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Upcoming Retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: G. Horner

2009

Russian Federation
Moscow
May 15–19
Retreat

Germany
June 5–7
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
Dzogchen Medjung, The Marvelous Retreat

Sept. 4–14
Vacation in Sardegna

Oct. 2–10
*Bepai Gumchung, The Hidden
Collection of Buddhagupta Retreat*

Oct. 23–30
Shitro Khorde 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



Namgyalgar children and Rinpoche.

Photo: G. Horner

The Dzogchen Teaching of Nying-thig Yangthi

Namgyalgar, April 17–22, 2009

Sue Fielding

‘First we pay homage to Samantabhadra – our real nature. This is the essential refuge’. Thus began our final retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for this teaching visit to Australia. The retreat was held at Namgyalgar between April 17–22 and 170 people attended. The autumn weather was clear and calm on the far south coast of New South Wales, bringing ease and enjoyment to the daily life of the Gar. I was not alone in feeling a mixture of deep gratitude for the energy, commitment and limitless wisdom of our precious master, and the poignant realization of his imminent departure.

Rinpoche gave us the transmission and instruction of the terma teaching of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje called Nying-thig Yangtig. This teaching belongs to the Upadesha series, which corresponds to the third statement of Garab Dorje: con-

tinuing to remain in the state of Dzogchen. The Upadesha contains two indivisible aspects: the Tregchod and thögal.

Preliminary practice

The preliminary practice for Yangthig Tregchö is to experience and know the difference between ordinary mind and nature of mind, or the state of rigpa. Rinpoche used the example of a mirror, which has infinite potentiality to manifest reflections and said that we need to begin by knowing the difference between the mirror and the reflections. To do this we have Semzin and Rushen practices.

Rinpoche began with the practice of outer or natural Rushen. This practice shows us how conditioned we really are and how difficult it is to just be in a natural state of body and mind, without changing anything. We experience our limitations, try to be aware

of them and let go. Then we rest completely and relax. This practice can lead to the experience of naldu wab. Naldu means ‘in the condition’ and wab to establish’, in other words total relaxation of our body, voice and mind. Through this we can have the experience of nepa, the mental state of presence in which we are not disturbed by thoughts and from here practitioners can enter into contemplation.

Following this Rinpoche taught us the practice of Inner Rushen. The main practice for this is the Purification of the Six Lokas. Rinpoche explained that for as long as we are caught up in dualism, we create the causes of our own suffering and limitation. He said that we have all of the seeds of potentiality for this suffering within our mind stream where they may, depending on secondary circumstances, ripen.

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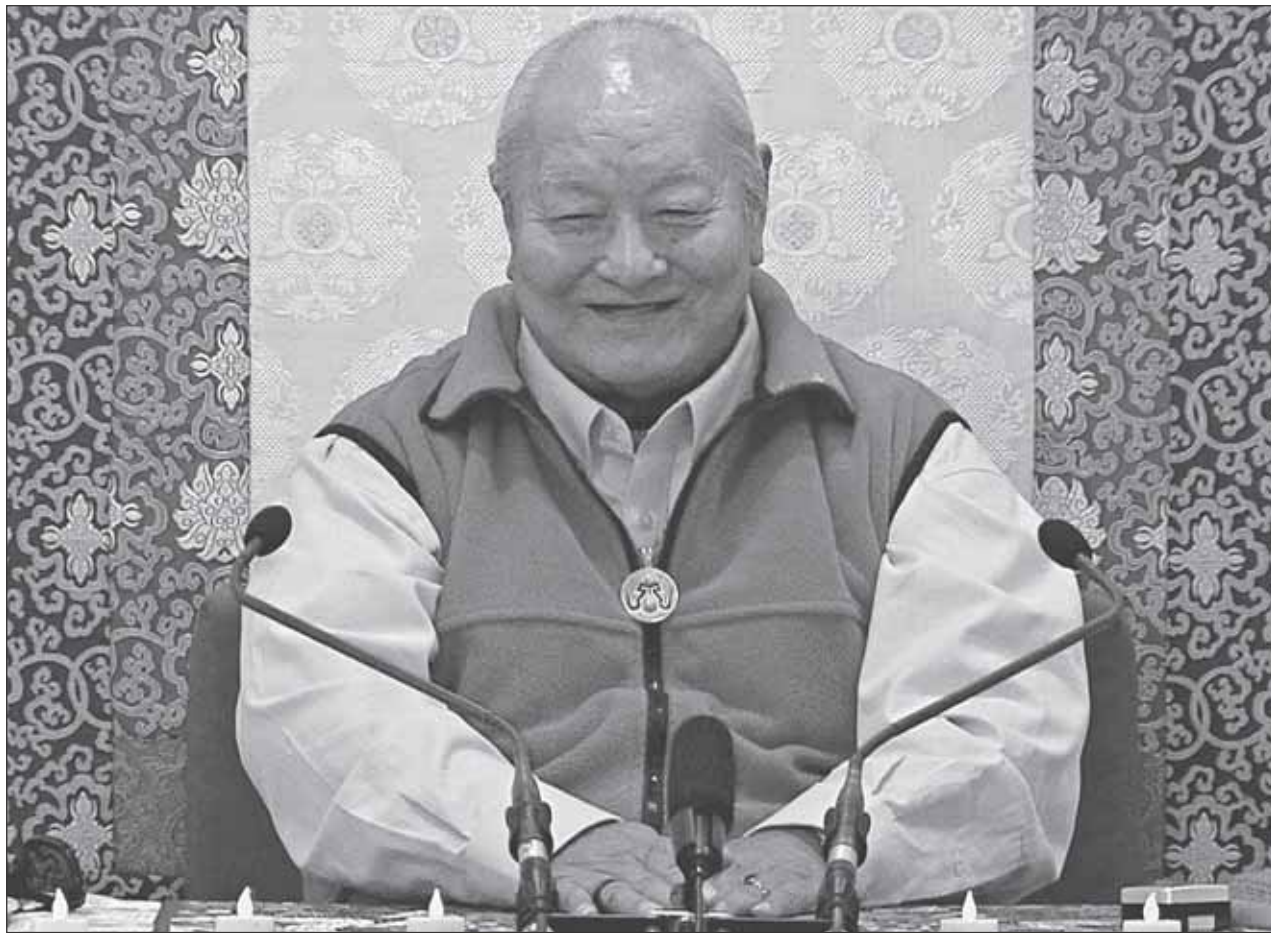


Photo: G. Horner

The Three Roots and the Yidam

Guru Tragphur Retreat

Namgyalgar Australia, Day 5, April 14, 2009

This morning I have two topics to talk about. The first is related to the learning and receiving of the transmission of the practice of Guru Tragphur. Everybody has more or less learned how to do this practice. We do not have only Guru Tragphur, but also Dakini Simhamukha, in our thun practice. We have them in the thun because when we do refuge and the cultivation of bodhicitta in the Vajrayana system, we say *namo guru bhya*, *namo deva bhya*, *namo dakini bhya*. These are the three roots.

This system of the three roots is very diffused in the Nyingmapa tradition and today it is also diffused in the Kagyüpa tradition. In other traditions they don't use the name 'three roots'. It is called three roots because the first and most important is Guruyoga. Guruyoga in Tibetan is *chinlab kyi tsawa lama*, because *tsawa* means root, the root of the blessing; that through which we receive the blessing. First of all we receive the blessing of recognizing or discovering our real nature. Secondly we are in that state and succeed to integrate in that state. All are related to transmission. We receive transmission from the teacher and we always apply Guruyoga. That is why it is the root.

Then we say *ngodrub kyi tsawa yidam*, *ngodrub* means *siddhi*, and *siddhi* means obtainments. There are two kinds of obtainments, supreme obtainment, total realization, and relative obtainments with four different kinds of actions. We always need these kinds of *siddhis* and that is what is related to these *yidams*. For example, in the Dzogchen teachings, we say that most *yidams* are for secondary practice. We say this because the most important thing is Guruyoga. All others are secondary practices because we use them for overcoming problems, etc. We do not concentrate too much on secondary practices for obtaining supreme realization.

For example, in Anuttara, Yoga tantra or lower Tantra, the concentration is mainly on total realization and then on secondary practices, realizations or obtainments. In this case, the development and accomplishment stages are done to obtain total realization and then finally through the non-dual experience one can have total realization. It takes a longer time. Dzogchen goes directly. That is the difference. We go more directly and then with other practices we use more *siddhis* of the relative condition. Of course we can use Guru Tragphur and we can also use total realization. Then we use secondary practices to overcome negative provocations, etc. So it is important

to understand. That is the reason we call them secondary practices.

So these are all *deva* manifestations, male and female. Tantra is divided into father and mother tantra in Vajrayana teaching, in Anuttaratanttra, in the superior tantric tradition, mainly in Sakyapa and Gelugpa, as well as part of the Kagyüpa. The Sakyapas also explain the neutral tantra. Why is there father and mother tantra? For example, in the tantra where the main manifestation is Guhyasamaja, there is a manifestation of *yab* and *yum* union, which is the transformation method. There is primarily this practice. Separate *yab* and *yum* does not exist; particularly practice methods of *yum*. In the Guhyasamaja Tantra that does not exist. That is considered more father tantra. The development stage, and the *prana* energy related to *dzogrim*, these methods are called father tantra. Mother tantra is mainly in the accomplishing stage. There are also very rich visualizations of chakras, channels and kundalini practice, like *tummo* inner heat practices, etc. These kinds of methods are mainly called mother tantra. Like Chakrasamvara, and the different Chakrasamvaras.

Then there are some other kinds of tantras, like the Kalachakra and Hevajra tantras, which the Sakyapas consider neutral tantras. Neutral means everything is balanced. In the mother tantra there is something called *yabka* and *yumka*. *Yabka* means you can only work with the visualization of the *yab* like Chakrasamvara. There is also the very famous *yum* Vajrayogini. There are so many practices of Vajrayogini because it is mother tantra. There is no Vajrayogini in the father tantra. These divisions exist in the Anuttaratanttra tradition but not in the Nyingmapa tradition. The Nyingmapas don't do this.

In the Nyingmapa tradition they talk about the three inner tantras, Mahayoga Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. Some people say Anuyoga is similar to mother tantra. That is not true. Many people explain it in that way. In Anuyoga there is instant presence, which does not include mother and father. Anuttara has nothing to do with that. So you see these can all be manifestations, male and female, and both are *yidams*. *Heruka*, *heruka* male and female form, like for example Simhamukha we call *yidam*. Many people think that Simhamukha is a guardian. Simhamukha is not a guardian, but a *yidam*, like Guhyajñana or Dorje Palmo, for example. These are all Sambhogakaya manifestations.

So when we say the three roots, the last one is Khandro, or Dakini. Khandro is *trinle kyi tsawa*. *Trinle* means actions; when you need action. Action has different aspects, not only making something function or for obtaining something relatively. Action is different. There are many actions for realizing. For visualizing, for ways of using our *chakras* and channels, these are also actions. So that is related to the *dakini* because *dakini* represents energy. Energy is very important for practitioners in order to develop, and particularly for the relationship to the guardians, like the queen of the *dakinis*, Ekajati. The *dakinis* are important for all actions, for protecting the teacher, teachings, transmission, for holding transmission, etc., and they have many of these kinds of actions. So that is what the root of actions is.

These three are called the three roots. When we do a thun practice, for example, we have short, medium and longer thuns. Some people say these are the system and practices of the Dzogchen Community. That is like saying something is the tradition or system of Sakyapa, Gelugpa, Kagyüpa or Dzogchen. It is not that way. In Dzogchen there is no system.

In Dzogchen there is no limitation of school or tradition. Dzogchen is knowledge, but we live in society and we must apply that knowledge somehow, that knowledge of going beyond limitations. We do not say, "Oh, this is the Dzogchen system, you should do this." That does not exist. So how do we present the three roots in the thun book? First we transform with Guru Padmasambhava or Guru Garab Dorje. We do a visualization of Guruyoga. If we are doing it very essentially, we only use the white A and thigle. There is no problem. A is always same. The A and thigle are the same in all schools. There is no difference. But when we say Guru Padmasambhava, people immediately think, "Oh, they are Nyingmapa because the tradition of Guru Padmasambhava is Nyingmapa." When we say Garab Dorje they say, "Oh they practice Dzogchen." People think that way, but we are not doing it for that reason.

There are no other traditions that say you should go beyond all limitations. Only in the Dzogchen Teaching. We learn Dzogchen teachings and apply them when we discover our real nature, and we go beyond limitations. We do not do that with Sakyapa, Gelugpa, Nyingmapa or some Kagyüpas. This is unique to the Dzogchen teaching. That is why we do Guruyoga related to the root of this knowledge, this teaching, with Garab Dorje and Guru Padmasambhava. We do not do this to make a school or tradition. It is important you know that.

We have a very nice story of Patrul Rinpoche. He was a very famous Dzogchen master and a very simple practitioner who went everywhere. Sometimes he had robes like a monk because he had a lower vow all his life – never a full vow. There are thirty rules for a full vow and he was always saying, "I can't remember all thirty rules. It is not so easy for me." He helped the monks understand. Most monks have two hundred and fifty rules that they don't understand or remember. Patrul Rinpoche said there were thirty and he did not always remember all of them. He did not often use monk's robes. He very often wore ordinary clothes, like a Tibetan *chuba*.

Patrul Rinpoche once went to a famous Gelugpa monastery in East Tibet. It was a very big and rich monastery. Sometimes they did things that made the Chinese authorities very unhappy, not the communist Chinese, but before that time. The Chinese burned this monastery three times, but even though they burned it, it was immediately rebuilt. Most monks did business and it became a very rich monastery. In this monastery there was a statue of Padmasambhava with an unknown history. Everyone thought this Padmasambhava statue was fantastic because although the monastery was burned three times and the Padmasambhava statue remained. This was considered a miracle and it was given great importance.

Patrul Rinpoche went to the monastery to visit this statue. When he entered he was wearing a red Tibetan dress with a yellow sash. The monks said, "Oh, maybe he is a kind of Nyingmapa"; if he was Nyingmapa they wanted to beat him. Then the monks decided to ask. One monk asked, "What is your dharma tradition?" Patrul Rinpoche said, "Oh, I am Buddhist." Then they thought it was better to ask, "What kind of practice do you do?" And Patrul Rinpoche said, "I do refuge and sometimes Green Tara." All schools do those practices. Patrul Rinpoche knew very well they intended to beat him. After they did not succeed, someone said maybe it was better to ask his secret name. Even if he did not have a secret name, all traditions have a kind of name that indicates their lineage, for example in the Karmakagyü, Karma Tsering, Karma Dorje,

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Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

An excerpt from a teaching on The Heart Sutra and the Three Paths

Brisbane Australia,
the evening of 27 March 2009

Most of you have probably heard about the Heart Sutra but it is very good to understand how the three paths are related to it because if we understand this relationship then we can also understand how our attitude and behaviour are.

For example, if I have a *sutra* attitude, the attitude of the Path of Renunciation, then I consider myself to be different from the Buddha. I have the idea that the Buddha is very far from me. So I like the idea of going to the temple, of having an altar, doing prayers to some holy divinity that is very distant from me. If I have this type of attitude I probably like rules. I may have a very strong idea of social rules, of religious rules then at a certain point I also have the idea of rules connected with Buddhism, that in Buddhism there are rules. This is how a path works. It means the only way that I can work and relate with this understanding, this teaching, is this way. We call it the gradual path. Lower. It means it is very much connected with the physical level.

If, instead, I have a very strong feeling of changing, I feel very tantric, let's say, I always have this idea to be better, to do something better. With a strong *sutra* attitude we always have a very strong idea of written words, like the Bible. If something is written, we do exactly what is written and whatever we do needs to be written, with a precise rule, very strict and so on.

If, on the other hand, I have more the attitude of *tantra* then I do the opposite. After a while I say that I will do my version of this teaching and then I have my version of Buddhism. Somehow, I do it better. I have the idea of improving because it is the idea of changing, of transforming impure to pure. Then, after a while, my attitude also becomes like this. But this has nothing to do with the real understanding of this teaching.

All three paths have the same characteristic so if we understand one, we understand all three, in the real sense. One can't be better than another, but we can say that they work at different levels. *Sutra* is working at the physical level, *tantra* at the energy level, voice, *Dzogchen* at the mind level, introducing the nature of mind directly, going directly to the essence. But of course if we work with the essence, we don't have rules, we don't have the idea of actions and it becomes a little more complicated to understand what we do.

With the Heart Sutra we can immediately recognise the attitude or point of view linked to these three paths just by commenting on some parts of it. I'm not going to read too much because it is evening and because this is a bit of an intellectual approach and it's late. But anyway this is a dialogue between Shariputra and Avalokiteshvara that is said to be the unspoken words of Buddha. The part that you always



Photo: G. Horner

hear in talks etc. is the central part that describes the importance of understanding emptiness.

Emptiness is common to all three paths and that is why we always talk about it. In *sutra*, it is called *shunyata* which means understanding that beyond thought there is a kind of perfect state. But this state is without interruption so it is like a perfect state in which you can continue without any kind of disturbance. It is like everything is perfect, like an idea of meditation - I am doing meditation and whatever happens I am joyful and happy. This is a *sutra* idea and it means that thoughts are very bad and we have to avoid or reject them.

In *tantra* it is the opposite; we work with thoughts, with feelings and transform these feelings. In *tantra*, too, we have emptiness but we go into the essence of it discovering that, on one hand, this emptiness is void, on the other, that it has all these huge manifestations of all kinds, passions, emotions and so on.

In *Dzogchen* we call it experience – emptiness is just experience. We are introduced to some main experiences and one of these is emptiness. But it is not enough – we need to discover other kinds of experiences called clarity and sensation.

In this part of the Heart Sutra it says, “Therefore Shariputra, in

emptiness there is no form, no feelings, no perception, no mental formation and no consciousness.” It means there is nothing for us. But what does this mean in a simple, direct point of view? It says, “There are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind.” It means there is nothing for us. It is like we are dead because we don't have perceptions. But how can we not have perceptions? Because we are relaxed. For example, if we gaze at a specific point, we look in a very pointed way at something, like a letter, then after a while we discover that thoughts can be controlled, that we can stop them a little bit. And we discover that these thoughts are not just like a river, not something we have continually, but that there are thoughts, then some time passes, then there are other thoughts. When there is this pause between one thought and another, we are very relaxed because there is nothing that is pulling us into an action because before action there is thought and thought is always asking for something and every time we follow these thoughts we immediately have feelings, emotions.

In the real sense in this part Avalokiteshvara is explaining that emptiness is without form. What does this mean? It means that we don't have feelings from our five senses but we also don't have mind. We recognise that mind is working after our physical perceptions. think well – [earlier in the teaching] we used the example of someone being touched. We like being touched, but then we judge the experience. We have memories of being touched. Memory is how we feel after we have been touched, for example. We can feel angry or happy after. For example, if a nice girl touches us, we start to think that we want to meet this girl again. The feeling of attachment becomes even stronger afterwards than how we felt in that moment.

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Karma Rinchen. The Nyingmapas are always giving Padma Padma, Padma, or Urgyen, Urgyen, Urgyen, etc., Sakya-pa always says Kunga, Kunga, Kunga, etc., Kunga Dorje, Kunga Tsering, Kunga Tashi, etc. So we understand what someone's lineage from that name. So they asked, “What is your *sangtsen*?” In Tibetan *sang* means secret and *tsen* means name. *Sangtsen* also means male and female organs. Patrul Rinpoche said, “Oh please don't ask me that. We nomads are very shy.” Then they left him alone and did not beat him, so Patrul Rinpoche succeeded.

You see we have these three roots in our practice. We do not use the three roots for limitation, but for concentration. How does this help concentration? For example, if I receive many practices of *herukas*, *yidams*, male and female, and I receive so many, what do I do with them all? I cannot do all the practices. I can only do one. So in that one, we can integrate all. How do we integrate? You must understand when you go into the essence of the teaching. For example, with the Kalachakra teaching, the manifestation of the Kalachakra is for introducing you into the Sambhogakaya manifestation. Tomorrow you may receive a Hevajra transmission, and that also means with the manifestation of Hevajra you are introduced into the dimension of Sambhogakaya. If you have received ten or twenty of these kinds of transmissions, all of them have introduced you into the Sambhogakaya dimension. We have limitations because we live in dualism: Kalachakra is not Hevajra, Hevajra is not Yamantaka; there are always these differences. But when we get in the Sambhogakaya there are no limitations. Limitations are a part of dualism. So when we get into a Sambhogakaya dimension through Kalachakra, through Hevajra, through Yamantaka or through Guru Tragphur or Dakini Simhamukha, there is no difference. We are in the Sambhogakaya dimension, so one method is sufficient to bring us into that state. This is the knowledge of how we can integrate.

There are male and female manifestations, female manifestations like Dakini Simhamukha and wrathful male manifestations like Guru Tragphur, and through them we are in the Sambhogakaya dimension. These manifestations are for transforming our three emotions – attachment is transformed with the joyful form, anger with the wrathful, and ignorance with the peaceful. These are the three roots of our emotions. For that reason these three aspects exist in Vajrayana. But when we are in a pure dimension, like in a Sambhogakaya dimension, those kinds of limitations do not exist. The dimension of Sambhogakaya is beyond time and limitations. So then we are in the state and it doesn't matter.

For example, when we introduce with direct introduction, the aim is to discover our instant presence. To discover that, we use emptiness, clarity or joy, which is related to sensation. There is no difference. When we are in instant presence, it is the unique instant presence. No difference exists. Also in the Sambhogakaya dimension there is the unique Sambhogakaya state. There is no limitation of deities, etc. So we are in that state and with this knowledge, we can integrate any kind of practice we have received. When we receive initiations we have commitments and with our commitments we cannot do hundreds and thousands of practices. But we go in the essence. This is the principle of the practice we have in the Dzogchen Community in the thun, Guru Tragphur and Dakini Simhamukha, for unifying and integrating. That is unification, it does not mean we integrate all deities and we put them in a sack or box. That is impossible. But we are in the Sambhogakaya dimension and are in that state. That understanding is very important and then you can understand what integration means.

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz
Collaboration with Adriano Clemente, Liz Granger and Jakob Winkler

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Maybe the girl was just reaching for something and touched us accidentally, but we can invent something after – ‘She likes me, I have to get her phone number’ and so on. Afterwards the feeling becomes even stronger because the mind is working. It means that mind doesn’t need physical perception; it can work by itself. But everything starts from physical perception.

In Dzogchen, the Path of Self Liberation, we say that we are into experience. In this case, it’s ‘the moment she is touching me’ experience, not when we start to think and invent something with mind, because in that case there is nothing, just concept. For example, when someone touches us, how does the person look when they touch us, how are they dressed, how do they smell, what kind of watch are they wearing? In the moment we may not even notice these things. What we will remember is our idea of this event, because the ego will say they touched us so they like us and we need to get their phone number. We won’t remember in what room this happened, or how they were dressed, because we were not present. We will just remember our idea because the main point is our ego. So we will remember what we felt because what we felt is the key point.

In Dzogchen, we observe. What does this mean? In the Path of Self Liberation we say we are into the experience, we observe the entire environment, and if our memory includes all the environment, it means we were present. But if we only remember our idea, we don’t really know what happened. So this means emptiness like the state, the state that is described without form, without feeling, without perception, without mental formation; meaning without concept.

In general when we go on with this explanation, it is not really important that we point out how emptiness should be. The key point in a text like this is not that we define emptiness from a particular point of view, such as sutra. We don’t really care about this. We try to understand it. If it is an explanation of emptiness it means our mind works in a certain way so we try to discover how it is working. Then, we discover, for example, that memories don’t exist because it

is just our ego. Why do we keep them? Because we don’t want to lose our feeling, our ego. We felt something when she touched us, but not that we felt something nice, we felt that she likes us so we got her phone number and we don’t want to lose this.

It’s the same with hope in the future: we project something so it means that we are working with our projection, our ideas. If we look to the past we have ‘something’ and we don’t want to lose it. But for the future we want to do something because we are like the owner of this ‘thing’, it’s like an object for us. Then if we project it, we have some expectation from it and build our life on expectation. Of course this is just a vision of hope and fear and what we get at the end of all this is that we are never into the precise instant of this moment so we can’t enjoy anything. On one hand we are afraid of losing, on the other we are projecting something that doesn’t exist.

So the text says that there is no form, no sound, no smell, no taste, no texture, no mental object. There are no elements of the different senses as well as no mind element or mental consciousness, meaning that there are no mental creations. But at this point there is no ignorance which means that we understand how our mind is, how it works. We don’t believe whatever mind says. But at the same time it says that there is no extinction of ignorance meaning that if we are into a state of emptiness, we don’t have an idea that emptiness is like this. If it is like this, it is because we recognise how mind is. So we don’t follow what mind says, but at the same time we don’t have an idea of not following mind because this is already an idea. It means that we are into the experience, not that we are creating something like another thought like – now we became Buddhist we can do meditation; meditation is like this, like watching TV and then the TV presents how meditation is. No. We are into the meditation, in this moment. There is no idea of how to meditate otherwise we are not meditating.

At this point the text says there is no aging, there is no death, there is no extinction of aging and death because we go beyond the idea of cause and effect. Likewise, there is no suffering, origin, cessation or path. There is even



Photo: G. Horner

no dharma. Dharma means Buddhism, but dharma or dharmata means phenomena because Buddhism talks about phenomena, about what we see and perceive. And then what do we discover? Our real nature. We don’t discover something outside ourselves. This is why we follow Buddhist teaching, not to discover some golden Buddha hidden somewhere in space or in the rock. We follow Buddhist teaching or Dzogchen teaching because we are interested in discovering how our real nature is, how our mind works. But then if we go deeper and discover that there are three paths, we find that there are three aspects – one is body, one is energy and then there is mind. When we discover this, we immediately understand that we are made of three aspects – we have a body, we have energy because we perceive something, we have emotions, but we also have this aspect of mind, of nature of mind. When we work with these three levels it is called the Path of Self Liberation and it is a key point.

Then here at the end it is written that there is no wisdom, no attainment and even no non-attainment which means that there is not even an idea of wisdom because the idea of wisdom is tantric. In tantra we work with passions because passions are an opportunity to understand. When we have obtained wisdom then we have overcome them and we have pure vision. But in emptiness, there is not even this

idea. We are just in the state of emptiness. In Dzogchen we say that we are in the experience of emptiness. There is no idea of what is good or what is bad, of how I work or don’t work with passions, not even the idea that I have to get something because getting something is action. It is just that I am in this understanding, in one shot, immediately, I recognise my nature of mind and I am into this understanding.

But, of course, it is not easy to apply. It sounds very nice when we are talking about it and we may feel we have a bit of understanding about it because we create an idea and then we have intellectual understanding. And this is the second step. Intellectual understanding means we have understood the point of view so we have the right attitude. Then we have to create the correct behaviour. But we have to see what happens when we are fired from our job – if we recognise our nature of mind in that moment, then this is Dzogchen. It means we have understood how to apply it. If we are afraid and feel sad it doesn’t correspond very much. It means we have to apply some methods and for this reason we have this aspect which is practice, applying a method to get this understanding somehow. And how do we do this? Of course if there is no action it means we just train our presence, but, at the same time, we don’t negate anything. We can use, for example, tantric methods – why not? There is

nothing to choose, to accept, to reject. If tantric methods work then we use them. But we are aware, just like with the Heart Sutra. You have probably read it and received an explanation based more on understanding how emptiness is. That is not the key point. It is not important how emptiness is described but rather how we perceive it. It means how we apply this understanding, how the experience of emptiness is. Then you understand that it is more about observing ourselves.

When you apply a path like Self Liberation, you will probably have methods that are connected with all paths. It means you can use the path of renunciation, of transformation, you can train your presence and you can use all these methods together because there is no idea of accepting or refusing something, of being Buddhist or not. There is nothing like today I decide that I am Buddhist so it means that tomorrow I am not Christian any more. The key point is that you discover your real nature and whether your real nature is called Buddhism or Christianity doesn’t change anything because it is about your real nature, not a name. So in the same way, this text is describing how emptiness is and how you apply and enter into understanding of it.

But if you give too much importance to emptiness as a concept, as a semantic field, then you are working with philosophy. If you think that emptiness is the final goal, like in sutra, then you are working with religion. Then you think that this emptiness is a state of Buddha that is very far from you because Buddha is far. That is the reason Buddha is in the temple, the reason you go there to light a candle and pray. And what do you pray to? Emptiness? It doesn’t make sense.

In Dzogchen at this point we have a method to apply and this is one of the experiences. Just one. But we need a lot of experiences to be ready for the moment when we are fired from our job to discover our nature of mind, instead of going into sadness, fear and so on. Doing the right thing at the right moment is called working with circumstances but it’s not that simple so we use all these methods.

Transcribed and edited by
L. Granger and N. Zeitz

>> Nying-thig Yangtshi continued from page 1
Finally Rinpoche explained the three kinds Secret Rushen: Rushen of Mind, which relates to the experience of emptiness, Rushen of Voice, which relates to the experience of clarity and Rushen of Body, which relates to the experience of sensation. Again, these practices help us to separate mind from nature of mind through direct experience. Rinpoche explained that in Dzogchen teachings there are many Rushens of the Mind for examining mind and thought in order to discover the emptiness and movement of

our real nature. We discover that the habitual process of conceptualization and judgement conditions our ordinary mind, and the nature of mind is beyond all of that.

Main practice – Dzogchen Upadesha of Tregchö

This is a term teaching of Yangtshi of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje. It is a preparation for yangti retreat. Tregchö means you are totally relaxing in your real nature. Tre means binding or bound, and chö means spontaneous release, in the sense that as soon as the

primordial state manifests, one can fall into a state of total relaxation like a bundle of sticks that has been tightly bound falls naturally once the rope binding it has been cut.

The principle of tregchö is that we relax our body, energy and mind and without effort we remain in the state of instant presence. There is nothing to meditate on. Instead, the method we use to get into the state of tregchö is the four Chogzhags. Chog means ‘as it is’, zhag means ‘to leave’ so this means not to correct, to leave as is.

The four Chogzhags are not practices of meditation. Rather they occur simultaneously as the result of being in the dimension of our experience naturally. This is a way of continuing in the state of instant presence.

Being in our natural state is very difficult for many of us. Emptiness has infinite potentiality to manifest. We get caught up in reactions of attachment and aversion to our experiences, and immediately fall into dualism. But we don’t need to judge, Rinpoche reminded us; we can enjoy, just

enjoy whatever there is. If we have difficulty experiencing our real nature, he suggested that we do Guruyoga and the Song of Vajra many times. This will really help. Rinpoche explained that putting the teachings into practice is like taking medicine. Left in the cupboard, medicine is of no use to us at all.

Introduction of Thögal, and the Bardo teachings of the Yangtshi

The practice of tregchö is the basis for the practice of thögal. Rinpoche explained that his mas-

>> continued on page 13

The passing of Penor Rinpoche

March 27, 2009

This is to formally announce that the 11th Throneholder of the Palyul Lineage of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, His Holiness Pema Norbu Rinpoche entered the stage of Thugdam, the final stage of meditation, as of 8:20 PM on Friday, March 27, 2009, at the Namdroling Monastery in Bylakuppe, South India.

Earlier that day, at noon, His Holiness received offerings from many of the highest Nyingma Tulkus, Khenpos, and Lamas who had assembled to pay homage to him. Rinpoche left Columbia Asia Hospital at 3:30 PM with the help of the Bhutanese



Government who provided an Indian police escort. He reached Palyul Namdroling at 6:40 PM and remained on his bed at the residence. Tulkus, Khenpos and Lamas did aspiration prayers to-

gether with His Holiness until 8:20 PM. At that time Rinpoche looked around and then closed his eyes and went into meditation.

Prayers continued for 5 minutes and then everyone remained in silence for the next two hours. His Holiness' meditation continues today, and is expected to continue for the next several days. When His Holiness releases his body from meditation, there will be an official acknowledgement of the final passing, allowing everyone to pay their respects according to tradition.

Kyabjé Drubwang Pema Norbu Rinpoche was born in 1932 in the Powo region of Kham, Eastern Tibet. His Holiness settled in South India where he built, with his own hands and with the help of a few monks, Namdroling Monastery. The monastery has grown into one of the largest Tibetan Buddhist Dharma centers in the world, housing over 6000 monks and nuns in the complex.

His Holiness also built temples and established dharma Centers around the world – in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Philippines, Australia, United Kingdom, Greece, Canada and the United States – among others. His Holiness frequently traveled to teach and give empowerments at all of them. Worldwide, His Holiness is universally revered for his loving kindness and compassion, pure upholding of the Vinaya and ceaseless dedication to the welfare of all beings. Wherever he went, has brought and nourished the Buddha-Dharma everywhere he has been.

He will live forever in our hearts.

Lama Lobsang Chophel,
Secretary
28 March, 2009
Sincerely,
Palyul Ling International



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Fire has destroyed Galingteng College of Studies

On 9 February 2009, a fire broke out at Galingteng College in East Tibet after 10 o'clock in the evening, when the monks had all assembled in the temple for their evening practice led by Khempo Tashi Choepel. It blazed through the new part of the College, finished in December 2008, completely destroying it. The cause of the fire has not yet been ascertained; it could have been started by a short circuit, a candle or some other cause. Fortunately no monks were hurt, but the 20 rooms of the College were razed to the ground.

Some of the old rooms of the College were also destroyed because they were blasted with dynamite to stop the fire spreading throughout the College.

GalingTeng Monastery is considered one of the most ancient Tibetan cultural centres in East Tibet and is particularly meaningful to our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his son Yeshe Silvano Namkhai.

Reconstruction of the College is very important, above all at such a difficult time when the very survival of the culture of the Tibetan people is seriously at risk.

During the Jnana Dakhini retreat at Namgyalgar in Australia, Rinpoche asked us to join our forces for its reconstruction: "The monastery of my uncle teacher, this is the monastery called Galingteng. We built a very nice college of

study, on the top of the monastery. ... And after the new year I received a communication from there, that half of what we built new, finished in December, was burned in a fire. I don't know what happened, nobody knows yet, they are doing some research. But we should rebuild it. We don't know how we can rebuild, because it is expensive, but we should, we have to do it. So I want to ask people, ask everybody to help ASIA to rebuild this, because it is necessary, we can't leave it that way." (14 April 2009)

ASIA together with Merigar West has launched a campaign for the reconstruction of Galingteng College.

Many practitioners from all over the world are demonstrating a strong commitment and awareness. If this immediate feedback we have had from the Sangha remains strong, we really hope to be able to rebuild the college before the end of this year.

The aim is to raise at least 117,000 euro for the construction of:
1 – A building with 20 rooms over two floors (to replace the one destroyed by the fire).
2 – Furnishings for the monks' rooms, beds, tables, bookcases, books, stoves, blankets and mattresses for 40 students.
3 – A second wing with accommodation for the Master and a second Teaching room.
4 – Necessary furnishings: tables, bookcases, beds, stoves, blankets.
5 – A plumbing system.



The situation after the fire.

In May ASIA personnel will leave for a mission to Tibet with the aim of signing all contracts for the rebuilding and starting with the construction work soon.

We count on the commitment of all practitioners to fulfil the wish of our Master to keep alive the College of Galingteng, the place of great masters such as Kunga Palden and Khyentse Choekyi Wangchuk, and one of the sites of the origin of our spiritual lineage.

Thanks to all of you for your generous contribution.
Andrea Dell' Angelo

Donations can be made at:
ASIA Headquarters in Italy
(for any questions, please write to info@ASIA-ngo.org or call 0039.06.44340034)
· Credit card on ASIA's website – www.ASIA-ngo.org/donatenow
· By bank draft * – make payment out to ASIA Onlus, Bank Monte dei Paschi di Siena
IBAN code: IT 27 M 01030 72160 000000389350; BIC/SWIFT code: PASC IT MI G99

ASIA America
(for any questions, please write to andreamnasca@yahoo.com or call 001 (413) 369.4153)
ASIA USA – Bank of Western Massachusetts, 45 Federal Street- Greenfield, MA – 01301,

Account #1236141502 – ABA Routing #011802488

ASIA Germany
(for any questions, please write to info@ASIA-ngo.de or call 0049.89.12763032)
Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V.
Bank: Kreissparkasse München Starnberg,
Bank Code: BLZ 702 501 50
Account: Kto 105 312 26

On ASIA's webpage you can find information about Galingteng College and updating on the progress of the reconstruction project. Direct access: www.ASIA-ngo.org/galingteng



A smiling face, an extremely kind and sweet way of talking and addressing people, a humble, but very frank and direct attitude: as soon as I met her, this was my very first impression of Namdol Lhamo, the lady doctor invited by the Shang Shung Institute, Italy, to give consultations and courses at Merigar. But then it didn't really take me very long to discover and appreciate all her other qualities, skills and qualifications: a charming personality, a sharp mind, a great sense of responsibility and seriousness in her profession and a remarkable capacity in presenting and explaining the subjects of the seminars and talks that she gave during her unfortunately too short stay at Merigar. In spite of her young age, she is extremely knowledgeable and boasts already quite a few years' experience in working with some senior doctors in Bangalore and Madras.

Starting with her first appearance in public during the talk she gave in the City Hall of Arcidosso, she has always used quite an innova-

The Lady Doctor Namdol Lhamo in Merigar

Elisa Copello

tive method to give explanations: all her teachings were based on a Power Point presentation which surely implied a lot of work and preparation on her side while she was still in India and which has enabled her to leave nothing to improvisation and to be very clear and concise even if the quantity of information she succeeded in transmitting to students, was really impressive and remarkable.

In the 'Introduction to Tibetan medicine' talk and during the two seminars based respectively on "Geriatrics, menopause and osteoporosis" and on "The seven types of personality and how to balance the three humours through diet and behaviour", the information provided "flashed" on the screen and her soft voice explained point after point with drive and determination, leaving space to students' questions to clarify their doubts or go into more details. She illustrated the main diseases that might manifest during old age and emphasized the importance given by Tibetan medicine to prevention.

As for menopause she said that this is not a topic covered by the Four Medical Tantras because it is not considered to be a disorder,

but an inevitable stage in a woman's life. The problem is to face it correctly with body, speech and mind following a proper diet and adopting correct behaviour in order to prevent menopause giving rise to imbalances that can ultimately lead to diseases with related symptoms. Fascinating was the topic on osteoporosis that was presented in relation to all possible disorders of bones, joints, muscles, tendons and ligaments which fall into two main categories: cold nature and hot nature arthritis with different symptoms implying completely different therapies and treatments. She enlarged upon this matter because of the interest and repeated questions of students.

The following seminar was characterized by a test she had devised to make students discover by themselves which type of personality they belong to according to Tibetan medicine, after providing them with exhaustive explanations on this topic. This course ended up with a fully-detailed explanation of food, beverages and behaviour suitable to balance each of the three humours to ensure good health and to prevent diseases. The two final slides appearing on the screen



Photo: Liane Graf

at the end of each seminar were a moving message of His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the contribution of Tibetan medicine to the well-being of mankind with a reference to the situation of "refugees" of Tibetan people and then "Thank You" written in big capital letters, a further evidence of the soft and sweet nature of Namdol Lhamo, to whom we all expressed our gratitude for her extraordinary explanations, her availability and kindness. She has also been very busy with consultations, more than 40 at Merigar and another 16 in Venice where she went at the end of her stay in Italy. It goes without saying that all patients were enthusiastic of her diagnostic capacity, her accuracy, her way of proposing traditional Tibetan medicine with a

western approach. In fact the Institute had never been previously requested to buy instruments to check blood pressure and determine glucose concentration in the blood! We were so fascinated by her capacity both as a doctor and as a medicine teacher, that we asked her to come back every year so that her courses and consultations may become a regular feature in the years to come together with the astrology courses held at present by Doctor Gendun Dhargay. Unfortunately she cannot stay very long because of her work in Dharamsala, but a very fruitful collaboration has started and we are confident that it will bring good results to our mutual satisfaction.

Interview with Dr. Namdol Lhamo

Men Tsee Khang Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute in Dharamsala

Merigar West April 29, 2009

After getting a Bachelor of Science degree at Delhi University, Doctor Namdol Lhamo attended 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 neighbouring places for about 4 years until she started working for the "Medical Text (Gyud shi) Translation Department" of Dharamsala in May 2008, where she is currently working together with five other doctors.

The Mirror: Could you tell us a little about your studies and if you have specialised in any particular branch of Tibetan medicine.
Dr. Namdol Lhamo: After my schooling in India I did a degree in Botany Honours at a women's college at Delhi University. About one year before I completed that I applied to enrol at the Tibetan Medical and Astrological College, passed the test and was admitted. Then I returned to Delhi to complete my studies and after finishing that, I joined the Men

Tsee Khang, the Tibetan Medical and Astrological Institute in Dharamsala where I did 5 years medical studies.

After that I did one year of internship at two of our branches, one in Delhi and another in Bylakuppe in the south of India where there is a big Tibetan settlement. Then I got a job placement in one of our branches in Bangalore in the south of India from 2004 to 2008. Once every month or two I would go to Chennai and Pondicherry and Hyderabad to visit our patients there.

Then I was transferred to our main branch in Dharamsala where we are working on a project for translating Tibetan medical texts into English. So since May 2008 I have been working with other people – there are six of us altogether – on this project. Before I joined, my colleagues had already completed translation of the first two medicine tantras, which have been published. At the moment we are working on the other two tantras. There are many chapters and it is going to take some time but we hope that they will be completed in the near future.



Photo: Liane Graf

The Mirror: What are your plans for the future?

Dr. Namdol: I have been approached many times by the professors at the Tibetan Medical and Astrological College to teach the students there in a collaborative way on the aspects of both medical systems – western physiology and medical science along with Tibetan medical science since I have a background in western science. So perhaps I will take one or two classes a week while simultaneously continuing to work in the department of translation.

The Mirror: I understand that this is the first time that you have been in the west and though you have only been here a short time what are your impressions?

Dr. Namdol: I really think that I have come to a very nice place especially because I came here to serve people in the west through

a Buddhist centre whose aim is preserving Tibetan culture which is already on the edge of being lost. I am really privileged to serve people in the west especially through a good cause and a good Buddhist centre and I am really enjoying my stay here.

The Mirror: How do you see this combination of Tibetan and western medicine particularly since you plan to teach a combination of the two. Sometimes they seem to be very different systems.

Dr. Namdol: I believe that every medical system, whether Tibetan or western, or any other alternative system like Ayurveda, homeopathy or whatever, has its own unique features. Being a physician means that our main aim is to help people who are suffering, no matter whether I come from a Tibetan medical system or any other medical system. Therefore this is the most important thing for me and I try to work in a wider perspective in giving good and sincere advice to a patient. If necessary, we also advise the patients who come to us to refer to western doctors especially in terms of any necessary laboratory tests and help. So I think that we should all work together for the sufferings of the world.

The Mirror: It seems that western medicine has a completely different approach unlike Tibetan medicine – western medicine tries to cures the effects of illness

whereas Tibetan medicine goes to the root of it. How can you combine these two underlying principles?

Dr. Namdol: As I said, the principle behind the Tibetan medical system is not to give symptomatic treatments but to go to the root of disease because just giving a suppressive treatment is like plucking away the leaves and twigs of the disease but leaving behind the root, just like a poisonous plant. From my point of view, we can work with these two medical systems together and advise our patient whenever necessary, especially in terms of surgical cases, emergencies and laboratory tests in which western medicine is very good. We can definitely work together in these fields and we have been working this way in our respective clinics in giving realistic advice and accordingly whenever necessary we refer them to western medical science or the laboratory for tests and then they can come back.

The Mirror: What type of cures does Tibetan medicine offer for cancer and diabetes, two illnesses that have become prevalent in the modern world?

Dr. Namdol: During my little experience of the past few years, I have seen a lot of patients with different types of cancer and diabetes which is very common in the south of India and we have definitely been able to help

>> continued on the following page

A Series of Seminars on Tibetan Astrology

With Doctor Gendun Dhargay

Doctor Gendun Dhargay graduated in Tibetan Medicine and Astrology at the Chagpori Tibetan Medical Institute (C.T.M.I.) in Darjeeling, India, under the guidance of Trogawa Rinpoche. After his studies in Darjeeling he specialized in pharmacy and astrology at the Men Tsee Khang Institute of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology in Dharamsala, India.

Astrology and its relationship with Tibetan Medicine (first level)

August 21st to 23rd 2009 at Shang Shung Institute, Merigar, Arcidosso

Contents of the Seminar:

Introduction to the principles of Tibetan Medicine and Astrology
· Relationship between Tibetan Medicine and Astrology
How to use Astrology in Tibetan Medicine
How to recognize one's astrological sign
· Relationship between the five elements and the nature of the patient's body.
Correspondence in between the various zodiacal signs and the parts of the human body
The Female and the Male in the various signs
· Calculation of the Log-Men (how to forecast the individual's

obstacles according to the year of birth)

· Calculation of the Me-Wa (how to know the unconscious potential of a person and optimize it)
· Calculation of the Par-Ka (how to use a person's birth data to foresee possible illnesses and how they may occur in future years).

Participation Fee: 150 €

A Third Level Seminar on Tibetan Astrology

September 25th to 27th 2009 at Shang Shung Institute, Merigar, Arcidosso

This is a follow up to previous courses of first and second level organized by the institute in Arcidosso (Italy) in 2008.

Contents of the Course

How to know the 12 Darg Gud Blu Gnyis and Dar Gue Choo Nyee. Development and decline phases of life: first breath, the foetus, body development, birth, the first bath, growing up, work, adult age, decline, disease, death, cremation.

Explanation of Rten Brel Blus Gnyis and Ten Del Choo Nyee: the twelve rings of interdependence Gue Mig e Dur Mig (The nine cycles of eyes and eyes of the cemetery). How to recognize life obstacles and how to avoid them.

How to know therapeutic principles in order to remove obstacles. How to recognize healing practices suitable for oneself (mantras to recite, tangka...) How to calculate the astrological chart and know the results according to a simple method.

Participation Fee: 150 €

A Practice Seminar on Tibetan Astrology

October 31st to November 2nd 2009

An intensive training in practice open to all the students who have either attended the previous courses of astrology organized by the institute or who have joined at least one of them and then bought the MP3 of the others.

Contents of the Seminar:

The training aims at enabling students to acquire more than a working experience on astrological calculations in order to learn how to make astrological charts in a very precise and correct way.

Participation Fee: 150 €

Registration:

tel and fax: +39 0564 966940

courses@istitutoshangshung.org

The Archive project

Making our Heritage a top priority

The Digital Archives of the Shang Shung Institute are dedicated to ensuring that all information related to the life and teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as all manuscripts, books and documents on Tibetan culture present in our Library, are digitally preserved so as to remain available and accessible for generations to come.

The SSI office premises located at Merigar (Arcidosso, Italy) have been restructured to host technically advanced installation. A climatized room has been designed and built specifically for the data storage system. Some years ago we started the project of indexing contents of video material and we created a new database.

Now, we are entering into a new phase of digitizing all the video material in our archive and the data storage we have is not enough for this. We need 2 twin storages for maximum security with a size of 85 TB each to include all the video material we



have (around 7000 hours). To start this project, your support is indispensable!

As the first step in this project, we are looking for 20 donors who can give 5000 euro each. We are organizing a raffle among the donors. Each of them will get a special edition of new publications from Shang Shung Edizioni. The luckiest one will also receive the laptop that our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used every day for three years.

For any information, please, contact Shang Shung Institute info@shangshunginstitute.org

Translators' Training Course at Merigar West

I would like to inform you about the next Training for Translators from Tibetan in 2009.

This specific training is an initiative of the Ka-ter Translation Project of the International Shang Shung Institute. This is the seventh year of the training and represents a unique opportunity to increase one's knowledge of, and capacity to translate from, Classical Tibetan.

The Training will take place from 7th July 2009 until 7th August 2009, again at Merigar West in Italy.

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

Advanced Course

This course is intended for those people who have already attended at least one training course, and have a requisite amount of knowledge and experience. It will be led by Fabian Sanders and this group will work on a specific text about Dzogchen. All new people who want to participate in this training, but have never attended a previous training, will have to pass a test.

Less advanced

This course is intended for people who have either participated in a previous training, or have an

interest to learn, but do not have as much experience. It will also be led by Fabian Sanders and the group will work on a smaller and less complicated text about Dzogchen. This course is open to everyone.

To attend one of these courses, one must be an active member of the International Shang Shung Institute.

For further questions, please contact us at the address below.
Oliver Leick
International Shang Shung Institute
o.leick@shangshunginstitute.org
www.shangshunginstitute.org

>> **Dr. Lhamo** continued from previous page them in controlling the diseases by giving a very holistic treatment. Many people have benefited from these treatments and are still continuing with Tibetan medicine.

A holistic approach means not taking the patient as a separate entity but in a holistic way – body and mind – and advising him or her in terms of diet, behaviour and going to the root of the disease with healing medicines.

We have been able to benefit patients with diabetes, other diseases and even different types of cancer by giving a lot of relief to their overall system, starting right from digestion, which the Tibetan medical system gives a lot of importance to by saying that it is the root cause of all these diseases like diabetes. And for cancer patient we have been able to benefit their overall health and definitely extend their lives. I don't mean to say that I have treated cancer. I am just saying that I am aware of this through my very little experience in seeing many patients and my senior colleagues who have been treating them for many many years. I have only had 4/5 years experience. But I am saying that this is how Tibetan medicine works in general.

The Mirror: Is the Tibetan medicine available from the Men Tsee Khang prepared in India?

Dr. Namdol: Yes. The Institute has a big pharmaceutical department which manufactures all the medicines that are supplied to all the medical branches all over India and Nepal and a few abroad. The Men Tsee Khang has about 50 medical branches all over India especially in all the cities and places where there are Tibetan settlements and we are opening more and more clinics as the demand for Tibetan medicine grows.

The Mirror: Is there anything important you would like to mention regarding Tibetan medicine?

Dr. Namdol: I would just like to tell everyone that Tibetan medicines are healing medicines, not suppressive ones and work in a holistic way. They are healthy and very good for prevention of disease as well as curing it. The only thing is that you need a little patience because you might not get relief in only two or three days. You must have some patience to continue with the medicines and experience their effect on you. And you should know that if you follow the dosage and way of taking them, there are no side effects at all.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu The Dzogchen Community Euro 10.00

This book contains Rinpoche's teachings specifically regarding the Dzogchen Community and the way it works through the Gars, the Gakyils, the Santi Maha Sangha training, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance teachers' training, the relationships between old and new practitioners etc. However, it would be a serious error to think that these subjects are meant to be read only by those in positions of responsibility. What Rinpoche outlines in his writings and in his words is an example of social organization that is valid not only for the Dzogchen Community but for society in general: an organization strictly based on knowledge and awareness rather than on hierarchical authority and economic and financial power. And he is not referring to a utopian ideal because this vision, which is based on real knowledge of the individual and on his total freedom, has already been adopted in a concrete way in the Dzogchen Community under the patient and untiring guidance of the Master. This book is an inexhaustible source of inspiration and supreme wisdom for those who wish to know how to apply Dzogchen behavior in social life.



Tibetan Medicine USA

4-Year Course in Tibetan Medicine Now Accepting Applications for the Fall, 2009 Semester

The American branch of the International Shang Shung Institute is now accepting applicants for the fall, 2009 class of our four-year School of Tibetan Medicine. With a history going back over 2,500 years, traditional Tibetan medicine is one of the oldest continuously practiced healing systems on earth. Regarded as science, art, and philosophy, Tibetan medicine is an ancient form of holistic health care indigenous to the Tibetan people, which integrates the core Buddhist principles of altruism, karma, and ethics. Over thousands of years, traditional Tibetan medicine evolved and incorporated medical knowledge from China, Persia, India, and Greece. Since this time it has been practiced

continuously throughout Tibet, the Himalayan regions, India, Mongolia, and Siberia, as well as in the Western world wherever Tibetans live in exile. In the fall of 2005, the American branch of the Shang Shung Institute initiated the four-year program in Tibetan Medicine under the direction of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo. This program closely parallels the training of a traditional Tibetan physician culminating in a supervised internship and final exams. Each semester of the four-year curriculum combines a tripartite approach to the study of the Tibetan medical tradition that includes foundation core studies based on the topics of the Four Tantras, complimentary studies in Tibetan language and



Dr. Wangmo teaching the 2009 class at SSI USA. Photo: M. Schmookler

culture, and clinical practicum. Students in the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan medicine can expect to receive training that thoroughly covers all the traditional topics, presented in English. For those students who complete the first seven semes-

ters onsite, an optional internship at the Northeast Traditional Tibetan Hospital in Qinghai, China will be available at the conclusion of their studies. The Shang Shung program offers eight consecutive semesters, each consisting of 300 total

hours. Each week, students will participate in 20 hours of classes. Among these 20 hours per week; 16 hours are used for lecture, 2 hours for Tibetan language and culture studies, and 2 hours for a clinical practicum. There are no electives or part/time study options in the Tibetan Medicine four-year program and students are expected to participate in all aspects covering each semester's topics. Classes meet for two and a half consecutive days a week. This way, students have time during the week for study, work, and time for other obligations. More details, and an online application are available on our website at www.shangshung.org. The secretary of the American branch of the Shang Shung Institute can also be contacted at secretary@shangshung.org or by phone at +1 (413) 369-4928.

Shang Shung Institute Austria

Shang Shung Institute in Austria has new items on our online web-shop. We offer new Tibetan Herbal Medicines, the latest books of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu "Teachings at Sinabelkirchen 2002", "Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart", "Longsal 8", the just recently published "Merigar Calendar 2009/2010" and the "Yantra Yoga – Tibetan Yoga of Movement".

We also offer really fantastic statues, which you cannot get anywhere else, as these statues were exclusively made for the Shang Shung Institute. These statues not purchasable but you will receive them for free for your donation to the Shang Shung Institute. Your donations will help to continue the continuation of the various activities and initiatives of the international Shang Shung Institute. The see the images of the statues please have a look at our site. Available are the statues of

- Samantabhadra Yab Yum, a brilliant and large statue, full gold plated,
- Yutog Gonpa, the "father" of the Tibetan Medicine tantras,
- Dorje Yudrönma or the "Melong Dakini", a special form of Tseringma,
- Jigmed Lingpa, one of the most famous Dzogchen masters, Yogi and tertön,
- Vajrapani,
- Machig Labdron

We also offer the absolutely extraordinary statue of Changchub Dorje, the master of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu or a statue of Adzom Drugpa, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his previous life.

We exclusively offer the last statue of Longchenpa in the **Donation Package Longchenpa** For your donation you receive

- a wonderful, unique and gold plated statue of Longchenpa, who is known as one of the greatest scholars and translators of Tibet,
- the latest books of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu „Longchenpa's Advice from the heart“ and „Birth, Life and Death“,
- a beautiful cone-shaped crystal ball with the Tibetan letter A inside,
- free shipping of this donation package directly to your home.

In order to support the project "Complete Works Of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu" we offer the **Donation-box with 7 gifts**



Changchub Dorje. For your donation you get the following marvelous gifts right away directly to your home: 1. the booklet "A Dream from the Display of the Moon in the Water". This excerpt from the Book



Adzam Drugpa. of Dreams of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been printed exclusively for this project and has been distributed only to donors. All in all there are only 100 prints

of this booklet, each one will be signed with its own number;

2. a round silver pendant with the Longsal symbol;
3. a cone-shaped crystal ball with an A lasered inside;
4. the latest book "Longsal 8";
5. a very beautiful Tibetan shoulder bag with an A in a thigle;
6. a package of Tibetan incense;
7. a golden Vajra with antique gold plating, 8,6 cm long

Thank you very much for your support and your commitment, Very best wishes, Oliver Leick Shang Shung Institute www.shangshunginstitute.org www.ssi-austria.at

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Yantra Yoga

The Tibetan Yoga of Movement

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The great master Vairocana was endowed with three extraordinary qualities. He was the greatest translator of sacred texts to have lived in Tibet, an erudite scholar with total mastery of all the Sutra and Tantra teachings, and a Vidyodhara and Siddha with concrete realization of the state of self-perfection of Dzogchen. He put in writing this system of Yantra or Trulkhor called *The Union of the Sun and Moon*, very probably the most ancient among the various Yantra systems diffused in Tibet, which is connected with the profound *upadesha* of the *tantra* of Heruka Bhagavan Shri Ngöndzog Gyalpo and constitutes a marvelous ancillary practice of the oral transmission of the *Vajra Bridge*.

From the time when it was taught by the great master Vairocana and his disciple, the siddha Yudra Nyingpo, to their fortunate students down to our own time, *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra* together with its related instructions has never suffered any interruption in its oral transmission, nor any diminution of its capacity of empowerment or of its efficacy to enable the attainment of *siddhis*.

Even though all the Yantra systems tied to the various tantras,



Togden Ugyen Tendzin.

Detail of thangka by Glen Eddy

and in particular this tradition of *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra*, utilized by *yogins* as a secondary method of the practice of the Heruka Ngöndzog Gyalpo, belong to the profound and secret anuttaratantra series, any person approaching the practice of yoga in general and in particular the true principle of Dzogchen, the teaching of self-perfection, should first of all be able to relax body, voice and mind in their natural condition. The Yantra exercises, which engage all three aspects of body, voice and mind, comprise an exceptional means to enable relaxation. Consequently, they should not be deemed solely a secondary means for secret practices such as Tummo, but rather as something indispensable for the achievement of authentic relaxation of the body, voice and mind of each individ-

ual, a preliminary to any kind of practice. This is so because the mind finds its natural condition only when the *pranais* in its natural condition. Whether or not the *pranais* in such condition depends on the condition of the ‘vajra body’, and thus there exist diverse kinds of movements for control of the vajra body. In other words, by controlling the vajra body by means of physical movements, the practitioner’s *prana* recovers its natural balance. Consequently, the condition of the elements and the health of the body improve. Through balancing the energy of the elements, obstacles diminish and good conditions increase. Finally, the natural balance of the mind facilitates the arising of profound contemplation. These are just a few examples of the innumerable definitive and provisional

benefits of the practice of Yantra. So, all those aware of the functions of the body, voice and mind that constitute the individual should be interested in this practice, regardless of whether or not they are already practitioners of Mantrayana. I believe this is really important.

A pure and uninterrupted tradition of the precious oral teaching of *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra* was best preserved at Adzom Gar in East Tibet by the great master Adzom Drugpa, Drugchen Dorjechang Drodul Pawo Dorje, by his son Drugse Gyurmed Dorje and other disciples. As a result of their activities and care, the teaching of this Yantra system was widely disseminated; however, due to the changes that occurred in the twentieth century, the oral tradition of the various Yantra systems tied to the anuttaratantras and particularly that of *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra* severely declined, and today it is just like a sun that is about to set behind a mountain peak. It is evident, in fact, that in spite of the availability of the text of *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra*, if the precious oral instructions of a lineage teacher are lacking, then one can have only a literal understanding of such a text, inadequate for actual practice.

Fortunately, from a very young age I had the opportunity to spend much time with a direct disciple of Adzom Drugpa Rinpoche, my paternal uncle Togden Ugyen Tendzin (1888–1961). I received from him the oral instructions

on the way to practice *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra*, which enabled me later to acquire sufficient familiarity and experience of the profound methods contained herein. Furthermore, in order to resolve definitively my doubts, all the points in the text related to actual practice that were not clear or that were difficult to understand were explained to me by Drugse Gyurmed Dorje (1896–1959), son of Adzom Drugpa, by the Vidyadhara Changchub Dorje, a disciple of Adzom Drugpa, and by the latter’s son Gyurmed Gyaltsen.

With the intent to avoid any interruptions in the precious oral tradition of *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra* and to give all those who in the future will be interested the opportunity to practice it, I decided to write an easily understandable commentary to the original text by Vairocana, based mainly on the notes that I took when I received detailed oral instructions from Ugyen Tendzin and my other kind teachers of Yantra, and also on my personal experience. I have also included some tables with the timings for the performance of the various breathing phases of the movements and of the *pranayoma* of the Four Profound Applications.

In conclusion, with all my effort and capacity I have written this detailed commentary to enable immediate understanding of *The Union of the Sun and Moon Yantra*. I hope and express the wish that this might become the cause of supreme happiness, both provisional and definitive, for all beings.

Interview with Fabio Andrico about Yantra Yoga

Namgyalgar April 2009

Emily Coleing and Naomi Zeitz for The Mirror

Fabio Andrico is one of two principal international Yantra Yoga instructors, together with Laura Evangelisti, authorized by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to teach internationally and to train aspiring instructors.

Mirror: Fabio, could you tell us about how and when you met Rinpoche?

Fabio: I was in Italy. I had just come back from India where I studied Hatha yoga in Bangalore with a Hatha Yoga teacher at the Sivananda Ashram in Monghyr.

M: How old were you?

F: I was in my early 20’s. I actually wanted to become a doctor. I had a degree from an artistic high school, but at that time in Italy that would give you access to only two things: either the Academy of Art or Architecture. I wanted to study medicine. I had studied yoga and naturopathy for six months in India. Also I had done a lot of purification and fasting. I wanted to become a doctor, but a non-traditional doctor because I was not satisfied with traditional western medicine. In order to do

that, I needed to do an integrative year – a long course. Artistic school was only four years and to go to any faculty you wanted, it was an extra year. I signed up for that extra year.

In the meantime I met Rinpoche. I was living in Varese, in north Italy. I met Tiziana Gottardi and Giuliano Casiraghi. They often went to the mountains in north Italy to do some spiritual practice. Giuliano, who had already met Rinpoche, knew about this Tibetan teacher and it was through him that we heard about Rinpoche. What I heard was that Rinpoche was teaching advanced breathing techniques, which was Yantra Yoga. I was already doing purification and these kinds of things because I had studied yoga. I was totally vegetarian. I hadn’t had time to study pranayamas well, so I was very interested in what Rinpoche was teaching. That is what drew me to Rinpoche’s teaching. I had never heard the word Dzogchen before.

So that summer I was supposed to go to a small island in



Fabio teaching in Melbourne, Australia.

Photo: G. Horner

Sardinia with my friend to do a seven-day yoga purification retreat. Instead, I went to Rinpoche’s teaching with Tiziana in Prata. It was probably the second retreat Rinpoche had ever given. That was in 1977.

After that retreat in Prata, I decided to change my plans. I still needed to finish my exam for my integrative year, and then I could subscribe to any faculty. I decided to go to Naples where Rinpoche was teaching Tibetan in order to study with him. I finished my doctor’s degree there.

M: Did you start learning Yantra Yoga at that retreat at Prata? Who was teaching it?

F: Rinpoche was teaching Yantra Yoga in Prata. Also Eugenio was teaching there. There were also some people teaching in Naples, because Rinpoche was teaching there. After Prata we went to Vienna and nearby Vienna, to do a retreat there where Rinpoche himself taught Yantra Yoga. I learned Yantra Yoga and then I went to Naples. While I studied at the University of Naples, I supported myself teaching Hatha Yoga in the morning, sometimes I did some house painting, and in the afternoon I started teaching Yantra Yoga in the Community center of Parco Margherita.

M: Can you say what it was like learning Yantra Yoga with Rinpoche?

F: I wasn’t someone like Adriano who followed Rinpoche’s teaching of Yantra Yoga regularly in Naples. I participated with Rinpoche teaching Yantra for two, three or four retreats.

M: Did Rinpoche then say you could teach?

F: Yes, he said I could teach and after a while he even gave some people a diploma. The diplomas are not the same ones like the ones he gives now.

Then Rinpoche went to the United States and taught Yantra there. After a little while when more people started teaching Yantra Yoga, Rinpoche gradually stopped teaching the Yantras and the actual physical aspect but, especially during public talks, he often taught and demonstrated Yantra Yoga.

M: How did your practice in Hatha Yoga affect your practice of Yantra Yoga, was there any conflict, was it easy in the beginning for you to go right into Yantra, did you have some resistance, or did they work together?

F: I have to say that in the beginning it was not so easy to understand the depth of how Yantra works because it is so different, for example, the importance

Focus on Yantra Yoga

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of how the movement and the breathing work together. The kind of yoga I was practicing was mostly based on getting into the position and staying in it. But from the point of view of the flexibility of the body, also being kind of skinny and young, it obviously helped prepare my body to do it. Not only that, but in the morning I was teaching Hatha yoga, and in the afternoon Yantra, so when you do that several hours a day, your flexibility progresses easily.

M: What was different about Yantra and what drew you to it?

F: Yantra is based on a sequence of movement and breathing. The yoga I practiced was about getting into the position and staying, and relaxing the breath in the position. So it's very different. But it is not so easy to understand. To really feel the depth of how the Eight Movements work, for example, takes time and practice. Sometimes it takes a long time. Otherwise it remains on the surface and with Yantra you work at the deeper level of energy.

M: Did you have immediately have access to all one hundred-eight movements and the pranayamas? How did your practice of Yantra develop for you? Did you have access to the text?

F: The text was in Tibetan. It was not translated. There were little booklets. There was one time – I was in India – when they went through the positions in Merigar. People made little drawings, took notes, but it is a pity that there was no video. While the book was being translated, there were many sessions of clarification with Rinpoche, so we were able to fine-tune everything. Many of these sessions were recorded.

As I told you, sometimes I was teaching three hours in the morning, and sometimes three, four or even five hours in the afternoon. Honestly I wasn't practicing more on top of that!

M: When did you actual start traveling and teaching?

F: During a retreat in New Zealand they asked me to teach Yantra. There was nobody else that could do it. I started to teach Yantra again then, during retreats, and guiding the practice. From there slowly it evolved up to a point where I did either one thing or the other, work or teach Yantra. I didn't have the possibility to do both. If I accepted to go somewhere where they wanted to do a Yantra course, it was difficult to keep a job because it's difficult if you take off for one and half months and then you come back to your job and then they ask you again you take off another fifteen days. Well, I didn't find a job like that! (Laughter)

So I leaned toward teaching Yantra. Rinpoche thought for a long time about how to structure things. He thought that teachers who were doing things in this way should get some money for teaching courses of Yantra; otherwise it was hard to live. Gradually I started to do that. Honestly,

it just happened, it just evolved. That was in the 1980's.

M: What's the process of becoming a Yantra Yoga teacher now?

F: Now if you want to become a teacher, first you should follow a Yantra Yoga teacher training. Now Yantra is divided into three levels. You start at the first level. You should do at least one or two teacher training courses. In the meantime you should keep a practice of Yantra and possibly if there is a group of practitioners, you should lead the practice so as to develop some experience. Until now it's been that when someone feels they are ready, they can ask for supervision. They should organize a course, where they teach, and one of the two international instructors, Laura or myself, supervises with love and compassion. (Laughter).

Mirror (Emily & Naomi): We remember well!

F: If we think the person can fulfill the requirements, knows what they are teaching, teaches with the right motivation, and is an active member of the Community, we can consider them. Then when there is a teacher training with Rinpoche, we can introduce them to Rinpoche. Rinpoche authorizes the teachers during a teacher training, a kind of teacher examination. We do not do that.

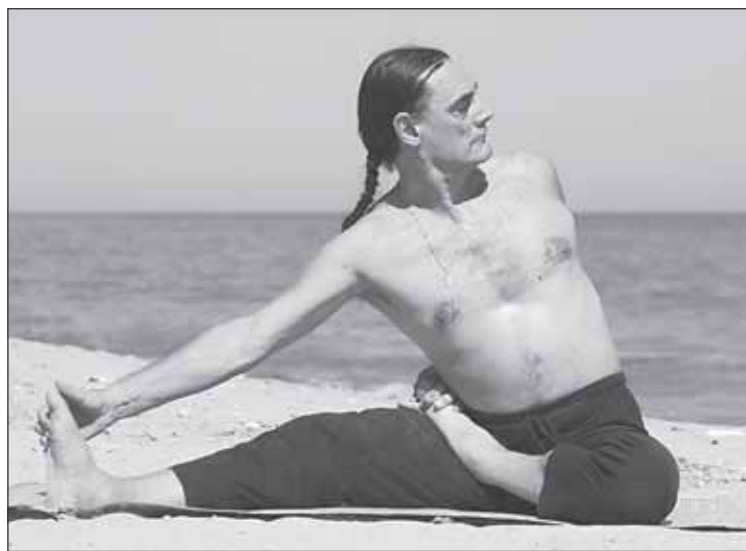
M: Could you please explain the definition of the levels?

F: Well, the last time we spoke with Rinpoche, we clarified things because the Yantra Yoga book was coming out. So for the first level we can teach all twenty-five basic Yantras. Actually the first level of Yantra has one aspect for the Community and one aspect for the general public. When we teach people who are not in the Community and not in the transmission, we don't teach the kumbhaka, things relative to the kumbhaka or the application of the kumbhaka. In that case, we can teach the tsandul without holding, just inhaling and exhaling, and that is a way of doing it for the general public.

So this would be the first level of Yantra: The nine breathings, tsijong, tsandul, lungsang (The Eight Movements), twenty-five basic Yantras, the rhythmic breathing without kumbaka, as a breathing training and the Vajra Wave. We do not teach pranayamas for the general public, but for those with transmission and the first level teachers can teach pranayamas of the first and second groups.

In then the second level, there would be more emphasis on the pranayamas, deepening the knowledge of the pranayamas, and also a more expert way of teaching. Knowing how to do things and teaching do not necessarily go together.

Some people have more skill to communicate, others less. But when you teach if you lack the skill of communicating, it's a bit complicated. So it's not sufficient that you can do the Yantra correctly. To teach the Yantra you should



The conch position.

Photo: I. Shakov

also be able to communicate and help people to practice correctly.

Somehow the second level should be more about the capacity to explaining well, going deeper and getting more understanding of your practice of Yantra.

The third level is everything that is left: all the variations, and the seven lotuses.

M: What impact is the Yantra Yoga book having, or what do you envisage it will have?

F: From our point of view, since there is the book we should all try to follow it. One thing Rinpoche asked Laura and myself to do was to avoid developing mutations of Yantra. So now that there is the book, we should all try to stay as much as possible with the instruction as it is in the book, so then there will be this kind of coordination.

M: What are the dangers of system mutating, how can you discourage people from mutating the system?

F: You can if people understand as it says in the text itself that you should try to receive this teaching from an authorized teacher meaning a teacher who has the transmission and is connected to the teaching. You need to understand that you shouldn't just try to learn it from the book or just take it and change it. You should respect the teaching as a profound teaching, that it has a lineage and everything.

If someone does not give any importance to this, you don't care or whatever, then I don't know, what can you do? It is difficult.

M: Can you say something about why it is so important to have transmission for an advanced practice of Yantra Yoga?

F: If you do the pranayama, if you learn the more advanced level of the pranayama of Yantra, it is clearly a preparation for applying certain specific methods and for these methods you always need transmission. So it is automatic. Since you are working at the more subtle level of the energy, working with the prana, with the channels, chakras and so on, then you want to be in the teaching. You don't play around with these things without a strong base.

For the rest, the famous open level first level of Yantra Yoga, that's a different story, you don't even have to be a Buddhist or

whatever, simply a person interested in a method that can really help balance energy, and strengthen your condition. Also life becomes easier because your condition becomes more stable. Rinpoche gives the example: what is thought of as good luck, or bad luck, in reality is more whether your energy is weak or strong. Everybody likes to feel better, stronger and more centered. It is not necessary to be a Buddhist, but very often people might get interested through this contact with Yantra Yoga.

That is why teachers should go around, not teaching what they shouldn't teach but should give some simple information about what Yantra is, what is its origin and principle. Through this information people might be interested, "Oh, there is Dzogchen teaching." And then they might get interested in getting the transmission and following the teachings. So Yantra can be an outreach, a bridge. It can allow people who otherwise wouldn't find it so easy to get in touch with the teaching. That is a very important function of Yantra as far as I understand.

M: How is Yantra related to Dzogchen and to tantric method?

F: You see, it is very easy to understand how Yantra is related to Dzogchen; you see in the Base of Santi Maha Sangha there is Yantra Yoga. In the introduction of the book, it says the method is connected with secret Anuttaratantra. Yantra is working with energy. Yantra is directly connected to Dzogchen teaching and this teaching of Vairocana and the point of view of Dzogchen. That's why, for example, we do not manifest or visualize a deity, but we visualize the channels and so on – tongra. That is an example to make you understand that even if there is the structure characteristic of Anuttaratantra practice, at the same time there is this aspect of the point of view and the application of Dzogchen. That makes it different, with that characteristic but from the point of view of Dzogchen.

M: Can we get enlightened through Yantra Yoga?

F: Buy the book! The actual final aim of the practice of Yantra Yoga is the state of Dzogchen. So, as a path to enlightenment through Yantra Yoga, you have to apply the teaching of Dzogchen.

M: How many local instructors do we have around the world?

F: There are twenty-two and that is far too few. We absolutely need more local instructors, but just having instructors is not of much value. We need instructors who are well prepared and committed.

M: Would you like to see the Gakyils organizing more advanced and teacher training courses in different places?

F: Yes, but it's the other way around, if there are people interested and they have this understanding that they want to do that training, then of course, more teacher training is better, not trying to organize a teacher training and then fill it with people. To be a teacher of Yantra Yoga people should be: a member of the Dzogchen community; dedicated to Rinpoche's teaching and transmission; and understand that it is not just a title. If you want to become a Yantra Yoga teacher it's because you want to teach it.

And I think that when you become a first level Yantra Yoga teacher, it's not very much about going out and doing a seminar or a weekend every month or something. It's trying to teach locally, and then if there is a need for some reason, you can also do some weekend seminars, maybe the people of the second level can do that more. Mostly you should do regular classes of Yantra. That's how you develop your capacity and understanding of teaching. Not jumping every one and a half months and maybe doing almost nothing in between. So, to become a Yantra Yoga teacher, one should have these motivations. And have some basic capacity of explaining what Yantra Yoga is, making people understand what it is: that it is connected to Dzogchen, without going over the top and teaching Dzogchen. Just teach Yantra, but be able to help people understand exactly what it is and how it is connected. That would be lovely to have many people doing that, to have local instructors doing this.

I understood one of the tasks entrusted to us by Rinpoche was to really train local teachers. Certainly we should try to have many qualified Yantra Yoga teachers.

M: If we see if there's activity within our local Dzogchen Community, or if we discover situations where people are teaching Yantra without our authorization, what do we do?

F: This is interesting. If there is anything the Gakyil can do, they should do it because since this is part of Rinpoche's teaching and the Shang Shung Institute has the copyright, so probably Shang Shung Institute should be informed. I think this is also the responsibility of the Gakyil. Sometimes maybe the only possibility is to inform people of the fact that the only people authorized to teach this Yantra Yoga, this tradition of Vairocana taught by Rinpoche, are authorized by Rinpoche.

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Rinpoche’s Uncle Togden, the Great Yantra Yoga Practitioner who attained the Rainbow Body

Excerpt from Crystal and the Way of Light
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In Tibet masters could be found living in many different situations, but they had four principal types of life-styles: those who were monks, living in monasteries; those who lived a lay life, with their homes in villages; lay masters who lived as tent-dwelling nomads, traveling with their disciples, in some cases following their herds; and those who were yogis, often living in caves.

I personally received transmission not only from my principal master, but also from many others including my two uncles. My uncle Togden was a great yogi, a practitioner of Dzogchen. Like Changchub Dorje, he did not have an intellectual education involving study, and was not attached to any school. In Togden’s case this was because his parents had decided when he was very young that he should be a silversmith, and so his whole education was aimed at preparing him for his work as a craftsman. But at a certain point he became seriously mentally disturbed, and none of the doctors could cure him. Finally, he was taken to see a Dzogchen master of that time, Adzom Drugpa [see plate 1], and as a result of contact with this master, he not only recovered from his illness but became a serious practitioner, a yogi who spent all his time in solitary retreats in isolated caves high in the mountains, where jaguars and leopards roamed.

I was sometimes allowed to stay with him as a child, and I remember that the leopards were particularly fond of butter, and that at night they would try to creep stealthily into the cave in which Togden stored his food to lick it up. I first learned Yantra Yoga in those high caves, as a very young boy, just copying Togden’s movements. I first stayed with him when I was three years old, and I can remember my uncle practicing Yantra for hours stark naked, while I amused myself as children of that age will, occasionally playfully slapping or kicking my uncle’s bare back, as part of my games, as he continued

his practice unperturbed. When I was a little older, I learned the meaning of what he was doing.

Togden wore his hair long and had a big bushy beard, so that when I later saw pictures Karl Marx I thought he bore a striking resemblance to my uncle, except that my uncle didn’t wear glasses. He was an example of the kind of practitioner who becomes recognized as a master through the qualities he or she manifests as a result of practice, rather than being recognized as the reincarnation of a previous master. When he was first sent to Adzom Drugpa he was so disturbed that he could hardly comprehend any of the teachings that were being given at the master’s annual summer teaching retreat that was always held on the high plateau pasturelands. The teachings would take place surrounded by a village of tents, like a nomad encampment, that would arise for the duration of the retreat and then disappear again afterwards. By the time the retreat was over that summer, Togden had, with the help of Adzom Drugpa, been able to overcome his problem sufficiently to be ready to do some practice.

The master suggested that he make a solitary retreat, but because my uncle hadn’t been able to follow the teachings, he didn’t know what to do in such a retreat. This is how Adzom Drugpa resolved the difficulty: he sent my uncle to a cave about four days’ journey away, telling him to stay there and practice until he sent for him, and he sent another disciple to show him the way to the cave. This other disciple had been following Adzom Drugpa for many years and was a serious practitioner. He was a simple man, not an intellectual, and he personally concentrated a great deal on the practice of the Chöd. This is a practice in which one works to overcome attachment and ego clinging by making a mentally visualized offering of one’s own physical body. The practice was developed by a great Tibetan lady practitioner, Machig Labdrön (1055–1149), who came from a



Togden Ugyen Tendzin.

Painting from The Temple of the Great Contemplation, Merigar

Bönpo family and who combined elements from the Bönpo traditions with teachings of the Prajnaparamita Sutra, of the tantras, and of the Dzogchen traditions that she received from her two root masters, Pha Tamba Sangye and Tragpa Ngönshe respectively, to produce a characteristically Tibetan form of practice which is a complete path in itself, but which is also practiced in conjunction with other methods.

Practitioners of Chöd are traditionally nomadic, traveling continually from place to place with a minimum of possessions, as mendicants, often carrying nothing more than the ritual instruments of a damaru, or two-sided drum, a bell, and a thigh-bone trumpet, and living in a small tent set up using a ritual trident (katvanga) as its tent pole, and four ritual daggers (purba) as its tent pegs. The practice is principally undertaken in lonely and desolate places, such as caves and mountain peaks, but particularly in graveyards and charnel grounds at night, when the terrifying energy of such places serves to intensify the sensation of the practitioner who, seated alone in the dark, summons all those to whom he owes a karmic debt to come and receive payment in the form of the offering of his body. Among the invited are Buddhas and illuminated beings, for whom the practitioner mentally

transforms the offering into nectar, and all the beings of the six states of conditioned cyclic existence (samsara), for whom the offering is multiplied and transformed into whatever will be of most benefit and most pleasing, but also summoned are demons and evil spirits to whom the body itself is offered as a feast just as it is.

Internal ‘demons’ are all the usually latent fears, such as the fear of sickness or death, that can only be overcome when they are brought to the forefront of consciousness, but there also exist demons in the sense of negative energies that the practice enables the practitioner to magnetize and, ultimately, to master. We have an instinct for self-protection, trying to defend ourselves from imagined harm. But our attempt at self-protection ultimately causes us more suffering because it binds us into the narrow dualistic vision of self and other. By summoning up what is most dreaded and openly offering what we usually most want to protect, the Chöd works to cut us out of the double bind of the ego and attachment to the body. In fact the name Chöd means ‘to cut’; but it is the attachment, not the body itself, which is the problem to be cut through. The human body is regarded as a precious vehicle for the attainment of realization.

The practitioner of Chöd who accompanied my uncle Togden to the cave in which he was to make his solitary retreat led him by an extremely circuitous route that traveled by way of so many lonely spots favorable to his practice that instead of the usual four days, it took them well over a month to reach their destination. And on the way, each day, in the course of their ordinary conversation, he communicated straightforward instructions on all aspects of practice, not just on the Chöd, to my uncle, so that when he was finally left alone, Togden knew exactly what he should do. My uncle stayed for several years in that retreat, and when he finally left it, he had already developed the remarkable powers that led people to give him the name, or title, of ‘Togden’, which means ‘Accomplished Yogi’, by which I always refer to him, although his given name was Ogyen Tendzin.

He continued thereafter to make frequent retreats, between which he traveled from place to place. His wanderings came to the attention of the Chinese authorities who were then making inroads into eastern Tibet, and they arrested him and called upon him to explain himself. Because of the way he was as an individual, my uncle was not able to give them an answer to their satisfaction, and so they decided he must be a spy. His execution was ordered, but despite several attempts to shoot him, it proved impossible to kill him. When he was released, the people of the area began to call him ‘Togden’. He could also communicate so well with animals that even the wild and timid mountain deer that normally ran away from everyone freely came to him and stayed wherever he did. Less docile creatures also frequented his company. On one occasion when the King of Derghe himself came to visit Togden, his minister climbed up to Togden’s cave to announce the arrival of the King and found an enormous mountain lion seated peacefully beside the yogi. The King had no choice but to share the company of that most royal of beasts if he wished to be received. This he did, with no little trepidation.

Living as he did, far from any centers of habitation, considerable hardship was involved for all those who gradually heard of Togden’s reputation as a practitioner and came to seek him out to receive teachings from him.

>>continued from previous page

Anyone who is not authorized by Rinpoche is not authorized to teach it. It is as simple as that. That’s why it’s important from our side to keep trying to coordinate it, because then if others do strange things, at least we shouldn’t. We should keep it as pure as possible.

M: How has Yantra impacted you, how it has affected or helped your

own practice, your Dzogchen practice and/or your life?

F: Since I have been teaching like this, it has become an integral part of my life, so maybe it is different to how it would be for someone who only practices Yantra. For many years I’ve been traveling teaching Yantra, so it is a big part of my life.

Of course, above all, what I try to do is apply Rinpoche’s teachings to the best of my capacity. But especially in the beginning Yantra really helped me coordi-

nate my energy and to become more balanced and more stable.

And then, of course, if you want to practice some of Rinpoche’s methods that he teaches, where you need to apply the famous kumbhaka, the main method in the Community to learn kumbhaka, is Yantra. In this sense it can and does influence how you practice, how you can practice and the kind of result you can have from practicing certain methods, because if you have a stable capacity

of kumbaka it is one thing, but if you don’t, it’s another.

It is also about trying to follow Rinpoche’s advice, to integrate our life in the teaching. Yantra is one of the things we can apply. That’s why I always explain that Yantra Yoga is in the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha.

M: Have you got some advice for older practitioners about how to work with Yantra and not get discouraged?

F: The concept is always the same. Do what you can do without forcing and if possible do things steadily rather than doing something once and forcing, in this way you can surely develop your capacity to an extent that you would not have believed possible. I don’t think there is more precise general advice than that. This is advice for everybody, not just old or stiff people.

>> continued on the following page

Reflections from John Renshaw on teaching and promoting Yantra Yoga in the UK

Edited by Barbara Terris and Judy Allan

Barbara: John, you have been teaching Yantra Yoga in the UK for more than 20 years in the UK and are qualified on the second of the three levels. This year you decided to promote Yantra Yoga at the annual Yoga Show at London's Olympia. What made you decide that **now** was a good time to promote Yantra Yoga in this new way?

John: The planned publication launch of Rinpoche and Adriano's book *Yantra Yoga: The Tibetan Yoga of Movement* coincided with the October 2008 Yoga Show at London's Olympia. It has been running for five years now and gathers practitioners of different yogic disciplines under one roof. In 2008 there were over 200 exhibitors with stands.

In the event we managed only to get one single copy of the book on the second day of the show, airmailed at great expense by special courier! It was disappointing that we had no copies of the book for sale. I meet many 'career yogis' and I know that some of them are actively encouraged to learn a whole range of yoga styles and incorporate them into their teaching repertoire. So it was important to have Rinpoche's book available in order to protect and represent the teaching in the purest way possible.

Barbara: Do you think this presents a danger or an opportunity – that 'career yogis' learn Yantra just to add it to their repertoire?

John: I trust Rinpoche's wisdom in allowing it to be published in its entirety. This is a unique and elaborate book on the tradition of Yantra and is very useful for practitioners. But, as we know, people **do** plunder Tibetan traditions to give their own new teaching or workshops some spiritual authenticity. As part of the tantra tradition in Tibet, yoga was kept secret, though more information is coming out now.

Barbara: Yoga is often marketed as making people feel good, healthy and happy, something that can make samsara a nicer place to be. However the Yantra Yoga website www.Yantrayoga.org.

org/ makes it clear that Yantra Yoga is an aid to contemplation.

John: Yes, there are only a few of the purer Hindu-based or hatha-yoga-based systems which have that complete body, speech and mind approach; many of the others are simply stretching, gymnastics, and physical work-outs.

I wanted to present Yantra in the whole context of the teachings, the Community, of our practices, courses and workshops, and for it to have that whole and complete approach. We have a total all-encompassing system, within which Yantra is situated. This was unlike what most of the other stalls and teachers were offering.

Barbara: You have explained to us why **now** and also why **there**. Tell us now about the stall and the people who helped you?

John: We displayed a picture of Rinpoche and an enlarged Yantra Yoga thankra bordered in silk brocade, which I made! The *Eight Movements of Yantra Yoga* video was playing continuously. We hung cloths in Tibetan Buddhist colors. We thought it looked beautiful and nice, because it was familiar to our mandala. Perhaps for the public it looked rather exotic and had the effect of filtering out people not attracted to this. We attracted people who recognized our stall as Buddhist or Tibetan. This was a limitation – or maybe it was good? – I don't know.

Alex Studholme was my link with the Gakyil and, with the help of Celia Wright we prepared a Yantra Leaflet. We made cards to give out, using a yogic Lukhang image given by Mike Farmer. I prepared information sheets for the helpers with answers to all the question that I thought people might ask. Andrew Cadmore, our webmaster, worked hard to update our website for the launch, so that it could be useful for potential newcomers. Although it only happened over one weekend, it was like opening a business, or a shop.

I had been to the Yoga Show before and so I knew how efficiently people presented them-

nize with all the different aspects. Then you can apply when and how you can and what you need to relax you energy and coordinate your condition. You learn it and then according to circumstances you apply what you need. That is how it should be, as I understood the principle of why we learn Yantra. But also Yantra in itself is the path. That's why we try to learn it. **M:** Thank you very much, Fabio.

www.yantrayoga.org



John at the Yoga show.

selves. Yoga is a business and the market is very competitive.

Barbara: Tell us about the financial aspect of this promotion?

John: Early on Celia and Brian Wright [Clear Light Trust] offered to sponsor the Yantra Leaflet and the stall hire. Sadly, Celia died recently and the UK Community has lost a good friend and a generous and committed practitioner. We had other smaller expenses.

Yoga is like a new religion and some of the yoga teachers are almost like rock stars, going round

Yantra, they may think, "Oh, that looks a bit extreme, but I do need to do something, so I will do a softer form of yoga, or the Vajra Dance or whatever." That is quite common, because Yantra is not an easy system when we are approaching middle age we are already a bit stiff, with the normal range of limitations and health problems.

Barbara: So basically, you want people to be dissatisfied with samsara **much earlier** in their lives?

John: It is happening. There are the children of community mem-

for other community members around the world who may wish to promote the Yantra Yoga book, or Yantra itself?

John: Yoga is different in each country, for example in its regulation. You must thoroughly research the whole yoga market. In the UK, I find it helps to demystify Yantra Yoga, as people initially are not drawn to something that seems exotic or spiritual.

If the people who are contacts for Yantra can record and analyze the questions they get and from where, this can help us in presenting it in different countries.

Barbara: In your experience, what attracts people to Yantra Yoga and to your London classes?

John: New people are attracted by the word 'yoga' which they associate with relaxing and stretching, and because the classes are local. They come for these simple reasons. Later they may get interested in the inner aspect.

Yantra is not for everybody. New people often may think they can get in a state of relaxation by instantly becoming still. Later, possibly by doing the breathing with the flowing movements and getting the prana to flow freely,



Ongoing Yantra Yoga class with John in London.

the circuit. They demand and get the best slots, the best stalls to attract maximum people. The community and I do not have this status, so the stall position and the program slot I got reflected this; nevertheless I was pleased to have 40 people come to my workshop.

Some yoga promoters were much more assertive than us and in your face, selling their 'product'. Our attitude was rather passive in contrast. I do not know if this was a good or a bad thing. For us it was not a business, not our livelihood, but you could feel the difference in intensity with some other stallholders.

Barbara: I was looking at the Yoga Show website and noticed the age profile of visitors was in the 30–40 age group. Was this helpful?

John: Traditionally in Tibet, people would start yoga when they were young and suppler. Here people tend to start later, having experienced some suffering in samsara which makes them look into spiritual things, including Buddhism. If they come across

bers coming in, and because of the books and other information, younger people are coming forward more now. The age profile is getting younger, and we do **need** to start younger because Yantra, especially at the advanced level, is very demanding on the body and breathing and requires lots of practice to get real results.

The biggest interest is from Buddhists who have heard of Tibetan yoga or Yantra through the Tantric system but do not have access to the teaching and practice of it because of the secrecy surrounding Tantra.

Yantra can also appeal to younger keep-fit sporty people and through Yantra they may develop an interest in breathing, Buddhism and contemplation. In the Kali Yuga everything speeds up!

Barbara: So the book's publication is fortuitous?

John: Everything evolves and it is good timing.

Barbara: Based on your experience, do you have any advice

they may reach that state of deep relaxation but it is hard work and they will not experience much relaxation in the beginning. You are dealing with people's limited views...

Nevertheless, I think Yantra Yoga could appeal to more people, especially now that the complete book is available.

I inform students if there is a transmission or a retreat coming up. This 'catches' the interest of some people and not others. I have to accept and respect that this is different for different people. It is not for me to insist that they become members of the Dzogchen Community. I am quite relaxed about this. However Yantra is one important doorway into the community for my students.

My weekly Yantra Yoga class is, I believe the longest continuously running weekly Yantra Yoga class in the world.

Barbara: Thank you very much, John, for sharing your thoughts with us.

>>continued from previous page

And possibly, try to do what you need to do. Try to understand your condition, what you really need to do, and apply what can help you. If somebody has some health problem, for example, in the book there are some indications that you can do certain Yantras for certain conditions. So it depends on what you are trying to do. Yantra is a tool, no?

That's why when people know Yantra, they can create their own basic practice. They can harmo-

Dzogchen Teaching Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Melbourne Australia
April 3-5, 2009

Paul Medi

It had been nine years since Rinpoche had last been to Melbourne, so there was a lot of anticipation, excitement and hard work that preceded his arrival to our city. On the Friday evening a public talk was held at the St Kilda Town Hall to an audience of both familiar faces and newcomers. For the next couple of days a large number of these people attended the weekend teachings held in the Brunswick Town Hall.

Both halls were beautifully decorated, and there were stalls with information dedicated to the various aspects of Rinpoche's activity – Dzogchen Community, ASIA and Shang Shung Institute. In addition Community members prepared a wonderful, healthy lunch for those attending the weekend teachings.

Sometimes it is amazing to realise that the Master is physically present here, in the very city that you live, work and spend most of your life in. In the city that for most part feels 'ordinary'. Most of the time we need to travel somewhere to see Rinpoche, whether it is to another continent or country, or even to another place within our own country. In a way we can sometimes feel that we leave our 'ordinary' life behind, at least for a while, when we go on retreat to a Gar or Ling. When it's time to leave we can also feel that we leave the retreat behind and



Teaching at Melbourne.

Photo: G. Horner

that we must now go back to our 'ordinary' life.

Rinpoche's presence here, in the middle of this ordinary life, in some way seemed to transform our perception of this place. Yes, this street and these cafes, restaurants and shops are not so ordinary after all perhaps.

Rinpoche transmitted the essence of the Dzogchen teachings on the first morning with his unique clarity and humour. After lunch Fabio taught the Nine Purification Breathings, which was followed by a demonstration of the Eight Movements by Emily Coleing, to give an example of Yantra Yoga practice to those newcomers who are unfamiliar with this part of the teachings. In the afternoon we were also very fortunate to have Yeshe Namkhai give teachings, much to the surprise of many, as he decided to stay in Australia a little longer than an-

icipated. It was a wonderful occasion for us to receive teachings from both Rinpoche and Yeshe on the very same day.

The following day Rinpoche continued to transmit Dzogchen knowledge to us, as well as giving transmissions for the secondary practices. After lunch a



In Brisbane with Yeshe Namkhai.

Photo: G. Horner

>>Nying-thig Yangthi continued from page 4
ter Changchub Dorje, told him that he needed to have a very precise experience of tregchö before applying thögal and so he did only tregchö for many years.

Rinpoche gave an explanation of thögal. He clarified that this was not an explanation of the practice itself, or permission to do it. One really has to apply tregchö very well first and be able to remain in the state of contemplation before commencing thögal practice. Thö means forehead, and gyal means manifesting outside. In this practice our real nature manifests just like an object in front of us. We practice in order to realise the inseparability of emptiness and vision, and as a result dualism falls away. Rinpoche explained that through the development of the Four Lights, the Four Visions of thögal arise.

The instruction on the obtainment of Fruit according to the Yangthi
Rinpoche explained about the realization of the practice. He said that in the state of instant presence everything purifies. The re-

flections in the mirror are not real. Emptiness has infinite potentiality. Our essence is the mirror itself. Regarding the fruit of practice 'it is not that we are producing fruit. The fruit already exists in us. It is revealed, like sun shining. It is all pervading.'

Conclusion to the Retreat

We have received so many teachings. Rinpoche reminded us that if we want to really benefit, we must put them into practice in two ways: personal retreat and integration in our everyday life. Otherwise we are just collecting practices. When we do Guruyoga, we have connection. To be at this retreat we already have this connection. We are very fortunate. So Guruyoga is very important. Rinpoche reminded us over and again that 'the essence of practice is Guruyoga, and its integration in instant presence with the Song of Vajra'

Regarding integrating our practice in everyday life, Rinpoche explained about the practice of ordinary presence. Of not being distracted. He said, when you

think, do so with presence, like driving a car. This is 'ordinary' presence and it is done with attention. The practice of ordinary presence is very important because it can be easily integrated into instant presence.

During the retreat Rinpoche also helped us to raise money for Nam-

gyalgar through his participation in an auction and a lottery. These were festive occasions with lots of singing and music, and a great opportunity to relax together and enjoy this special time with our precious master. The Community was very happy to make a donation from the proceeds of the lottery towards the rebuilding of

property damaged in a recent fire at Galenteng in Tibet.

Thank you Rinpoche, for all that you have given to us in Australia, for your wisdom and compassion, and the incredible inspiration of your presence. Be safe and well. Please return soon!

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The Australian Tour

14

Guru Tragphur Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai NorbuNamgyalgar, Australia
April 10-15, 2009

Michael Pulsford

Rinpoche taught on a Guru Tragphur practice from a cycle of Vajrapani teachings in a terma found by his uncle, the tertön Kyenze Qosgi Wánq-yug. On Saturday, Rinpoche gave us an initiation into the practice, and direct introduction to instant presence. After the initiation, he encouraged people like me - who were too distracted to notice instant presence at that moment - to apply ourselves when we could using the semzin method, and to repeat this practice until we had a clear experience.

Over the next few days Rinpoche explained the symbolism of Guru Tragphur's form, how to do the practice and its benefits - its provisional usefulness in controlling negative energies as well as its power as a path toward realization. Rinpoche also spent quite a while explaining the eight classes of negative beings, their qualities and temperaments, and the different kinds of trouble each can cause if disturbed.

One afternoon Rinpoche taught retreatants how to play the Tibetan game bagchen, and the Gonpa turned into a happy raucous gambling den for the rest of the evening. Afterwards Fabio showed you tube videos of a French man claiming to be a

Dzogchen master, and Rinpoche explained the importance of lineage in testing the authenticity of claims like this.

Rinpoche's explanations of the lineages of the practices he teaches are usually pretty amazing, because he's a tertön himself, but the story of the lineage of the cycle of Vajrapani teachings from which this Guru Tragphur practice comes is, is one I've always been enchanted by. In this case Rinpoche received this teaching directly from his uncle, but was also instrumental in its discovery:

Once when Rinpoche was young he visited his uncle. One night he dreamt of a Dakini who gave him a scroll. She told him it was important so he wrapped it tight in both hands. When he woke up his hands were still clenched tight; opening them he found a small piece of paper there. He took it to his uncle immediately, even though it meant interrupting his uncle's morning practice. His uncle received the scroll calmly, said he'd been waiting for it, and returned to his practice.



Teaching at Namgyalgar.

Photo: G. Horner

Does this kind of thing blow your mind? It blows mine. Sitting in the Gonpa I felt like I was in a fairytale but in a good way, where magical things were possible even if I couldn't understand how they happened.

On the last day Rinpoche explained how to develop awareness in the rolling whirlwind of daily life. He focused on the simple Guruyoga using a white A, and told us we could never do this practice too much. He also encouraged us to cultivate a straightforward awareness in whatever we happened to be doing: to decide to be especially aware for five minutes, or half an hour, and in that time not to block thoughts or stop what we were doing, but just to remain aware and undistracted whatever

our activities. "This is not instant presence," said Rinpoche, "but it is very good training for maintaining instant presence." He gave the example of driving: while driving we are aware we are driving, even if we are talking or thinking about something else. It's an example of maintaining awareness without blocking thoughts or actions, and of the kind of continuous awareness we might cultivate whatever the shape of our lives.

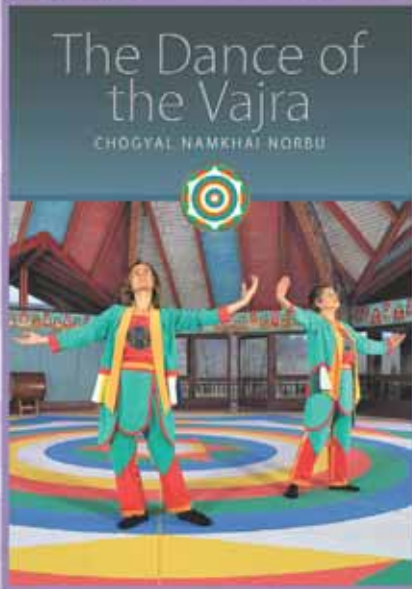
At the end of the retreat we drove home and Rinpoche was right: whatever else I forgot along the way I managed not to forget I was driving. There is hope for me yet! So I go for refuge to our precious teacher who reminds me not to get distracted, to the possibility of non-distraction, and to the

rest of you all, dear Vajra sisters and brothers of the planet Earth, who organize retreats and practices and publish schedules and newspapers and make the life of the Community possible.

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CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU



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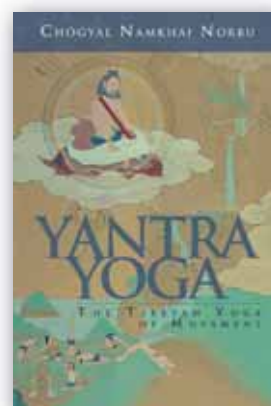
Also included is a collective practice of the Dance of the Vajra on the Universal Mandala at Khandroling, USA in 2005.

The Dance of the Vajra is indissolubly linked to the living transmission which connects the Master to his disciples. Thus, the video is intended exclusively for Dzogchen practitioners who have received the transmission of the Song of the Vajra and related teachings from the Master.

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Books by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



- ◆ Yantra Yoga
- ◆ Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light
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- ◆ The Supreme Source
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Dzogchen Retreat at Caloundra.

Photo: G. Horner

The Invocation of the Base, the Path and the Fruit

The Dzogchen Retreat on gZhi lam ‘bras bu’i smon lam from the kLong chen snying thig cycle of Jigmed Lingpa with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Caloundra March 16-21, 2009, Ewen Maddock Recreation Centre, Landsborough, Queensland, Australia

Lydia Nelson

A pleasant grassed area leads to a dam, which is weeded daily by dedicated local council workers, leaving the waters fresh and clear for pre-breakfast, post-lunch and late afternoon swimmers, canoe paddlers, and lazy floaters. Is that a person or a piece of driftwood? Is he or she still alive? Where did Channah go? How do I climb onto this mid-water rock, which is actually a piece of styrofoam tethered with an anchor?

The most intrepid camp on the grass, the less intrepid inhabit dormitories that still resonate with the presence of recently departed school groups but are at least dry and relatively insect proof, while those who need the comforts of home share accommodation in nearby beachside suburbs. Although Caloundra is nearly 90 kilometres north of Brisbane, the urban sprawl continues most of the way along the coastal strip. Ewen Maddock Recreation Centre is on the Steve Irwin Way and the famous crocodile hunter’s Australia Zoo is just down the road. Tall gum trees surround the centre and harbour the many mosquitoes, march flies and midges that provide the opportunity for maintaining presence, at least long enough to find the insect repellent.

Some of us remember the place well from the retreat held in 2003. I am one of those who arrive from “the south” by plane and shared hire car from Brisbane or Maroochydore airport. We include those who attended

the first 2009 retreat in Australia at Namgyalgar (1500 kilometres south) followed by the SMS base exam, level 1 training and two weeks of Dance of the Song of the Vajra course with Rita Renzi. Others have just arrived from overseas, and many are from Queensland and northern New South Wales. Some are meeting for the first time and others after a gap of many years. Some heard Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the first time at the November 2008 webcast, and some are hearing him for the first time.

The retreat was advertised as “Dzogchen Teachings”. We were delighted to learn that we would hear a teaching explanation related to the Dzogchen invocation: “The Invocation of the Base, the Path and the Fruit” (gZhi lam ‘bras bu’i smon lam) from the kLong chen snying thig cycle of Jigmed Lingpa, which summarizes the three principles of Dzogchen teaching: the base, and path and fruit. Rinpoche explains that this gterma teaching is sufficient for personal total realization, but not for ensuring the continuation and transmission of the Dzogchen teachings.

Each morning Lynne Geary and Jean Mackintosh teach the Dance of the Three Vajras. In the evening the diners are pushed aside so the dance mat can be spread once again for the Song of the Vajra dancers, many trying to recall the steps they learnt in the previous couple of weeks. Emily Coleing teaches the eight movements of Yantra Yoga. Each afternoon a

small group forms around Maria Rita Leti, who shares her detailed knowledge of the namkha and Tibetan astrology. The bagchen players gather under the open-sided shelter, swatting away mosquitoes and biting flies, but not moving from their seats all afternoon, determined that this round, surely, they will “jump”.

The students are delighted and satisfied with the teachings, but not all beings are similarly content, it seems. On the second last morning, while we sing the Song of the Vajra, a very vocal butcher bird flies in to the room and appears to join in. Later in the morning the same bird (we assume) returns and flies around before sitting on one of the roof beams and singing its song. Rinpoche stops to listen then continues to teach. The bird is not satisfied that its

message has been heard. It flies to the roof beam just in front of Rinpoche and, leaning forward, it looks at him and scolds and harangues for several minutes. Rinpoche listens and assures the bird that he is taking note of it. At that moment it seems that if one had enough clarity it would be possible to understand the language of animals. The bird clearly had something to say.



The bird that was communicating with Rinpoche.

After the final Ganapuja, when the webcast was over, Rinpoche told us that it might be possible that the Dzogchen Community buy a property in the area of the Glasshouse Mountains, a series of volcanic plugs that tower above the surrounding coastal plain. (For the aboriginal legend associated with the mountains, see <http://www.glasshousemountains.com.au/aboutledg.htm>.) With this exciting possibility in mind we said farewell and au revoir to our fellow retreatants. Many were making plans to stay in Brisbane until the following weekend to hear Yeshe Namkhai speak. Others, like me, were heading back to work for a couple of weeks before the Easter retreat to be held at Namgyalgar.

Words of Gratitude from Thupten Rabgyi Lama

Namgyalgar Australia
April 22, 2009

“I just want to say thank you to Rinpoche. Here at Namgyalgar we have been receiving wonderful teachings from our great master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. I feel very happy, lucky and satisfied. I feel a little sad because our retreat is ending. However, Rinpoche always says to us, “Everything is relative and impermanent. Everything is unreal.” So in this sense we don’t really have to feel sad. Also Rinpoche said to me that he will come again to Australia in 2011. I believe very much that this will happen for us.

Always Catherine [Simmonds, former Gakyil director] said, “Rinpoche, you are a very wonderful Teacher.” It is true. You are a very wonderful Teacher, Rinpoche. Your teachings, your great knowledge, your great transmission, have touched thousands of people’s hearts. All

this has liberated millions of sentient beings from samsara. That is why we feel very much that you are a precious and wonderful teacher.

As you know I grew up in Tibet. I learned everything about Tibetan culture, language, and Buddhism, under the monastic system. I had many teachers. Most of the teachers are Dzogchen practitioners. I have received many teachings, including Dzogchen, from them. I felt that I knew a little bit about Dzogchen and Buddhism, but in the real sense it was my ego and my knowledge is on the surface. It is not really deep. Since you have come to Australia this year Rinpoche, I had a great opportunity to spend time with you every day and every moment. I have been able to listen to your wonderful stories, receive your won-

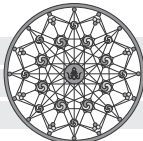
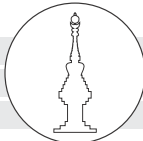
derful advice and your wonderful teachings. I feel totally changed.

Now I understand what the essence of the practice is and why we follow and do the practice and what the essence of the teaching is. So that is why I feel very much that you are a wonderful teacher.

I also want to say thank you Rinpoche because you totally changed my life. I am now an Australian citizen. [Big applause] I’m Aussie, [Laughter] which means I am part of this great nation. You know that the Tibetan situation is not easy, particularly for those who have left their homeland, when they arrive in India and Nepal; it is like being in the bardo. We do not know what will happen in our future. We always listen to His Holiness and what he says and pray for our future. We don’t have a country, money or support, and we don’t have jobs. So that is why I feel lucky. Now I have a country, a great and peaceful country like Australia.

Now I have a wonderful Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. I have a great family, Vajra brothers and sisters, the Dzogchen Com-

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Calendar of Events 2009

June

June 1-11

Mandarava Tsalung and practice retreat
With Nina Robinson

June 12-21

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Merigar East, Romania – open webcast

June 21-26

Dance of Song of the Vajra
revision course
With Rita Renzi

July

July 1-5

Yantra Yoga and Pranayama
For members

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

Experiential Instructions on
“Dzogchen Medjung”, The Marvelous,
one of the most important Tantras of
the Dzogchen Semde

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


Experiential Instructions on
“Bepai Gumchung”, the Hidden
Collection of Buddhagupta,
an ancient Dzogchen text found among
the Tunhuang manuscripts

October 23-30

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Practice and Teachings dedicated to
those that have died, **Shitro, terma**
of Rigzin Jyangchub Dorje “Khorde
Rangdrol”

Teaching Retreats 2009



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

photo ©2008 Gianni Baggi

MERIGAR WEST

Comunità Dzogchen
Merigar West 58031 Arcidosso (Grosseto)
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merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
More info on: www.dzogchen.it

Experiential instructions on “Dzogchen Med Yung” THE MARVELOUS, one of the most important Tantras of Dzogchen Semde

AGUST 10th to 16th
cost: 350 euros
(with discount for members)

OCTOBER 2nd to 10th
cost: 450 euros
(with discount for members)

Experiential instructions on “Bepa'i Gumchung” THE HIDDEN COLLECTION OF BUDDHAGUPTA, an ancient dzogchen text found among the Tunhuang manuscripts

Teachings on Shitro and practice dedicated to those who have died, from the terma “KHORDE RANGDROL” of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje

OCTOBER 23rd to 30th
cost: 400 euros
(with discount for members)

Merigar West News

After a long wet winter, an even wetter spring is still struggling to make itself felt at Merigar West. Bright white blossomed cherry trees dot the surrounding emerald green hills and the fields are full of tiny bright yellow and white daisies bobbing in the breeze against a background of dark gray clouds and swooping falcons.

At the Gar essential work to renew and repair the Gonpa has started and to begin to prepare for a full summer programme of courses, trainings and teachings.

The entire summer will be full of events such as courses of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, various practice retreats and, of course, the teaching retreats given by our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The first of the longer summer courses will be an eleven day Mandarava Tsalung practice and explanation retreat led by Nina Robinson at the beginning of June. Two teacher training courses will be held, the first a Dance of the Vajra Teachers' Training course with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo the first week of August, the other a Yantra Yoga Teachers' Training course with

Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti the last week of August. (see full programme of events on this page).

Rinpoche is planning to arrive early in July and his first retreat will be August 10–16. The title of the teaching is Experiential Instructions on “Dzogchen Medjung”, The Marvelous, one of the most important Tantras of the Dzogchen Semde. His second teaching retreat at the beginning of October is called Experiential Instructions on “Bepai Gumchung”, the Hidden Collection of Buddhagupta, an ancient Dzogchen text found among the Tunhuang manuscripts. His third retreat October 23–30 is entitled Practice and Teachings dedicated to those that have died, Shitro, terma of Rigzin Jyangchub Dorje “Khorde Rangdrol”.

As well as the organisation of this busy series of summer events, at the moment there is essential work in progress to improve and repair the Gonpa and to make it larger in order to accommodate more people during retreats and

courses. First of all the external wooden deck around the building is being repaired and replaced and the copper roof is going to be removed. Once the roof is off, the supporting beams that have been affected by weather and damp will be removed and replaced and a new copper roof will be put on. This is major work and has mostly been necessitated by the effects of the extreme weather conditions of strong wind, rain and sun on Mt. Amiata. However, it is vital that it be done as soon as possible to keep the Gonpa dry and to preserve the precious artistic patrimony inside.

Once the new roof is ready, the building is going to have added protection with new glass panels forming an outer wall around the present walls. This will offer an extra enclosed area for people to sit during retreats and courses who, up to now, have had to sit outside on the deck or in tents in all types of weather conditions.

Throughout the winter, work on the new website for Merigar has gone ahead and it is now almost ready. Several people have

been working on various aspects of the site. In cooperation with the blue gakyil, Paolo Ferraro has selected the text; Adriano Clemente, Fabio Risolo and Maurizio Mingotti have revised it. Dan Zegunis, Gabriele Marazzi, Thimley Koblensky, Massimo Catalfo, and Mandarava Bricaire have been working on the layout, the graphic and the technical part. The first version is ready but there are still some aspects that need to be developed. For example, in the future all the Lings and Gakyils will be able to present their programmes, activities etc. so that visitors to the site can easily access information on the various Gars and Lings everywhere.

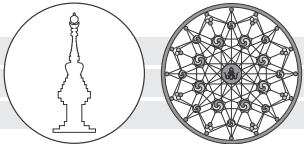
Another point that the Gakyil is currently working on is trying to find cheaper accommodation for practitioners who attend retreats and courses at Merigar West. The Gakyil hopes to be able to offer a solution before the beginning of summer activities. As well as this, the dormitory at Merigar Two will be able to host people this summer and reservations can be made for June on through the office.

Last year during the summer/autumn retreats, the Merigar West gakyil had a couple of meetings with all the European Lings and gakyils in order to exchange ideas and information and to set up a communication network. This year the gakyil would like to continue this project. They have already established a network of internet communication between Merigar and the Lings but now the gakyil is looking for a Project Manager and a European team to increase communication between the European centres and between the European centres and Merigar.

The summer season is approaching and we are doing our best to offer a full programme of events in comfortable and pleasant surroundings. We look forward to seeing you here at Merigar West to enjoy the retreats and courses and the quiet beauty of the summer in Tuscany.

The Merigar West Gakyil

MerigarWest



Exhibition of Tibetan Art and Culture in Grosseto

Paolo Ferraro

The exhibition was held in Grosseto from April 30 to May 6 with the aim of promoting knowledge of Tibetan culture in the Italian town closest to Merigar. Even though Grosseto is a small town, attendance was very good with about 600 visitors. Some of them showed their gratitude in having discovered or rediscovered this wonderful Tibetan culture by writing favourable comments in the visitors' book.

On April 30, the day of the inauguration, the exhibition was set up in the charming ambient of the late Renaissance Bigi church. All the details were worked out in a few hours thanks to the precious and fast work of a handful of practitioners under the expert guidance of Migmar. At 6 pm, just like a type of miracle, all the objects were perfectly in place as if they had always been there, and



the ancient doors of the church were opened to the public. Shortly after it started to rain, but only for a few minutes and in the half grey half sunny sky there was a rainbow. It was fantastic! The day after, the May 1st holiday, there were around 200 visitors.

Even though the place was quite small, the exhibition had a great number of objects. There was an area dedicated to the nomads, a second to handicrafts and a third, the biggest, to sacred art. The intention was to show the variety and the depth of Tibetan culture, but in a 'light' way

and without attempting to be all-encompassing, simply trying to hint about the greatness of this ancient culture to the public.

This cultural event which took place in a harmonious way was made possible thanks to the contribution of our precious Master, the Namkhai family, ASIA, the Shang Shung Institute and the Merishop (who made their objects available for the exhibition), the Grosseto Municipality (which gave its support, recognising the cultural importance of the event) and all the practitioners who did karmayoga.



Guru Jnanadakini Gomadevi practice course

by Massimo Catalfo

The second Guru Jnanadakini Gomadevi practice course with explanations took place at Merigar West March 27 and 28. The course was led by Enzo Terzano. The first course took place in December on the occasion of the Master's birthday and its theme was the long practice. During these final days of March, however, we went more into the method of the short Gomadevi Tun and we also applied the Dance of the Song of the Vajra.

They were three days of intense practice. Enzo's precise and enthusiastic approach together with the numerous participants made it a highly stimulating experience. At times the distractions of everyday life make me forget the immense fortune and opportunity that we have in having received such precious teachings. A part of me is aware of the incredible importance of this opportunity and I feel ashamed of my dull-wittedness ... but this, on its

own, is not good for much. It is not possible to thank the Master enough, but only to receive is not sufficient. We have heard many times that the capacity of Dzogchen is measured by the participation of the individual: once one has received the teachings, it is up to us, and the attitude with which we approach

the practice, be it active or passive, is fundamental.

Enzo's explanations impressed me for his active approach along with his meticulous research on the sources of the practice, the explanations that Rinpoche has given at different retreats. Being active doesn't mean inventing



Weekend course on SMS Base with Elio Guarisco.

Photo: L. Granger

Upcoming

First Level Vajra Dance Teachers Training

with Adriana Dal Borgo and Prima Mai
August 1-8, 2009

Who can attend? This course is for those who have a good knowledge of the female (Pamo) and male (Pawo) parts of the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra and the Dance of the Three Vajras and would like to deepen their practice or aspire to become a 1st level Vajra Dance instructor.

The course will start on August 1st at 4 pm and end on August 8th at 1 pm.

The cost is 280 euro without discounts.

Important: When you enroll, you will receive a form that you have to fill in and send back before attending the Teacher's Training.

For organizational purposes we ask you that you please register before the course starts, by e-mail or phone to the Merigar West secretary.

phone:+39-0564-966837

e-mail:merigaroffice@tiscali.it

*

Upcoming

First Level Yantra Yoga Teacher's Training

With Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico

August 24-31, 2009

Who can attend? The course is open to all those who have a good knowledge of the 1st level of Yantra Yoga (preliminaries, 1st & 2nd series of Yantras and the related Pranayamas, the Vajra Wave) and would like to deepen their practice or aspire to become a 1st level Yantra Yoga instructor.

The course will start on August 24th at 4 pm and end on August 31st at 1 pm.

The cost is 280 euro without discounts.

Important: when you enroll, you will receive a form that you have to fill in and send back before attending the Teacher's Training.

For organizational purposes we ask you that you please register before the course starts, by e-mail or phone to the Merigar West secretary.

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Ongoing Beginner's Yantra Yoga with Tiziana Gottardi at Merigar West.

something but adopting a rigorous and pragmatic approach towards what is being transmitted in order to first of all understand it and then to apply it.

I think that practice retreats like this one are important in order to increase the feeling of collaboration between practitioners that comes from practis-

ing together and sharing our understanding. In this way, I think, we can help each other. Thank you Rinpoche for this precious transmission, may our practitioners make the utmost use of it!

Passages

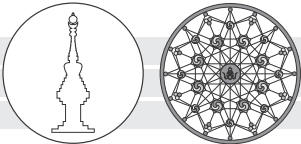
Born: On Wednesday April 29 at 5.21 in Volterra nel Borgo, Italy, a son, Deleg Mihai Apicella, was born to Janina Dan and Mario Apicella.

Long life and prosperity
to the new arrivals
and their families!



Born: On Saturday May 2 at 15.45 In Ravenna, Italy, a son, Achille Rinchen Merlo was born to Yesan Clemente and Filippo Merlo.

MerigarWest



Patrizia Moscatelli

21 May 1954-22 April 2009

The first place you come to when you arrive at Merigar is Serkhang (the golden house). Here you find the administrative offices, the secretary’s office where you can enrol for courses or retreats, the shop packed full of books and incense, thankas, statues and calendars. And then the kitchen, the toilets, the little flat for the geko and another for the Master’s important guests. The “little gonpa” and the large veranda giving gakyil members who are meeting there a panorama of colours of the Merigar land.

Everyone knows Serkhang. But not everyone knows that the present structure is due to the talent and the determination of Patrizia. Serkhang was the total gift that Patrizia gave to the Master and her Vajra brothers and sisters: the gift of her money, of her intelligence and of her capacities. Patrizia worked for almost five years on restructuring what before was simply the “yellow house”.

Patrizia was an able architect, careful to respect the building style of Tuscan farmhouses. At Serkhang she only wanted to use traditional materials like wood and hand made terracotta tiles. But besides tradition, Patrizia really respected the building regulations. In a country like Italy when you realise how important it is to build in compliance with the regulations only when the houses crumble and people are dying, as happened recently during an earthquake, Patrizia was the type of architect that many people consider to be a real nuisance because she refused makeshift solutions and do it yourself tricks. She rectified the works that had been done with goodwill but also in a very off-hand way over the course of the preceding years. She brought a unified project to the chaos of the improvised building work, giving grace and harmony to the building (it is not by chance that the Master changed the name of the yellow house to the ‘golden house’). Today Serkhang is not only a beautiful building but perfectly in line



with any type of building checks by the appropriate authorities. Only those who know the complexity of the Italian bureaucracy can understand how much Patrizia dedicated herself to setting things right.

This task also meant working in very close collaboration with the Technical Department at the Arcidosso Municipality, the beginning of a solid integration with the inhabitants of the village where Patrizia had decided to live most of the year. Integration with the people of the area, all of whom had no interest in the Teaching, was her little master stroke. Patrizia took a decision that brought her a lot of criticism because she wanted to use local workers for the restructuring of the yellow house – highly skilled builders who soon developed a high regard for her. At her funeral in Rome they were all there, “her” workers, “her” carpenter, “her” surveyor.

Another important element that cemented Patrizia’s friendship with the people of Arcidosso was her infinite compassion for animals. She had a lot of animals but she never bought any, not even one. Hers were all animals that she or other people had found: sick, wounded, half starved, ready to be sent to the butcher, abandoned in the mountains tied to a tree. Dogs left behind by hunters because they weren’t brave enough, dogs of respectable owners who, however, for various motives, could no longer take care of them. Cats who appeared at the gate of the farm to ask for asylum or who were left in front of the door by people who wanted to get rid of them, though not in the worst way. Palmira, the goat, managed to escape the butcher’s knife as did the ghost-

ly thin horse, Tara, who Patrizia bought paying for her by the kilo because the market value of this thoroughbred had been reduced to the mere weight of her bones. After she had been operated in the mouth, Tara fattened up to a hundred kilos and spent her last two years happy, looked after more than lovingly by the people who manage the stables that border Patrizia’s house. With them, too, Patrizia had a solid and deep friendship: Ivan and Giulia were among the first to rush down to the hospital in Rome last March when it seemed that the situation was taking a turn for the worse. They were there together with Patrizia’s most intimate Vajra family and closest relatives when her mortal body was laid in the coffin. As a final gift they had brought a horseshoe from Nepola, the little horse on which Patrizia had learned to ride.

The generosity of Patrizia was felt not only by animals but also by many people both in the Community and outside it. Thanks to her, many people’s problems were lightened: business gone wrong, jobs lost, unexpected needs or health emergencies. Her help always came in a discreet, continuous, unselfish way. She supported many of ASIA’s projects and had adopted a dozen Tibetan children (she called them her football team) who were chosen, once again, from those who had more difficulty in finding a sponsor.

I am convinced that the fortunate circumstances of her death were the direct result of this extraordinary accumulation of merits for having alleviated the suffering of so many people and animals. By fortunate circumstances I mean first of all the union with the Master, then being cared for in her own home by Vajra brothers and sisters for the whole time of her illness and, especially on the last day of her life. Patrizia’s hands were held, she was caressed, supported by her friends until she passed away. She heard the voices of those who were dearest to her reminding her not to be afraid and to think of the Master. Her heart stopped to the sound of the Hundred Syllables and the Song of the Vajra. Nanuk, her beautiful white cat – with one yellow eye, one blue – was lying next to her, and had never left her bed.

Among the wreaths of flowers in the church one of them from her animal rights activist friends had a note: from your four-legged friends. A lot of flowers arrived at the church – even though people had been asked to give donations to ASIA – and remained to adorn the Santa Pudenziana church where the religious service was celebrated. Santa Pudenziana, one of the oldest churches in Rome dating back to the 4th century AD, is the church where the Philippine community gather. It was chosen for the funeral service for this very reason because it is very dear to Judy and Romeo who have been Patrizia’s highly trusted and faithful domestic help for almost twenty years. Their children, who wanted to serve Mass, were also almost like the children of Patrizia who had fought so that they could live with their parents in Italy and have a real family.

Santa Pudenziana was packed with people. If you looked well, they were a very mixed group: there were her animal rights activist friends, those from Arcidosso, the community of Rome, representatives from Merigar and ASIA, her artist friends. In fact, Patrizia was not only an architect but also a painter. During the interval of about a year, which her illness had granted her before the final plunge, she found the energy to organise two exhibitions. The first in April 2008 took place at the splendid villa built by the Venetian doge Pisani at Stra, near Venice, and it turned into a great party for her many friends. At that time we all thought we were cel-

ebating her definitive return to good health. The second exhibition in October of the same year was supported by the Arcidosso Municipality who had made the rooms at the Aldobrandescan Castle available.

For many people it was the last opportunity to be with Patrizia. In November the medical exams she underwent periodically started to signal the worsening of her illness. Lung cancer is particularly fast and aggressive but it spared her bones and her brain. That is why she did not undergo extreme suffering and maintained almost intact her extraordinary capacity to be ironic about everything and everyone. Almost until the end she was able to be our Patrizia, the Patrizia that we knew.

But I don’t want to talk about the prickly side of her character, of her outspokenness that at times bordered on viciousness, of her irreverent intolerance, of her defects. I don’t want to for a very simple reason that has nothing to do with the social graces that expect us to point out only the virtues of the dead. Patrizia had defects that each of us can recognize within ourselves: anger, jealousy, ignorance etc. This mud we have in common doesn’t need to be described because we know it well, we are all caught up in it every day. Instead it is worth speaking about the flower that each of us manages to bring forth from this mud. I hope I have let you know about some of Patrizia’s lotus petals.

Her sister Annamaria Moscatelli



Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra course with Maurizio Mingotti. Photo: J. Granger

Accommodations near 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

Phone: 0039 0564 957542

Mobile phone: 0039 339 1370739

We cooperate with local hotels, family pensions, residences, agriturismo, Community members who have rooms or houses to rent or sublet. Also we can advise on car rental (at airports or locally), on the best itinerary and time tables of trains and buses, and we have now a circuit of residents who offer various useful services like transfer from the airports, local taxi service, translations, baby sitting, etc.

MerigarEast



Merigar East

Asociatia Culturala Comunitatea Dzog-Chen

23 August 907005

Constanta

Romania

phone: 0040 746 26 08 61

office@dzogchen.ro

www.dzogchen.ro

Summer Events 2009

June
June 12-21
Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
During the Retreat there will be Dance Course of the Three Vajras supervised by Adriana dal Borgo.

June 21
Public talk by Yeshi Namkhai in Constanta/Romania

June 22-28
SMS Base Level Exam

June 23-25
Kumbkhaka course led by Fabio Andrico

June 26-28
Teaching retreat with Yeshi Silvano Namkhai

June 29-July 6
SMS 1st Level Training with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

For more information visit our website: **www.dzogchen.ro**
Please register in advance at **www.dzogchen.ro/en/?pag=registration**

As we are small group of people who take care of retreat organization so any help is welcome. People interested in Karmayoga for longer or shorter period of time – please write to **red@dzogchen.ro**

Candidates for new Merigar East gakyil

In June/July 2009 a new Gakyil for Merigar East has to be elected. The Gakyil has to consist of 9 members. The present Gakyil has established the legal, human and material base of the Gar. The main tasks of the next Gakyil are to continue the construction of the Gonpa, stupas, Vajra Dance mandalas reflecting the vision of Yeshi Namkhai; to run the office involving local human resources; to organize events promoting the aims of the International Dzogchen Community mainly in Romania and Bulgaria; to keep close contact with Merigar West Gakyil.

It is a big job, and consequently, great devotion and sacrifice are required. The conditions are special, but so are the chances.

All members of the International Dzogchen Community are kindly invited to think about the possibility to work voluntarily in the Community and if their circumstances permit, to use this occasion for help in a specific way.

The candidates for Gakyil members have to meet the following criteria:

- be a member for a minimum of 3 years and to have paid their membership fees
- be ready to offer their free time for the Community
- be able to bear hardship (long distance travel is involved that some people find uncomfortable)
- be present at Merigar East at least once a month and during the summer retreats
- be able to work in a team
- have internet access and an email-address
- speak English

The requirements for the different colours are the following:

- Blue Gakyil:**
- to organize all activities regarding teaching and retreats and the collective practices at Merigar East
 - to prepare the public relations materials of the Gar
 - to keep in contact with The Shang Shung Institute
- Yellow Gakyil:**
- to supervise the economic, financial and legal administration of Merigar East
 - to keep in contact with members and to take care of membership affairs
 - to supervise the Office

- Red Gakyil:**
- to supervise the construction and maintenance of the Gar
 - to organize karma yoga

We are looking forward to hearing from you at: **office@dzogchen.ro**

Warm greetings to all,
Merigar East Gakyil

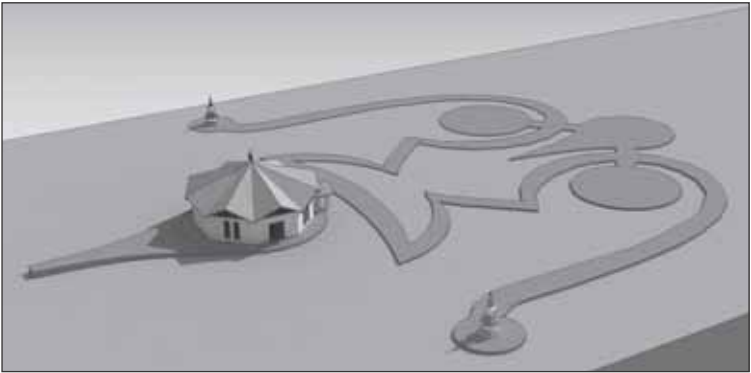
News from Merigar East

The Gakyil of Merigar East is very happy to announce the upcoming celebration of the 20th anniversary of the International Shang Shung Institute through a cultural event for Romania about:

The precious treasure of the unique Tibetan culture. This event is organized by Shang Shung Institute Austria in collaboration with Asocia ia Cultural Comunitatea Dzogchen in the Central Library of the University of Bucharest, in Romania on the 9th of May 2009.

The program will include: Tibetan songs and dances, a talk about the Tibetan cultural heritage (Oliver Leick), Tibetan medicine (Dr. Gino Vitiello), Ku Nye Tibetan massage with a live demonstration (Aldo Oneto), accompanied by an exhibition of unique Himalayan pictures and traditional Tibetan food, *momo*.

The summer season at the Gar will open with a Teaching retreat led by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (June 12–21, 2009), then there will be the Santi Maha Sangha base level exam (June 22–28, 2009) and the SMS 1st level training



View of the future.

(June 29–July 6, 2009). The Merigar East Gakyil would like to invite everybody to participate. Any help with organization is really welcome so people interested in Karmayoga for longer or shorter periods of time are asked to contact **red@dzogchen.ro**

After very long complicated legal procedures, we got all the permits which are necessary to obtain the “intravilan permit”, which would change the designation of our land from agricultural land into land that can be built on (legally it takes 30 days, but delays in issuing the permits are quite common). After we manage to get this permit, we will have to apply for a building permit (another 30 days) and finally we can start to build the Gonpa, Stupas, Mandalas and Gar-

den in the shape of the Longsal symbol. So this is the last year that summer retreats will be in the tent.

Meanwhile we have been working on “the barn project”. The wooden barn, used as a storeroom for different tools and a dormitory during the summer retreats, has recently been transformed into a living area for Karmayogis who wants to do some personal retreat and at the same time help with daily jobs at the Gar. At the same time whoever is staying there automatically becomes a guardian of the place, taking care of the building and the surroundings.

After reconstruction and face lifting during the winter there is one room, a bathroom and a small kitchen with water, equipment for cooking, electricity



Springtime in Merigar East.

Photo: G. Ladra

and a wood-fuelled heating stove inside the room. At the moment the Czech Karmayogi Marek Jaks is living there and from now on there will be always somebody living at the Gar!

Slowly our place has become something more than only a piece of agricultural land. The next step of the “barn project” is to use the building during the summer retreats as a dormitory and, together with the planned external area shaded by a straw roof in local style, as a small cafeteria for retreat participants.

The living conditions there are still quite spartan since the only source of elec-

tricity is still the generator, but we plan to set up a solar system for hot water and some other technical support for the winter.

The wind is very strong and the prayer flags move day and night. The beautiful, fresh, green mornings have just started, the Black Sea is still cold but the sun is already getting stronger. In other words, spring has come to Merigar East.

Waiting for you at Merigar East!
Gakyil of Merigar East
office@dzogchen.ro

Meeting of Merigars

Gabriele Marazzi

From March 4–8 the gakyils of Merigar West and Merigar East met at Merigar East in Romania. This was the second time the two groups had met – the first meeting was held in Italy at Merigar West at the end of last summer

Three members from Merigar West were present, each representing one of the colours of the gakyil: Giada for the blue, Luna for the yellow and Gabriele for the red. From Merigar East, there was Gabriella, Greg (also geko), Ondrej for the red, Fijalka, Tereza for the blue and Maria, Abel and George for the

yellow. Giovanni Boni was also present as supervisor of the construction plans and works of Merigar East.

On the first evening of our visit to Romania we all met on the land of the Gar and sung the Song of the Vajra together. Later on, we had dinner in a very special restaurant on the coast of the Black Sea just a few kilometres from the land of the Gar. The Gar itself is only a ten minute walk from the sea.

For more than a year now, Merigar East and West have been considered as a single Gar divided geographically into two centres, according to the Master’s vision: all the Lings and the gakyils in the east of Europe relate in an organizational way to the offices, the structures and the staff of Merigar East, in the same way all the Lings and gakyils

in the west of Europe refer to Merigar West.

During the meeting we worked on several points including our commitment to show the need to collaborate between community members in order to develop Merigar East which now needs as much help as possible to grow. Luna explained about the management of finances on the part of the yellow gakyil and we decided to make available to ME all the blueprints or guidelines drawn up over the years at MW for organizing retreats and courses and for various job descriptions including the ones relating to caring for the altar and the preparation of the Ganapuja.

We took several practical decisions, one of which was really ‘promotional’

>> continued on the following page



Merigar East & West meeting.

Photo: G. Ladra

MerigarEast

>> continued from previous page
and meant for collecting funds by selling a limited number (200) of T-shirts with the Merigar East logo for 50 euro each. Anyone who would like to help Merigar East financially in this way can visit www.dzogchen.it/tshirt-4-me or write to tshirt-4-me@gmail.com.

The days we spent at Merigar East were useful for us from Merigar West in order to understand more fully the situation in Romania where a few people from different countries in east Europe are very busy trying to concretize the new Merigar centre in the area of east Europe.

The meeting, which drew to an end with homemade ‘tagliatelle’ made by Luna and Giada, was a really important experience for us. Our stay was very enjoyable and nothing was missing, not even a wonderful walk on the beach with the sun, the sea breeze and the seagulls.

Impressions of Romania

Giada Villahermosa

At the beginning of March three representatives of the Merigar West gakyil, Luna Lattarulo, Gabriele Marazzi and myself, left for Romania to meet up with the Merigar East gakyil in the village close to the Gar.

I had seen some photos and heard comments about the place and the impressions were it was somewhat in the middle of nowhere and the sea wasn’t especially inviting.

For years we have considered Europe to be concretely just the West ... Paris, Rome, London, Barcelona, the Mediterranean



Springtime in Merigar East.

Photo: G. Ladra

Sea ... the East has always been seen as somehow separated, unknown or at the most a place interesting for business: there are a great number of Italian companies in Romania including Enel-the national electricity company.

Apparently with business we have also exported Italian mafia and in Italy Romanians are often considered to be lawbreakers and associated with the gypsies. Of course all this is just bias but it didn’t make the trip seem very attractive.

Before leaving we checked all the possible flights to Constanta, the nearest town to the Gar and found out that the only airport in Italy with that option was Pisa: the first sign of the closeness of the two centres that now are one Gar. In fact you leave MW in the middle of the night and you have breakfast at ME with the whole day ahead.

On the way from the airport to the Gar, the landscape is quite plain, the big concrete buildings on the outskirts of Constanta, heritage of the communist era, look shabby and anonymous.

We get to 28 August, the rural village close to the Gar.

Here the houses are small with bright colours and haphazard styles. At first, accustomed to all the strict building rules in Tuscany one feels a lack of culture but then slowly a sense of freedom settles in: the possibility of choosing red for the post office, pea green, dark blue, yellow and orange for the houses.

Rinpoche’s house where Greg and Mira, the gekos, live and where we meet the ME gakyil is on a dirt road as all the roads of the village: along the road a muddy ditch.

self-service of the la Pace hotel in Paganico.

We visit Constanta: the big concrete buildings are close to abandoned French style ‘maisons’ with elegant stuccos and refined designs. In a very pretty little building which would be considered a jewel in a western town, gypsies live as in a caravan. The orthodox church has some interesting frescoes on the façade: a huge dragon, surrounded by devils, representing hell, has the damned in its flaming mouth. An influence of Giotto’s imagery with a taste of Boch. Nearby on the Black Sea a huge abandoned casino from the beginning of the century. It is not open to the public: the guardian tells us that it will soon be restored and kindly lets us in. Grand halls with crystal chandeliers, bow windows overlooking the sea with its strong grey waves, a bit like being on the wreck of the Titanic.

Everywhere you can see the remains of Roman ruins.

We discover that the Romanians are the sole descendants of the eastern Roman world with a language and ethnicity that has survived a millennium of migration and war. The Latin poet Ovid who lived here in exile, has the central piazza in Constanta named after him. In fact the Romanian language is closer to Latin than Italian – quite a shock for us Italians who tend to consider ourselves the most direct descendants of the Roman Empire. Politically they have a chamber of deputies and an upper house called the Senate: so we are not the only ones to preserve the ancient Roman government structure...

Few days, but very strong impressions... one of the last images is the station in Mangalia with a number of sky blue trains...

Thank you Rinpoche for giving us the opportunity of widening our horizons.



Yantra Yoga course in Oradea with Zsolt, organized by Merigar East

By Beatrix Csete

Dear community, vajra brothers and sisters, with gratitude and contentment in our souls, we are happy to inform you that in our city Oradea took place, for the first time, a Yantra Yoga beginners course, from February 27 till March 1, 2009, thus receiving the precious teachings regarding the Yoga of movement of our dear Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, through one of his students, Yantra Yoga instructor Zsolt Somogyvari from Hungary.

The course took place in the Oradea Culture Hall, and there were 9 participants, among which some were community members, and there were also new people interested in this part of the teaching representing the movement, the co-ordination of the body and the mind in order to reach the state of contemplation.

The number of interested people hardly reached our expectations, but the

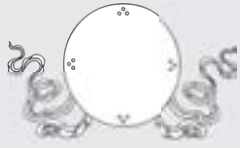
ones taking part in the course had a genuine interest towards this kind of Yoga, mostly due to the instructor, Zsolt, who managed, because of his great compassion and wisdom, to equally pay attention to everybody, succeeding, as we believe, to inspire us to a deeper practice and, at the same time, to a more extended group practice.. We finished our course with Ganapuja in which also other members of the local community joined in.

The course reached its end on March the 1st, and we, practitioners, found ourselves with a vivid interest and perhaps with a stronger impulse towards the practice.

With full thanks and gratitude to our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the precious practice that he transmitted, to the Gakyil of Merigar East for the opportunity and for organizing the course and, last but not least, to the instructor, Zsolt, for his kindness and his patience in teaching us.

Warm greetings from the students in Oradea!

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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Europe Austria

Yeshi Namkhai teaches in Austria

Oliver Leick

The Yeselling Dzogchen Community in Austria was very pleased to welcome Yeshi Namkhai to Austria in February 2009.

On the 12th of February Yeshi gave a talk for a better understanding of the real meaning of the Teachings. He also explained a special kind of Guruyoga practice, which we practiced together afterwards. This explanation and practice was dedicated to the development of the new Ling, so that it may become a valuable and precious base here in Austria for the international Dzogchen Community. About 25 fortunate people participated in this unique occasion.



Yeshi Namkhai teaches.

Photo: DC Yeselling, February 2009

In the next days Yeshi Namkhai explained the essence of *The Upadesha on Total Behavior of Equal Taste* in a very special and direct way. His explanations were absolutely brilliant and fascinating, and Yeshi used colorful and vivid examples. Through Yeshi's extraordinary skill to make us understand the real essential meaning of the Teachings and how to apply this understanding in our daily life, we could directly

discover our limitations, hopes and fears – just like looking into a mirror. Yeshi taught in such a humorous way, so that we also had a lot of fun just listening to his Teachings. More than 60 people from nine different countries – Austria, Czech Republic, Cypress, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Russia, and Slovakia – were deeply touched and impressed by the words of Yeshi

and at the end of the retreat it was quite hard to say good-bye.

The retreat took place at the gym of a primary school in a tiny village called Flöcking (about 17 km from Yeselling). There we also had the possibility to practice the Dance of the Vajra and Yantra Yoga. Every night (from midnight until 2 am) some people also followed the (video) webcast Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Yeselling.

At the retreat place people could purchase all the different items produced by the Shang Shung Institute. On Saturday evening Oliver Leick gave a short and essential talk about the importance and the work of the international Shang Shung Institute.

May this retreat be beneficial for all sentient beings!

Dearest Yeshi Namkhai, thank you so much for all your loving kindness and compassion.

As a special service we have put the recording of this wonderful Teaching on our website www.yeselling.at. There you also find some very nice photos of the retreat.

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Fax: +43 3386 83218
yeselling@speed.at
www.yeselling.at

Czech Republic

Losar event in Prague for ASIA

The Czech Community is happy to inform you that we organized a very successful Losar celebration in the Prague New Town Hall linked to the opening of the exhibition dedicated to the 50 year anniversary of the exile of H.H. the Dalai Lama.

All the Tibetan Buddhist groups were present and also organizations supporting Tibetan culture and human rights. In the cultural program we presented Tibetan

performers playing traditional instruments, music and theatre inspired by Tibet, some common simple medita-

tion for all groups, a rich raffle and a psytrance afterparty.

There was also space for specific workshops and presentations of various traditions, where the Dzogchen Community presented the new Yantra Yoga book.

The whole event was attended by nearly 500 visitors and approximately 2,300 euro profit was raised for ASIA. This will be sent for ASIA's distance adoption projects.

Happy Ox Year to everybody!
Tereza Starkova, Sarka Koliasova, Pavel Spanily (Losar team)

Estonia



Vajra Dance in Estonia with Luda Kislichenko from February 20 to March 1, 2009.

France

New Gakyil

Blue:
Catherine Duez
duetz.catherine@yahoo.fr
Marie-Neige Lefevre
mneiges@gmail.com

Red:
Nicole Morineau
morineaupeju@yahoo.fr
Laurent Maurice
Imaurice@worldonline.fr

Yellow:
Patrick David
adtresor@voila.fr
Bruno Rousselin
brunorousselin@laposte.net

*

Summer 2009 in France

July in Dejamling: a month to practice Vajra Danse in DejamLing with collective practices links with the Vajra Dance: Mandarava, Gomadevi, Jnana Dhakini, Guru Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava.

July 1–7
Mandarava retreat (explanation & practice) & **Dance of the Vajra** with Annalen Gall
registration:
elisabethdongparis@hotmail.com

July 8–12
Advanced course of Dance of the Vajra & Gomadevi retreat (explanation & practice) with Adriana Dal Borgo
registration:
elisabethdongparis@hotmail.com

July 13–19
Dance of the Vajra & Collective practices (type of practice to be confirmed)
contact: duetz.catherine@yahoo.fr

July 20–26
Dance of the Vajra & Jnana Dhakini retreat
contact: stoffelina.verdonk@gmail.com

Paris
July 24–26
Course of Dream Yoga
With Michael Katz
July 26 is dedicated to those who have received Rinpoche's Transmission
registration: regina.m@noos.fr



Dejam Ling
July 28–30
Course of Dream Yoga
with Michael Katz
registration:
lorraine.gaultier@wanadoo.fr

Dejam Ling
Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission, Anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava & Collective Practices of Guru Padmasambhava
July 31 – Aug 1
Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission starts July 31 at 5am
contact:
stoffelina.verdonk@gmail.com

*

▲
Vajra Dance course in Paris, France
By Elizabeth Crouzet

A few days after the webcast of Rinpoche's Longsal Jnana-dhakini teaching in Australia, a Vajra Dance course with Stoffelina Verdonk was held in Paris, France for 7 days.

In Paris this year, we have met twice a month on Sunday afternoon for practicing the Dance in the historical area known as the flea market – to arrive there we have to walk along roads and houses full of old furniture and crowded at the week end with all sorts of people.

The hall is in an old factory transformed into cultural centre; there, we are now welcomed and known as the “group of Nadia”.



Beginner's Yantra Yoga with Tiziana Gottardi in Paris France, March 20–22, 2009.

The hall we use for the Dance is a bit of a primitive place, with artificial light and so on; but there, we have a complete feeling of being together at home, either on the Mandala or around it.

Everyone applied themselves well – we managed to learn up to the end of the dance and even succeeded in dancing together quite harmoniously – so said our instructor – without accidents on or off the Mandala; it is great help to dance together for learning and going ahead and discovering how to do it; we developed our awareness, clarity and joy.

Thanks also to the generosity of some participants we had all the possibilities for food and refreshments even sometimes unscheduled!

When we left the hall in the evening and moved into the traffic of the city,

we realized that we were still on the Mandala, when walking, sitting on the bus or metro or in a car or at the restaurant and we were happy to exchange our impressions and be together.

During the lessons we remembered the time when Rinpoche started to teach the Dance at Merigar and those fortunate people to whom he said, “It does not have to be “carino” but you have to relax and integrate in the movement”.

We realized again our great fortune to practice such precious and great teaching; there are no words to express our feelings. We also particularly thank our patient and skilful instructor, Stoffelina.

We are grateful to our Master; with Homage and Long Life to him.

Europe France >> continued



Graduates from the second year Kunye course with teacher Aldo Oneto from SSI and translator lama Rangdreul, at Karma Ling Institute April 2009.

Italy



Dancing on water in Venice

The Community in Venice was fortunate to have Adriana Dal Borgo there in February and March so they could organise a Vajra Dance Course for beginners over several weekends.

On Saturdays the course was held at the S. Girolamo in Fondamenta degli Ormesini gym and on Sundays at the S. Alvise sports centre just a few blocks away. Each Sunday a little group of practitioners carried the two mandalas in a trolley from one gym to another, even on the days when it rained so heavily and the water level was high.

Nothing daunted the intentions of practitioners to learn the Dance who managed to get to the gym in rubber boots and umbrellas carrying the Mandala on their shoulders, making their way through the high waters that opened up before them like Moses ... ATRO CHE MOSER!

About twenty practitioners from Venice, Padova, Treviso and Udine learned a good part of the Dance in order to practice this precious Teaching.

The Course was quite demanding particularly for those who dedicated the entire weekend to it after a week of hard work, however, the Dance had the benefit of bringing great enthusiasm and collaboration to the group who have promised to practice the Dance every Saturday at the S. Girolamo gym in Venice from 3 to 6 pm. (If you are in Venice on a Saturday, it will be an opportunity to Dance on water ...)

Thanks to the precious and patient help of Adriana, the people of the Venice Community are improving their practice of the Dance. We are looking forward to getting together with Adriana for other sessions in order to conclude the final part of the Dance and perfect the movements that have already been learned.

Thank you Master for this wonderful opportunity!

Hungary



The Healing Power of the Heat

A warm weekend in the cool Budapest, Hungary with Elio Guarisco Moxa Course 1st part, March 13-15, 2009

Zsolt Somogyvári

When some people from the Community asked the Blue Gakyil, or me, to try to organize a moxa course in Budapest, I was full of doubts. Knowing Elio is usually very busy; I had not thought he would have time for coming to us still in this kalpa. The other thing was the question of the number of participants, and to find the appropriate place for the course. But – as it usually happens – everything went on in a completely different way than I had thought. We could fix two weekends still in this eon, already in March and May, and everything happened very easily.

The healing power of heat applying *Artemisia vulgaris* – an herb that can pass its heat on while it is burnt evenly – is a quite common method of natural healing in Asia, not only in China, Japan and Korea, but also in Tibet. Tibetan Moxibustion is part of the external therapies of the traditional Tibetan Medicine and represents an independent art of healing distinct from the Chinese system. As for Tibetan medicine in general, Moxibustion originated in the ancient Kingdom of Shang Shung, the cradle of the Tibetan civilization, in the pre-Buddhist era. Later, in the eighth century, Tibetan medicine absorbed much of the medical knowledge of various neighboring countries and developed into a homogenous and complete system of medicine. As a result of that, also Tibetan Moxibustion became a very extensive knowledge and one of the main external therapies widely practiced throughout all regions of Tibet.

The Moxibustion course is inspired by the work and exhausting research done in this field during the course of many years by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who studied and compared a large number of ancient sources of Tibetan Moxibustion. The result of such research is now materialized in his manual of Moxibustion entitled *The Clear Crystal Mir-*

ror, a Concise Guide to the Practice of Moxibustion, a book that will be published soon by the SSI.

In order to preserve and transmit such knowledge, at the request of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu the Shang Shung Institute has organized a course in Moxibustion on three levels. Three days of explanations and practice will be dedicated to each level for a total of nine days. During the course, the practice of Moxibustion will be introduced along with the basic principles of Tibetan medicine. Five hundred points of Moxibustion will be described together with their therapeutic indications. And the various methods will be taught and practically applied. As complementary to the main subject of the Moxibustion, one can also learn various other ancillary external therapies.

So, during the first three days in March we learned the first 154 points on the back of the body, together the basic knowledge about the distinction of the three different characters: Wind (rlung), Bile (mkhrispa) and Phlegm (bad-kan). We have learned the method of making moxa cones using moxa wool. This method was quite interesting for those people who already practiced the Chinese system with moxa sticks. Applying sticks is much easier, but – as Elio shared his opinion with us – this method is more effective, probably because the cones should be burned on the skin directly, or at least on a really thin slice of ginger or garlic. The indication and benefit of using the points was also interesting: the first 80 points on the spine and on both sides along the spine were practically the same as in the TCM (Traditional Chinese Medicine), but the other 74 points are extraordinary, because these came from the visionary knowledge of Changchub Dorje, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's root master.

During the course – which was organized in a beautiful big hall of a Martial Arts Center in Budapest called Butokugan – in front of the wrathful eyes of Japanese Divinities and Protectors (in the form of sculptures) we had possibilities not only to study but practice the techniques in pairs. This application demands deep trust in the partner anyway, because if the cones burn down completely to their base, it will definitely hurt the skin. And although there is a method the main goal of which is to cause a burnt wound in the skin, we tried not to use that – because that method should be applied only for people with very poor state of health, and as I saw nobody was in such a life-threatening situation.

Unfortunately, the time for Elio's stay was quite short, he arrived the evening before the course, and left on the day after it, and after 5 hours' explaining he was really tired, but we had the possibility to relax together in the warm spa water and showed some nice places to him in Budapest. During these activities we took pleasure in the joy of conversation and jokes.

The following tiny story that happened on the last day is reflecting Elio's behavior as an instructor. We (the organizers and Elio) were discussing his evening program, where we would go to together etc., but Elio decided to remain at home, because he saw how expensive Budapest is, and quoted Jamgön Kongtrul: "...a teacher can never prey on the money of the community".

At the end of the course all the 62 participants were given a certificate by the Shang Shung Institute. The next three days will be on May 8–10, and we are expecting even more people than before.

Thank You Rinpoche, who made this kind of unique knowledge of the Tibetan Culture accessible for us, and also thanks for the Shang Shung Institute and to Elio who helped us study and practice this method.



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Europe >> continued

Kungaling in Izhevsk, Russia

Recently we had a very meaningful event for our Sangha. Yeshe Silvano Namkhai came to our town and gave Teaching. We had invited him for the opening of our Gompa.

Our community was founded in October of 2006, when Yeshe invited representatives from all cities to come to a conference in Kharkov, Ukraine. That's when we had our first meeting. Before that we were just a group of practitioners. During this meeting members of our first Gakyil and a representative for the conference were chosen. When our representative came to Kharkov he



was inspired by the communication methods that Yeshe Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani were using. There were 11 people in the Izhevsk Community in Russia at that time. Since then in spite of the small number of members we have still worked together as it was written in Chögyal Namkai Norbu's famous Blue Book. The Gakyil system has had a strong and fruitful effect and in

spite of our number and the circumstances that we had, we have been able to unite our potential for the good of all living beings. We have also been trying to know more about and observe experiences of other Communities and, most importantly, to observe attentively how Chögyal Namkai Norbu solves some questions and to learn from him. The following retreats have been orga-

nized in Izhevsk over the past two years: retreats with Igor Berkhin, Viktor Krachkovsky, Ulyana Sokolova, Alexander Pubants and Oleg Novikov. We have been able to organize the Vajra Dance practice regularly, but we still didn't have a big place for collective practices, webcasts, etc. At the same time, one of the members of our Community managed to purchase rooms on the first floor of five-story downtown apartment building. The reconstruction works, which needed a lot of approvals and financial commitment, have been going on for two years there. We were very happy when we learned that the end of all the construction works was not so far away anymore. We organized our first web-cast there recently. It was a retreat from Namgyalgar for Guru Dragpur practice. In spite of the fact that it was during the nighttime, eight people received direct transmission from the Teacher.

We wrote him a letter and asked him to consider if our Sangha could have name. We also asked him if Yeshe Namkhai could come to Izhevsk and give Dzogchen Teaching. Rinpoche replied quickly and we were given a wonderful name – Kungaling. Also Yeshe Silvano Namkhai found time to come and bless the Gompa and give Dzogchen Teaching to the members of Dzogchen Community and the public, even though he was very busy preparing the Moscow retreat. We hope very much that next year Yeshe will come to Kungaling for a little longer, and we can organize invitations for the public and practitioners from other cities ahead of time. We are very happy that we have been to Yeshe's Teachings in Moscow and St.Petersburg and also got a chance to listen to the web-cast of his retreat from Merigar.

Community of Kungaling

Slovakia

Mandarava retreat with Nina Robinson
in Trencianske Teplice,
May 6–10, 2009
by Jan Kompis

Nina very kindly and patiently explained the practice, its origin and also the recent changes. Around twenty usually distracted people could concentrate on the deep and clear explanations from Nina's open heart. Participants really enjoyed it. Nina also gave a public talk in Trencin and visited the Slovak Ling called Wangdenling.



Kundusling, Barcelona
Santi Maha Sangha Course
with Jakob Winkler
by Matthias Schmal-Filius

Our four days of the Base Level SMS Course started with the fortunate possibility to listen and watch the webcast of the teachings of our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, which he gave in Australia over the Easter period.

The course took place at beautiful Kundusling which gave us a wonderful view over the skyline of Barcelona. So this atmosphere provided a good base to get an overview and better understanding of these incredibly profound and complex teachings belonging to the Book "The Precious Vase".

The content of this precious book could probably fill a lifetime of studying and – oh no, it's called the base. But Ja-



kob spoke in a very understandable way about the base of the Dzogchen teachings in general, gave us introductions to the teachings of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen and explained with creative and colorful examples the differences

between the various lineages of Tibetan Buddhism.

To get everything more clearly, we also received well prepared handouts with helpful graphics. So although we had to digest a lot of information we

Spain

Kundusling, Barcelona – Namkha course
by Pedro Pons

We had a nice and interesting Course on Namkha Construction at Kundusling with Liane Graf. The course lasted 5 days and we finished it by celebrating Losar and empowering our Namkhas during the Ganapuja.

The Namkha and its construction with colored thread lets us harmonize those aspects that astrologically are not in harmony from our birth. The Namkha is our harmonized energy.

never got to the point of losing ourselves in intellectual discussions. Studying was balanced with a good amount of SMS practices and this made the course very energetic and much easier to integrate the theory.

At the end of the course a big mountain of theory had been melted together with a lot of practices. Furthermore we got an understanding of the importance of these teachings and why they are called: The base.

Finally we enjoyed a wonderful Ganapuja, guided by Jakob Winkler together with the Vajra family of Barcelona.

Thanks to our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for giving us these unique teachings, to Jakob Winkler for teaching in a very understandable and creative way and to the Karma Yogis who made this well organized course possible with their collaboration and effort.

Liane explained that it is important to be able to do the Namkha authentication at least once a year, but that it is possible to do it as many times as one wants. She also said that it is possible to make a Namkha for other people, also for the year, day, month... In this course we focussed on the Namkha of the year.

The course was a great experience on a practical level as well as an inner one. We were 9 practitioners. The course started with an explanation of the Namkha and finding the animals and colors corresponding to each practitioner. After that we continued with the construction which lasted four days.

Besides the actual construction, the process of construction was very interesting because it created an atmosphere of presence and concentration, of awareness of what was being done which developed a great environment of silence in the group. One could feel the tranquility, presence and silence of each practitioner within him/her self, and that was an enriching experience until the Namkha was finished and also a great joy.

For a new practitioner like me it was also was a good opportunity for meeting other practitioners since the course lets you communicate with the others about the Namkha, the animal that each one is, doubts... and after that leads you to communicate in other ways.

We are grateful for this course and for the possibility that courses are organized in Barcelona, thanks to Liane for coming, for her patience and specially Infinite thanks and Long Life to our Precious Master.

UK

Kunselling, Wales
Spring–Summer events 2009

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 Email:
kunsellingbookings@yahoo.co.uk

25th–26th July
Introduction to Meditation
with Oliver Leick
To book, please contact Mike Beddard
Tel: 0781 5299976
Email: mikebeddard@gmail.com

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

www.dzogchencommunity.org

Passages

Celia Wright, 1943–2009, who died in surgery following a brain tumour February 24th, had a process of liberation in death that was witnessed by meditators in various parts of the world, and was undoubtedly due to her assimilation of the essential points of the Dzogchen teaching.

She was amongst the first to address her generation's needs to understand and free herself through new therapies and encounter groups in the early 70s, then at a spiritual level in the Arica School. She worked as a therapist and

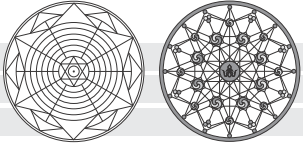


also became a jeweller, producing some beautiful silver and gold pieces. Celia married Brian Wright in 1976, forming a strong, dynamic and loving couple who enjoyed a full life together. Coming

from a deep interest in natural health, they began their first nutrition company in 1979. Celia discovered her talent for writing wonderfully accessible and informative articles and books, and gave countless people advice that turned around their state of health.

In 1993 she found Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and rapidly absorbed the Teachings. Although she had a large business workload, her great energy was always available for people, and she drew everyone toward her through her great love, her clear intelligence, her forthrightness, and her unique sense of humour.

Tsegyalgar East



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Summer Events 2009

June 5–7
Dzogchen Practice Retreat
with Santi Maha Sangha Instructor
Elio Guarisco

Schedule:

First Two Days:

1) The Upadesha on the Total Behavior of Equal Taste, from the Longsal Terma of Rinpoche (Book Eight): An explanation of practices on how to deal with the five emotions- Explanation and Practice

Final Day:

2) The Rite of Byanchog, connected to the Shitro practice for purifying the karma of deceased – Explanation and Practice.

Two sessions per day:

10 am–12 am & 4 pm–6 pm

Weekend is open to current members. Transmission of these practices is not required to attend the retreat. Practitioners seriously interested may learn the methods and receive transmission at a future date.

Cost for weekend: \$ 120, membership discounts apply

If you are interested in participating please pre-register as soon as possible with our Secretary, Asruh Warner: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

Please register by May 27th. A 15% down payment is required for preregistration. Tsegyalgar East reserves the right to cancel courses based on low preregistration.

Also to stay here at the Gar’s dorm during the teaching please contact our Gekö, Dave Hayes: geko@tsegyalgar.org

For more information contact: secretary@tsegyalgar.org, bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org

June 20, Saturday
Jnanadhakini Practice Day
at Khandroling
For more information contact: bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org

July 3–6
Chöd Practice Retreat
at Khandroling
Contact: andreamnasca@yahoo.com

July 18–19
Ongoing Vajra Dance Course
with Anastasia McGhee

Cost: \$140, Membership discounts apply
For more information contact Leela: centerplay@hotmail.com
Please register as soon as possible with the secretary Asruh Warner at secretary@tsegyalgar.org

July 24–27
Introduction to the Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
With Bodhi Krause

Friday and Monday evenings 7–9 pm
Saturday and Sunday 3 sessions
9:30 am to 11:30 am, 2 pm to 4 pm and 6 pm to 8 pm

Membership discounts apply
Please register as soon as possible with the secretary Asruh Warner at secretary@tsegyalgar.org
For more information contact: bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org

The Tsegyalgar East Gakyil is happy to announce our Annual
Santi Maha Sangha Summer Intensive
On the Sacred Land of Khandroling
Buckland, Massachusetts

August 1–23, 2009
Santi Maha Sangha with Jim Valby
Yantra Yoga with Paula Barry and Naomi Zeitz

7:30 – 8:30 am Yantra Yoga
9 am–noon & 4–7 pm, Saturday Aug 1 to Friday Aug 7: SMS Base
9 am–3 pm, Saturday & Sunday, Aug 8–9, Karma yoga

7:30 – 8:30 am Yantra Yoga
9 am–noon & 4–7 pm, Saturday Aug 8 to Friday Aug 14: SMS Level One
9 am–3 pm, Saturday & Sunday, Aug 15–16, Karma yoga

7:30 – 8:30 am Yantra Yoga
9 am–noon & 4–7 pm, Saturday Aug 15 to Friday Aug 21: SMS Level Two
9 am–3 pm, Saturday & Sunday, Aug 22–23, Karma yoga

\$750 full retreat or
\$300 each 7-day session
Membership discounts apply

Please register soon!
To register, or for more information, Please contact the Tsegyalgar East Secretary:
Phone: 413-369-4153
secretary@tsegyalgar.org

(Register now: enrollment limited to a maximum of 24 people per session)
Please pre-register. A 15% non-refundable down payment is required for pre-

registration. If there are not enough participants, Tsegyalgar East reserves the right to cancel courses and retreats. There will be ample notification of cancellations.

Khandroling – the “Land of the Dakinis” – is the birthplace of Vajra Dance.

Santi Maha Sangha is a course of study and practice designed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to deepen our knowledge of Dzogchen. Rinpoche has encouraged all people seriously interested in Dzogchen to learn at least the Base. The first Level is restricted to those who have passed the Base Level examination.

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

Long life to the Master!

Karma Yoga at Khandroling

Tsegyalgar East is beginning work on development projects at Khandroling.

We are looking for people who want to do karma yoga on a short or longer-term basis. We will need skilled and unskilled labor and any help is appreciated. The Gakyil will offer lodging and food for anyone making a longer-term commitment of a few months.

Please contact Cindy at rosarugosa21@hotmail.com

Thank you!

Red Gakyil, Tsegyalgar East

New York, Kundrolling
Introduction to the Dzogchen Teaching
with Elio Guarisco
June 12–14

June 12: Evening session
June 13: morning and afternoon sessions, 30 Words of Advice of Longchengpa
June 14: morning and afternoon sessions, 30 Words of Advice of Longchengpa

For more information contact: janeulton100@hotmail.com

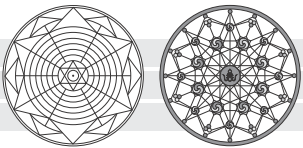
Canada

New Gakyil Toronto
Yulia Jitkova: Director, Red
Andy Wai: Secretary, Blue
Deepak Ramachandran: Vice-Director, Yellow



Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra Retreat with Bodhi Krause in Toronto Canada, April 15–19 2009.
Photo: S. Zhitkova

Tsegyalgar West



Tsegyalgar West

Baja California Sur, Mexico

tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com
<http://tsegyalgarwest.org>

New Ling in Mexico

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche authorized a new Ling in Tepoztlán, Mexico called **Wangdusling**.

The name of the new ling in Mexico means “All dominating”.

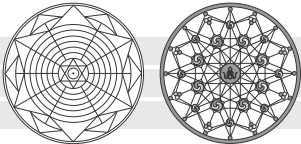


Chöd Practice Retreat with Nina Robinson in Tepoztlán, Morelos, Mexico from March 12–15, 2009.



Mandarava Chudlen Retreat, led by Nina Robinson, in Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA, February 12–16.

TsegyalgarWest



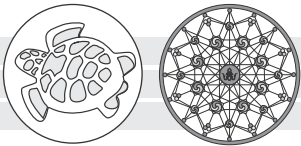
Introduction to Yantra Yoga with Oni McKinstry in San Diego, March 20–22, California.



Introduction to Yantra Yoga with Oni McKinstry in Los Angeles, March 13–15 2009.

Berkeley
First Level Yantra Yoga Course
with Naomi Zeitz
Dondrubling, Berkeley California
July 16–19 and 23–26
Contact: nicanagua@yahoo.com or
leticiarecepter@yahoo.com.ar

TashigarNorte



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

A Report on the Goma Devi Retreat

with Enzo Terzano
April 30-May 5, 2009

Carmen Rivas

In April 2004, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted the Teaching of the practice of Gomadevi us in Tashigar Norte. We have been very fortunate since then!

In 2005 the Master gave another retreat with this Teaching at the Gar.

From May to June 2007, Rinpoche gave the Drubchen with Jnanadakini practice at Tashigar Norte, where we recited the mantra uninterruptedly for thirteen days, and the Master gave us the medicine prepared specially for this occasion. We were fortunate!

In November 2008, Yeshe Namkhai visited us. He gave us his Teachings and we also did Gomadevi practice with him every day. Yeshe helped us experience clearly that this paradise land of Tashigar Norte is completely connected with the Teaching of the Dakini Gomadevi.

On that occasion, talking about future plans for our Gar, Yeshe suggested we should invite Enzo Terzano and he told us, “We know that this is the place of Gomadevi and we want to do something. Invite Enzo and work with him to create a specific program. Then you do it with the approach



Goma Devi Retreat with Enzo Terzano at Tashigar North, April 30–May 5 2009.

of making a multifaceted understanding of Gomadevi.” Since Yeshe left we have done the practice of Gomadevi uninterruptedly every day at the Gonpa of Tashigar Norte, and I have to say that as a result a period of a lot of activity began, principally in connection with the Vajra Dance and with perfecting the timing and melody of the practices (thank you Adriano, thank you Prima!), and lovingly organized by the Gakyil.

Enzo arrived on April 26, when Margarita Island was beginning to manifest some of the hottest and windiest days of the year. About twenty-two people were waiting here to do the retreat with him and to learn as much as

possible about our precious Gomadevi practice. The presence of Enzo is joyful, animated, expressive, heart open to other hearts. What happiness to receive someone so affectionate and full of energy and who – we felt – is naturally connected to all of us and thus to Tashigar Norte. The days passed rapidly while Enzo explained the Tantra wonderfully, the perfect visualization of the Dakini, the melody, how to play the damaru and the bell, how to use the vajra, the mudras, everything!! The result was the way we were doing our collective practice improved daily. Thank you, Enzo!

At the end of Enzo’s stay, the Gakyil took advantage of his pres-

ence to invite us to an open meeting where we would exchange ideas about activities related with the Gomadevi Teaching and the future of Tashigar Norte. About twenty of us who live here attended the meeting and were amazed to find that we and Enzo agreed perfectly on the main points of the activities to be developed at Tashigar Norte in connection with Gomadevi, which will be proposed, once they are clearly planned, to Rinpoche and Yeshe. We shared wonderful moments also outside the Gonpa. In the deep sky around our Gar, almost every day during the course, thigles and rainbows manifested around the sun and moon. And just imagine the salsa and merengue parties, the magnificent starry sky at night, the delicious food

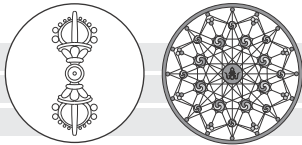
and the games we played... and at the same time the interesting conversations about the future of our Gar on the shore of the Caribbean sea, in the shy company of the giant turtles that prepare their nests on the warm sand of Playa Zaragoza, or the not so shy, joyful company of the thousands of birds that accompanied us during our practices. From the garden was the offering of the flowering of the “forget-me-nots” with their fiery flowers, the papaya trees like great mothers laden with fruit, and all this with Rinpoche and the Jnanadakini as one, in our hearts.

Our greetings from Tashigar Norte and we’ll see you here, sooner rather than later, to practice together!



Beginner’s Course of the Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra with Rosa Altamirano, Supervised by Prima Mai. March 27–29, 2009 Tashigar North.

Tashigarsur



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

“20 Years, Time to roar like a Lion! Join us to make it real!”

February 7, 2010

Tashigar South is about to be 20 years old. For this joyful occasion we are embarking on an ambitious project that will be of great benefit to both the local and worldwide Community. We need of your support to help bring it into reality!

The Celebration
On February 7, 2010, Tashigar South, the Gar of the Dzogchen Community for South America, will be 20 years old. Our Master especially chose the location of Tashigar South and its unique characteristics have been home

to the development and growth of the Dzogchen Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in South America.

Since its foundation in 1989, Rinpoche has led more than 60 retreats of precious teachings and hundreds of courses, retreats and practices have been undertaken by instructors of SMS, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance or coordinated by older practitioners. All this would have been impossible without this sacred place.

The Project - Remodelling of the existing Gonpa
Following the instructions given by Rinpoche during our last retreat, Tashigar South should give total priority to the project of reconstructing our Gonpa. The main work to be done is the replacement of the roof that, as many of you know, is made of straw. Having passed 20 years since it was constructed, the material needs to be changed, but nowadays, due to the global

climatic changes our province is more and more subject to big fires during winter, so this material has also become very risky. Therefore the new design contemplates a sheetmetal roof. It will be larger than the existing one creating a perimeter gallery in the north and east sides of the building, extremely useful in the rainfall season when our retreats are held. Two more gates will be added as well as two rooms (a

>> continued on the following page

Tashigar Sur

>> continued from previous page
toilet and a storage room) in the back, behind the throne of the Master.

This change implies the need of replacing the structure as well, because the old one is no strong enough to support any other type of roof.

Our Master requested Engineer Giovanni Boni to design the project who is working with the technical assistance of Architect Alejandro Fabiano. Tashigar South has appointed Sergio Oliva as the manager for the project.

Certain items such as the windows from the Gonpa and part of the structure supporting the roof can be recycled so they will be used to improve the Camping Site facilities in the near future.

The Estimated Budget – the estimated budget for the remodelling of the Gonpa is of US\$ 87,000. Thanks to the generosity of our Master and the collaboration of all the Sangha during our last retreat, we already have US\$ 45,000. That means we have 52% of the total amount needed to complete the works.



View of the future Gonpa created by Alejandro Fabiano following Giovanni Bonni's design.

The Goal – Tashigar South needs to have the total amount by the end of July. We are sure that working together and with the support of all the Community, we will be able to raise the funds we need to make this project come true.

How can we collaborate?

The Gakyil is working on the design of an international fundraising campaign that will be presented in May.

There are many ways in which we will be able to collaborate:

- We can donate money – any amount will be really appreciated

– The Gar will offer nice thank-you gifts to donors

· We can buy ‘virtual bricks’ – they can be exchanged for Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance courses led by local instructors at Tashigar South; for lodging at the Gar to make personal retreats; or for days to make a dark retreat in our dark retreat cabin.

· We can pay our membership in advance – meritorious, supporters and ordinary members will be able to pay 2, 5 or 10 years in advance to help with this project.

The following people have already donated to this campaign: Our Master Chögyal Namkhai

Norbu, Ricky Sued, Marisa Alonso, Ma. Elena Gastaldi, Sergio Oliva, Paula de Raedemaeker, Adriana Batisti, Daniel Barreto, Ana García

We hope you can join us for the benefit of these precious Teachings!

Contact:

tashigonpa@gmail.com

The work team of the project is formed by:

· Giovanni Boni: Project Designer and Consultant

· Alejandro Fabiano: Project Designer and Technical Direction

· Sergio Oliva: Manager

· Luis Olivera: Control of Construction

· Paula De Raedemaeker: Administration of Funds

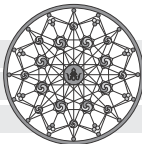
· Daniel Barreto, Ana García: Fund-raising Campaign Design and Communication Strategies

· Alvaro Mera: Alvaro will coordinate the fund-raising activities being the link between the Gakyils and Ling representatives for the project and the Gakyil of Tashigar South.



Retreat on seven main Semdzin with Ricky Sued and Carolina Mingolla March 7–13, 2009.

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



**Namgyalgar
Dzogchen Community in
Australia**

PO Box 214 Central Tilba
NSW 2546
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secretary@dzogchen.org.au
www.dzogchen.org.au

>> **Rabgyi Lama** continued from page 15
munity. So I feel like I have had a rebirth in my life on this planet. I have a new dream for my future. This is my happiness and my wonderful thanks. The source, the cause, is from your help, Rinpoche. I will never forget your kindness. I said I will never forget but I know that is not sufficient. I have to offer something to you, I have to do something for you, but as you know my capacity and knowledge is underdeveloped. However I have my body, speech and mind. Today I offer you my body, speech and mind, from today until my death. I belong to you Rinpoche. Whatever you teach me I do. There is no hesitation or doubt. If I have any qualifications or skills to contribute, in this society, in this Community, I will do my best for the Dzogchen Community. I will do the best service for you, Rinpoche, and I will do my best practice for all sentient beings and myself. This is my commitment.

I also want to thank all the Dzogchen Community who supported me, financially and many other ways, especially Jean Mackintosh and Mark Farrington. They did a lot of work for me. I want to say thank you, I feel very appreciative and would like to offer to you.

Finally, I want to say my hopes, prayers and wishes, and it is not only me present now, there are the dakas, dakinis and guardians, deities and all the Dzogchen



Rinpoche with Rabgyi.

Photo: G. Horner

Community all over the world and all sentient beings who are connected to Rinpoche's transmission, we altogether make wishes and prayers for your long life. We understand that your capacity is as a totally enlightened being, totally Sambhogakaya. There is no birth and death, no young and old, there is no unreal and real, there is no suffering and happiness. Like space, beyond time and beyond everything. To ordinary people like me with impure vision, you are a human being, an ordinary teacher. But like this, together we pray, wish and hope, that your long life is maintained on this globe for hundreds and hundreds of years. For we sentient beings, for all the Dzogchen Community, your transmission is a million year old transmission, for all sentient

beings. All sentient beings can get the enlightened mind and total realization through your great knowledge and transmission. Until then, we pray for your life and that your transmission is maintained on this globe for all sentient beings and particularly the Dzogchen Community. This is my wish, hope and great dream. I hope this is the truth for all sentient beings, especially for the Dzogchen Community. This is all I want to say."

Thupten Rabgyi Lama

Thupten Rabgyi Lama lives at Namgyalgar where he arrived in 2003 having been asked by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to take up a Scholarship position to study Santi Maha Sangha and to learn English and other skills to survive in the western world. Thupten Rabgyi Lama, known to everyone as Rabgyi, has lived at Gawaling since that time.

When Rinpoche arrived in Namgyalgar this year 2009, Rabgyi Lama was asked by Rinpoche to stay in Gawaling and act as his attendant which he did, also traveling to Caloundra, Melbourne and Sydney with Rinpoche and Rosa. Rabgyi made a spontaneous speech at the final teaching session with Rinpoche in Namgyalgar thanking Rinpoche for his great kindness to Rabgyi both for bringing him to Australia and for giving him such wonderful Dzogchen teachings. Many people at the retreat were very moved by Rabgyi's speech.

Since coming to Australia, with the help of the Australian Dzogchen Community, Rabgyi has been able to gain Australian citizenship and for this he felt very grateful as it gives him a secure passport and a free country to live in.

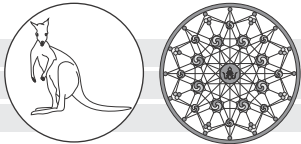
He came from Tibet when he was in his early twenties crossing the mountains and escaping the Chinese soldiers. There were many difficult times on this journey when Rabgyi was in very real danger of being caught and spending his life in a Chinese prison or being shot. He helped other people on this journey who were sick and dying putting himself in danger of being caught. When the group entered

Nepal there was still difficulties with the Nepalese officials stealing their money and belongings and threatening them with being sent back to China. On arriving in Katmandu, he and his friends slept on the streets in a plastic bag for warmth as they sold their blanket for food.

After spending two or three years in India meeting the Dalai Lama and other teachers, Rabgyi met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Katmandu and arranged to come to Namgyalgar. Mark Farrington was crucial in arranging all the details of his entry to Australia and continued to support Rabgyi during his stay here.

Rabgyi was chosen by the Namgyalgar Gakyil to be the next Gekös of Namgyalgar and he has now begun his duties there. Rabgyi is very loved by the Australian Dzogchen Community for his gentle ways and his devotion to Rinpoche.

Namgyalgar and Pacific Rim



Turning Concepts Upside Down - Yeshe Silvano Namkhai teaches Down Under

Jan Cornall

In the upstairs conference room of Brisbane’s art deco grand city hall, Yeshe Silvano Namkhai cuts to the chase. The room is full and the audience is excited, intent and curious. It’s a dharma crowd with a core of Dzogchen practitioners, some of whom who have flown in from other states especially for this inaugural event. Others including the small caravan of international Dzogchenpa’s from Italy, Switzerland, Germany, France, USA, Chile, are on their way from Rinpoche’s Caloundra retreat to Namgyalgar via Melbourne, for the final Australian retreats.

Yeshe sits on a low stage with vases of flowers either side, a small white ‘A’ in thigle behind him on the wall. No throne, a simple chair, the teacher in cargo shorts, lilac T shirt, orange ‘croc’s and for those attending from other dharma traditions the concept of teacher and teaching is already turned on its head. While Yeshe’s ‘straight from the hip’ approach may not be everyone’s cup of tea, the Friday night talk is a great success with an enthralled audience taking it all in. A smaller band of die-hards stay on for the Saturday and Sunday teachings and an introductory session by

Elise Stutchbury on the Dzogchen Community.

Interspersed with meals in the bustling food halls of the nearby city mall and poolside chats over tea at the casino hotel, we make our way backwards and forwards to the venue through a multicultural throng of Brisbanites out for weekend fun.

Many of us have been following Yeshe’s story and teachings in the Mirror and his credentials are impressive. As son of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and reincarnation of Rinpoche’s uncle, renowned Dzogchen master Khyentsen Rinpoche Chökyi Wangchug, the expectations are already huge. But when you get over trying to work out if he looks more like Rosa or Rinpoche and listen to the rapid-fire delivery of his mind

transmission, you understand Yeshe Namkhai is his own man.

A former company manager with feet firmly planted in the modern world, Yeshe comes armed with practical examples, shocking insights and a speedy’ catch me if you can’ clarity, cutting through our mental laziness and bringing the DZ teachings into clear focus. Expanding, illustrating and deconstructing as he goes, Yeshe wakes up our conceptual complacency – even (shock, horror), our concepts about Dzogchen. Teaching on the Heart Sutra Yeshe takes us into the essence of Dzogchen, showing us how to work with fear and hope and reminding us that the manifestation of your greatest fear can also be your awakening.

Weaving stories of sensuality, envy, greed, ego, attitude, and behavior in a circular logic to illustrate the base of Dzogchen, Yeshe challenges us to listen to the teachings in a different way. Like a performer who does away with conventional narrative enabling you to experience, rather than intellectualize or judge, Yeshe asks us the same of us.

Sunday afternoon comes too quickly as we say our goodbyes and trundle off to catch planes, trains and lifts to our various destinations. For those of us attending Rinpoche’s 2009 retreats in Australia, Yeshe’s weekend teachings are a perfect complement. Left with a tantalizing taste for more, we look forward to Yeshe’s return to the Down Under Land of Oz.



Rinpoche with Namgyalgar Gakyil. Blue: Lynne Geary, lynnedene@optusnet.com.au; Paul Medi, nikolasmedi@gmail.com; Ben Pearsall, bmpearsall@yahoo.com; Yellow: Catherine Horner, cath.horner@gmail.com; Kaye Bysouth, bysouth@acr.net.au; Red: Heather Hyde, hmyde@ozemail.com.au; Julian King-Salter, julian.kingsalter@gmail.com; Sue Fielding, sue.fielding16@gmail.com; Lindy Pulsford, lindypulsford@gmail.com



Rita Renzi teaches Vajra Dance at Namgyalgar, February 27 to March 13 2009. Photo: G. Horner

Moving Ahead

A temporary Ling in Melbourne

Bruno Irmici

In his last brief talk the evening before leaving Australia, just outside Gawaling, Rinpoche’s residence in Namgyalgar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said, “We are going ahead, we had big progress this year. We had very nice retreats and now we are developing Namgyalgar North [in Caloundra, Queensland] and this Gar will be Namgyalgar South. I am satisfied.”

Also the Dzogchen Community in Melbourne is moving ahead.

Now the Community can enjoy a ‘temporary’ ling in a beautiful, large and luminous hall belonging to the local Brunswick Council. Fleming Park Hall can accommodate two dance Mandalas, has a meeting room, a large kitchen, and two separate toilets for men and women.

The Gakyil booked the Hall for 25 hours a week for the whole year. But since it is a council community hall, it means it is also rented to other groups. This is a

limitation in terms of having it as solo premise for the Melbourne Ling of the Dzogchen Community; this is why we called a ‘temporary’ Ling. This is a very good step, we will make the best use of this opportunity and soon we will move again to search for a premise of our own. Secretly, I am cultivating a personal view that perhaps there is a way, step by step, to ‘conquer’ this hall for us. There is a saying in the popular wisdom of Neapolitan dialect that perhaps could inspire a possible strategy for that: ‘...e’ trasute ‘e sick, e se mmise ‘e chiatt !!! (I made an attempt to translate it into English, but I came up with something very convoluted that doesn’t reflect at all the fresh immediacy of the words, so I decided to leave to the readers to contact a Neapolitan aborigine to make sense of those words.)

The announcement of the Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 2009 Australian Tour became a key impetus in the raising of the energy of the Community towards the project of a ling in Melbourne, and a committee was formed to pursue the project.

At the Dzogchen Community 2008 Annual General Meeting,

the idea of the ling received a big “Yes!” of encouragement with a magnificent and shocking gesture from a practitioner who made a \$AU 20,000 donation to support the project. The Ling Committee felt like we were just a step away from the goal.

A dedicated few gave their time and energy searching for properties, meeting real estate agents, reading contracts navigating council permits, preparing budgets, formalizing agreements, etc. In a short time, we discovered that to find a suitable place that satisfied our many requirements was a learning curve unto itself. While searching for a suitable premise, the Ling committee came very close on two occasions, to signing on the dotted line but in both cases the deal fell through.

Given we were having some difficulty to combine the desire to find a place large enough to accommodate the Mandala and in a central location according to our budget, we found ourselves, for one reason or another, often called back to Fleming Park Hall. The hall has had quite a long history with the Dzogchen Community because it has been regularly used every Sunday for the last eight years for the practice of the Vajra Dance. So was like the harmonious sacred energy of

the Dance calling us back there. Even the people that were living far on the other side of town feel happy to have this Hall as a possible ling.

Two years ago when asked about the possibility of realizing a ling in Melbourne, Rinpoche said in an email: “It’s easy to have a ling.” Feeling frustrated after we missed the possibility to rent what seemed to be a good place, and considering it was coming very close to the arrival of Rinpoche in Australia, one Sunday I found myself strangely alone dancing on the Mandala in Fleming Park Hall. Looking around this place that was already serving well our purpose, while searching for our ideal one, there continued the resonance of that word ‘easy’ that Rinpoche mentioned. Once again the solution seemed to be just there, but somehow I couldn’t see it because I was still focusing on one concept, to rent a place entirely of the Community, while the circumstances have changed. The meaning of this word ‘easy’ was beginning to sound like the saying ‘sometimes what you are looking for has been there all along’ or in Rinpoche’s words, “Open your eyes well”

I asked for some clarity and in listening more carefully the

whispers travelling in space, like a mystical ‘Eureka!’ the answer arrived in a form of a quite obvious idea. Maybe the hall could be booked for many hours a week and we could use it as a temporary ling! It was easy and everything was temporarily solved; also with a very good hourly rate. Soon after, the hall was booked for all year and most of the Community seemed happy with this outcome.

At the public talk and weekend seminar with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Yeshe Namkhai in Melbourne, we were able to give to the public a brochure presenting the temporary Melbourne Ling and a rich program of activities. The activities started on the May 5. We had a very encouraging first week with the Mandala full of dancers, thirty people at the first Ganapuja, and new people coming to the practice explanation, etc.

Perhaps this temporary ling could be seen as a very good transitional solution towards a better outcome and maybe behind the corner lays the possibility of buying a ling premise. We will see.

At Gawaling the evening before leaving Australia, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu also said: “Lands, houses, it’s all relative. What we are developing is that many more people can seriously understand what the Dzogchen teaching means and its benefit.”

New Zealand

The New Zealand Dzogchen Community is happy to announce their new Gakyil:

Red Sandra Steff
Blue Gabrielle Kearney
Yellow Richard Clarke

NZ Dzogchen Community
P.O. Box 52089
Kingsland 1352
Auckland
New Zealand

Email: info@dzogchen.org.nz
Website: www.dzogchen.org.nz

How I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Gloriana Brenes

The very beginning was in 1998 when I was twelve years old and the Dalai Lama came to Costa Rica. I had the opportunity to meet him in a garden in Costa Rica. His Holiness kind of adopted me. He saw me and I was playing with flowers, it was a botanical garden, and he came up to me and asked, “Do you like flowers?” and I said, “Yes”, and he said, “Why?” and I said, “Because they always make me happy.” Then His Holiness looked at the flowers and he started laughing and laughing very strongly and I thought, “Wow, he is old, older than my old parents, but he is kind of like my friend; like someone my same age.” He was someone I could relate to. Immediately I said to myself, “Yes I want that!” The other older people I knew did not look very happy, but he did. I could see that he has something different, special. With the Dalai Lama you don’t need much language. You just point, laugh, happy, it is more like a heart to heart.

Three years later when I was fifteen years old, I was in a camp for Latin children in the monastery of Trangu Rinpoche in Nepal and we would play all day with Tibetan children from 6 to 18 years old. That period was amazing for me. It really changed my life. We did not have any formal language to communicate with. They only spoke Nepali and Tibetan and we only spoke Spanish and English. But we could communicate. We all became so open and happy. It was very hard to go home.

Then I always had this feeling that one day I wanted to go and see the Dalai Lama. Time went by and when I was twenty-one, in 1998, my mom sent me to Europe for three months and I was on my way to Italy but I never got there. Maybe I was supposed to meet Rinpoche there. [laughter] I first went to France and then I went to Egypt to stay with my aunt. Then I went to Israel, to Bethlehem. My mother came to take me away because she had a dream that something really bad happened to me and it almost did.

My mother and I went to Nepal and we decided to go all around Tibet. Of course I was always thinking of the Dalai Lama, so when we went to Norbulinka we saw beautiful roses, and we took one and I thought, if I ever see him again I will show him and say, “The garden, the flower, remember?” Then we went to Dharamsala and the morning we arrived His Holiness had an open audience and we went that day and my mother went first and then I went and gave him the flower and I told him it was from Norbulinka and then I asked if he could bless my country Costa Rica and he said, “Costa Rica!” and grabbed my head and was laughing and laughing. Then I took the bodhisattva vows and stayed for the millennium and then I was in Bodhgaya for the silent meditation for world peace.

I was on my way to Southern India to do a yoga teacher training course and a friend said, “Oh you should come and meet my teacher.” So I went to meet his teacher and when I walked in the room the young Lama said to me, “What are the birthdates of your father and mother if you decide to follow me?” And I was taken aback because I was not even used to the teacher idea. That Lama gave me a lot of attention, and I felt the hatred from the Sangha. The whole thing was too much for me.

I went back to Costa Rica for six months. Then my mother and I came back for the Kalachakra with His Holiness in Spiti Valley, at the end of the world in India, and I was sitting there and there were some really good looking guys sitting next to me and they had this picture of this Lama. It was the same Lama who asked for my parents’ birthdates. I thought, “Why this Lama? What is he doing here 6 months later?” Then I talked a little with these guys and they said this Lama was coming and would be in Dharamsala and I should come and see him. I kept bumping into his disciples. Then I did a Vipassana retreat to escape from all his students and when I came out I went to Dharamsala and said to myself if it is meant to be I will meet him. So I bumped into him right away. He asked what I was doing and I said I was taking the bus in four hours and he said, “Well I am teaching now so you can come and see, and if you are not interested you can go.” So I went and then I followed him to Nepal and there were many young people and we did ngondro and prostrations. We did Chöd practice for a year four times a day. This was in Bodanath, Nepal. We all lived together in a hotel near the Lama’s house and we became a little community of practitioners. I started to be a close disciple and also to be uncomfortable with the Lama.

Then I ran into the Yantra Yoga video of Fabio in Nepal. I bought it. The Lama forbid me to use it. He took the video from me and it cost \$50, which was half of my monthly budget. Then I saw that he was using the video to learn Yantra Yoga to be able to teach it later. Then another friend gave me the CD of Rinpoche doing the Chöd. Then I read *Crystal and the Way of Light*, and I wanted to meet this teacher very much, but he was in Italy and I did not have enough money to go there. Then I started to be more uncertain with this Lama; I had jumped to early in the water.

There was the Nyingma Monlam and my friends and I wanted to ask the important Lamas if this Lama was ok. So we asked three Lamas and said, “Have you heard of this Lama?” (This Lama’s name had some similar sound to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s name) and some of the Lamas would say, “Oh yes. Him?! He is a great Lama. You are so lucky to be his student. Stay with him. Follow his teachings.” For half an hour they sang Rinpoche’s praises saying how wonderful he is. They finally said, “Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is really a great master!” “No, that is not his name”, I said. And I said the name of this other Lama that sounded similar and said no not Namkhai, but such and such. And they said, “Oh yes Namkhai Norbu, he is in Italy. Yes Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche he is really a great master, you follow him.” Then we said, not him, and they asked whom we were asking about and we said his name and they said, “We don’t know who that is, we have never heard of him.”

Then this Lama decided he wanted to make me a Lama. I did not feel comfortable about that. He said, “Oh yes, you can teach. I will train you how to teach and you can make a center in Costa Rica.” I thought yes that sounds like a great vision, sounds perfect, Lama and then center.

I was kind of depressed because I gave up my pure devotion to this Lama. Then I overstayed my visa so I couldn’t really



Photo: A. Chlimper

leave Nepal. Sangye, my son’s father, took me to meet Chatrul Rinpoche in Parping. I told him I was in trouble because of my visa and he said, “Oh don’t worry, dye your hair and learn Nepali and you will be fine.” I thought, oh well, he gave me permission. Then I went to see him one last time and told him I want to leave tomorrow, but I might get in trouble because of my visa. I asked him if he thought I would have problems, and he started to laugh and laugh, holding his stomach, normally he is really strong and grumpy, and I thought well maybe that is a good sign and even his attendant was kind of dubious. Then he came close to me and said, “Not even the Buddha will save you! You break the law and you pay!”

The next day I tried to catch the plane to India and the police stopped me and were going to put me in jail and fine me \$10,000. I pretended I needed to go to the toilet and then I went and I escaped. My best friend from England was there and I told him I cannot leave because I need the stamp in my passport, so he went to talk to the officials and I was waiting in the restaurant in the airport. My friend took my passport to them and said, “Look she is very sick and she has to leave”, we had a doctor’s note, but they said no and for four hours my friend stayed and I was in the restaurant waiting for the police to come and get me and my friend comes back and says, “You won’t believe this.” After three hours of begging these policeman and they are all asking where I am, my friend remembered his grandmother and how much he loved her and he started crying and crying, he is very big and he just went to the floor and bowed to them and said, “Please, she’s going to die”, and the police were like, “Oh ok, just stop crying”, and that’s how he helped me get my visa stamp to leave the country. I had to leave the country because I was in trouble, either \$10,000 or a year in jail.

Then I found out I was pregnant and decided to leave India. I went back to Costa Rica. My mother went to Bodhgaya for

some teachings where my son’s father was supposed to be and my mother did not see him there. So then I felt doubly betrayed, my Lama and then my boyfriend. Then my boyfriend finally came back to Costa Rica and he was completely closed to me. My faith was completely gone.

After a year in 2004, Sangye was nine months old, my brother went to see Rinpoche in Venezuela and he came back and told me I have to go. Then I thought, OK, maybe this is my last chance for my life to have some meaning. I had tried. Disappointment came from all directions. Sangye’s father left to become Buddha. One night I was with Sangye and I had a dream and I was walking up a path to an open place and there were many people. And then I saw these people all looking to my right side. When I turned around there was this beautiful sunset on the beach, very beautiful. There were many colors and all the people were saying, “Oh look how beautiful.” I looked in the other direction and there was a full moon coming out on the other side. No one was paying attention and then I saw Rinpoche walking behind all these people in the dark and no one saw him. He just went and sat there. Then I followed him and he was sitting on his throne. And there was a disciple sitting in front of him with long curly hair. I went to sit and say hello and Rinpoche hit me in the head with a purba or something hard and when that bang happened, it was really hot and so strong and I woke up and I was completely hot and I remembered the whole dream very well and I said ok, I am going. I did not have much money, but I decided to go and then my mom and I went together to Margarita. Just as I landed, I had never seen the place, I immediately decided I wanted to buy a house there and live. My mom was looking at me like I was crazy. But I said I know I have found what I have been looking for.

Then there was huge storm and Rinpoche never went swimming so I could not meet him. Then there was the worldwide transmission in the night, I had Sangye in my arms and when Rinpoche walked in, I saw Mt Everest, it was amazing, I saw this solid pure rock the highest of all that overlooked everything. That is what came to my mind. And I thought, I found it! I was so happy the moment I saw him and I was crying and thinking I found my Lama! I told my mother, nothing will move me from here, I have been looking my whole life for the meaning, the one thing that would unify everything, the essence, and it is here. Then I became devoted to Rinpoche and to bring the teachings to Costa Rica.



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