day Mandarava Retreat led by Nina Robinson at Dondrubling in Berkeley, California. It was a delightful experience from beginning to end and a wonderful way to end the old (Tibetan) year and start the new one. The Course was very well attended with people traveling from places both within California and

as far North as Oregon and each person participating as their personal schedule permitted.

We dedicated our practice for the Health and Long Life of Our Master who is currently at Namgyalgar in Australia. For this we used the particular word that we learned that is used when dedicating for someone else. We also learned the latest dadar movements, and all adjustments to the text that arose out of Rinpoche's recent dreams during his month long Mandarava retreat.

Nina also patiently and clearly led us through the Chudlen breathing and some of the Mandarava



Nina Robinson and group at Dondrubling, Berkeley California February 20–March 1, 2009.

Tsalung practices. The course was structured with one after-

noon and one evening session each weekday so people who had

to work during the day could participate in the evening sessions. This meant that Nina would often repeat what she had already explained as “new” people arrived and this was very beneficial for all of us as we were in this way able to get clearer on the details of the practice.

The Course ended with a Mandarava Ganapuja with Marme Monlam practice and we are all sad to see her leave but happy for the Mexico Community where she is heading next.

We hope to see her back in the Bay Area as soon as her schedule permits. Safe travels. ©

### Yantra Yoga in Portland Oregon

Darren Littlejohn

The Portland Dzogchen Community hosted Paula Barry for the introductory Yantra Yoga course from Jan 30th- Feb 1st, 2009. We used the facilities of the Zen Center of Portland, which is located in the beautiful Northwest Portland neighborhood. There were over 20 registrants for the weekend. Several participants came from Seattle (3 hours to the North) and Salem (an hour South) and most were already students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Paula was wonderful and very well received by the Community. She has a direct, personal and accessible style. Her warmth spread quickly through the group and grew with us from the time we all greeted her at the airport, through many hot tub sessions at the house, until we put her on the plane bound for frosty Massachu-



setts. Everyone loved her teaching and unanimously agrees to invite her back for more Yantra Yoga.

We made it through the warm ups and the Eight Movements, with plenty of time to run through a complete practice session at the end. Paula quickly learned everyone's name and the group felt very comfortable asking questions and Paula walked around the room from time to time, making personal suggestions to practitioners.

In the future for the Portland Sangha, we foresee Vajra Dance, Santi Maha Sangha and, of course, more Yantra Yoga courses. We're making plans to buy a Dance Mandala and find a room to host practices. Our Dzogchen Community is growing. We're doing regular practices, getting together for web casts and communicating over email, Facebook and so on. So we're happy and doing well here in Portland. ©

San Diego  
Upcoming  
An Introduction to Yantra Yoga:  
The Tibetan Yoga of Movement  
with Oni McKinstry  
March 20–22, 2009

Called The Union of the Sun and the Moon, Yantra Yoga is an ancient Tibetan system of trulkhor (movements) and tsalung (pranayamas). Through positions and movements combined with breathing, this practice helps one to relax and achieve a state of well-being and harmony, at the same time enhancing physical health, energy, and mental balance.

In this introductory course we will focus on Complete Breathing and the Preliminary Practices of Lung Ro Salwa (Exhaling the Stale Air), Tsigjong (Loosening the Joints) and Lungsang (Purifying the Prana). Emphasis will be on cultivating presence and awareness while developing and deepening our understanding and experience of the breath, both within the yantras and the pranayamas. This course is the foundation for further study and practice of Yantra Yoga.

Visit [www.yantrayoga.org](http://www.yantrayoga.org) for more information

Schedule  
Friday, March 20  
2:30 pm–4:00 pm: Free public lecture and presentation  
6:00pm–8:00pm: Session 1  
Saturday, March 21  
1:00 pm–3:00 pm: Session 2  
5:00 pm–7:00 pm: Session 3  
Sunday, March 15  
1:00 pm–3:00 pm: Session 4  
5:00 pm–7:00 pm: Session 5

Location: Embody Yoga Therapy  
5632 La Jolla Blvd, San Diego, CA 92037  
858-454-9355  
[info@embodyyogatherapy.com](mailto:info@embodyyogatherapy.com)

Registration: \$ 200 (or \$ 150 if paid in full by Friday, February 27 )  
Space is limited, preregistration is advised.

What to Bring  
Please wear comfortable clothing.  
Bring a blanket or mat to lie on.  
Come with not too full of a stomach!

Please feel free to contact with any questions.  
Miles Thomas, 619.379.6359  
[miles@southparkcommunityacupuncture.com](mailto:miles@southparkcommunityacupuncture.com)

## Tashigar Norte

Lauri Denyer

Rainy season has been continuous since last summer, people say, which accounts for all the beautiful flowers and the greenness of the foliage. Now the rain is falling less, and the wind is coming. For the next few months it is the wind that will be continuous, they say. But the rain has not abandoned the island yet.

Last November Yeshe Namkhai visited and reminded us that this is a special place for the dance and Gomadevi, which people really took to heart, and there has

been a morning practice of Gomadevi almost every day since, the exceptions being when there has been another practice instead, such as Mandarava or the recent practice Rinpoche taught in the webcast from Australia, the Jnanadakini thug thig.

There was a Losar celebration, which included the traditional Tibetan soup with dough balls containing indications for the next year, a morning swim at Zaragosa at 5 am, practices, eating together and playing games.

The Gakyil invited Prima Mai to come to supervise three Vajra Dance teachers- Carmen, Bodhi, and Rosa- so she has come for a month. The courses they are teaching were organized very

carefully so that all the participants could eat together and the energy of the dance practice be as continuous as possible. This retreat is well-attended; there are at least twenty students, some of whom have never taken any Vajra Dance course before.

Adriano Clemente and Dina have also been here for a month. Dina leads two sessions a day of Yantra yoga, and Adriano accepted the invitation of the Gakyil to lead Chöd practices, Mandarava practices, Jnanadakini practices, giving explanations when needed as well as demonstrating how to play the damaru and bell. He also gave four intensive sessions on how to lead the Ganapuja practice, meticulously going over the tunes of each section.



Painters and dancers.

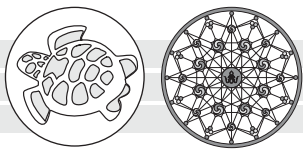
Photo: J. Bass

This coincides with the second year of the Gonpa painting, with the crew of painters from Merigar under the direction of Mig-

mar. They have been here for a month and the painting is almost finished. They came to a  
>> continued on the following page



# Tashigar Norte



>> continued from previous page  
beach paradise for a month and a half to work, but the crew has been so continuously busy that it can in no way be seen as a holiday. They work eight hours a day, and in that way, it will be mostly complete when they leave. Several other painters have worked with them, including one from Russia who came solely for this purpose, several Venezuelans, Italians, and occasionally others. The Gonpa is now decorated in its entirety and two mantras are painted on the major lengthwise beams, and around the periphery of the Gonpa, A A Ha Sha Sa Ma, and Om Ah Hum Vajra Guru Padma Siddhi Hum.

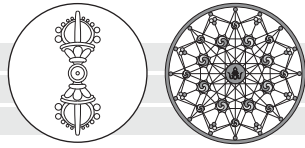
And then there is Luciano from Italy who is here to work on the complex and dismaying electrical system in the Gonpa. Since all these activities are taking place in the Gonpa, sharing the same space at the same time clearly represents the non-division between formal practice and the practices of daily life. The painters and the electricians are clearly far too busy to attend all the formal practices but it is equally clear that what they are doing is also a practice, since it is being done with so much apparent care, attention and respect for others.

The upkeep of the gar and the housing area rests largely on the shoulders of a few very diligent people for whom the endless arising of one problem with the subsiding of another does not seem to be such an enormous stress, probably due to the fact that they have been involved in this for a long time in these very fortunate surroundings, and have a good perspective on it and a real understanding of the lack of substantiality of things. The support that the Gar gets from the way people are involved in the teachings Rinpoche has given both here and elsewhere is impossible to overstate. And it feels as if this is only a beginning.

**upcoming**  
Tashigar Norte is pleased to announce **Vajra Dance Course of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra** With Rosa Altamirano, supervised by the Main Instructor Prima Mai March 27th, 28th & 29th For Beginners, open to Members and All interested People  
  
Cost  
Non-Members Bs.F. 500  
Meritorious Members Bs.F. 200  
Sustainer Members Bs.F. 200  
Ordinary Members Bs.F. 400  
Reduced Members Bs.F. 250  
Our intention for this retreat is to provide a comfortable environment for practice, very good food so participants can enjoy eating together and accommodation inside Tashigar so everyone can walk to the Mandala in a relaxed retreat environment where we are not stressed by driving to and from the Gar.

We also want to encourage people living in mainland Venezuela to communicate your intention to travel by air and by car and we will do our best to coordinate cheap airline tickets and car sharing opportunities.  
  
Food Service  
Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner:  
Bs.F. 70 per day  
Please be free to communicate your personal dietary requirements to our experienced chefs  
  
Limited places are available  
  
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Monday to Friday 8:00 am–12:00 pm  
  
For Accommodation, Food and Travel Assistance:  
**vajradance.march2009@gmail.com**

# Tashigar Sur



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



Yatra Yoga 1st Level Supervision of Haimavati Nakai and Jimena Piedra with Fabio Andrico from Jan. 2–8, 2009.



Seventh Lojong Retreat with Yatra Yoga led by Ricky Sued and Marisa Alonso, January 22–27, 2009.



Ongoing Beginner's Yatra Yoga Course with Carolina Mingolla in Tanti, Cordoba, Argentina.

## Costa Rica

Dekyitling, The Costa Rican Ling has a new Gakyil

Blue Gakyil is Oscar Jimenez [ojimenezmeza@yahoo.es](mailto:ojimenezmeza@yahoo.es)  
Red Gakyil is Federico Herrero [eloi\\_jota@yahoo.es](mailto:eloi_jota@yahoo.es)  
Yellow Gakyil is Gloriana Brenes [glorianabrenes@yahoo.com](mailto:glorianabrenes@yahoo.com)

## Norbunet

There are some changes to Norbunet, International mailing list of the Dzogchen Community  
To subscribe: send a message to **norbunet-request@lists.dzogchencommunity.ru** with in the subject-line: subscribe  
To post messages: **norbunet@lists.dzogchencommunity.ru**  
To contact the administrator: [loekjehe@xs4all.nl](mailto:loekjehe@xs4all.nl)

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led by Dr. Michael Katz under the direction of

CHOGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

<http://tsegyalgarwest.org>



# 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 with Santi Maha Sangha level 1 group, Namgyalgar.

## 'Base Jumping' Dzogchen style

Maree Ploetz

Base-jumping is an extreme sport, one that many Dzogchen practitioners eventually decide to take up. So what thrills and experiences were had by the 33 Dzogchen 'Base Jumpers', those who took the leap to study the Santi Maha Sangha Base, The Precious Vase and take the jump of completing the SMS examinations in Namgyalgar, Australia from the February 17-19, 2009?

Santi Maha Sangha Base Exams. Question one." So how has studying the Santi Maha Sangha impacted on your life?" 'Base Jumping' as I call it, the leap of making the commitment to study the SMS Base, for me started 6 years after first meeting Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche when I attended a Santi Maha Sangha Retreat in Margarita March 2007. Rinpoche stressed the importance of at least studying the SMS Base to develop

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**Upcoming**  
Fabio Andrico in Australia 2009  
**Breathing Course**  
March 27-29  
Melbourne

**2nd Level Supervision** for Aspiring  
Instructor with Emily Coleing  
March 30-April 2

Contact for all:  
Catherine Simmonds at  
catsimmo@yahoo.com

★

a deeper understanding of the Dzogchen teachings. The result has been to enormously develop my understanding of the Dharma and progress my practice more than ever before. Having my first Dharma education in Sutra and then in Zen (Mahayana Sutra) and later some Vajrayana teachers, studying the Precious Vase was enormously integrating and validating experience. I feel more connected to the Community and involved. So I wondered about the other SMS Candidates, how had their lives had been effected by studying The Precious Vase?

Ringo, 57 years old from Singapore, has been a student of Rinpoche for 18 years and traveled to Australia especially to take the SMS exam, said, "Studying the SMS I have a better understanding of the various Buddhist views, especially the inner Tantric view. But I am too old to study."

Quinn, 34 years old from Australia, has been a practitioner for 2 years and only attended his first 'face to face' retreat with Rinpoche immediately before he sat the exams said, "for myself it has been a wonderful experience. I found it helped to strike a balance between the cerebral/study aspects and practice/experience aspect to really deepen my understanding of the teachings."

Nicki the Gekö of Namgyalgar who has been a student of Rinpoche for 7 years said, "I was a bit surprised as I thought the study of the SMS text would be an intellectual exercise but the study brought deeper experiences of the teaching both energetic and

emotional. Doing the exam at the same time as being the Gekö was really intense and rich too."

Giovanni an Italian student of Rinpoche for 26 years said, "For me it was a long journey to study the SMS. I started to study 4 years ago as I thought it was time to follow the advice of Rinpoche, that it is important to know the Base even if you don't do the other levels. But when I read it the first time I thought it was too much for me because all these different words and schools were difficult for me. Then after one year I tried to read it again and I found it a little easier to understand than the first time. I worked in Tibet in an aide foundation for the Tibetan population so I had time to study in the spring 2008. The sensation arising in me during the spring of 2008, during 'The Tibetan Event' in Lhasa and elsewhere was so strong it was almost unbearable. So sometimes the practice of the SMS, like exchanging yourself with others, was useful but sometimes unbearable. The real understanding of how to integrate the concept of refuge and Bodhicitta in my life especially the concept of compassion has effected my life greatly and this experience seems present in a stable way now."

Dorje from Switzerland, 33 year old who has been a student of Rinpoche since summer 2005, the current Namgyalgar Scholarship holder said, "Studying the Precious Vase changed my understanding of the teachings, especially when Rinpoche gives retreats. I understand more of what he is saying now. It also helped me to be more in contact with the Dzogchen Community. This is also the reason I decided to do the Scholarship at Namgyalgar, to be with virtuous companions and be in the environment of the teachings and practice. The Scholarship helped me to deal with people. Karma yoga and practice all at the same time...it is something very useful for me. The teaching of SMS helped me to integrate my Swiss side and my Tibetan side... they are not separate."



Breathing Course with Fabio Andrico at Sydney University February 2-5, 2009.

## Children's program at Namgyalgar Retreat

February 9th-15th 2009,  
Australia

Maree Ploetz

Namgyalgar has always been very child friendly place promoting the attitude that the Community should support parents and families. Childcare at retreats has always been provided free and by volunteers and was quite variable in its quality. This year it was decided to employ professional child care workers. Parents appreciated being undisturbed and being able to concentrate for a precious few hours on Rinpoche's teachings. At lunchtime younger children were unrecognizable with faces painted as tigers and cats but where happily reunited with their parents with stories of adventure and friendships. Reports filtered back of how the children's meditation session which was supposed to be for 10 minutes lasted 45 minutes. So what was happening in the children's program and what was their parents' experience of it?

The children's program was devised by the parent practitioners with the idea of linking the spirit of the land and the spirituality of the teaching. It was divided into 3 age defined streams 2-6 year olds, 7-12 year olds and 13-16 year olds, the children most of whom already know each other. It ran during the morning teaching session from 10-12 am. The program for the youngest children 2-6 year olds engaged in the basic concepts of Buddhism

in a fun and playful way exploring themes of interdependence, awareness, and compassion for all beings, energy and calm state. They met in a circle each morning starting with meditation and later in the day was able to join a yoga session and meditation led by one the Yantra teachers.

Well that was the theory. How did it really work? Some mothers said that selecting the right childcare leader is important in implementing the program. In the morning it was more like good child care. The children had a great time but sadly the ideas of dharma related activities that were put forward to the non-practitioner childcare leaders were not taken up as much as it was hoped. The afternoon program was based on the Kumar Kumari written by Rinpoche led by Kate and Emily a Yantra Yoga teacher with worked really well with meditation and yoga. The children who attended really benefited by the meditation and they become very calm, open and participated well. The cost was \$50 a child but this cost did not cover the full actual costs but contributed to covering it. All the parents really appreciated that they could attend Rinpoche's teaching and not to be worried about the safety of their children.

It is hoped that next retreat at Easter Retreat Children's Program be more fully implemented especially the morning session. The organizers hope the teenagers will be as excited as them about the 'Teen Program' that will be activity based and lead by a professional Youth Outdoor Educator. One mother said "Having child care at retreats is a really valuable resource for Parent Practitioners. We really recommend it." ©



## Passages

**Born:** Emakiri Helen Fielding was born at 11.40 pm on January 13, 2009 at a quick and peaceful birth in Sydney Australia to Christina Barber and Tom Fielding. The midwife urged Christina to say AAAAA and push and out she came!! She is a very peaceful baby.

.....  
**Upcoming**  
**Yantra Yoga Open Course**  
Led by Yoko Morito under the supervision of Laura Evangelisti  
May 9-12

Contact:  
fwkf5051@mb.infoweb.ne.jp

## Japan

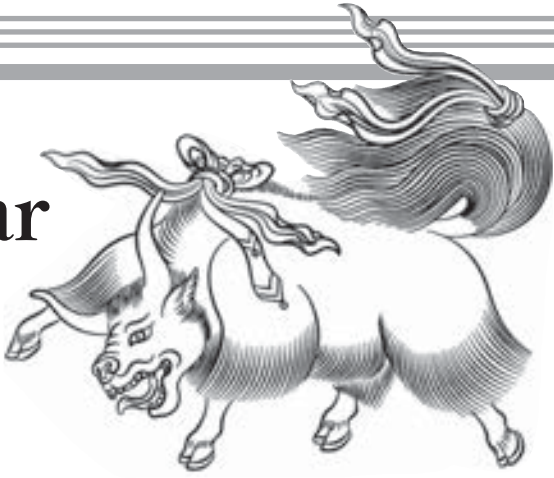
**Upcoming**  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
in Japan

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give Dzogchen Teaching in Tokyo May 8, 9 & 10. Please visit our site for more information and registration at  
<http://japan.dzogchen.it/TokyoRetreat>  
Dzogchen Community Japan





# Special Practice Calendar for the Earth Ox Year 2009–2010



1st Month, 10th day  
**Fri. 6th March 2009**  
This is the day on which Padmasambhava was ordained by Ananta, or, according to Jigmed Lingpa (*‘Jigs med gLing pa*), the day on which he left the kingdom of Oddiyana to go to the cemetery at Maghadha called Citavana. You can do a *Ganapuja* in the usual way or if you do not have the possibility you can try to do the longlife practice linked to the *Guruyoga of Guru Rinpoche (Universal Wisdom Union)* either collectively or alone. Otherwise you can do a *Medium Tun (tundrin)* with an intense practice of the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava.

1st Month, 16th day  
**Wed. 11th March 2009**  
**Full Moon.** This month there is no 15th day so today is full moon day. The anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje as well as that of the founder of Bön, the great Master Shenrab Miwoche, falls on the day of the first full moon of the Tibetan year. It is also a special day of Buddha Sakyamuni when he manifested several miracles and the anniversary of the Master Marpa. Thus it is an especially important day for both Buddhist and Bonpo practitioners, in particular those who practice the Dzogchen teachings. On this day, therefore, when it is 8 am in Oddiyana, *Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* will give the transmission of *Guruyoga* with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Garab Dorje. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 4 a.m.)  
**See global timetable**

1st Month, 25th day  
**Sat. 21st March 2009**  
This is the day of the Dakini and in particular the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Khandro, so it is good to do the *Akar Lamai Naljor* or a *Ganapuja* with transformation into the Dakini Simhamukha.

1st Month, 30th day  
**Thu. 26th March 2009**  
**Dark Moon.** This day is suitable for purification practice so try to do purification with the *Namcho Shitroi Naljor*, the practice of the peaceful and wrathful manifestations, either collectively or alone, as well as a collective *Ganapuja*.

2nd Month, 6th day  
**Wed. 1st April 2009**  
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *Long* or *Medium Tun* in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

2nd Month, 10th day  
**Sat. 4th April 2009**  
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the day on which the king Sahora tried to burn him alive and when he transformed the fire into a lake, so try to perform a *Ganapuja* collectively, but if that is not possible do the *Longlife practice Universal Wisdom Union*.

2nd Month, 12th day  
**Mon. 6th April 2009**  
This is the anniversary of Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147–1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the *Guruyoga of the White A*.

2nd Month, 15th day  
**Thu. 9th April 2009**  
**Full Moon.** This is one of the best days for doing the *longlife practice of Guru Amitayus*, with a *Ganapuja* if possible. Try to do it collectively or, if that is not possible, alone.

2nd Month, 20th day  
**Tue. 14th April 2009**  
This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dodrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Dundul. It is therefore a good day to do *Akar Lamai Naljor*, the *Guruyoga with the White A*.

2nd Month, 25th day  
**Mon. 20th April 2009**  
This is a Dakini day so try to do a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters or if that is not possible, a *Medium Tun*, either collectively or alone.

2nd Month, 30th day  
**Sat. 25th April 2009**  
**Dark Moon.** On this day, which is the anniversary of the great Tertön Loter Wangpo, try to do the *Akar Lamai Naljor, Guruyoga of the White A* with the Master Garab Dorje either collectively or alone, with a *Ganapuja* if possible.

3rd Month, 4th day  
**Tue. 28th April 2009**  
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *Long* or *Medium Tun* in the usual way, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

3rd Month, 10th day  
**Mon. 4th May 2009**  
This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Those who have received transmission should do a *Guruyoga with Padmasambhava* with the longlife mantra and a *Ganapuja* as we usually do, otherwise you can do the longlife practice “*Universal Wisdom Union*”. If it is possible, the best time to do the Guruyoga and longlife practice is in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the Ganapuja later in the afternoon. Usually the best way to do the Ganapuja and the Guruyoga is collectively, with your Vajra brothers and sisters, but

if this is not possible you can always do this practice alone when you have time. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners linked to the same transmission so that you can develop the potentiality of the transmission that you have received and through it your understanding and capacity to integrate your daily life in the state of contemplation. Those who have not received the transmission of the Tun practice can learn it from other practitioners and then receive the transmission when there is the opportunity. Otherwise on this day those who have not received transmission of the Tun practice can do a purification practice with breathing and Yantra Yoga exercises and movements or practices linked to controlling the prana.

3rd month, 15th day  
**Sat. 9th May 2009**  
**Full Moon.** This is one of the best days for longlife practices and in particular for the practice of the “*Union of Primordial Essences*”. It is best to do it early in the morning between 7 and 8am if you can but if this isn’t possible you can do it in the afternoon or even in the evening when you are not busy. Today is also the anniversary of the Kalachakra, the day when Buddha Sakyamuni first gave the teaching of Kalachakra so it is good to do a *Ganapuja* or *Long Tun* in the evening either collectively or alone.

3rd Month, 25th day  
**Tue. 19th May 2009**  
Today is a Dakini day. It is also the anniversary of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a great tertön and practitioner of Dzogchen so it is a very beneficial day to reinforce the function of our energy and create a more vital contact with the energy of the universe. If you have the possibility, it is good to do a *Guruyoga of the White A* in the morning and in the evening a *Ganapuja* with an intensive practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do the *Medium Tun* with the practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart mantra as much as possible. The best time for this practice is around 8 in the evening.

3rd Month, 30th day  
**Sun. 24th May 2009**  
**New Moon.** Today is the anniversary of Sangyas Lingpa (1340–1396) a great tertön and Dzogchen master. You can do a *Guruyoga of the White A* from the cycle of teachings *Universal Clarity* with a *Ganapuja*. It is also a good day to do the *Purification of the Six Loka*.

4th month, 7th day  
**Sat. 30th May 2009**  
This is the anniversary of the birth of Buddha Shakyamuni, an important day for all Buddhists, so try to a *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

4th Month, 6th & 8th days  
**Sun. 31st May 2009**  
This month there is no 6th day so today is an important day for the practice of Ekajati so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun* with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If that is not possible you can do the medium Tun alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

4th Month, 10th day  
**Tue. 2nd June 2009**  
Today is the day of Guru Padmasambhava. In general you can do the practice of the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava on this day. If you have the possibility and enough time you can do a collective *Ganapuja* with your Vajra brothers and sisters otherwise you can do the longlife practice “*Union of Primordial Essences*”.

4th Month, 15th day  
**Sun. 7th June 2009**  
**Full Moon.** This is the anniversary of the Parānirvāna of Buddha Sakyamuni as well as an important day for the longlife practice “*Cycle of Life’s Vajra*”. Therefore if you can, do the practice of the Dakini Mandarava in the morning (the best time is between 7 and 8 am) and a collective *Ganapuja* in the afternoon or evening according to your possibilities.

4th Month, 25th day  
**Thu. 18th June 2009**  
Today is Dakini day. It is also the anniversary of Ngor Chen (a great master of the Shakyapa tradition and initiator of the Ngor lineage), therefore it is a good day to do the *Guruyoga of the White A, Akar Lamai Naljor*, collectively or alone.

4th Month, 30th day  
**Mon. 22nd June 2009**  
**New Moon.** Today is the anniversary of Nyagla Padma Dundul (1816–1872), one of the Masters of Chang-chub Dorje and the main Master of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. He discovered the Terma “*Tsedrub Gongdu*” which two of his disciples, Ayu Khandro and Changchub Dorje, transmitted to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche practised this method as much as possible and started to transmit it to his students after visiting the sacred cave at Maratika. Therefore try to do the longlife practice “*Union of Primordial Essences*” in the morning. In the afternoon or evening you can do the *Guruyoga of the White A, Akar Lamai Naljor*, collectively or alone, with a *Ganapuja* if possible.

5th Month, 1st day  
**Tue. 23rd June 2009**  
This is the anniversary of Chogyur Lingpa (1829–1870) a Nyingmapa Master of Dzogchen, one of the three most important Rimed masters of the 19th century. Try to do a practice of the *Guruyoga of the White A, Akar Lamai Naljor*.

5th Month, 10th day  
**Thu. 2nd July 2009**  
Today is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. In general you can do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava practice on this day. If you can, try to do a *Ganapuja* collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, otherwise you can do the longlife practice “*Union of Primordial Essences*”.

5th Month, 14th day  
**Mon. 6th July 2009**  
This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *long* or *medium Tun* collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 15th day  
**Tue. 7th July 2009**  
**Full Moon.** This is a special day for the longlife practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Longlife practice “*Union of Primordial Essences*”. The best moment to do it is between 7 and 8 in the morning, if possible, either collectively or alone. If you can, try to a *Ganapuja* as well. It is also the Dzam gling spyi bsang (Lit. ‘smoke puja of the world in general’) so if you know how to do it, you can do the *Sanqod (Sangchod)* in the morning.

5th Month, 25th day  
**Fri. 17th July 2009**  
Today is Dakini day as well as an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a *Ganapuja* or a *long Tun* collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or a medium Tun alone. In either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 30th day  
**Wed. 22nd July 2009**  
**New Moon.** This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the *Purification of the Six Lokas* either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a *medium* or *short Tun* or a *Ganapuja*.

**Global Timetable**  
**Anniversary of Garab Dorje**  
1st Tibetan month – 16th day  
Celebration at 8 a.m. Oddiyana time

**Tuesday 11th March 2009**  
17:00 Hawaii  
19:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver (US Pacific Time)  
20:00 Denver (US Mountain Time)  
21:00 Chicago, Mexico City, Belize (US Central Time)  
22:00 New York, Montreal, Detroit, Havana  
23:00 Caracas

**Wednesday 11th March 2009**  
00:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paolo, Santiago  
03:00 GMT, London, Dublin, Lisbon  
04:00 Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Amsterdam, Stockholm  
05:00 Helsinki, Athens, Jerusalem  
06:00 Moscow  
08:00 Oddiyana (Karachi-Pakistan)  
08:30 Delhi, Bombay  
08:45 Kathmandu  
09:00 Dacca  
10:00 Bangkok, Jakarta  
11:00 Singapore, Hong Kong  
12:00 Tokyo  
14:00 Melbourne, Sydney



## Santi Maha Sangha

26

## Approaching the Santi Maha Sangha

The aim of the Santi Maha Sangha

Fabio Risolo

**S**anti Maha Sangha means the Dzogchen Community.<sup>1</sup> Those who are interested in the Dzogchen teaching and in the Community are automatically part of the Santi Maha Sangha project.

Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has explained several times, starting from the beginning of the project in 1993, that the aim of Santi Maha Sangha is to guarantee the continuation of the Dzogchen Teaching in a pure way, in the same way it has been transmitted uninterruptedly from Garab Dorje up to today within a very precise lineage and as he himself has transmitted it to his students for more than 30 years.

It is about a real mission that is the Master's main undertaking, the fundamental aim of his life:

“You remember how important this is, particularly for me. In my work, or even in my dreams, the Santi Maha Sangha is always very important. I told you when I had leukemia and they informed me, I thought that my life was finished. At that time the only thing I was a little worried about was the Santi Maha Sangha. I was not worried for the Dzogchen Community, my family or myself, I was only sorry that I could not go on with Santi Maha Sangha because I know that the Dzogchen teaching is very, very important. What I have understood I communicated to my students and I wish that this knowledge continues in the future. If people continue this teaching, I am convinced there will be some kind of evolution. Teaching really helps all beings, particularly human beings.” (Teachings at the Teachers' Trainings, Tashigar Norte, 2004, p. 39–40)

To this it should be added that even though today in the West there is a rapidly increasing number of masters who teach Dzogchen (concerning this we should recall that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was the first to teach Dzogchen in the West), it is a fact that in several cases they are teachers who do not belong to the Dzogchen lineage, or who act as if they do, often mixing different traditions and teachings. The preciousness and the uniqueness of the transmission and the teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu are an element that is very important for us, his students, to understand.

The Santi Maha Sangha serves to guarantee the continuity of the purity of the Teaching. Obviously if a lot of practitioners deepen their study and practice of the Santi Maha Sangha integrating it into their daily lives and dedicating themselves to it, the continuity of the knowledge of Dzogchen



as transmitted by the Master will be guaranteed.

“We must continue to transmit the understanding and knowledge of this teaching. This is the responsibility of all of us. First of all I have this responsibility because I transmit this teaching to you. You also have a responsibility, and then we share this responsibility. With this responsibility we must keep the transmission in the correct way; by keeping the transmission in the correct way we are not mixing it with something else. We should not modify, change or create problems in the transmission. If we learn in the correct way then we can continue the transmission. We all need to accept this responsibility.” (From a talk given at Merigar, July 1996, published in *The Mirror*, issue 37, September/October 1996.)

As the Master has made clear on several occasions, the correct way for each practitioner to approach the Santi Maha Sangha is, first of all, to devote oneself to attaining one's own personal realisation. This is the best way to make the Community grow. Helping others does not depend on our good intentions but on our awareness, on our being good practitioners who integrate the teaching into our daily life. The Santi Maha Sangha exists for this very reason.

It is not compulsory for a Dzogchen Community practitioner to take part in the Santi Maha Sangha project, nor is it indispensable to receive special teachings, but it is true that it is very useful for one's own inner development.

“Some people think I am giving essential teachings only to those doing Santi Maha Sanga. First of all, I want to make it clear that it is not obligatory to do Santi Maha Sangha. Also, I never said that I don't give important teachings outside of Santi Maha Sangha. I have constructed this to help people have a very precise knowledge of the Dzogchen teachings. In the future there will be qualified people who can teach, help and continue the transmission which they have received in the correct way. This is a way of producing qualified people.” (From a talk given at Merigar, July 1996, published in *The Mirror*, issue 37, September/October 1996.)

## Approaching study of the Santi Maha Sangha

Regarding the structure of the text and the object of study in the volumes written by the Master, starting with the Base and then continuing through the following levels, the Santi Maha Sangha consists of a systematic explanation of the entire teaching of the Buddha keeping in mind specific knowledge of Dzogchen.

The Master has planned 9 levels of progressive in-depth examination of the Santi Maha Sangha. After taking an exam for each level, one can carry on to the next level by following a Training given by the Master. After the Base (which corresponds to the book *The Precious Vase*) there are 3 levels related to the Semde, 3 to the Longde and the final 3 to the Upadesha. Up to now the Master has given teachings up to the Training of Level 4.

In 2002, the Master established the Teachers' Training in order to select teachers for the Santi Maha Sangha who can collaborate to help practitioners deepen their study.

If the long-term goal of the project is to guarantee the continuation of the Dzogchen teaching for the future, the short-term objective is for as many practitioners as possible to approach this knowledge. But how can this come about concretely?

On innumerable occasions the Master has explained that in Dzogchen the point of view cannot be established in an intellectual way or through philosophical debate but by integrating knowledge into one's existence.

“There are some people who think Santi Maha Sangha is like studying at University in an academic style. I am not interested in this. (...) Remember that there are the three principles of *tawa*, *gumpa* and *chöpa* in our teaching. The Santi Maha Sangha does not consist only in answering some questions like students at school. In particular in the Santi Maha Sangha the most important point is the capacity to integrate knowledge into one's existence.” (From a talk given at Merigar, July 1996, published in *The Mirror*, issue 37, September/October 1996.)

This has nothing to do with knowing, judging or assessing that which is outside ourselves, with considering different points of view explained in *The Precious Vase* in a mental way in order to discover which is the best, using the internal logic of the different views as a reference point and applying the convincing precision of dialectics. For a Dzogchen practitioner, studying the different points of views serves to look within himself, observe and know himself. This is really the fundamental point that our Master has taught us through the example of the mirror. And this is the way we can discover how to go back to our real nature, our primordial nature, the pure potentiality of the mirror, from the reflections.

The main point is not intellectual study but to integrate the point of view, meditation and behaviour in our three existences of body, voice and mind.

## Chodpa: behaviour

Here we have touched on a fundamental point: what does integrating the Santi Maha Sangha into one's behaviour, into one's own condition, mean?

“According to the Santi Maha Sangha Base examination, for people who are interested and participate in Santi Maha Sangha, first of all they must be interested in the Dzogchen Community. The training of Santi Maha Sangha is not only something learned in an intellectual way, but this knowledge should be totally integrated into one's condition. If someone is not interested in the Dzogchen Community, there is no way they can be totally integrated. The Dzogchen Community is like a boat; we are travelling by boat in order to arrive beyond a very big river and until we arrive beyond the very big river we should be interested in that boat. Therefore, we can understand how important the Dzogchen Community is for the trainee.

If people are interested in any kind of Karma Yoga activity related to the Dzogchen Community it means those people are interested in the Dzogchen Community. For example, if someone is a member of a family then that person is interested in everything related to that family. In the same way, if there is something to do for the Dzogchen Community, one who is interested in the Dzogchen Community is always ready to participate.” (*The Mirror*, issue 56, March/April 2001.)

It is not possible to be interested in the Teaching and the Master but not the Sangha. The Master is the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. Santi Maha Sangha means Dzogchen Community and the Sangha is the body of the Master himself.

If, as practitioners of the Dzogchen Community, we become aware that we are all on the path, we understand in a concrete way what all of us being in the same boat means: collaborating for a common goal in which individual realisation and the realisation of all our vajra brothers and sisters is, in actual fact, the same single objective. If we really practise the Santi Maha Sangha, a profound change takes place within us and we have a great awareness of this principle. This means integrating the principles studied in *The Precious Vase* into our behaviour in a very concrete way. Without this, there can be no realisation.

To feel real compassion for our vajra brothers and sisters can only arise from a real inner experience of instant presence. Under those circumstances compassion arises spontaneously (“there is no compassion without emptiness”, we read in the Suttas). This can be expressed in the con-

crete commitment practitioners take in making their capacities available for the common good, no matter what the situation, in such a way as to contribute to the life of the Community and therefore, indirectly, to the continuation of the teaching. And so we offer our collaboration as Karma Yoga. Those who do not do Karma Yoga cannot do the Santi Maha Sangha exam because under these circumstances their process of integration is not complete: they don't really give importance to the Community and thus not even the Teaching.

The Master has often emphasized the importance of having the right kind of behaviour towards our vajra brothers and sisters: always being ready to listen to, to talk to, to collaborate with each other. We have said that the Sangha is the body of the master, our own body. We cannot integrate the body of the teaching if we do not work for the Community. The Community is us: we are all connected and will be, with the Master, until our complete realisation.

Until realisation manifests, we should behave in a way that follows what in the teaching is called “awareness”, or being present in our body, voice and mind in every moment, observing ourselves and being able to keep our disturbing emotions under control, especially when we come into contact with our vajra brothers and sisters. Sometimes we behave in a rigid way, raising our voice, tensing our muscles. If we realise that we are doing this it means that we are applying presence at the level of the body and then becoming aware of the level of our energy that may be disturbed. This attitude of observing oneself, of being aware, is still not instant presence, as the Master explains, but it is the preparation for it.<sup>2</sup>

## Tawa: how to study the points of view

The classification into nine vehicles in the Nyingma tradition (cf. chap. V of *The Precious Vase*, p. 170) includes: the three causal vehicles (the worldly vehicle of the Devas, the vehicle of the Shravakas and of the Pratyekabuddhas, the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas), the three series of outer tantras (Kriya-tantra, Ubhayatantra and Yoga-tantra) and the three series of inner tantras (Mahayoga, Anuyoga, Atiyoga). In this classification Dzogchen-Ati is presented as the ninth vehicle, the point of arrival of the tantric path. From the Dzogchen point of view, however, it is also considered to be the path of self-liberation, a path that is independent from the tantric one. Why do we study the nine points of view? Not to show off our intellectual knowledge but to integrate these points of view into our condition.

Let's take a concrete example. In the first chapter of *The Precious Vase* the mundane points of view are explained. By studying them we can discover them in ourselves



by asking ourselves, for example, if we have that point of view. The Chalpas act driven by the search for pleasure for themselves and do not have a vision beyond this world. Are we or are we not like this? And then there are the Gyanghenpas – is our point of view materialistic like theirs so that we “hurl afar any concern about future lives” and think only about taking care of present gains? Are we, at times, nihilistic like the Murthugas who do not believe in karma and its maturation? This is a non-intellectual way to study that is useful in helping us to know ourselves and most of all in “bringing to life” *The Precious Vase* within ourselves, integrating it with knowledge of our existence. We can try to study all the explanations of the points of view of the different vehicles in chapter V in this way, by applying them to ourselves. So we can understand that when a practitioner of the path of renunciation discovers that he/she has this type of attachment, he is vigilant, he becomes aware of it and sets himself the task of eliminating it by cutting its roots at the base. If he has negative thoughts, he forces himself not to generate them, if he sets upon his neighbour verbally or physically he stops himself from doing it and so on. If we study in depth the pages that the Master has dedicated to the path of renunciation in *The Precious Vase*, we will start to ask ourselves about how we behave when we discover a defect within ourselves. Do we make ourselves rules in order to correct it? What kind of result do we obtain? Then we can try to apply the understanding we have received by observing ourselves without judging, but becoming aware of our condition. At this point we go on to integrate the different points of view on the basis of our awareness, according to circumstances.

For example, we could decide to take a vow in order to eliminate our attachment, like Hinayana practitioners do. The Master has given us the example of the possibility of taking a vow not to smoke for those who do not manage to stop. This absolutely does not mean that the Master has “advised” us to take this vow.

He has only said that there is this possibility because a Dzogchen practitioner is open to all possibilities. Or if one is guided by awareness (which arises from observing oneself and knowing one’s condition), one can choose any type of method, integrating it into one’s existence. In this way study of *The Precious Vase* is not intellectual but expressed in a concrete, live understanding rather than a theoretical one.

When we study chapter IV regarding Bodhicitta in action and we do the secondary practices of the 5th Paramita for developing meditative stability, we can concretely try to put ourselves in the place of those who suffer and if this becomes a real experience we carry it with us into our everyday lives. It is not that we have to act in this way but according to the situation and, even though it is a secondary practice for a Dzogchen practitioner, we apply it not to accumulate merits but because we are in that state. Now we really feel compassion and this means integrating the Mahayana point of view into our condition.

Then when we approach the path of transformation and understand its profound sense, first through study and then through practice, we will also be able to integrate it into our daily life. The Master has given us the example of the possibility to “transform ourselves instantly” into a wrathful divinity – according to the method of Anuyoga – in the moments in which we are particularly swept up by anger, in order to transform the passion of anger into its corresponding wisdom, the wisdom of equanimity. A practitioner who integrates study of the tantric point of view into their practice and behaviour should also be able to apply this method according to circumstances because he is aware that his own indestructible condition of the vajra is no different from that of the realised divinity.

As practitioners of the path of self-liberation, when a passion arises we observe ourselves without judging, without following thoughts and without blocking them, trying to keep sense contact with the objects of the senses open and remaining in instant presence, in the state of

Guruyoga. Under those circumstances our condition of anger may be self-liberated. On this path, a practitioner of Ati arrives at the concrete understanding that there is no point of view to adopt in an intellectual way, there is nothing to judge outside of us, but rather we can turn our attention to ourselves as if we were in front of a mirror in order to discover our self-perfected primordial nature.

Integrating the understanding of the viewpoints of the different vehicles into daily life means knowing how to use any one of the methods that we study according to circumstances and according to our capacity.

This is really a fundamental point that is linked to the very meaning of the Santi Maha Sangha project and its usefulness for us. In fact a lot of practitioners ask themselves – if we are Dzogchen practitioners and we are beyond limits, why do we study the nine vehicles and their relative methods? Let’s reflect on the fact that Dzogchen is the supreme vehicle and this means that it is situated, symbolically, on the peak of a mountain that overlooks everything in the valley. This means that a Dzogchen practitioner can make use of all methods on the basis of circumstances and different situations, integrating them into his own knowledge. But in order to understand all the points of views and different methods of practice and integrate them concretely into one’s practice and daily life one needs to study them. And to do this one needs to study *The Precious Vase* in a correct, intelligent and active way. This “non-intellectual” key that the Master has indicated to us offers enormous possibilities for integration and for realisation. It is as if we were to become the owners of a treasure - the treasure of real knowledge and integration.

**Gompa: integrating the different practice methods**

In chapter VI of *The Precious Vase*, the different practice methods related to the nine vehicles are explained and in the Appendix there is a list of the practices that should be done in order to have

concrete experiences for each of the methods.

For a Dzogchen practitioner the main practice consists in being in the state of the Master, Guruyoga; all other practices “are like an umbrella” and we should use them according to circumstances in order to deal with specific problems. Thus we understand how to apply the methods of the Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen teaching traditions and become aware of the profound meaning of what we are doing.

Regarding this we can take an example: when the Master explains the way of practising the tantras, he gives us the example of the way we do the practice of Tara in the Dzogchen Community. First of all in the first part of the practice we visualise Tara in front of us using the method of the lower tantras, invoking her with devotion which is characteristic of the Mahayana Sutra. Then “reciting the root mantra in order to activate her wisdom”, we transform instantly into Tara, according to the method of Anuyoga. Of course, the whole practice has meaning only if we are in the essential state of Guruyoga from the beginning.

Through real understanding of the different phases of the practice of Tara we can therefore understand the profound sense of the methods that we apply in different practices. We are also able to connect them with the study of the different points of view and really integrate them into our understanding of our condition as Dzogchen practitioners, in such a way that all of this is expressed in concrete experience.

The uniqueness of the practices of the Dzogchen tradition (such as Rushen and the Semdzin), however, lies in making us have a

direct and essential experience of the primordial state, linking us directly to the transmission and reducing as much as possible the importance of the method. If we become aware of the different methods we can integrate them and use them knowingly according to circumstances.

**Conclusion**

Approaching the Santi Maha Sangha can become something very alive that can change our lives. To do this we should integrate the points of view, the meditation and behaviour into our condition starting with real presence and observation of ourselves. Without this, there is no Santi Maha Sangha.

We can contribute actively to the Santi Maha Sangha project and respond to the Master’s invitation to “do our best”, finally acknowledging in the depths of our hearts the “good fortune” of having met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and received the Teaching of a “special” path from him.

“Even if we are getting older we are not too worried because we have the Dzogchen Teaching. But you see, in this world many people when they get old only wait for their death. That is not nice. One of the most important aspects for Dzogchen Community people is understanding how much the Dzogchen Community is important: that is your fortune, my fortune, our fortune. So we know that point, we take care of it and we do our best.” (Teachings at the Teachers’ Training, 28 November, 2005) ©

- 1. Santi Maha means total perfection and Sangha means community.
- 2. See the Master's text *Practice in Daily Life*.


Translated by L. Granger



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## The Birth of the English Dzogchen Community

Jill Purce

It was a strange moment – I woke up one Saturday morning in July 1978 and had the oddest feeling that someone had slotted a tape into my head in such a way that the normal radio of my thoughts were interrupted and the message on the tape said “go to the market”.

To set the scene – having written *The Mystic Spiral, Journey of the Soul* in 1973, I had for five years been General Editor of a series of books published by Thames and

did I know, how true this would become for so many people.

I wandered round the market waiting for the next instruction, which finally came in the form of an old friend shouting above the crowd – “Jill come for tea, there’s someone I want you to meet”. When I got there, my host, Mary, introduced me to Robert Beer an Englishman who had spent years in the Himalayas becoming an excellent *thanka* painter. Mary was suggesting I might want to



Rinpoche in Monte Faito April 1980.

Photo: © Jill Purce

Hudson called *Art and Imagination* – highly illustrated, cross cultural and thematic books on the psychological and philosophical meaning of the art of different cultures.

By this time, I had produced thirty books and was looking for the right person to write one on Tibetan Buddhism. Over the previous ten years, I had received teachings from many Tibetan Lamas who passed through or lived in the West, and felt strongly that none of them was to be the author of this book.

At the particular moment the cassette tape slotted into my head, I was packing to go to the South of France to work with another author on a book in progress for my series.

Up to now my life had moved gently from one activity to another with a natural and easy flow and I was not used to being bossed around by voices in my head. This voice nevertheless left me no choice but to do what it said. I stopped packing and drove to the to the market. This was a new market in North London called Camden Lock. I had always loved markets because they have a fascinating quality of randomness which I had always felt could be easily influenced by fate or spiritual destiny. Little

incorporate some of his painting into books in the series. We chatted over tea about life and mutual friends. Quite out of the blue – or so it seemed at the time, since I hadn’t yet mentioned my intention to do a book on Tibetan Buddhism, and apropos of nothing we had been discussing, Robert said “I hear there’s a Tibetan Lama in Italy”. This was all that was said – and yet it was enough for me to know I had immediately to go to Italy and find this Lama and ask him to write the Tibetan Buddhism book for my series. Robert wrote the name “Gufo” and Rome telephone number on a piece of paper, and off I went.

On Monday I had lunch with my publishers, told them I had to go to Italy to visit a Tibetan lama for the book and telephoned Gufo. I was given the name of a village in the Italian Alps. I called a friend who was holidaying in Nice and proposed we drive up together after I had finished working in Grasse on the Egyptian book. On Tuesday I caught the plane to Nice. After a few days we set off in the most frightful storm and climbed blindly up and up into the Alps clutching a damp scrap of paper. When we finally reached Campo Molino, a remote and tiny village in the middle of nowhere, with breathtaking and almost Hi-



Rinpoche with Community in Campo Molino August 1978.

Photo: Mario Maglietti, © Jill Purce

Left to right: Jill Purce, Nancy Simmons, Eva, Fabio Andrico, Rinpoche, Barry Simmons, Maria Simmons, Patrice, Laura Albini, Constantino Albini, Laura, Marcello, Rosa Namkhai.

malayan views over distant valleys, the evening was drawing in. We found the village hall in time to see a few young people spilling out of the door. I sought out the only two people who seemed to speak English, Nancy and Barry Simmons, and told them I had come to see Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. They pointed vertically up a cliff and said he had gone up there for the night and that I should find somewhere to stay and come back in the morning. In the morning we piled into the jeep and drove up the cliff to a deserted and ruined village with no sign of life except a few chickens. I had expected someone in robes and brocade and the chickens were not promising. We entered a dark room and there, dimly visible, was a young man in jeans sitting at the table writing in a notebook. We were introduced, had a coffee and chatted. Rinpoche seemed much younger than I expected and at that time wasn’t speaking much English, yet I knew immediately he was the right person and asked him if he would write the book in my series. Without any hesitation, he said yes. Mission achieved, and with much urgent work to do back in England, I got up to go, only to be told by Nancy that on no account could I leave and that I had to stay there for the summer to receive the teachings and that her husband Barry would translate. My friend Joyce who had come with me, left to return south to her house near Pisa and I stayed. What Barry translated hour after hour, day after day was so extraordinary, and made sense of all the philosophy, practice and meditation I had been immersed in for the previous ten years. I realized that here indeed was a very great teacher. I remained there, entranced for the whole month. At a certain point, towards the end of the retreat I had a dream in which someone appeared and told me I had to travel with Rinpoche and take him to England and Greece. At this point Rinpoche had been living in Italy for some years, teaching Tibetan language at the University in Naples and this

was only the second Buddhist retreat he had given there. So I asked him, if I could organize it, would he give another retreat in Italy just after Christmas and into

tended solo retreat in the mountains. Then in October, November and December, 1979 I went with Rinpoche on his first visit to the States and later to Paris in



Rinpoche with Jill Purce Monte Faito April 1980.

Photo: © Jill Purce

the New Year, he kindly agreed. I immediately called Joyce at her house near Pomaia, and asked if she would offer her house for two weeks at Christmas. I then called my publishers in London to see if I could invite Rinpoche to London at Easter to discuss the book. They agreed, so I booked a large house for ten days, the old Cambodian Embassy, normally lived in by friends of mine. I bought Rinpoche an air ticket and asked Barry to translate. I designed and printed a leaflet and sent it to everyone I knew, I spread the word and crossed my fingers. I had done many things up to this point but I had never organized an event of this kind in London before. So an old friend of mine who had never met Rinpoche, kindly offered to guarantee the price of the ticket if no one turned up. Soon it became clear it was working, something of the magic of this astonishing Lama who no one had yet met, was travelling around the ethers of London. Finally, many of the Italians who had been at the previous retreats in Campo Molino and Pomaia joined us in London for the retreat. The event was a great success and the seeds of the London Community were sown.

In the summer of 1979 I worked with Rinpoche on the book at his home in Italy and then did an ex-

January 1980, during which time we collected, as we had in London, material for the book from the major museums. I then organized the second London Retreat at the Guild, as the Embassy was called, this time, a twelve-day retreat at Christmas and New Year 1979–1980. By now I was helped by what was to become the core of the new English community. After this, while working more on the book for my series in Formia in the Spring of 1980 and attending many retreats with Rinpoche elsewhere over many years, the last retreat I organized for him was a two-week retreat on the wilds of Dartmoor in Devon in April 1981. By this time the English Community was firmly established. ©

**Jill Purce** pioneered the international sound healing movement through the rediscovery of ancient vocal techniques, the power of group chant, and the spiritual potential of the voice as an instrument for healing and meditation. Through her workshops, *The Healing Voice*, and *Healing the Family and Ancestors* she has taught internationally for almost forty years. She worked in Germany from 1971 with Karlheinz Stockhausen exploring the spiritual aspects of sound and the voice. She lives in London with her husband Rupert Sheldrake and their two sons.