

# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

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## Schedule Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 2006



### 2006

Jan. 27 - Feb. 5

Santi Maha Sangha Base Teaching and Practice Retreat  
Open Web Cast

Feb. 17 - 26

Longsal Saltong Lung teaching and Practice Retreat  
Restricted Web Cast

March 10 -19

Retreat of Dzogchen Semlung Namkhache:  
Teaching and Practice Namkhache.  
Open Web Cast

April 14 – 23

Tibetan Moxabustion  
Teaching and Application retreat

May 5 -14

Ati Lam-ngon Nasjyong  
A Retreat of Longsal teaching Preliminaries of the Path of Ati about  
the Purification of the Six Lokas, Teaching and Practice.  
Open Web Cast

### FRANCE

May 18 -22  
Paris Retreat

May 26-28

Karmaling Retreat

### ITALY

June 9 - 15  
Merigar

Teachings of Yeshe Zangthal Transmission, Nadzer and the Main  
Points of the View Totally Beyond the Conceptual Mind.  
Restricted Web Cast

June 18th

25th Anniversary Festival of Merigar

### BHUTAN

June 30

### BANGKOK

August 4 - 6

### JAPAN

August 10 - 14  
(Tentative Retreat)

### TAWAIN

August 18 – 22  
(Tentative Retreat)

### SINGAPORE

August 25 – September 3  
Longsal Ati'i Gongpa Ngotrod Retreat  
Restricted Web Cast

### AUSTRALIA

Caloundra  
September 27 – October 1  
Longsal Yeshe Zangthal  
Upadesha on All-Penetrating Wisdom  
Restricted Web Cast

NAMGYALGAR  
October 9 - 15

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Margarita Gonpa during Tregchod Retreat & Web cast

N ZEITZ

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche *From the fifth volume of Longsal* THE UPADESHA ON THE TREGCHÖD OF PRIMORDIAL PURITY RETREAT *ka dag khregs chod kyi man ngag*

November 4 – 8 2005,  
Tashigar Norte, Margarita Island, Venezuela

by Agathe Steinhilber

We were about one hundred-eighty nine students, gathered in the beautiful, airy Gonpa at Tashigar Norte, attending the Longsal Tregchöd Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The Gonpa was bustling with activity. Fabio, Alexey and assistants were busy setting up the web cast and the video cameras that would transmit Rinpoche's teachings to all the Gars and centers around the globe.

Rinpoche's seat was flanked by a colorful thigle to the right, OM A HUM to the left, and another thigle, forming the background. On the ground to the left and right, delicate pink and white bougainvillea shoots in earthen flowerpots elegantly adorned the platform.

After Rinpoche's arrival each day it took about ten minutes for the web cast to be connected to all the centers. The quiet and spacious 'time gap' in the presence of the Master felt like a great blessing. Rinpoche opened the teachings by saying how important it is to enjoy life, to go to the beach (in Tashigar Norte), not just

to sacrifice one's life, that life is short and time is precious. Rinpoche expressed his delight about the web cast. Thanks to new technology, many people who otherwise do not have the possibility to attend the teachings are now able to receive teachings and transmission.

Rinpoche then focused on the formal teachings. He reminded us that it was essential not to leave out the preliminaries. Traditionally, the preliminaries are indispensable in Dzogchen. With the preliminaries we prepare to enter the knowledge. Such preliminaries are the four reminders: precious human birth, impermanence and death, karma and samsara.

We are human beings, interested in the possibility of realization. Therefore we must be mindful of the preciousness and the impermanence of our human birth. It is easy to lose. Any moment is always related to the mind. In distraction we create negative karma. We must be awake and mindful with this occasion.

We then take refuge in the

Three Jewels, traditionally understood as: 1. Taking refuge in the Buddha and the teacher, 2. Taking refuge in the Dharma, the teachings, and 3. Taking refuge in the Sangha, the spiritual community of the fellow traveler, that supports the journey. The purpose of taking refuge is to understand why we practice. Refuge is related to Bodhicitta. We cultivate Bodhicitta with the intention and application to benefit all sentient beings, to benefit ourselves, to purify obstacles, to accumulate merit and to augment clarity.

Last but not least, Semde (Sems sde), or the introduction into 'the nature of mind' - the primordial state, pure and self-perfected, the mind of every individual. The introduction to the nature of mind is accomplished through oral transmission, and the practice known as 'the four contemplations'.

Rinpoche then spoke about tregchöd (*khregs chod*), one of the highest forms of relaxation, the essence of Dzogchen Upadesha teachings. Treg means 'something bound' like an object. With our mind, we bind our dual

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## C O N T E N T S

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
Santi Maha Sangha  
Teacher's Training  
Introductory Talk pg 3



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Special  
Feature:  
New  
Winter Gar  
in Crimea







Good evening everybody. I am happy to be with you this evening and also to have the occasion to talk about Dzogchen. Tonight I will introduce Dzogchen and what it is for Dzogchen is a very ancient teaching, not a religion, tradition or philosophy. In particular in Tibet, Dzogchen has developed in all Buddhist and pre-Buddhist traditions. Dzogchen is knowledge and understanding, and that understanding is very useful. Dzogchen is a teaching that helps one discover one's real condition. I am a practitioner and student of that teaching. I teach people when they ask me what Dzogchen is. That doesn't mean that I am a missionary converting people to this teaching. That is not the principle of the teaching, but I know it is very useful and when people are interested, with my good intention, I try to help them understand. That is what I have done from when I began to teach until today; I try to help people understand Dzogchen.

In the real sense Dzogchen means our real condition. The Dzogchen teaching means how we develop or discover our real condition and how we develop that knowledge. For that reason, for centuries, this very ancient teaching developed. There are also many ancient books that explain Dzogchen teaching. If people are interested in the teaching they should try to follow, study and learn from these books. In the real sense, we learn and study in order to discover our real condition. In Tibetan, Dzogchen means our real condition.

The Dzogchen teaching developed in a country called Oddiyana in ancient times, in the original language of that region. Today that region is the northern part of Pakistan. You may have heard of a famous country called Shambhala. That is primarily where the Kalachakra teaching developed. Shambhala was also in northern Pakistan and today that country is Afghanistan. Many Western professors who have done research through archaeology and history have confirmed this. Today all these countries are Islamic countries. Also in ancient times most of central Asia was Buddhist; particularly places like Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, once called Truja. Not only Buddhism developed there, but a special Tantric Buddhist teaching. In Tantric Buddhism, there are two very different methods. One is called Anuttaratantra in Sanskrit, which means Superior Tantra. These are all Tantric Vajrayana teachings that developed in Tibet. In Tibet we have four main schools. Tantric teachings developed in all these schools and are a special characteristic of Tibetan Buddhism. There are also Hinayana and Mahayana Sutric teachings in Tibetan Buddhism. Vajrayana, the Tantric teaching, governs all teachings in Tibet. There is another characteristic teaching called Anuyoga, but the way of following and applying this teaching is slightly different. Transformation is the characteristic of the path, particularly in Vajrayana.

In Sutra teaching, the path is renunciation. Most of you proba-



Rinpoche after Teachings in Crimea

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Public Talk on the Essence of Dzogchen Teaching Kiev, Ukrainia

May 30th, 2005

bly know what Sutra and Tantra mean and the difference between them. You know that Buddha lived in ancient India and taught a teaching called Buddhism. Buddha physically taught this teaching to ordinary people. That kind of teaching is called Sutra. Ordinary people have the capacity to see, hear, and have contact with the senses in a normal way. A 'normal way' means if you want to see something you must open your eyes. All our organs of senses are indispensable; if you close your eyes you can't see anything and if you close your ears you can't hear anything. This is our ordinary capacity and Buddha taught Sutra to ordinary people. Sutra is a word in the Sanskrit language that means the conclusion of an event. For example, one day the king of Benaras invited Buddha to teach; the king and others received that teaching. Sometimes people asked questions regarding a specific argument and some asked more general questions. Buddha gave a teaching and at the end, all the students, including the king, were satisfied. That is the end of the event of that day. Later some students of Buddha wrote down this event, which is called the Request of the King of Benaras. This became the name of a Sutra. Therefore you can understand that Sutra means the conclusion of an event. All of Buddha's life he was invited to give different kinds of teachings. All these teachings are called Sutra teachings. These teachings are related more to normal capacity. Normal capacity means that Buddha taught with his mouth in the Indian language and the people listened with their ears and heard that teaching.

The Four Noble Truths is a

famous Buddhist teaching. The Four Noble Truths are considered the base of all Buddhist teaching. The Buddha taught this when he first began to teach. The First of the Four Noble Truths is The Truth of Suffering. It doesn't mean that suffering is noble. There are all kinds of suffering for all sentient beings, but that knowledge and understanding is noble knowledge. For example, no one likes to have suffering, but we don't know how to overcome it. If someone asks what to do with suffering, our ordinary mind says that we should struggle with it. Buddha explained that is not a solution. You can struggle all your life with suffering, but you never win. Suffering is only an effect. When there is an effect, there is also a cause. The value of effect is only to learn or discover that cause exists and how it functions. If you discover that cause exists and you work with that, there is a possibility to overcome suffering.

The Buddha explained The Second Noble Truth of the Cause. The Buddha explained cause and effect; how they are related and what in Sanskrit is called karma. Many Westerners think that karma is an oriental concept or philosophy and Westerners don't know what karma is. That is not true. Westerners know what karma is; they just don't call it karma. For example, Tibetans know about karma from following Buddhism, but we don't call it karma. We call it *le*. When we say *le*, we don't think we don't understand what karma is. For example, Westerners know very well that if there is a negative cause it produces something negative. It is sufficient when we see a film, for example, or when we go to a doctor. The first thing the doctor

asks is what you did and what you ate. The doctor is researching the cause of the illness. For that reason, the knowledge of karma exists. So, that is The Second Noble Truth.

Then Buddha said it is not sufficient only to know there is a cause. If there is a negative cause you must stop it and if there is a positive cause you can increase and develop it. In that way, you will not create negative actions. When we are distracted we produce the potentiality of negative karma. Potentiality means, for example, that if you have the seeds of flowers and you do not put them in the earth or add water the potentiality of the seeds always remains. When there are secondary causes, like earth, air, light etc., then the seeds grow. In the same way, we have many negative potentialities. In our circumstance, when there are secondary causes, the negative potentialities manifest. We need to have knowledge and understanding to stop negative potentialities from manifesting. Understanding means that if I have a seed of a poison and I put it in the earth, it will grow and produce more poison. I know that poison is negative and therefore I don't put the seeds in the earth; maybe I even destroy the seeds. If I don't know the potentiality of poison is negative and I plant it and the plant grows and later I discover it is negative, there is still the possibility of modifying the result. I can stop the plant from growing. For example, if I don't give it any more water, it will not grow. In that way, we work with our awareness. There are many methods used to purify, change or modify our negative karma. Some people think karma is registered and we pay for it. Someone who has heavy problems and thinks it is their karma feels there is nothing they can do. That is a wrong idea. There is always the possibility to modify and change karma. This is mainly related to our mind, our mind that judges, thinks, and justifies everything. Good or bad. We know there are always all possibilities. It is sufficient that we know how we produce the potentiality of negative karma. It doesn't mean that everything we do wrong becomes the potentiality of karma. To become the potentiality of karma we need three conditions. First of all, we need to have intention. Then we need to enter directly or indirectly into action. At the end if we are satisfied, at that moment the potentiality is produced. If we have no intention but accidentally do something bad, it can't be the potentiality of bad karma. Of course it's not positive. It is always something negative, like a negative obstacle. We always need to purify these kinds of obstacles, otherwise we accumulate more and more and at the end this becomes heavy. How we can stop this? Buddha explained this in the Sutra teaching for ordinary people. Different kinds of vows exist so common people can control the body, energy and mind. We take a vow and apply it. In that way, we don't commit negative karma. This is called the path of renunciation. We consider all

bad actions as negative, which also manifest different kinds of emotions. We are conditioned by that emotion and we produce negative karma. We renounce the emotions that cause the production of negativities.

The way to stop karma is called The Third Noble Truth, The Truth of Cessation. Cessation means to stop. The Noble Truth of Suffering is like having some physical problem and we know we have a problem. We research the cause of our problem. Maybe we cannot discover or know ourselves. We go to a doctor and the doctor asks questions, checks our pulse, urine, etc., in order to discover what the problem is. That is like The Noble Truth of the Cause. Now the doctor gives us medicine and advice about our attitude. He says our diet must be this way. Then he says we should take this medicine. We must follow the doctor and take the medicine. If we do not take the medicine and we only know the information the doctor gave, it doesn't help. So that is The Third Noble Truth of Cessation.

Buddha also explained The Fourth Noble Truth of the Path. One universal path does not exist. All sentient beings, particularly in the human condition, have different conditions, capacities, desires, etc. A doctor does not give only one kind of universal medicine. There are so many different kinds of medicines because the condition of the individual is not the same. For that reason, there are many different kinds of paths. The Path of Sutra is for ordinary people who have less capacity. The teaching corresponds to the condition of the individual. Our condition is composed of three principles. The first thing we have is our physical body; with our physical body we can understand something related to the material level. That physical body also has different kinds of energy levels. In the teaching, that is called 'voice'. Voice means that when I speak with my voice, you hear. Voice also means sound. Voice is produced with the breath.

Breathing is the life of the individual. For example, you inhale, exhale, inhale and exhale continuously. When you exhale and no longer inhale there is no more life. Breath is related to our vital energy. Voice is the origin of all manifestations from emptiness. In Buddhism we always speak of emptiness or shunyata. That is considered our real condition. For example, we say dharmadhatu. Dharmadhatu means the real condition of all phenomena is emptiness. There is also dharmata in Sanskrit. Dharmata means that in all phenomena there are many sentient beings and all sentient beings have their condition, their nature. My nature, my condition, is different from another person's. It doesn't mean a different way of being, but it is what we call the personal condition. For example, if we need to increase our intelligence we do the practice of Manjushri because even enlightened beings, enlightened Buddhas, have various qualifications. If we want to increase compassion, then we do the practice of Avalokiteshvara. If we want to have prosperity for a long time,

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we should do the practice of Buddha Amitayus. It seems that all enlightened beings have different relative qualifications. In a real sense all enlightened beings have the same qualifications, but how the situation relates to their wisdoms, their qualifications, are different. For example, when Manjushri was on a path and he was a Bodhisattva, his connection to sentient beings related to intelligence. Manjushri created many wisdom aspects of intelligence. For that reason, now that he has total realization, he provides more function of wisdom related with circumstance. Even if all enlightened beings have the same condition, the same nature, they do not always become the same manifestation. In that way we can understand the Path of Renunciation.

Then the Path of Transformation is related more with our voice or energy level because that is how the teaching developed. For example, the famous initiation of the Kalachakra is Vajrayana, a Tantric teaching. We can learn about it in history. The Kalachakra is related to Buddha Shakyamuni. It doesn't mean that Buddha Shakyamuni taught in an ordinary way in India. Buddha Shakyamuni was a human being and therefore existed on the material level. Kalachakra is that manifestation; the manifestation called Sambhogakaya. Sambhogakaya means the dimension of the wealth of all qualifications. That is something like the essence of all elements; the five colors. We can only see the material level so when there is this kind of manifestation of lights, ordinary people can't see it. When someone dissolves in their real nature, like light, for us they disappear. Of course, beings that develop more capacity or increase their clarity can have contact with these beings. Buddha manifested the Kalachakra and transmitted that knowledge. Since the Kalachakra is yab and yum, male and female union, Buddha couldn't manifest that aspect because he was a monk. It is impossible physically, but the manifestation is another aspect. The Buddha introduced the knowledge called the Path of Transformation with this manifestation. Transformation means the essence does not change, but the aspect does.

There is an example given by Guru Padmasambhava, a very famous and important teacher from Oddiyana who later arrived in Tibet. Guru Padmasambhava started to teach all the teachings of Vajrayana, including Dzogchen teaching. From the beginning, Guru Padmasambhava taught two kinds of Tantrism and he gave a very important example to help people understand what transformation means. He said that if there is a small piece of gold, we all know that gold has value, and this gold is made into a statue of Buddha, everybody sees a golden Buddha. People who follow teaching of Buddha pay respect to this golden Buddha, to the statue, and offer incense, flowers, etc. Later someone transforms this statue of Buddha, like during the Cultural Revolution, and make a very nice golden ashtray that is elegant that they can use when there are very important meetings. They make an ashtray and the gold has not changed, the

nature of the gold is the same, but the aspect has changed. People throw dirty things inside an ashtray, they do not pay respect, offer incense or flowers. Guru Padmasambhava gave this example of the essence of gold. This example means that we have a nature, just like gold has its value. We need not renounce. They renounce in Sutra teaching because they do not know the value of the nature. In Vajrayana, they know nature has value and they transform it with the method of transformation. We transform the root of our three emotions: ignorance, attachment and anger. Our three emotions are considered the three root emotions. Ignorance doesn't mean we are uneducated but means we are missing the clarity of discovering and knowing our real nature. We transform these three emotions with Vajrayana style initiations, practices, etc, related with these three kinds of transformations: peaceful, joyful and wrathful. By using these methods the practitioner can succeed in transforming all impure vision into pure vision. This transformation is related to the energy level of the individual.

There is also the mind level. The characteristic teaching for the mind level is called Dzogchen. Many people think the Dzogchen teaching is a transformation practice like Tantrism. The main teaching of Dzogchen is not transformation. In Dzogchen we don't consider pure vision and impure vision and transform impure vision into pure vision. When we are in that knowledge, we are not in Dzogchen knowledge. So for that reason this characteristic path is called the path of self-liberation.

What does self-liberation mean and how we can self-liberate? We need an example called the symbol transmission. In Dzogchen we often use the symbol of the mirror. You don't need a special mirror or something in a particular form. You know very well how a mirror looks; in your house there may be many mirrors. Even in the toilet you have mirrors. The mirror is a very good example. When you look in a mirror you see reflections. You know the reflection is not something real. It is an example of what is unreal. This knowledge or understanding that the reflection is unreal is just an intellectual understanding, because a mirror can never have a reflection if there is nothing in front of it to reflect. The object or person in front of the mirror and the reflection are interdependent. We consider that the reflection is unreal but what is real in our condition is reflected in a mirror. For that reason it has no value. But that is not the case for discovery in the Path of Self-Liberation. Buddha explained in a Sutra teaching: "All phenomena are just like reflections in a mirror." The mirror can manifest as very clear, pure, and limpid, but it is always interdependent with an object. For that reason we enter into accepting, rejecting, likes and dislikes. How we can use that as an example for self-liberation? We must understand that the mirror is a very good example of ourselves. We say that Dzogchen means our real condition. Dzogchen means the totally perfected state. That

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Yantra Yoga First Level teachers demonstrate for Rinpoche

M SALVATORE

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche Tashigar del Norte Santi Maha Sangha Teacher's Training Yantra Yoga levels I & II Vajra Dance Levels I & II November 25-29, 2005

Introductory Talk  
November 25, 2005

This retreat is called Santi Maha Sangha Teacher's Training. This is more than a title; Santi Maha Sangha is not only the title of a book or a teaching. Santi Maha Sangha means the Dzogchen Community and we participate in it to become dedicated Santi Maha Sangha Dzogchen Community people. Everyone can participate in the Dzogchen Community and follow the teaching. There are two distinct situations - if you follow the teaching only superficially or more deeply. If you are really interested, then must you understand the function of the Dzogchen Community. This is particularly important to the people who participate in the Santi Maha Sangha training. There are many people who have done Santi Maha Sangha training but do not do things according to the principles of the Community.

The benefit of continuing with Santi Maha Sangha is a very simple thing. I say at each retreat, "If you receive teaching, it is related with transmission." That is why I take care of the Dzogchen Community. I not only have the responsibility of giving the teaching, but also of taking care of that transmission. I cannot leave the transmission in the street. We do not know what will happen in the future; for that reason we also need a Dzogchen Community and Sangha that work and collaborate to take care of this transmission. Otherwise there is no way I can do it all myself.

We needed some kind of coordination after some years of teaching and many people became involved in the Dzogchen Community. We started by forming a Gakyil. The Gakyil is the reason that we have a Dzogchen Community today. Where there is a Dzogchen Community there is a Gakyil. Maybe everyone in the Dzogchen Community is not aware of Santi Maha Sangha, but the responsible people in the Gakyil must do things in the correct way. It seems that not many people are manifesting that quality. Sometimes I really feel very tired. I think what can I do, I have already given so many teachings, but there is no possibility to really take care. I always tell people, "When you receive the transmission, there is also something related to it called samaya commitments. Samaya is not only the commitment between teacher and student, but also between student and student. When you receive the teaching together, you are connected by the Vajra relationship." I have repeated this thousands of times, but people don't care. They pretend to be

practitioners; they fight and create so many tensions and problems among themselves. How we can proceed in that way? You must think that when we say, "Santi Maha Sangha Teacher's Training", a "teacher," means someone who teaches others. Before you teach, you must have correct behavior yourself. You cannot teach if you do not do things in the correct way. Maybe it is not so easy, but we must understand this very well.

In the Dzogchen Community there are many places called Gars and Lings. The Gakyil is the group responsible for these places made for Dzogchen Community practitioners. All these people should try to be correct; they should communicate and collaborate with others in the correct way. We must remember that all the teachings and transmission received in the Dzogchen Community are received from me; there is a very strong connection between my students and myself. If there is a concrete connection, people must respect the teacher. Respect is not only getting up when the teacher arrives. When we do something in the Community related to the principle or the reason for the Dzogchen Community, we must do so in the correct way.

Particularly this year in Kunsangar, the Gar of Russia, there was a problem. I want to talk about this because there are many Russians here [in Magarita]. There is no longer a possibility to do big retreat in Kunsangar. The two retreats held in that region lately were in the Crimea. Before the second Crimean retreat, I asked that we try to hold the retreat in Moscow. I was told this was not possible, the authorities would not give permission, and so it is better we do this retreat in Crimea. You know very well how the situation is. It is not sufficient that because you are Russian the Gar must be in Russia. Some people say that I don't like to go to Kunsangar but I would like to continue in Kunsangar. This is a ridiculous discussion. We know the problem very well. Everything in Russia is getting worse and worse. If there is really any possibility, in two or three years things could develop. We should work with circumstances and try to be aware.

When we finished the retreat in the Crimea I asked Igor Berkin to inform the Gakyil that we should sell Kunsangar and try to buy something in the Crimea. I asked Igor because he is a translator; after Igor informed the Gakyil they said the idea to sell Kunsangar was his idea. I said that it is better that we try to sell Kunsangar before we have even more problems. At the same time, if there is some

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Jnana Dhakkini Teaching Retreat of Longsal Gomadevi

SANTI MAHA SANGHA  
October 24 -26  
Santi Maha Sangha 1<sup>st</sup> Level Exam  
October 27 - 31  
Santi Maha Sangha 2<sup>nd</sup> Level Training

November 10 – 17  
Nadjyang of Tawa Retreat  
The Main Points of the View Totally Beyond the Conceptual Mind.  
Restricted Web Cast

November 24 – 26  
Teaching in Sydney  
(To be announced)

**ARGENTINA**  
December 8 – 19  
Buenos Aires Retreat  
(To be announced)

December 26 – January 1  
Ati'i Gongpa Ngotrod  
Upadesha of the Introduction to the State of Ati  
Restricted Web Cast



IMPRESSIONS FROM THE GURU DRAGPHUR RETREAT  
WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU  
IN SÃO PAULO, BRAZIL  
October 15 - 19, 2005

by *Jair Rodini Engracia*

Rinpoche arrived on October 10 2005, in São Paulo, Brazil. It was the first time I met him, so I was a little euphoric and anxious. The thirty-minute wait seemed to be an eternity, but then he finally arrived — impassive but humble, majestic and imposing, and smiling sweetly upon meeting us. Rinpoche and Fabio seemed to love the beautiful plate with tropical fruits prepared by Heloísa and Monica for Rinpoche’s hotel room. I felt immensely privileged and became quiet and reverent, enjoying the magical moment of helping Rinpoche settle in. October 12th is a holiday in Brazil, the day of Our Lady “Aparecida”. To avoid the over-crowded restaurants, we had lunch at Otavio’s home. Rinpoche asked us about and listened attentively to the history of the “Brazilian Madonna”. He then explained about the Real Madonna, the ancestral Tara, much more ancient than Maria or the iconographic Tibetan Tara, biographed as a princess. The real Tara is Prajna-Paramita, the Mother of the Buddhas, he said.

October 14th was the day of the Public Talk that would open the retreat in São Paulo. There were two hundred-fifty places, and all were taken. As soon as Rinpoche was seated, I shot several pictures hoping for a tige to appear in one of them, as in the picture shown on Norbunet that had been taken in Hungary in May.

There were Brazilians from all the regions of the country among the participants, besides a surprising variety of practitioners from other countries: Italians, Argentines, French, Hungarian and even a young Ukrainian couple. As special guests, there were Lama Samten, Nyingmapa; Lama Rinchen, Sakyapa; Nun Tenzin, Kagyupa, besides several other writers and Dharma teachers.

The theme of the retreat was Guru Dragphur . In

his talks, in a certain moment, Rinpoche emphatically defended His Holiness the Dalai Lama [see article by Raimondo Bultrini on page ] against the attacks and criticism that he has received from divergent groups that, inside Tibetan Buddhism, promote sectarianism and the Gyalpo cult. Since one of these groups has a strong presence in Brazil, his declarations caused considerable impact.

Rinpoche also transmitted the marvelous Upadesha, Yeshe Zangthal, from his Longsal cycle. Many people could meet the master and receive transmission for the first time. Everyone could see that the older students were also amazed with the depth and clarity of his instructions.

On the third day of the retreat, I had a fantastic personal experience. Just after the morning talk, I was taken by Catherine Braud, from ASIA, to talk with Rinpoche a little. I noticed that in that moment he was different; there was a subtle sublimation in his gestures, in his smile and in his words. It seemed to me that he was overflowing with compassion. I had to take the subway soon after the meeting. Inside the subway wagon, among an intense flux of people, I suddenly felt an enormous love for all the suffering people, and I thought that these are my people and why had I never before felt that way about them? Only a few hours later I understood that, although only for some brief instant, I had tasted the transforming power of the Master.

The last day of the retreat was October 19th. That day was my birthday — sixty-three years. I had received transmission for the first time only three years before, lovingly guided by Muriella. Now , at the end of the retreat, I didn’t feel as a newcomer anymore. I felt accepted by Rinpoche and I also felt that my heart had opened and that I had completely accepted the Master.

RAINING THE DHARMA  
THE LONGSAL  
JNANADHAKKINI  
RETREAT  
AT TASHIGAR NORTE,  
MARGARITA  
DECEMBER 2 — 8, 2005

by *Jan Boehm*

About two-hundred fifty fortunate individuals found their way from over twenty different countries all around the globe to participate in the Longsal Jnanadhakkini Retreat at Tashigar Norte, Margarita, and receive the teaching and practice of Gomadevi that our precious Master Chogyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was generously willing to give from December 2 - 8, 2005.

Since the retreat was attended almost exclusively by people who had already received transmission, Rinpoche decided to begin with a Guruyoga and then continue with a summary of the origins of the different series of Dzogchen teachings (Semde, Longde, Mennagde) and explained the context of the Longsal Cycle as mainly related to the teachings he has received through his dreams.

One hundred and fifty of us were especially delighted to be able to receive the root initiation of Longsal, which took place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the retreat in groups of seventy-five (the first of which was entirely Russian speaking) while the remaining part of the Community had the opportunity to learn and do the practice of Gomadevi, led skillfully by Adriano Clemente.

While Rinpoche was teaching, the sky apparently decided to follow his example of generosity; for almost the entire length of the retreat it opened all its gates and let liquid blessings pour down that were joyfully received by all the plants and probably a little less by all those who had chosen to stay at the Gar’s campsite or had hoped to spend some sunny hours at the beach. (I didn’t hear anyone complain though, after all, the light that was transmitted to us was hopefully absorbed in a more profound way than ordinary sunlight and had a more gratifying effect than a nice tan.)

As the retreat continued, Rinpoche repeatedly stressed the importance of cooperation among the members of our Community as a means of keeping samaya and addressed the great number of Russian speaking Vajra brothers and sisters, using the opportunity to explain the situation in Russia as an example of how the Community should try to work with circumstances. [see page12] On the penultimate day of the retreat, after the Ganapuja, Igor Berkin presented the project for the new Gar in Crimea [see page 12], which according to Rinpoche’s vision, could serve both as an alternative to Kunsangar and a Winter Gar for Merigar. Rinpoche pointed out that both Merigar and the proposed site in the Crimea are situated exactly on the same latitude. Igor described the land and its surroundings that was found in the most colorful words, not hesitating to praise its qualities. He went to give a most enjoyable account of the historical back-

ground and cultural heritage of the area when a sudden power-failure left us all in the dark, but didn’t seem to bother the amplification equipment, to the great delight of Igor, who joyously continued his explanations. Rinpoche said this was an auspicious sign that the project will eventually be successful despite all odds.

As usual, the last day of the retreat arrived surprisingly soon with Rinpoche giving transmission of lung and advice on how to integrate the practice in daily life. Rinpoche repeatedly stated the priority of Guruyoga as the “number one most important practice” and also spoke about the importance of the practice of the night as a way of preparing oneself for the moment of death and gave a device on how to do a Nyingthig retreat in order to deepen this particular practice.

The end of the retreat auspiciously coincided with our Master’s birthday and after the teaching session finished, Sonam, a Tibetan singer and songwriter, presented a beautiful song she had composed especially for the occasion. The celebration was continued in the afternoon when many different members of the Community expressed their joy and gratitude through song and dance as well as through the offering of gifts. The day ended with everybody eating and drinking together with Rinpoche and Rosa at the Gar’s “comedor” and despite the multitude of languages being spoken, it was easy to understand the heartfelt wish of everyone present: “May the lotus feet of our master remain firmly on the earth!”

*Teaching ChNN continued from page 3*

means it has all potentiality . It doesn’t mean there is everything, that is impossible, but if there is the potentiality of all when there are secondary causes everything can manifest. This is called Dzogchen. That is very similar to the mirror. The mirror has infinite potentiality of manifesting different kinds of reflections. In order for the mirror to reflect, you don’t need to put any kind of program inside. You know , for example, that for things to appear in a computer, we first need to put in a program. The mirror already has that potentiality . For example, if you go in front of the mirror , at the moment you stand in front of the mirror , your figure appears perfectly. It is your color , your size, your form - everything. Instantly everything is appears. This figure is not developing slowly and then becoming complete. Everybody has that kind of potentiality called primordial potentiality. It is not something developed by people who follow the teaching and do practice; it is not that way . We all have that potentiality in our real nature from the beginning. In Dzogchen the teacher introduces you and with the oral transmission makes you understand. The teacher explains what your potentiality means and how your potentiality looks by using the example of the mirror . Through this introduction you can have an idea, but to have only an idea is not sufficient. In the Dzogchen way you must discover that. The principle in Dzogchen is not that you have blind faith. Some people say, “Oh, I only believe my teacher, my teacher said that is so, so it must be.” You can believe in that way, but if you remain that way, later you may discover that is not real. Until you discover for yourself, you can always create and change. For that reason in the Dzogchen teaching, it is most important for us to discover . Of course, we can’t discover easily , that’s why we need the Dzogchen teaching, transmission, and a teacher. The teacher informs you of what you should do and how you can get in that knowledge. You collaborate with the teacher and then there is the possibility you can discover. Buddha taught the state of shunyata, which represents the Great Mother, in a Sutra teaching. How we can understand the Great Mother? No one can explain that in language, so a description does not exist. It is also the same in Tantrism when we try and explain our real nature. If there is no possibility to explain, what do we do? Why do we follow the teaching? It doesn’t mean there is no possibility to get in the knowledge. That possibility always exists. That possibility is related to our ordinary condition. For example, how did we learn so many things in our lives? We basically know very well that we learn everything through experience. Sometimes people say: “Oh, this is this, and that is that”. We receive a lot of information. Until we have a personal experience, we do not really believe. When we have a personal experience, we discover. When we discover, there is nothing to change. Even if we want to cancel, eliminate, or change our experience, we can’t do it. For example, I show you this box. You see, this

is a box, a small box. Now I ask you to forget that. How can you forget that? You can’t forget it because you have a direct experience. Experience through our different kinds of experiences is a method of teaching. The teacher introduces to the students, the students work together with the teacher and then the students discover their real nature. When you have discovered your real nature, there is the possibility that you have this experience again and again. You try to be in that experience and that is called the practice of Dzogchen.

All your existences: body , voice, and mind, everything — all these are related to our mind; at the mind level. Everything at the level of mind is just like the reflection in a mirror. It has value or use for discovering the nature of the potentiality of mirror . Of course, it is not the real nature of the mirror . The mind and the nature of mind or your primordial potentiality are different. You say there is no relationship between these two things, they are totally different, but that is difficult to say. For that reason, when you practice, all your existences of body, voice, mind, everything, integrates in your real nature. You increase that capacity day after day. That is called Dzogchen practice. This is more or less what self-liberation is. The knowledge of self-liberation is very important. It is important to become a practitioner or follower of a kind of teaching. We all live in this dualistic condition in samsara and have so many problems. We have problems because we have dualistic vision and we are always charging. We are thinking that this and that are important - this is how life is. So day after day we increase our tensions. We have more attachment, more fear , and more problems when we develop and become richer and richer in the accumulation of tensions. For that reason it is important that we really understand how our condition is. We try to be present. We try to not to always be distracted, because if we are not distracted then there is the possibility to be in our real nature. That is a very important practice.

In the Mahayana teaching we concentrate on compassion. Compassion is considered very important in Mahayana, but still more important is that we observe our intention. There is a teaching that says if we have good intention, then our realization and everything is good. Of course, if our intention is the contrary, then everything is bad. If we are not distracted, then we discover . When we discover that we have a bad intention, we change. In the place of bad intention we cultivate good intention. This is the real essence of cultivating Bodhicitta. Otherwise, if we are distracted with bad intention we enter directly or indirectly into an action and we commit negative karma. So you see, this is also a very simple practice. Everybody can do this practice. It helps everybody.

In any case, two things are very important: one is not to be distracted and to try to be aware in our lifetime. It is much better if you do not practice that you are not distracted in worldly situations; with your presence you discover tensions. In that moment you relax. Sometimes people say: “Yes, I know , relaxation is very

*continued on next page*



important. But I have so many problems, I can't relax." That is true. But why can't you relax and why do you think you have so many problems? It means you give too much importance to everything. In this case, you should remember the teaching of Buddha. Buddha taught that everything is unreal and he taught this also in Sutra. Nothing exists that is real. Everything is just like a dream. You can have good dream but you can also have a bad dream. At the moment you are dreaming you feel it is real and important. For example, you have a very good dream. You dream you won the lottery. You discover that you won and you think, where is my ticket? You find the ticket. Then you think, now I am going to collect the money. You go to the place to collect the money, but when you get closer, you wake up. Then you feel sad. You think that was only a dream! That means you know the dream is unreal. That is why you are unhappy. Sometimes it is the contrary. You have a very bad dream and someone is killing you and already killed many of your friends. There is no possibility to escape. Now that person is killing you and you wake up! You discover it was a dream. Then you are happy. That was just a dream. You see, when we are dreaming, in that moment we feel it is real. When we wake up, we discover we were dreaming. Buddha said, "Life is big dream". It is not a big dream like dreams in the night; with dreams in the night after some hours we wake up and we discover we were dreaming. A big dream means we sleep many times, we wake up many times, and continue this way all of our confused lives. In the end, we die. When we die we are in the state of the Bardo. Some people don't immediately discover that they are in the Bardo. They don't discover it because they have very strong attachments. Later, day after day, that attachment diminishes. In Tibet, for example, when someone has died, we do a puja and purification for seven weeks. We consider that each week there is a process of dying. That means that after one, two, or three weeks, attachment diminishes, and after some weeks we discover that we are in the Bardo. Finally we discover that our long lives were a big dream. Until then we did not have that knowledge. We need to have a little confidence with the teaching and then we wouldn't have so many problems or confusions because we could free all our tensions. It is very important to know that principle. Some people say, "I can't relax, what do I do?" You remember what Buddha said and gain a little confidence. You can discover, not necessarily that you are in the Bardo, but you can discover the effect in this life. You can feel lighter, that you have fewer problems, and nothing is very important. That is very useful in our lifetime. So this is more or less what Dzogchen means and how useful it is for sentient beings. If you are interested you should follow the Dzogchen teaching and learn the methods. It is not sufficient to only hear an introduction to understand the principle of Dzogchen. This is what I want to say. Now if you have some ques-

tions, I can answer them.

*Can you please 'show' Dzogchen? How can I 'show' Dzogchen when even Buddha couldn't?*

*What spiritual person is considered the most important in your teaching?*

Historically speaking, the Dzogchen teaching is a very ancient teaching. Early in different epochs, before Buddha Shakyamuni, there were twelve teachers who taught Dzogchen teachings. After many thousands and thousands of years, the situation changed; it did not always remain that way. What remained were some oral teachings. Oral teaching means there were no books, only a few words that became a key to this knowledge. Oral teachings were the only teachings that remained in the time of Buddha Shakyamuni. Dzogchen books did not exist. Buddha Shakyamuni gave advice for the future saying there will be a teacher who teaches beyond cause and effect. Some traditions like Hinayana, Sutra teaching, consider the teaching of Buddha only what Buddha physically taught. In Vajrayana there are many different explanations. The teaching of Buddha is not only what Buddha taught physically. In Tibetan what Buddha taught with his mouth is called [zhal nas gsungs pa'i bka'] *shal ne sung pai ka*. The teaching [rjes su gnang ba'i bka'] *jes su nang wa'i ka* exists and means that Buddha gave his permission and it became the teaching of Buddha. That is the famous Sutra we have in Mahayana. It is called the Prajnaparamitahridaya, the essence of Prajnaparamita. In the film, "Little Buddha", someone is chanting: "There are no eyes, there are no ears, there is no nose, there is no path, there is no wisdom." This is the essence of Sutra. Of course the Prajnaparamitahridaya is considered to be the words of Buddha. In a real sense, there is not one single word of Buddha taught by the mouth of Buddha in this Sutra. Buddha is present and in front of him there is Avalokiteshvara and Shariputra, his two students. Shariputra asks Avalokiteshvara and Avalokiteshvara replies. Another kind of teaching of Buddha called [byin gyis brlabs pa'i bka'] *chin gyi lab pai ka* means that Buddha empowers something and from the empowered object comes the teaching of Buddha. For example, Buddha empowers a big drum, and when the big drum sounds, a teaching comes out. This is a Sutra. There are many kinds of these Sutras. The objects are empowered, Buddha is not teaching. Another way is that Buddha gives a prophecy and says for the future there will be someone giving teaching. In that way, Buddha prophesized a teacher called Garab Dorje around three hundred years after Buddha Shakyamuni. Garab Dorje taught all the Dzogchen teachings we now have. In this moment in the human condition, Garab Dorje is more important.

*When you say Shambala do you mean such country as Russia, Ukraine, Tibet or is it something different in some spiritual dimension?*

Physically Shambala is

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## A Talk by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu After Awarding the Teacher's Training Diplomas November 29, 2005 – afternoon

*"The Dzogchen Community is your fortune, my fortune and our fortune."*

The Dzogchen Community must not disappear from this world. As long as I am alive the Community will continue, but I hope it does not disappear when I do. There has been progress and not everything in the Community is negative. There are many good things; I cannot say everything is either



Vajra Dance SMS Teachers

M SALVATORE

negative or positive. That is the nature of the world and our human condition. Nagarjuna explained that where there is *tashima*, good fortune, there is also *na-nagma*, a black nose or bad fortune. Where there is fortune, there is also misfortune.

In the Dzogchen teaching we try to be aware and do our best. This is what we apply, but not only through words. It must be something concrete. For that reason I am not satisfied with the answers of the first questions [In the Santi Maha Sangha First Level Teacher Training, the first question was related to the Dzogchen Community.] It seems only the second question [related to the Santi Maha Sangha text] was considered important. The answer to the second question is explained very precisely in the First Level book and you can find the answers to all the questions there.

Most of the participants did not reply to what was asked and did not touch upon the argument. It seems there was a lot of invention and comparison of arguments, for example, the comparison of Dzogchen to Sutra or Tantra. I did not ask that and therefore I am not satisfied. For example, when I asked what the point of view is, I did not ask what the method of



Yantra Yoga SMS Teachers

M SALVATORE

meditation is. If I ask the point of view and its application, then you should explain that. You do not need to explain how we do practice in Dzogchen. Mahayoga is Mahayoga. Anuyoga is Anuyoga. It is another question if you are only doing Santi Maha Sangha training to develop and have more knowledge and more background of the teaching. That is a different circumstance. Here you are presenting "Teacher's Training." That means you want to be teacher. You should think about that a little. If you want to be a teacher, you must be prepared. You don't have to study many volumes of texts like in Tibet and go deeply into the knowledge, but at least

you should learn this one small book well that I prepared for each level of Santi Maha Sangha training, starting with the Base, First and Second Levels. If you learn this very well, then you can also understand why I have asked the first question.

I am very sorry not to accept all of the eight people who presented themselves. I have the very serious responsibility of maintaining the knowledge of the teaching and therefore participants must present themselves seriously. That means participants should be very well prepared and feel it is important, then you can present yourselves. I would like to ask, particularly for the future, that anyone who wants to present this Teacher Training, the Base, First or Second Level, prepares well. If you are not prepared well, or are not sure of yourself, please don't present. It is very sad for me and for you. I am not happy when someone presents and does not pass. If someone doesn't present him or herself, there is no problem, but if someone does present him or herself and is not prepared, it may appear that I am very severe.

*[Rinpoche gives the diplomas to the three of eight participants one by one.]*



Santi Maha Sangha Teachers from left to right: Elio Guarisco, Jim Valby and Igor Berkhin

M SALVATORE

This is the fruit of our Santi Maha Sangha Teacher's Training. We should try to do our best for the future. I consider Santi Maha Sangha Teacher's Training something serious and important. You know that there are many Dzogchen Community places and people in this world; these places are not only related to the principle of organization, but to the principle of the teaching and knowledge. It is very important. We are getting older everyday and even after one day it seems we are already a little older. Time goes ahead. We are very fortunate that we are practitioners and as we get older we have a path. We have the special path of Dzogchen; we have knowledge, we receive transmission, so we know how to apply and integrate with it. We are not too worried about getting old. In this world there are many people getting old who only wait for death. That is not nice. One of the most important

aspects for Dzogchen Community people is the Dzogchen Community. The Dzogchen Community is your fortune, my fortune and our fortune. We know that, we take care of it and we do our best. You can reflect a little on how important the Dzogchen Community is for the continuation of the teaching and particularly for future generations. We do our best and proceed in that way.

Transcribed by Anastasia McGhee and Carisa O'Kelly  
Edited by Naomi Zeitz



# ASIAN NEWS

## LONG DISTANCE SPONSORSHIP PROJECTS

### Sponsor Regulations

#### What is Long-Distance Sponsorship?

*Long-distance Sponsorship* or simply *Sponsorship* is a conventional term used to indicate a kind of solidarity, very widespread nowadays, whose aim is to help the most needy children, families, schools, villages and communities to overcome moments of difficulty and to acquire abilities and means for self-development. Other terms are also used for this kind of solidarity: adoption at a distance, distant solidarity, distant support, distant moral adoption, entrustment, 'godparents', grant, etc. However it is called, its characteristic feature is that assistance is taken to the country of the person being helped without their having to leave their family or social and cultural surroundings, thereby sustaining the development of the local community where they live. It does not consist only of financial assistance but also requires active and responsible engagement on the part of the sponsor. That is why a moral rather than a legal commitment is asked for, meaning that the choice of solidarity is stronger and more binding than any contract.

#### Long-distance Sponsorship Projects by A.S.I.A.

A.S.I.A.'s commitment to the preservation of the traditional cultures of ethnic minorities is actualized not only through various development projects in education and in the conservation of the Tibetan cultural heritage but also through long-distance sponsorships of *the poorest Tibetan children and refugees in Tibet, India and Nepal.*

#### Why Tibet?

Currently the development level of Tibet is extremely low: the United Nations Human Development Index ranks Tibet as the 153<sup>rd</sup> out of a total number of 160 nations, between Chad and Djibouti. The per-capita income in 1990 was US\$80 and the average life expectancy was 40 years (the lowest index in the world). Since the Chinese occupation in 1950 about 135,000 Tibetans have been forced into exile in India, Nepal and Bhutan. Still today many Tibetans are fleeing their country, between 300 and 350 each month according to the assessment of the Tibetan Central Administration, undertaking a crippling two month journey on foot across the Himalayas. Some families entrust their children to those seeking exile, and in fact over 50% of the refugees are under 25 years old.

#### Goals

In the Tibetan settlements in India and Nepal long-distance sponsorships aim at the maintenance of children and young monks and nuns at their studies, in general from pre-school age to post-university, as well as the assistance of old people who are alone. In the schools and monasteries of the most remote regions of Tibet, support aims to guarantee access for all children, in particular the children of nomads, to competent basic education, and to preserve the ancient Tibetan culture through supporting monks and nuns studying at the monasteries and nunneries. The preservation of the culture, language and traditions of Tibet is, in fact, the key to maintaining the cultural and national identity of the people and to guarantee the prospect of economic and social development that could emancipate them from conditions of extreme poverty and illiteracy.

#### Duration

In general the assistance ends with the completion of the supported activity, for example at the end of the distant adopted child's education. To this end A.S.I.A. asks the sponsors for a commitment of at least three years and of six months' notice before termination of the sponsorship.

#### Termination

A sponsor wishing to terminate the sponsorship should give A.S.I.A. six months' notice, that is at the time of the last payment they intend to make, to enable the Association to find another person to continue the sponsorship. In the case that no notice is given A.S.I.A. continues to regularly send the contribution to the assisted parties in order to avoid that the children should undergo the setback of having their studies interrupted. However this weighs heavily on A.S.I.A.'s budget and we wish to avoid this situation as much as possible.

#### Economic commitment

The annual contribution requested amounts to a total of US\$360 per year, that is US\$30 per month, to sponsor a primary school-aged child (US\$470 per year to sponsor a student in higher education, and US\$250 per year to sponsor a monk in Galenteng or Simda Gonpas).



#### What we do with your contribution

The annual Long-Distance Sponsorship payment is thus divided: 80% are sent to the local counterparts to cover education fees, the children's board and lodging at school or monks' and nuns' lodging at the monastery or nunnery, medical assistance expenses or residence of the elderly at an old people's home; 10% for partial coverage of management costs such as postal, fax, telephone, email, stationery, personal and office rental expenses, etc; 10% for a Common Fund to feed a caution fund set up to contribute to the covering of unpaid payments until an alternative sponsor is found.

#### The Common Fund

As well as covering unpaid payments the Common Fund is also utilized to contribute to the costs incurred by the annual missions to monitor progress of the ventures in the countries where the sponsorship projects are under way. The Common Fund can also be fed by remittances sponsors may choose to make by means of specific payments or by supplementing their contributions. At the end of the year any residual funds in the Common Fund will be aggregated in the balance sheet as donations to A.S.I.A. and utilized for the partial financing of one of the micro-projects in the Tibetan settlements in India and Nepal or in one of the education development projects realized in Tibet.

#### Local Project Management

For management *in loco* A.S.I.A. relies on local institutions and makes use of the collaboration of referent agents or local coun-

terparts, usually the education director of the institute or monastery or nunnery, who indicate the cases in need of help on the basis of general criteria provided for by the project and of their knowledge of the local situation; furthermore they conduct the correspondence between sponsor and sponsored and undertake the management and distribution of the economic assistance according to agreements made and the aims of the project. Money is rarely if ever paid directly to the child or family, as it would prove difficult to monitor its actual use. The referent agent then sends the account report of the management of the funds to A.S.I.A., which constantly corroborates operations also by means of annual monitoring missions.



PHOTOS BY ROMAIN PIRO

#### Correspondence

In long-distance sponsorships there is an exchange of letters and photographs between the sponsored person and the sponsor that often leads to a deep and gratifying personal relationship. The letters, written in English, should be sent to the local agent, whose details are provided at the start of the sponsorship. It is always necessary to clearly specify one's name and Sponsor Code as well as the name and Roll Number of the adopted person, which are also provided by A.S.I.A. at the start of the long-distance sponsorship. The frequency of the correspondence varies according to the type of the project, local social conditions and the workload of the local agent often working without adequate technical means. There are also various difficulties to overcome, due mostly to language, cultural, social and economic differences, as well as to distance and at times to the inefficiency of the local postal service.

#### Gifts

It is advised to restrict the sending of gifts and to select the kinds of gifts sent, for example by choosing group games, so as not to create situations of inequality among the distant adopted persons or to create excessive expectations with regard to a distant unknown 'godparent' or 'benefactor' whose standard of living is very different from that of the adopted person. In general it is advisable to send presents and gift packs, also when these are specifically requested, in agreement with the local agent, and also to evaluate the possibility of assigning to the agent the purchase of gifts locally.

#### Journeys

Obviously travel to India or Nepal to meet the distant adopted persons is welcome, and A.S.I.A. is available to offer pertinent advice and suggestions. It is more difficult, however, to invite the adopted person to one's own home country, and this is not only due to the difficulty of obtaining a passport and exit

visa. The guideline offered by A.S.I.A. in assistance policy does not encourage bringing to Europe or the U.S. persons (especially if very young) whose totally different culture could conflict with the western lifestyle and cause problems of various kinds.

#### How to start a long distance sponsorship

To start a long-distance sponsorship it is sufficient to make payment of the annual or bi-annual (every 6 months) amount by bank transfer or check, clearly indicating *the name and address of you, the sponsor* and specifying in the reason for payment *Long Distance Sponsorship Project*. It is also necessary to complete and return to A.S.I.A. the *Registration Form*.

#### In the U.S:

BY POST: Make checks out to "ASIA-USA" – Memo: Adoption At a Distance Project – P.O. Box 124, Conway, MA 01341-0124, USA  
BANK TRANSFER: direct deposit in the name of "ASIA-USA" – Memo: Adoption At a Distance Project – Bank of Western Massachusetts, 45 Federal Street, Greenfield, MA 01301, USA, Account #1236141502, Routing #011802488.

#### In Europe:

BY POST: C/c postale n. 78687001 made out to "A.S.I.A. Onlus" Sponsorship Project – Via S. Martino della Battaglia 31, 00185 Roma (Italy).  
BANK TRANSFER: Monte dei

Paschi di Siena S.p.a. Filiale di Arcidosso (GR) Italy. CAB 72160 ABI 01030 Conto n. 5622.72 made out to "A.S.I.A. Onlus" Sponsorship Project – Via S. Martino della Battaglia 31, 00185 Roma (Italy). After receipt of funds have been confirmed by A.S.I.A., we'll send you formal notification of the sponsorship, assign a Sponsorship Code, send the sponsor the personal form of the adopted person, receipt for the payment and all relative material, and finally, communicate to the local agent the details of the sponsor and of the start of the long-distance sponsorship.

#### Adjustments

Long-distance sponsorship can start at any time of the year, however for reasons of administrative clarity and precision it has been decided to unify the deadline dates of all the sponsorships. Thus whoever is starting sponsorship at a time different from the months established for payment (June and December) has two choices: 1.) to pay the sum needed to cover the whole semester or 2.) to level the adjustment for the year, that is for the number of months remaining until the set deadline. For example, someone starting a sponsorship in March who has decided to make 2 six-month installments will have to level the months of April, May and June: US\$30 x 4 months = US\$120, and from June will be able to pay regularly according to the deadlines. Should they instead decide to pay annually then they should level the months remaining until December: US\$30 x 10 months = US\$300.

#### Subsequent payments

In subsequent payments it is necessary to indicate the Sponsor Code, especially if the person making the payment is not the sponsor.

#### Method of payments

Payments should be made with fixed deadlines on the basis of two choices: Two *six-month payments of US\$180* to be made by 30 June and 31 December; One *single annual payment of US\$360* to be

*continued on page 23*



## KA-TER TRANSLATION PROJECT A Message from Oliver Leick

HOW TO HELP AND HAVE THE POSSIBILITY TO OWN ONE OF THREE BEAUTIFUL STATUES, GREEN TARA, GARAB DORJE or DORJE LEGPA

Hello everybody,

I want to thank all donors who have supported to activities of the Ka-ter Translation Project up to now. Without this help, we would not be able to go ahead with our work on the translations of Dzogchen Tantras and on the Training for Translators from Tibetan. Elio Guarisco, Adriano Clemente and Jim Valby are continuing their translation work on the Dzogchen Tantras in December 2005 and also in February/March 2006 in Margarita. Due to their effort and dedication to translate sacred Tibetan texts into English, we will soon have the possibility to read these Tantras in our own languages.

If you would like to support this important work, we have three very special offers for you:

### GREEN TARA STATUE

If you send us a donation of a minimum of 555 Euro, you will receive a fantastic statue of Green Tara. We only have three statues in stock, so the first three people who want to donate at least 555 Euro will get a statue of Green Tara. The statue is 8,5 inch or 21 cm high and 6,5 inch or 16 cm wide. It is fully gold plated and weights about 1,5 kilo. Please have a look at the statue at our website:  
<http://www.ssi-austria.at/ssi-engl/shop-engl-tara.htm>

### GARAB DORJE STATUE

For a donation of minimum of 1000 Euro, you will get an incredible statue of Garab Dorje. It is fully gold plated, is 13 inches or 33 cm high and 9 inches or 23,5 cm wide. There is only one statue available, so the first one will get this statue. Please have a look at the statue at our website:  
<http://www.ssi-austria.at/ssi-engl/shop-engl-garabdorje.htm>

### DORJE LEGPA STATUE

We also have a wonderful statue of Dorje Legpa. It is 14,5 inch or 35,5 cm high and 11 inch or 27 cm wide. It is excellently carved and has a gold plated face. If you donate a minimum of 750 Euro for the Ka-ter Translation Project, you will receive this statue of Dorje Legpa. We only have one of these excellent statues. Please have a look at the statue at our website:  
<http://www.ssi-austria.at/ssi-engl/shop-engl-dorjelegpa.htm>

In case you appreciate our work but you don't want to get a statue, you can also make an online donation with your credit card. Please visit our web safe site:  
<https://ssl13.inode.at/ssi-austria.at/creditcardoffering.htm>

Thank you for your attention.  
Very best wishes,

Oliver F. Leick  
Shang-Shung Institute Austria  
[www.ssi-austria.at](http://www.ssi-austria.at)

## book review

Ian Baker . *The Heart of the World: A Journey to the Last Secret Place*. New York: Penguin Press, 2004 (511 pages).

Part travel narrative, part philosophical reflection, and weighing in at a hefty five hundred pages, this is an enjoyable book, but requires a certain amount of leisure time to fully enjoy. The author is an intrepid trekker and explorer, as well as a devoted student of the teachings of Tantrism and Dzogchen.

The author, Ian Baker, becomes intrigued with the Tibetan tradition of "beyuls"—secret or "hidden" lands described in ancient Buddhist texts. The Western notion of Shangri-La, which was popularized in twentieth century fiction, is inspired by the idea of these hidden treasure-lands.

The particular beyul that intrigues Baker is Pemako. One of Guru Rinpoche's termas states, "In [Pemako's] secret chakra, a place blessed by the wisdom dakinis...bloom pink colored flowers. The sweet scent of these flowers can induce bliss...Eating them one can survive for years (p. 121).

Pemako is reputed to be found in Tsangpo, a gorge deeper than the Grand Canyon, located at the intersection of Tibet, Bhutan, and India, through which flows the mighty Tsangpo River. At one point the river becomes lost from sight, flanked by steep, sheer cliffs. Tibetan legend states that in this inaccessible spot is the

highest waterfall in Asia—the "Hidden Falls of the Brahmaputra," behind which is the door to Yangsang, the hidden land of immortality, which can be reached only by those whose hearts have been purified. Baker consulted with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and with Chatral Rinpoche, who both encouraged him on this deeper journey of exploration, which involved deep meditation and study, and not just traversing physical terrain.

In 1924 the British explorer Frank Kingdon Ward penetrated into Pemako, but was unable to find a way into the five-mile area where the fabled waterfall was located.

This was the goal of five expeditions that Baker participated in from 1993, when the Chinese first lifted its ban on foreign visitors, to 1998, when he and his companions successfully reached the waterfall and documented it on film for the National Geographic, Channel: Secrets of the Tsang Po.

In the course of the journey, Baker and his companions must confront many obstacles, inner and outer. The external obstacles include uncooperative Chinese officials, unreliable porters, sheer cliffs, torrential rains, and torment by leeches and hordes of insects.

Baker is as obsessed with reaching his destination as Captain Ahab was with the White Whale. For Baker it is not about the ego-rush of being the first

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Afghanistan. After Islam conquered Shambala, all the Buddhist practitioners were killed and eliminated. For centuries no one knew the history of Shambala, but Shambala is the source of very important teachings. This place is related to the transmission and teaching. For that reason, for practitioners, Shambhala still exists in a pure dimension and that pure dimension is more related with a personal condition, not geographically. That is the same for Oddiyana and Truja.

*What is common to and the difference between the lineage of Dzogchen that you are teaching and what the Dalai Lama teaches?*  
I don't know the difference. The Dzogchen that I teach is related to my transmission and my understanding.

*What is the enlightened mind?*  
Enlightened mind is our primordial potentiality.

*What is the practice of your teaching?*  
My teaching practice is that first of all you try to understand that everything is unreal, you don't give very much importance to things, and you try to be aware. Practicing Dzogchen means that you try to be in the real knowledge and through that you know how to get in that state and in order to do that you need the teaching and a teacher.

*Is your teaching more ancient than the teaching of Bön?*  
Dzogchen is much more ancient.

*When a human dies, can he be reborn only as a human or also as some other being?*  
In general, we say there are six lokas in samsara. There are six different dimensions because we have that cause and we have six kinds of emotions. The different lokas are the result of different emotions. Of course a human can become cat, a cat can become a human, if there is cause and effect. Many people say: "How is it possible that we are human and we become a cat?" Maybe until you die you feel you are more advanced than your cat, but when you are in the Bardo you and your cat can be more or less the same. (applause)

*What is the reason for the spreading of the Dzogchen teaching in Ukraine, an Orthodox Christian country?*  
I already said that I did not come here to spread the Dzogchen teaching. I am not a missionary. I don't do that. That is negative in my teaching. If people are interested, I try to help them understand what Dzogchen is. It seems you are interested to know what is Dzogchen, and so I explain it to you.

*Are there any explanations of heaven and hell in your teaching?*  
As long as we have good and bad, the dualistic condition always exists. Sometimes we can explain it in a very rich way, but in the teaching that is very relative. The idea of heaven and hell, cause and effect, are dualistic. What I am trying to understand and make you understand is a teaching beyond cause and effect.

*What is the difference between Dzogchen and Zen?*  
Zen is a Sutra teaching. Dzogchen is self-liberation.

*What do you think about astral traveling?*  
Astral traveling? I enjoy that. (applause)

*What is the relationship of Dzogchen teaching to the sense of humor?*  
You mean why do some Lamas laugh, for example? There is no particular relationship. It is a way of manifesting your feelings. You have a physical body, why shouldn't expressions manifest?

*Are you going to realize the body of light in this lifetime?*  
I do not have any kind of hope. I am just trying to be in that knowledge.

*Is it really possible to give direct introduction into Dzogchen by video, does such a transmission really exist?*  
You can't receive direct introduction of any kind by video. I prepared these video transmissions for people who are interested to receive transmission because people who are interested cannot always come to me and I am not able to go everywhere. So three times a year on three days, like the anniversary of Garab Dorje, we use two videos. The first video explains how you should follow. When the time arrives, the very precise moment, you can use this video and receive the transmission. You do not receive it only by video, but at the same moment I give the transmission wherever I am.

*When we sleep, where does our awareness go?*  
If you are a good practitioner your awareness may also continue when you sleep. Otherwise, when you sleep so does your awareness.

*A man would like to receive initiation into practice.*  
If someone is interested they are free. They can follow. I do not limit or invite anyone.

*I perceive this world as a dream, dreaming in the night and dreaming in the day, and sometimes I am afraid that when I wake up, where will I wake up?*  
You will wake up in a Bardo.

*What is your attitude towards Jesus Christ?*  
I don't know what my attitude is, but I consider him an enlightened being.

*When you are giving this talk, are you distracted or not?*  
I cannot confess to you that I am always present or I am distracted.

*What happens with the mind of a person who commits suicide? How does this action affect future lives?*  
Our future life is related with action. Suicide is a very heavy negative action. Of course, the consequences are not good. There may be a very heavy consequence.

*What should we do in a serious situation? Is it enough to remain present and aware or we should wait till the situation solves itself?*  
If we are present it means that we

know what the condition is. If we know how the condition is, we can do our best. It is not necessary that we wait for something to happen. In any case, always being present is very important!

*How are you going to manifest in the next lifetime?*  
There are words of Buddha in a Sutra: What you did in your past life you can see in your present body. To know how you will be in the future, you examine your present actions. You concentrate on it a little and you will understand.

*How many people in the world practice Dzogchen and how many of them got enlightened in the last fifty years?*  
I have no any idea how many people are practicing Dzogchen or how many people got enlightened. That is not my interest. My interest is that when I see people are interested, I do my best. I already told you that I am not interested in converting anyone.

*Which difficulties can a person have who didn't receive direct introduction from a teacher, but only studied Dzogchen from books?*  
If you had a very high level of experience of the Dzogchen teaching in a past life and you read books about it, maybe you can wake up, but that is very difficult. It is something like winning the lottery. That is why you always need transmission, teachers, etc.

*What are the main qualities of manifestation of Dzogchen?*  
Being aware. That is the best manifestation.

*Which type of Western mind does Dzogchen attract?*  
I don't think that the Western mind or Eastern mind is different. More important is that you know what the difference is between mind and its real nature.

*Do you eat meat?*  
Of course, I like meat.

*How can one overcome spiritual laziness?*  
It depends. First you must understand what laziness is. Sometimes you think you are lazy, but it can also be due to some secondary causes that you do not to succeed. In any case, in Dzogchen struggling with laziness is not a good way. It is more important that you relax and are continually present; then you can discover why you are lazy.

*Are there any secrets in the Dzogchen teaching?*  
Yes, we have many secrets.

Okay, this is the end of our questions, now I want to say goodbye to everybody and thank you for your attention and for listening with interest.

Transcribed by Andrei Besedin  
Edited by Naomi Zeitz



# Dzogchen Community Reorganization Project

## Yeshi Namkhai's Presentation Merigar, August 19, 2005

We are here this morning for a meeting of the Gars and Gakyils. I would like to know which Gars and Gakyils are here - Spain, Germany, Switzerland, France, Argentina, Austria, Britain, Mexico, the Czech Republic, Holland, the USA. We do not have anyone from Australia. We'll talk about what has been done and what the goal of our reorganization project is. The first part (of the presentation) will be about what is happening right now. The second part will be about what we have to do and why we are here.

### What's going on? The Reasons

There are three reasons why we are here today – the first is to sustain the growth of the Community because there is not only a growth in the number of people, there is also expansion in more parts of the world. If it's just a question of people just increasing in one place, you can make room for them, but if they increase in different places, it is more complex. This is why we use the word 'diffusion' in the sense that it is a geographical expansion as well as in numbers. Rinpoche goes to different places and in each place he goes, different things happen. New motivations and new interests arise and people take part in the life of the Community, so we need to sustain this growth in some way. The second reason is to ensure the financial stability of the Community that, up until a short time ago, was based on Rinpoche's journeys and retreats. Since we've been around for about thirty years, it's time to modernize, to pass from being an old organization to being a more modern one.

**The Choice: to Cut or to Grow?**  
At this point, we can see that the Community is not really poor and has economic resources, however, over the years these resources have gradually been consumed so there was a choice either to make a reduction in costs, to sell the land, equipment and assets that we have, or, the alternative was, to improve the organization and its activities and become bigger. Obviously Rinpoche's choice was to become bigger. Obviously he chose the more difficult of the two choices.

**All together**  
We started to create a plan to define what was necessary for this growth. What are the indispensable things? The first thing was not to have a lot of different organizations but only a single one because it is easier to run a single entity rather than several. We have to modify things and change them a little bit. If I have a lot of objects on the table, it is much more difficult to change them one by one. It is easier to unify them into one object and just to change that. This means that everything should be the same for everybody. All the organizations founded by Rinpoche are one entity because he is the head of all the organizations.

Let's say at this moment that we have only one organization, and that's the Dzogchen Community.

**Dzogchen Community 'Brand'**  
This is the new graphic image



that represents the Dzogchen Community [see graphic at top of this article] that you can see on your membership cards. We have chosen this graphic image to represent the need to know what the relationship is between the various entities and how they are legally connected. Obviously there are some entities that have different aims in what they are trying to do. For example, the Shang-Shung Institute has a different objective to the Dzogchen Community, just as A.S.I.A. has a different objective - it is more pointed towards activities that are actually in Tibet while the SSI operates more in the cultural sector, more on the preservation and diffusion of culture. But when it comes down to the final point, it is always the diffusion of the Dzogchen Teaching and Tibetan culture. The idea is to show all these entities to the public as a "brand", a single entity that is represented by the Dzogchen Community, and whenever this entity undertakes an activity, it is identified with this "brand". This is the basic idea. It is not some kind of fantasy. It is the way big organizations in the world work at the moment. That's the way the government works, even in a small country.

**Every Gar Specializes**  
We have all these Gars that are connected with the Community but which, in actual fact, act as separate entities at the moment because they are far away from each other - geographically they are on different continents. In order to collaborate in a better way, we decided that each Gar should specialize in something because even if you think that one person is similar to another, they have different habits that are rooted in their cultures. Even if we write a beautiful book that explains everything, certainly an Italian, an American or a Japanese person would see it in completely different ways, so if you are asked to organize a Gar, a structure, or to interpret the rules, everyone will do it in a different way: an Italian won't follow the rules, while a Japanese might follow the rules to the letter without even thinking about the reason that they were created. So every time we have to reinvent what is actually there. At this point we decided that each Gar should specialize and should have a particular activity. Obviously the choice of this specialization depends on the entity's experience over a period of time and this explains why we started with Merigar, because we had to start with the oldest center where there is more

administrative experience.  
**Principle of Transparency**  
Obviously in order to make everything work this will require a radical change that will be built

on the principle of transparency. I think that everybody has had some experience of the recent changes that have taken place in Europe. Almost all countries that make up the European Union have had to change their attitude towards their own citizens. You have all received a lot of information from your governments in which they state that the center of the country is the citizen. So the citizen is entrusted with the maximum amount of information possible. This is what is called transparency – it means that the citizens know what the government is doing so that when you vote, you know what you are voting for. For us, we are not particularly interested in the democratic process of voting, but because we want different continents to work together, everything has to be open to the light of the sun. In one of the books that Rinpoche has written there's a phrase that says that the principal duties of the Gakyil is to guarantee that Community activities are carried out legally. So the concepts in that book have actually been made concrete. It has been interpreted in a way that brings it into a modern context,

**What's going on? The reasons.**  
The Dzogchen Community needs to grow, to be diffused, and has to be financially stable and modern. Why do we have to become modern? Certainly it's more comfortable, it's much easier with the help of technology, and obviously if we have communications all over the world, how are we going to become modern without technology? People in Australia can't call me at 3 o'clock in the morning to ask me certain things. So we have to change our methods and use technology for things we used to do by telephone and fax. I don't know how many of you work for businesses, but technology is expensive. It actually costs more than land, so it's much easier to buy land for a Gar than technology because it's not enough just to buy a computer. You need a lot of things in order for it to function. This kind of customization usually costs a lot of money. From the point of view of the organization, we need to write these things down. In Rinpoche's document the requirements are indications that we should use our intelligence and work with circumstances in order that things function in the best possible way. Therefore we have created a structure with the same logic without going into every little detail about what each person should do. Let's hope we don't need to because we aren't a big

company and it seems a bit useless to go into what every person needs to do detail by detail.

**Organized**  
We have created a set of 'roles'

and 'methods'. For those who have difficulty in digesting this type of language, the 'role' refers to the type of behavior I expect from a person, not what that person does but what I expect him/her to do. There's a margin of freedom in this. The 'method' is no more than what is written down about how these things should be done. Why do we write this down? So that it doesn't have to be reinvented each time. So in order to make things better for each continent and each city, it isn't enough to define what each place has to do. Each place has to communicate and collaborate in a better way and in order to do that we need to use new technologies and new ways of working. The final goal of this type of work is so that the Gars, the Lings and each member can participate more intensely in the life of the Community.

**Learning**  
What has been discovered in the business world in the last few years is that the difference between one organization and another – we're not talking about any kind of organization but non-profit or organizations in particular – is knowledge management, or knowing how to learn. Learning how to use and communicate this knowledge makes a huge difference. I don't believe that anyone is in the Community unless they are willing to learn something. Our final objective is realization, so we're here to learn something, right? We've also been taught that everyday life is important and that the Sangha is of maximum importance. So in order to better integrate with this, we've adopted the ways most corporations currently use. I think that this daily life in the outside world shouldn't be so different from what we do within the Community. Why not use the best of that world. Up to now we have worked on the results. In fact the Community valorizes what we do through the results that we get. If a retreat goes very well everybody is really satisfied and says how well it was organized. The problem is that nobody has actually thought about the 'style' or the 'form', which are very important. Nothing of what is done concerning the Teaching is valued on its results only. If we had to judge on results only, as practitioners we should be worried. There is also a style, a form, and an interest towards a certain kind of culture. For example, we chose today (for this meeting) because it's a really good day according to the Tibetan calendar. This is called 'style'. In order to learn we have to have

everything, not just the results. Unless we really know what went into that result - the feelings, the organization, every aspect of what went into it - we cannot really assimilate that result as knowledge. Those emotions that we feel are important, but to archive those emotions is difficult. So we are going to try to reach this type of objective because it's very easy to archive the result.

### Re-engineering the Teaching archive

In order to do this we are going to use the technology that is available today [re-engineering of teaching archive] and there is also technology that we can use in order to improve preservation of the teaching. We are not the best people in the world and we are going to try to enter into relationships with similar organizations. We'll learn about ourselves but we'll also learn about what other people do, because it's crazy to think that we are the best. There is always some better who organizes things in a better way. One of the things we can do is to re-engineer the teaching archive so we preserve it for the future using modern technology. This is something we are really interested in.

### What has been done? The Organizational Model

We've drawn up a new organizational model of how people should relate to each other and a basic re-organizational structure, which has been done in a Buddhist style. We have identified two areas: the area of relations and the area of activities, because we have said that the results are only relatively interesting for us. It is in relationship that we discover the emotional side. Remember that this isn't just particular to the Community. It is also done in businesses; it is something normal, not something we've invented for this one project because in an organization, if an employee is happy, he works better.

The job description was introduced although it is not really indispensable, because we realized right away that there is a lot of confusion between the activities that are carried out in karma yoga and the activities that need to be done in order for the Gar to go ahead. I'll repeat it for the umpteenth time, Karma Yoga is a practice. The Gar has to go ahead anyway. If Karma Yoga fits in with the job description, fine! If not, we can do some other kind of Karma Yoga. In other words, it may be better to go and cut grass instead of doing the accounts. So we have to balance the needs of the Gar with the needs of the person because we are not machines. We have emotions; so let's improve the way that we work with these emotions. This is a little example.

### Business Model – Short and long term initiatives

In the document that we have prepared, the Gakyil is responsible for short and long term projects, the co-ordination of the Project Managers, administration of resources, communication on

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the activities carried out and safeguarding the principles of the teaching. Furthermore, this isn't the principal thing but a support, the Gakyil has the responsibility for the management of the Gar - today this seems to be one of the most important things - and responsible for the coordination of voluntary work, for example, Karma Yoga.

The chain of command is like this: the Gakyil defers to the International Gakyil, which defers to the President. This is a classic organizational chart. We've started from the President - in any organization there is a President. Clearly that's the Master. Then there is the International Gakyil, which should give guidelines. It is not that the International Gakyil gives information; it is an executive group and has to interpret the will of the President. Then there are lots of Gakyils and Gars.

In the Red Gakyil section, the areas we have identified are maintenance and supply. In the Yellow section there is management, accounting, membership, and in the Blue section there is teaching and knowledge. The Gakyil may change every year but there needs to be some people who remain and work as points of reference.

#### Organizational Model - Activities

We have already said that one type of Gar will be involved in one type of activity while another Gar will be involved in a different one. Up to now we've been talking about relations - people, emotions etc. But as far as what we actually have to do, we'll do it using the logic of the project. It's not that just any kind of thing is done at the Gar. For example, say I have to clean the Gonpa. The project is not that I have to clean the Gonpa. The project is a structure. For example, the last summer retreats at Merigar were accomplished using this type of logic. If a person comes from another Gar and asks me what the budget was for this retreat, we have it. If someone asks: whom do we need to organize the retreat, how many people do we need, are they from outside, from inside, what do they have to do, what errors did we make, what results did we have; all this information has been archived. After that, because the retreats have just finished, we analyse the feedback. We need a kind of cyclic process going on that begins with a strategy and ends with the evaluation of the result so we can correct and improve from what we have learned, which is more or less what is happening now. Now we are missing all these little pieces: define strategy - communicate objectives - analyse - propose - evaluate - activities plan and resources - realize and give feedback - performance and results evaluation. For example, how do you analyse or evaluate a proposal or do a cost benefit analysis? You do it by defining what we have to do before we actually do it and understand what resources are necessary to do it. Then at this point we have to realize these things and give feedback on them. You must evaluate the project in the general sense for the

Community.

In a few words, to understand what will happen in the future? Rinpoche will define where we need to arrive. The higher levels will translate that vision into projects and going down slowly to lower levels the concrete things will be realized. This is the same thing that is written in the blue book for the Gakyils. The only thing that is completely new is that it is not useful to evaluate



only a single project. In order to understand the Community, we have to evaluate all those projects. That's why we need technology - to see if we are actually achieving what we set out to achieve.

You have to have a minimum level of skill in order to understand this. Merigar is here for that. One of the most important specializations of Merigar is to distribute this style of working. I'm thinking of a farm, years ago - the father would go out and plough the fields, the mother looked after the children, the eldest sons went out to help in the fields or care for the animals, and every day there was something to do. Let's think of the Community like a farm. Merigar takes care of these activities: management and training; this is one of its specializations.

#### Organizational Model - Workflows and Procedures

At this point we have actually written down what has to be done - this is called workflow, how things are done; the basis on which they are done. If you are cooking something, it is the recipe. Procedure and workflow really mean the same thing. We have found some areas in which there are really big difficulties. A typical area is the job of the secretary, which is very expensive for a Gar. Or the administration, the accountancy. We have identified the workflow situation, we've development the equipment, or we've bought a machine that will do it or a tool that we can use in order to deal with this work. Or we have evaluated that we need a different kind of skill. So that's how you do the training.

#### Business model - Membership

Now we get to the part that's connected with money and the definition of the new membership as a primary income source. It is the key to accessing or to participating in Community life and is also a key to accessing the services. Now we are working on web casts and we are trying unify things in a way that membership connects to all the other things - publications, training, etc. - all of which are based on being a member of the Community. Everything that I have spoken about up to this point has been analysed and approved by Rinpoche. So this membership will become something very important. It will be the result of all this work. And if this is going to work, it has to work in harmony with the organizational model

that we presented before. It is easy to talk about the costs of membership and general costs, but it is difficult to say how the costs are covered and what the organization should do.

We've prepared an eighty-five-page document to deal with this. This has been signed and approved by Rinpoche. It goes into much more detail of what we have been talking about up to

now. We've started with these elements and this is how we are going concretely into action.

#### Business Model - Yellow, Red, Blue Gakyil

For the yellow, the resolution of financial problems.

The valuable advantage of membership.

How to lower costs with the same results.

For the red we need more members, volunteers and consultants. So we can also have people from outside to do the work because we don't always have the necessary people.

More satisfaction.

Better organization and workflow.

The blue needs to have more capabilities and knowledge.

More projects, events, cultural activities.

Knowledge and culture retention. This means that we are going to define long and short-term initiatives over a number of years.

To have specialized Gars:

Merigar: will take care knowledge and management

Kunsangar: supplies

Tashigar North: retreats and events

Tashigar South: This is a little more difficult - Marketing and sales

Tsegylgar: Retail, sales force.

America is usually a very flourishing market.

Namgyalgar: we haven't identified the field yet.

Then there will be another Gar in Asia and one in Africa.

*Question from the audience:* I do know the meaning of the word 'supply' and 'retail' but only in a business sense. What are what and we supplying are we selling retail?

*Reply:* There are two areas of supply: raw materials like audio tapes and paper for publications, those things which we can transform, and then the sale of goods just like a shop. We'll make one shop for the whole of the Community organized just like a typical supermarket.

As far as retail is concerned, they develop what we sell, in terms of the object, how it is packaged, and how it is distributed etc. When you get to the retail stage you've got all the stuff, you have a catalogue, and you distribute and sell it. So this group will do the cataloguing. Do you see the difference? Is it clear?

*Question:* So when we talk about selling, these objects are books and tapes.

*Reply:* The most important thing we sell is membership. Is the concept clear? It is a difficult work. In order for this membership card to have value, all the organizations that we have mentioned will be identified through this membership card. If I have this membership card, I finance all of the activities of this entity of which I am a part and there will certainly be something of interest to me.

For example, if I want to give money to help the victims of the tsunami, I may not be interested in the Teachings, but through my membership I know that I will be supporting A.S.I.A. that is a support agency.

#### Brand Recognition

The positive effect of the organization is that the Community and the Teachings will go ahead so having more brands means a more complete offering; that's why we have these other organizations within the Dzogchen Community. There will also be partners, not just those entities founded by Rinpoche. It is a simplification of market logic. At the moment we have not arrived there, but ultimately membership will give access for everything.

Some of these organizations are already on the market for example ASIA, which, in the Italian market, is up in second or third place. It's quite high in its particular market. If I want to choose somewhere to donate my money, ASIA is number two or three in Italy out of a list of organizations of its kind.

You see, all these organizations are founded by the same person, a person who, wherever he moves is known without any need for publicity, his name is recognized, not the names of the organizations. Let's try to do things in a way that the names of the organizations will become recognized so we can separate what is sacred from what is profane.

Many of these organizations work only because Rinpoche's name is there and that's it, not because they are really strong in the market place. There are many organizations that are much stronger than ours because they have a market viewpoint, rather than just Rinpoche's name attached. We absolutely don't care about doing some business. All we are interested in is the field of culture. We've got no interest whatsoever in making war on the Chinese. This is the guideline of Rinpoche and this is how we are going ahead. But if we don't have a structure and a method similar to these business models in order to go ahead, we risk not being competitive. That's the problem.

#### Prospective for development

Just to give you an idea of the level of complexity, from that simple scheme that you have already seen, we have made a scheme for development. There is the financial side and the membership side, internal processes,

learning and growth. When you move a piece of this, you have to rebalance everything; otherwise nothing works in the mechanism. This structure has to work for all the Gars. It's not something simple in which we just introduce membership and don't have any more problems; otherwise we would have done that a long time ago. We've tried that simple way of doing it in the past and if it had worked we wouldn't be in the position in which we are today. What we did in the past was that we introduced a membership card but we actually lost a number of members. There are lots of people who come to retreats but who aren't part of the Community. At that point my question is, "Why do you come here to participate in retreats but never become a part of the Community? It's your problem, not mine." This project takes this problem on. Maybe people are used to the illusory world of TV; advertising. Perhaps this little window on reality becomes necessary, because historically the Community has been a little "wild" and not everybody likes this. And it's got nothing to do with the principle of the Teaching. But obviously if I give responsibility to someone who is used to living in a tree - it could be a really nice person - he would put the Gar up in the trees and lot of people wouldn't accept that.

#### Tools and Technology

What are the tools that we have already created? We have started improvement in the network and connectivity through the Internet. We are working on this through fibre optics. We have introduced a logical system of management and we have worked out software that we can use for one Gar or many Gars. While we are going through the process of integration, by pressing one button, we can give to Rinpoche one piece of paper letting him know how much we have and how much we have spent. This is the kind of information that normally we have to do loads of different telephone calls and finally a few months something arrives. It's ridiculous when people come to Rinpoche and say that they need a roof for their center and ask him to give them a hand. His job is to give Teachings, not to run the administration. He doesn't feel very happy doing this kind of thing. Let's get people who know how to do this type of work to do it.

We've got a rough outline here for collaboration on the Internet, a form of technology that let's us all be in the same place at the same time. The web casts have now become a routine activity and next year there will be something new along these lines every month, something will be transmitted through that means. That way we can also reduce the burden of traveling on Rinpoche. This is a chart of what we have actually done. This is a hardware computer system that we have already set up. There are sites for collaboration and there's the software in order to manage it. Here there are a whole of list of things from the accounting to supplying, sales, buying, etc. We've done it in such a way that we can have a vision of the Community as a whole. It's not that we are calling up somebody in another place

continued on page 11



# A SPIRIT OF THE XVII SECOLO

by Raimondo Bultrini

When clouds, with thunder, wind and hail suddenly disturbed the Master’s teaching on the morning of the last day of the August Retreat at Merigar, a number of people immediately connected the fury of the elements with the wrath of the gyalpos because of Rinpoche’s direct and precise allusions to their evil nature.

“Strange, the weather forecast said nothing about this...” Rinpoche quipped. And since those who follow the Dzogchen teachings do not take refuge in strange beings but instead in the true teachings of the Dharma, symbolically all of us participating in the retreat were forced to seek refuge inside the Gonpa – the ship of samsara – while an electrician sorted out the problems with the sound system.

So, the gyalpos. An ordinary reader, who knows nothing about such things, picking up the Mirror, would certainly be surprised to read about spirits, mysterious entities who control or can control even climatic conditions. In ancient Tibet, and still today (I personally attended a rite at a Nyingmapa monastery in Dharamsala which was followed by a shower) it is common practice in several Gonpas to invoke rain. And just to connect this anecdote with a case and a personage that might directly relate to the story I am about to recount, one of the Lamas celebrated for their ability to ‘evoke rain’ was Pabongka Rinpoche, a prelate of the Gelugpa school who lived at the start of the last century. Pabongka, who used to be summoned by Dalai Lama XIII to this end, to places suffering from drought, was in fact the main propagator in the modern era of the cult of Gyalpo (or Dorje) Shugden.

When the Dalai Lama XIII sent him a formal letter asking why he repeatedly disobeyed his order not to give the transmission of the initiation of the spirit of this gyalpo (see Rinpoche’s teachings concerning this class of beings), Pabongka answered that he had received the transmission for the worship of this being from his mother’s family. Nevertheless, at least formally he apologized to the Dalai Lama and offered the traditional white *khatag* with some precious coins.

The importance of Pabongka in the story we are discussing is tied mainly, but not only, to the fact that it was he who transmitted the practice of Gyalpo Shugden to his young student Trijang Rinpoche, who in the 1950’s in his turn transmitted it to the present Dalai Lama XIV, whose junior Tutor he was.

At that time His Holiness was little more than a child, and all around he could feel the anxiety of the high Lamas, government officials and dignitaries on receiving the dramatic news from the Eastern front, in particular from Derge, where the advancing Chinese army was carrying out ferocious massacres of the civilian population (Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche’s own family suffered through these

events and subsequently his father and a brother died in prison).

Those who know history know that in that situation at the Potala, with the support of the state oracles, in particular the Nechung oracle, the decision was taken to bring forward the official investiture and assign temporal power to the Dalai Lama, even though the seventeen-year-old Tenzin Gyatso did not feel ready for such responsibility. In due course events necessitated the

*Pabongka, who used to be summoned by Dalai Lama XIII to places suffering from drought, was in fact the main propagator in the modern era of the cult of Gyalpo (or Dorje) Shugden.*

flight and subsequent escape of the Dalai Lama and a considerable retinue to the Indian border (this occurred some years before his eventual exile in 1959). In Yatung monastery (as narrated by His Holiness himself in his long account of his experiences with Gyalpo Shugden recounted at the end of the 70’s at Dharamsala) on the advice of his junior Tutor Trijang Rinpoche and with the help of the abbot of the local monks, the young Dalai Lama started consulting the Shugden medium because, he explained, the Nechung and Gadong oracles had remained in Lhasa.

The answers he obtained from the divinations seemed reasonable, or at least that is how they were presented to him, and slowly His Holiness started to trust this spirit, who since his childhood had been presented to him as an enlightened being and special protector of the Gelugpa school. Unaware of the spirit’s secret history in which, by tradition, he was an enemy of the lineage of the Dalai Lamas, His Holiness started to invoke him in his daily practice, and a number of political decisions – although this has never been explicitly stated by the Dalai Lama – in those years may have been influenced by the divinations of the Shugden medium.

The relationship between the Dalai Lama and the gyalpo (which however never reached the stage of ‘life entrustment’ or taking refuge) lasted many more years and the followers of this spirit still maintain that the choice to flee taken in March 1959, traditionally attributed to the counsel of the State Oracle, was in fact due to Shugden. In any case, it was still many years before His Holiness freed himself of the conditioning by this spirit imposed by the constant presence at his side of Trijang Rinpoche (his senior tutor Ling Rinpoche was never particularly tied to this cult which nonetheless involved dozens of high lamas of the Gelugpa school).

Trijang was a religious figure of great worldly prestige and practically all the lamas of the Gelugpa school of his time had received teachings, and obviously also the Shugden initiation, from him. The main ones among these lamas were Zong Rinpoche (when this lama came to Italy many years ago the advertisements said that seeing his photo was enough for attaining enlight-

enment), Geshe Rabten, Lama Yeshe and Lama Zopa. Except for Zong Rinpoche, who died long ago, they all subsequently gave up this practice at the Dalai Lama’s request.

Lama Yeshe in particular can be deemed a posthumous victim of the indirect consequences of this cult, because after his death the center he founded in England, one of the first and most important of the Gelugpa schools in the West, was literally expropriated by an ambitious Geshe (the broth-

er of the Shugden spirit medium) called Kelsang Gyatso, who turned it into his own personal fiefdom, and thanks to the powers of this spirit that temporarily grants worldly riches and power, it became one of the monasteries most highly attended by Westerners with branches in the United States and other parts of the world. Kelsang Gyatso can also be considered a kind of leader of the world cult of Shugden, in open and at times rowdy opposition to the Dalai Lama (he organized a protest sit-in during His Holiness’ visit to London in 1996). Since the end of the 70’s, His Holiness has been asking the most important Gelugpa lamas and abbots to stop this practice, and after long reflection, in the 90’s, extended his request to all followers of Tibetan Buddhism.

His Holiness cited a long series of reasons based on his own personal experience, factors of a fundamentally mystical nature such as dreams, signs and divinations, but also bitter reflections on the concrete consequences on his role as spiritual leader in exile and on his relations with the other schools of Tibetan Buddhism engendered by his connection with the ‘harmful spirit’.

As this is a matter that still today is the cause of personal suffering for His Holiness, this article is certainly not sufficient to clarify all the aspects of a complex issue whose origin may hark back to the time of Dalai Lama V (my book on this subject will be published shortly). However, I believe it is necessary for readers to have some general knowledge of the reasons why, for some time Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been insisting on the importance of failing to appreciate the danger inherent in such cults.

As already mentioned, Shugden is traditionally deemed a kind of guardian or protector of the Gelugpa school, and at this stage one could raise the objection that Dzogchen too has more than one protector, led by the Dakini Ekajati. But apart from the different consideration regarding the nature of these beings (Ekajati being a manifestation of the Enlightened Sambhogakaya beings while Shugden is a worldly spirit of uncertain origin and motivation for acting) this Gyalpo has traditionally been invoked by orthodox Gelugpas in the past and the fundamentalists

in our days, in open antagonism against the other Tibetan Buddhist schools.

The main reason why the Dalai Lama decided to disclose in public his reservations regarding this cult, which he himself had practiced for many years lies in the publication of a booklet called the *Yellow Book of Shugden* penned by a geshe called Zemey Rinpoche, under the inspiration of Trijang Rinpoche, with anecdotes and stories about Gelugpa personages, also important ones,

of the last century, including the former regent Reting Rinpoche, who discovered the present Dalai Lama, and who according to the author were the victims of Shugden’s wrath for having engaged in practices of other schools, in particular Nyingmapa and Dzogchen.

The book circulated as an open secret, and provoked the actual desertion by many monks and nuns of an important offering ceremony to Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava, founder of the Nyingmapa school and a Dzogchen practitioner) that the Dalai Lama wanted to hold for the first time, in public at Dharamsala, for the Tibetan New Year. Also the placing of a statue of Padmasambhava in the main temple at Namgyal some years after the forced exile, provoked hostility and threatening letters, as His Holiness informed me personally during an interview at Dharamsala.

I think these elements are just enough to enable readers to understand the gravity and the nature of the conflict created by the cult of this being whose followers, including a lama living in Milan whom Chögyal Namkhai Norbu named directly during his teaching at Merigar, consider a compassionate Buddha to whom to make offerings and in whom to take refuge. But above all, worthy of consideration is the fact that, unlike the followers of this gyalpo, no Dzogchenpa or non-sectarian Gelugpa has ever thought of using Ekajati or Palden Lhamo as an antagonist of other faiths or beliefs.

It is necessary also to reflect on what the development of such a sectarian cult has meant and continues to mean for the Dalai Lama and for all the Tibetans in exile (and also for the Tibetans in occupied Tibet, for whom the repercussions of this matter are many and of more than secondary import).

Over the years, after his flight from Tibet, His Holiness has found himself in the situation of having to represent, far from his country and his people, the spirit of unity of a people suffering in its struggle against an overwhelming powerful nation which, at least during the most fanatical phase of the Cultural Revolution, ruined monasteries and temples, murdering lamas and devout followers of the Dharma. During his exile in Dharamsala but also earlier, while in the refugee camps,

Trijang’s lama disciples continued to spread the cult of this so-called Gelugpa ‘protector’ the followers of all the other schools, who equally poor and ailing due to the different climate and other hardships, were living in communal hovels piled one on top of the other; there were no longer as in the Tibet of old, great distances between monasteries to hamper contacts between lamas and monks of different traditions. And above all, there no longer existed the power that the

Gelugpa school, founded by Tsongkhapa in the fifteenth century, had been accruing over time, starting from the Great Fifth Dalai Lama who in 1647 obtained from the Mongols temporal power over all Tibet from Lhasa to Qinhai and from Mount Kailash to the border with Sichuan and Yunnan.

It is perhaps no accident that this conflict started at that time, when according to the autobiography of Dalai Lama V another prelate (Dragpa Gyaltsen, 1622-c.1651) who was challenging his authority and had ‘broken the samaya’ that linked them as Dharma practitioners and as teacher and disciple, died in mysterious circumstances in his Drepung residence. He may have been strangled with a white *khatag* (as the Shugden followers today maintain) or he may have died due to an infectious disease; in any case according to the Great Fifth he was the victim ‘of a demon’ that ‘had total dominion over him’ and which the Dalai Lama himself had been unable to vanquish in spite of his attempts to save his rival.

Whatever the truth of the story, it is certainly difficult to reconstruct its inner dynamics so many centuries after the fact, and in the absence of impartial documentation (Trijang Rinpoche wrote that he was killed by the Regent of Dalai Lama V who was jealous of the growing popularity of Dragpa Gyaltsen and of Drepung with the Mongols). The spirit of this high lama with strong psychic powers was probably transformed, as happens to those who die in anger, as Rinpoche himself has stated, into a wandering harmful gyalpo. But on account of his powers as a former Tantric practitioner, not even the many pujas performed by Dalai Lama V himself and by the greatest Nyingmapa and Dzogchen masters of the time (of whom Dalai Lama V was a disciple) were able to pacify and eliminate his negative influence.

According to the different versions of Tibetan mystical history, Dragpa Gyaltsen’s *la* transformed into Gyalpo Shugden was first received into the monastery of a Sakyapa lama who made it into a secondary ‘protector’ (nowadays His Holiness Sakya Trizin maintains that among the practitioners of his school there are no followers of this cult) and then in subsequent centuries came to be venerated as a realized deity and Dharma guardian by some Gelugpa lamas.

However, it was at the time of Pabongka (and to a lesser extent his teacher Thapu Rinpoche) that the cult erupted among the higher Gelugpa hierarchs against the wish – as we have seen – of Dalai

*continued on next page*



Lama XIII, who died prophesying the impending tragedy for the Tibetan clergy and people. Both before and after the Chinese invasion throughout Tibet, and especially in east Tibet, where the Nyingmapa presence was still predominant, numerous statues of Padmasambhava were destroyed and lamas and monks of other traditions humiliated and attacked by hordes of Gelugpa fundamentalists instigated by the teachings of Pabongka and his lama disciples. In this way they intended to assert the dominion of the so-called ‘pure tradition’ of lama Tsongkhapa, which according to them had been neglected and abandoned in favor of offensive Tantric practices, and especially for the ‘termas’ or hidden treasures that many Gelugpas, alongside the Nyingmapa and Dzogchen practitioners, made great use of.

With hindsight, his predecessor as well as other Dalai Lamas of the past could censure the current Tibetan spiritual leader over his lack of clarity with regard to a cult whose dangers had been well known, and His Holiness has often humbly acknowledged this. But practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism are well aware of the relationship between master and disciple and of the nature of the samaya pledge, the promise to act in common for the benefit of beings in samsara. The young Dalai Lama had neither the experience, nor the knowledge, necessary to challenge his teacher Trijang over the value of a cult which has subsequently revealed itself as not only of scant benefit for the Gelugpa school itself (it certainly did not save them from their historical defeat and subsequent suffering) but also harmful for the many beings instigated by such a sectarian view to perpetrate actual physical violence.

Many people know about the triple murder committed at Dharamsala on February 4, 1997. A learned scholar, very close to His Holiness, the Venerable Lobsang Gyatso, Director of the Dialectics School of Dharamsala (who attended the Conference on Tibetan Language at Merigar organized by the Shang-Shung Institute) was stabbed to death together with two young monks who were his students and translators in a small flat a stone’s throw from His Holiness’ residence in exile at Dharamsala.

The brutality of the crime generated great shock and alarm among the Tibetan community in exile; they already were burdened by divisions, continuous tension and threats since the appeal by the Dalai Lama not to practice the cult of the gyalpo spirit in public, and for its practitioners to limit such practice to their own private sphere.

Police documents I saw during my long journalistic investigation of this case, show that on diverse occasions, and in particular one, the leaders of the Dorje Shugden Charitable Society of New York instigated not only divisions within the Tibetan community, but also between Tibetans and Indians in Dharamsala culminating in another murder of which a young Tibetan was accused (but who then was found innocent).

The investigations of Kangra District Superintendent Rajiv Singh concluded that a few days before the murder, the killers of Geshe Lobsang and of the two monks had attempted to follow his car on his return from Hong Kong as he journeyed to Dharamsala. During the pursuit their taxi broke down and from an STD phone booth (where every call is recorded) in Ambala city, the assassins telephoned the personal number of the geshe who at the time was General Secretary of the pro-Shugden Association in Delhi. However, even though witnesses and a great amount of documented evidence were presented (the taxi driver, a hotelier who recognized photos of the accused and the rucksack pulled by the lama from the hands of his murderers who had to leave it behind at the scene of the crime) the Indian judiciary caved in before a plethora of Delhi lawyers hired with fees that were certainly far in excess of the apparent means of Buddhist monks in exile in the poor Majinu Katilla quarter of Delhi.

As a reporter I was deeply struck by events of which I knew no historical or political precedents of such consequence.

*As a reporter I was deeply struck by events of which I knew no historical or political precedents of such consequence.*

Nevertheless, at least certain spiritual aspects had already been made clear by our Master as long ago as 1989 (see the transcript of a teaching on the guardians given in Wales in 1989). And more recently he sought with difficulty to alert the Italian Buddhist community that was divided over the problem of accepting the membership of gyalpo lamas and practitioners in Italy.

I wrote some articles for newspapers, which elicited a certain amount of response that spurred me to continue my research in greater depth. I spoke about it with His Holiness in person when he visited Italy in 1997, when he invited me to Dharamsala to collect the documentation I needed. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu himself counseled me and helped me with some invaluable advice and information on many spiritual and historical features.

However, as a journalist with thirty years experience I thought it best not to limit myself to the reflections of two personages, even as eminent as His Holiness and Rinpoche, who might be deemed as partial as they are both perfectly in accord on this issue. Therefore, I went to interview numerous exponents of the cult, including Lama Ganchen in Milan (deemed by Norbu Rinpoche as the ‘number two’ in the world, evidently after Kelsang Gyatso) and a certain ‘His Holiness Lama Kundeling’ (as he was introduced to me by an English disciple) living in Asia, whom I met in Ganchen’s center in Milan on his return from the United States, where he had taken part in, and in his own words promoted, some protest demonstrations during the visit of the Dalai Lama.

The very fact of the meeting between the two lamas at the Milan center was proof of an

international link between members of the cult. And while the Dalai Lama has only asked disciples not to attend his teachings and initiations if they practice the gyalpo, the slogans and literature I was handed asked the Dalai Lama to ‘respect the religious rights’ of the Shugden practitioners under the aegis of a newly constituted ‘Dorje Shugden International Coalition’. The booklets of the Coalition list several lamas and geshe from all over the world, including one famous teacher who however had his name erased once he was informed about the organization. Obviously the list included members of the association in Delhi who were under investigation for the triple murder, which led the Indian police to bring Interpol into play in relation to any eventual international connections including Italy and England.

When I went to meet the leaders of the Shugden Charitable and Religious Society organization at their headquarters in Majinu Katilla, they spoke to me at length about their relations with the other cult practitioners throughout the world. Alongside a division within the British community itself, Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, who lives in a lavish castle in Yorkshire, has decided also to send a letter breaking with all the other devotees of the spirit who still maintain relations of formal respect towards the Dalai Lama.

However, without doubt, the most remarkable episode concerns the decision by the young reincarnation of Trijang Rinpoche to leave the center in Switzerland where he had remained for years under the ‘protection’ of his lama-tutor. In a dramatic letter and in an interview on the Tibetan radio station in Dharamsala, he announced his abandonment of his monastic robes in order to become ‘an ordinary person’. Shocked by a series of still murky events, the gravest of which was the attempted murder of his former personal assistant by members of the cult, the young Trijang explained he had no intention of becoming a banner or symbol of the pro-Shugden movement (albeit continuing to do its practice) against the Dalai Lama, who was his disciple in his previous incarnation.

A comment I deem worthy for concluding these notes, written with the hope of making a little clearer an issue about which our Master has for some time asked us to reflect. The dark days the world is currently traversing due to religious fundamentalism seem in fact to find a dramatically congruent echo in Tibetan Buddhism, whose professed aim is the development of compassion and bodhicitta for the benefit of all beings. But if there were no evil there would be no need for good, and as our Master says the best thing is to know how to protect and preserve the good against the rising wave of fanaticism, in whatever philosophy or creed it presents itself.

who has an Excel spreadsheet.

**Time Schedule**

The ideal time for this (to come into operation) is three years. In a normal context where there’s an active collaboration, a project of this type would take three years. Up to now, working just here at Merigar, it has gone ahead within this time frame so the budget must have been right. Because what happens is that prices get pushed up when a project is not working on schedule. The longer it takes in time, the more the costs are. We forget what we are actually doing and we have to begin all over again. So please let’s try and make this work within the time frame with the other Gars that are going to be integrated into this project.

**Worldwide Membership**

Now let’s move on to actual membership. We have to do it in a way that it becomes worldwide. We’ll go ahead with the project, from copyright to the protection of Rinpoche’s image. The preservation of the Teaching – we’ll go ahead with this with things such as the archives. Each member will have access to these services. My vision is that you put in your password on the site for the archives and you get exactly what you want; so your membership card gives you access to all these services. It won’t be that each thing has its cost, its own services, its own administration, and its own people who have to learn about it. It may seem strange but sometimes there aren’t enough people to do these things. We’ll try to do things in a way that is more concentrated. Our internal culture also - we lose it all the time. This doesn’t just mean the Teachings. It also includes the way we gather together, the relationships between us, the way we talk to each other, what we actually do when we are here. When we have somebody who has been on the Gakyil for four years, and you need somebody to take over who doesn’t have the experience, this

is part of internal culture. Otherwise we have to make these rules because we are losing this internal culture. The transmission of knowledge from one Gakyil to another is really lacking. This is not lacking because there is incapacity in transmitting, but it’s because people who have been in the Gakyil are totally stressed out because they have to do a job that they don’t know how to do. It’s not enough just to have good will in order to do this job for two or three years. It would be much easier if there were a document that outlined everything that they need to do. You have a contact; there is someone who already does something all the time. It’s more normal to arrive at collaboration as much as possible. Sometimes we feel a bit on the outside. It’s not that we just have to live in the Community, because what happens is that somebody who is part of the management of the Community is more involved in the Community than they are outside it. So let’s also try and live outside. In order to do that, we have to have something of value that we can offer. I’ll make a really banal example. Rinpoche is a very famous professor, not just because he teaches, but also because he has written a lot of books and not just about the Teachings. What everyone needs to examine in his or her conscience is the fact is that we all have to live outside the Community to be appreciated in our field; otherwise what kind of integration is this with the outside world?

**Integration among the Various Community Bodies:**

What does integration mean? Integration means to share the same organizational model, the same business model, the same tools, the same technology and to share the same vision.

*Transcribed by Liz Granger  
Edited by Liz Granger and Maurizio Mingotti*

“explorer” to “discover” the spot. Rather, he is drawn to the mysterious and mythic nature of this sacred place.

By coincidence, an official Chinese expedition is also en route to the same location. Baker’s team succeeds in getting there first, but the author is disappointed that National Geographic focuses on this coup. For him, this is missing the point, reducing the mythic to something prosaic. As a further example of this, the Chinese “erected a concrete and bronze memorial to their expedition in the fall of 1998, displacing a row of prayer flags that had once traced the movement of the winds” (p. 440).

There was talk by the Chinese government of converting the area into an “ecotourism hotspot.” But nature, or perhaps the guardians of the land, had different plans. In June 2000 a “cataclysmic” flood unleashed landslides and washed away bridges, entirely cutting off access to the region.

In the end, the author decides, “We feed on mystery, whether the enticements of unknown lands or a masked dancer . . . Hidden-lands open everywhere; they are as much modes of perception as actual places (p. 440-441).

by Paul Bail



The LOTTERY OF THE GOLDEN RING  
OF CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU  
To help purchase Merigar East, the new Winter Gar in Crimea

To participate in the lottery, you can choose an element (fire, water, earth, air or space) and communicate to Anna Eid at [anna.sigrid.eid@gmx.de](mailto:anna.sigrid.eid@gmx.de) how many numbers you would like. Payment should be made to the following account:  
MONTE DEI PASCHI DI SIENA, filiale di Arcidosso, GR Italy  
IBAN:IT01030 72160 3120 29  
BIC/swift:PASCITMMGRO  
And add: For "THE LOTTERY OF THE GOLDEN RING OF ChNN"

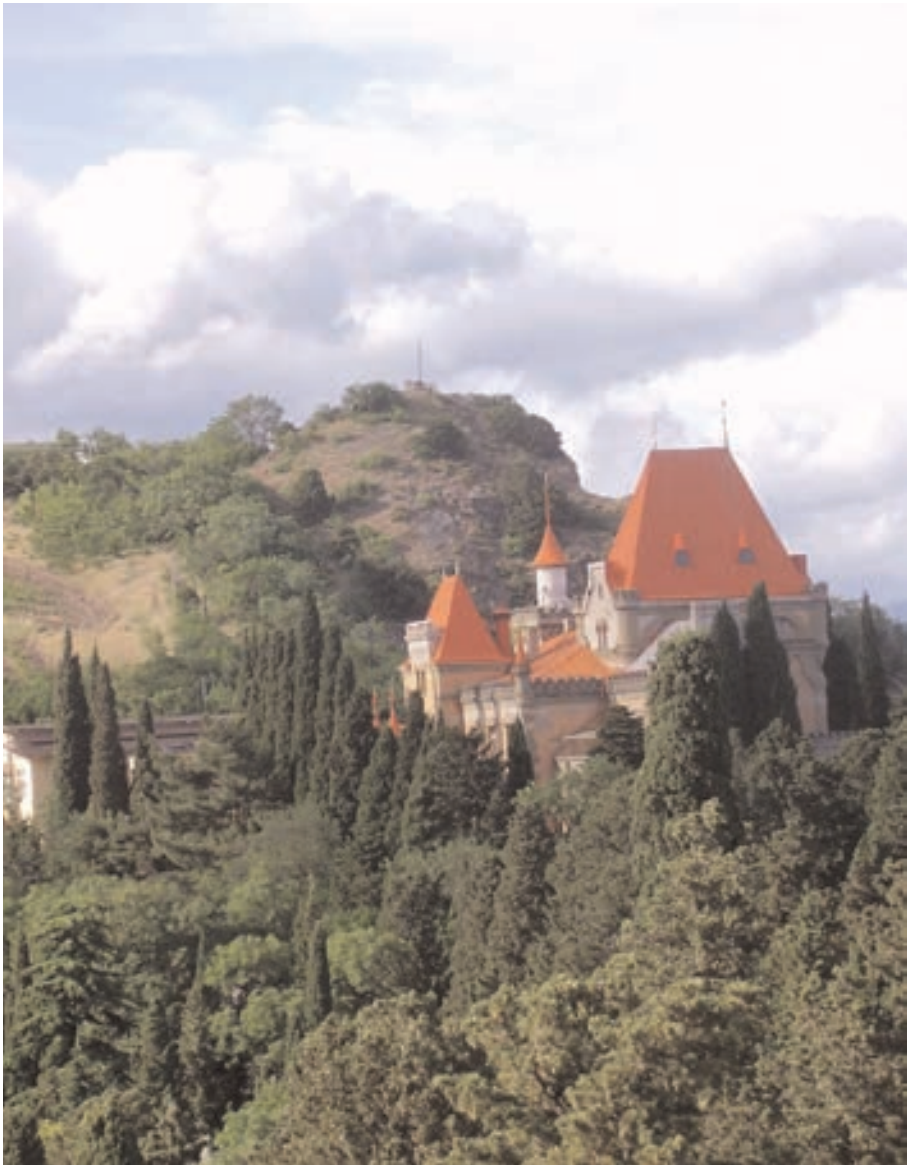
- 1st prize, A Wonderful, Gold Ring with 5 Dakini Jewels worn by Rinpoche
- 2nd prize, Beautiful and well made thankas of Amitayus
- 3rd prize, Painting of Goma Devi by Glen Eddy
- 4th prize, Statue of Goma Devi
- 5th prize, Crystal
- and more.....

Anna will choose the numbers and hold them for 10 days until communication is received from Merigar that the money has been paid. People can also pay cash at Tashigar Norte or Merigar.

One number of the lottery costs:

\$15 USD or 13 EURO or 40.000 Bs

Thank you for your participation!  
Anna Eid



NEW WINTER GAR  
CRIMEA

A WONDERFUL  
Rinpoche Speaks about the New  
Margarita, Island

"I would like to ask the entire Dzogchen Community for participation and help."  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Some people say I do not like Kunsangar. That is not true. I like Kunsangar very much, but there are many problems in Russia. These problems will not only exist for a short time. The problems associated with Russia and Kunsangar are long term and getting worse. Russia is no longer moving in the same direction as Europe. It is better that all the Russian-speaking people from the Dzogchen Community are aware of this and we understand the situation. That is important. You must be aware that with the present situation you will not be able to continue to receive teachings from me in a concrete way.  
For this reason, after the last retreat in Crimea, I asked my translator Igor Berkhin to inform the Kunsangar Gakyil that we should try and sell Kunsangar before it becomes too complicated. Since that time, many people have created many problems and do not want to sell it. I don't know if we will be able to sell Kunsangar, but we have now formed a group to see if it is possible. Unfortunately there is more confusion in Russia, as well as with the Dzogchen Community there.  
I told Igor Berkhin that we should try and sell Kunsangar and get some place in Crimea. Ukraine is going in the same direction as the rest of Europe and maybe in the future it will become more democratic. Ukraine is a Russian-speaking country. I don't know if Russian people will be able to travel freely there or it will become more complicated in the future. In any case, if they can manage to come at least they will have a place

The Possibility of  
Merigar-East  
Winter Gar in Crimea  
A Report by Igor Berkhin

December 7, 2005  
Margarita Island, Venezuela

Thank you Rinpoche for this possibility to talk about our project in Crimea. First of all, as Rinpoche said the other day, in June Rinpoche asked us to find a place in Crimea we could develop for Russian-speaking countries. We had two very successful and big retreats in Crimea, the first in 2002 and the second in 2005, and people from many different countries attended them. At the final Ganapuja of the last retreat in 2005 there were approximately 2000 people. This past summer we started to look for the new Gar by collecting information from different sources and studying the situation of the real estate market. In September or October we started to look concretely for different places. We visited several places and had contact with many local people. The area we covered on the Southern coast of Crimea was about 200 kilometers. It is not so easy to find a good place in Crimea at this time because Crimea is for Russians what Margarita is for Venezuelaans. It is the most popular tourist place that we have. The place we found is in the warmest spot in Crimea, with very nice weather and a nice sea. We tried to find a place that would correspond to the general description Rinpoche gave us, so basically the place is not for big retreats; for the big retreats we can find other venues and this way we won't need to maintain a very big place. In Russian-speaking countries we have many people involved in Santi Maha Sangha so at least we need a place to develop that. One of the important points that Rinpoche mentioned is that this place should have a view of the sea. We had some information and did many practices dedicated to finding and creating this place. We had Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga retreats in October in Crimea at the same place we held the retreat with Rinpoche in June. For twelve days fifty people actively participated and all our merits were dedicated to this purpose. The next day we found two beautiful places. The place Rinpoche approved of was the first place we saw. We presented the information we had collected to Rinpoche and finally Rinpoche

approved the place we should look at and advised in which direction we should go and which place is best for our purposes.

The Place:

The place we found is a kind of summer hotel, but not a fancy hotel. It is somewhere between an inexpensive hotel and camping. The land of this place is about 2 hectares. It is made up of different kinds of buildings and the area covered by buildings alone is 3000 square meters; there are 3000 square meters of buildings on 2 hectares. In Soviet times, it was a kind of boy scout camp or Pioneer Youth Camp. The constructions are very simple, mostly light constructions, but there are also buildings from the beginning of the 20th century and they are still in more or less normal condition. The facilities of this place are:

150 sleeping places in heated houses  
100 + in summer houses  
More or less this place can hold 250 people.

It has a big dining hall for eating and also for practice for 200 to 300 people. We can have retreats inside and not only in the open air, but open air is an option because there are two big grounds. One is a sporting ground, like a basketball court, and has benches to one side. This place can be expanded by putting a tent and can be a place for several hundred people. The other is a very big square, 30 x 30 meters and maybe even a little bigger, so maybe we can put the big mandala there. This place is functioning as a summer camp. It is not in very good condition, but in terms of good business in the Ukraine, it is not considered good business because what we consider good business in the Ukraine is fantastic business for the West. This may be one of reasons why it is being sold.  
There is a possibility to expand the area and to have 4 hectares. The owners already started this process, but since they are selling it they have stopped the process. We are not going to buy the place itself, but we will buy the company that owns the place and therefore all legal procedures started by this company can be developed and there will no need to start from the beginning. So these are more or less the technical characteristics of the place.



# WAR OF MERIGAR

## MEGA

### FULL IDEA!!!

New Crimea Winter Gar Project  
Dec 6, 2005

to come to. We are trying to get a place in order to create a base for Russian-speaking people. The Russian Dzogchen Community people should reflect well and try to collaborate to create this place. We do not need a Gar only in Russia. In Russia you need not only one Kunsangar, but also two or three. When there are positive circumstances, we can create many Kunsangars. At this time there are no positive circumstances and it is negative if you go in another direction; you must understand that. We are searching for land for that reason and there are some indications regarding this land. We know that to buy land or houses costs money, but if many people collaborate, anything is possible! I have a very wonderful idea. For example, for many years we have been searching for a second Merigar, a Winter Gar for Europe. Crimea is on the precise parallel with Merigar. Crimea has very good weather and we can create the Winter Gar of Merigar there. Merigar can participate and help make some money for the project. There are many people connected to Merigar who can help and the people who have more money can help sponsor this new Gar. I would like to ask the entire Dzogchen Community for participation and help.

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz

#### Location:

It is on the most Southern part of the Crimean peninsula. The Crimean peninsula is dividing the Black Sea and the Azov Sea. In the real sense, it is very relative calling it a peninsula because the piece of land connecting this peninsula with the continent is more or less one or two hundred meters wide and is more like an island in the Black Sea. On the Southern coast there is a chain of mountains with the highest point being 2000 kilometers. These mountains are very ancient and this chain is exactly on the Southern seacoast and divides the sea and the rest of the peninsula. For this reason, the climate is very good from the Southern side of these mountains. It is more or less on the same latitude as Merigar, but it is protected from the cold North winds and is open on the Southern side, so most of the year this place is very warm. For example, this year until October 16, we were swimming in the sea and the temperature was around 20 to 22 degrees Celsius until the middle of October. This is not an exceptional year. This place is warm because it is more to the South and in general the climate is very healthy and the air is very good. Crimea has been traditionally a healing place. People with asthma and tuberculosis, for example, from all of Russia, go there because the air has a lot of healing properties and the water is very salty. The water of the Black Sea has antiseptic properties so wounds heal very quickly. Wounds get better, not worse. This region also has many trees: Pine, Cypress, Eucalyptus, Tuja, Juniper, and all the Southern coast is full of these kinds of plants and their perfume permeates the air. There are huge lavender fields and the best French cosmetic companies use it. There are many roses there also. This place is famous for its grapes and wine and there is a lot of wine there. [Laughter] Maybe I should stop here because maybe people will start changing their tickets and leave Margarita for Crimea and this we don't want, just now. [Voice from the audience] Someone is asking me to say there are many beautiful women. ["What about men?"] yelled from the audience].

#### Transportation:

##### Visas:

From this year citizens of or the European Union, Switzerland, the United States, and Canada no longer need visas to travel to the Ukraine. Anyone from these countries

can enter the Ukraine and stay for three months. There is freedom of traveling. This is very important because we until recently we had a problem of visas that remained from Soviet times. Now we don't have that situation.

##### By Air:

Kiev has direct flights to most European cities, not only capitals but also big cities and there are regular flights to cities in the United States and Canada. Also the international airport and domestic airport are adjacent and very near. There are three flights a day to Crimea and the flight is 1 hour and 15 minutes from Kiev and there are also regular flights from Moscow. There are two companies, Turkish and Israeli, that fly to the capital of Crimea, Simferopol, and it is possible to go from Europe directly with a transfer in Tel Aviv or Istanbul.

##### Local Transportation:

The place is 2.5 hours by car from the international airport via a very beautiful road through mountains and grape fields, and the rest goes along the seaside, so it is a very beautiful way. There is a lot of transportation in that area.

##### Project Development:

**A Gar** for the Dzogchen Community

**Commercial Purposes:** There is a possibility to use a part for commercial purposes for the Community and also for a private summer hotel.

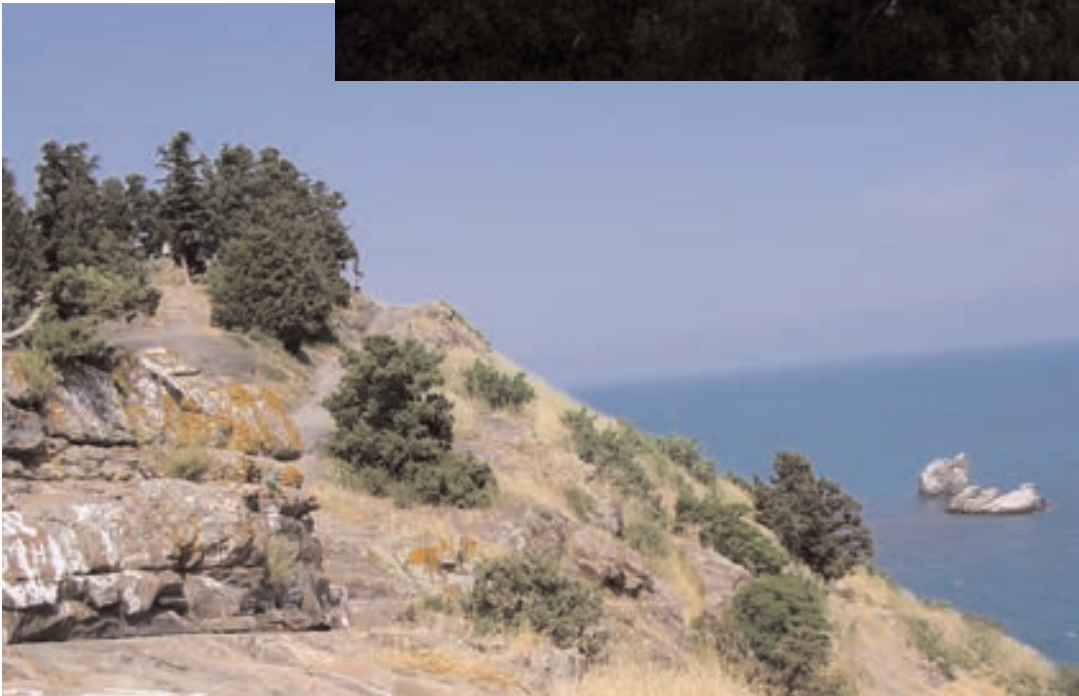
**A Center for Tibetan Medicine.** This may be the best solution, to use a part of this place as a center for Tibetan Medicine because Crimea is known in Russia and Ukraine as related to healing.

**Private Homes for Practitioners:** There is also the possibility to expand this place and have an additional 2 hectares of the main territory and 2 hectares or maybe more beyond that, and we are thinking of using this land for building private homes for practitioners like here in Margarita. We are thinking very much in this direction.

##### Cost:

I have more or less explained everything, and now I must say how much this beauty costs. It is quite expensive. Real estate is very expensive in Crimea. The factors are good for us and make this place relatively cheap but still we need \$700,000US. We at least need offerings and donations, but we also need credit under some good condi-

continued on page 18







I N T E R N A T I O N A L

# C O M M U N I T Y N E W S

*merigar*

**Dzogchen Community in Italy**  
**Arcidosso 58031**  
**GR Italy**  
**Tel: 39 0564 968 837**  
**Email: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it**  
**Web site: www.dzogchen.it**

*e u r o p e*

## Merigar Calendar of Events

### January - June 2006

#### January

Fri Jan 27th– Sun Feb 5th

Open Web cast Audio and Video of the SMS Base Teaching retreat, Tashigar North, Margarita

#### February

Sat. Feb. 4th – Sun 5th

Practice Retreat of the Vajra Dance of the Three Vajra. Everyday from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Fri Feb. 17th – Sun 26th

Web cast Audio and Video Longsal Saltong Lung Teaching and Practice Retreat, Tashigar North Margarita (restricted to members who have already received transmission)

Sat. Feb. 25th - Tue 28th

Yantra Yoga Course for Advanced Practitioners

Cost 80€, with discounts for members.  
Everyday from 10:00 am to 12:30 pm

Mon. Feb. 27th

5:00 pm Practice of the Purification of the Six Lokas  
7:00 pm Ganapuja

Tue. Feb. 28th

Losar: 6:00 am Practice of the Long Life of Guru Amitayus  
1:00 pm Ganapuja with the authentication of Lungta and Namkha

#### March

Fri. Mar. 10th – Sun.19th

Open Web cast Audio and Video Dzogchen Semlung Namkhache Teaching and Practice Retreat Tashigar North, Margarita

Fri. Mar. 10th – Mon.13th

Meditation and Contemplation workshop with Constantino Albini  
The course begins on Friday the 10th at 5:00 pm  
Cost 80 €, with discounts for members.

Mon. Mar.13th

5:00 pm Explanation of the Practice of the Garab Dorje Guru Yoga for the Worldwide Transmission

Tue. Mar.14th

4:00 am Web cast of the Worldwide Transmission of the Guruyoga of Garab Dorje

#### April

Thu Apr.13th – Tue 18th

Easter Practice Retreat of Green Tara with Yuchen Namkhai  
Cost 240€, with discounts for members.

#### May

Fri May 5th – Sun 14th

Open Web cast Audio and Video Ati Lam-ngnon Nasjyong.  
A Teaching and Practice Retreat of Longsal Teaching

### Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat with Jakob Winkler January 27 – February 5, 2006 Höfen, Germany

Together we will listen to the web cast from Tashigar Norte and will learn the practices together. Jakob will explain and lead the practices.

The course starts on Friday January 27 at 8 pm and ends Sunday February 5 at 5pm.

For more information contact:

Helga Betz  
Lindemannstr. 12  
D-40237 Düsseldorf  
Tel+fax 49 (0)211 682657  
Email: office@dzogchen.de  
Web site: www.dzogchen.de

For lodging and meals please contact:

Hans J. Vogel, Höfen 12, 91460 Baudenbach,  
Tel.09166-995311, Fax 09166-005313, Email: HansVogel@t-online.de

## NEW AUSTRIAN GAKYILS

The new Austrian Gakyils for 2006 were elected and confirmed by our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu:

The new Gakyil of Vienna is:

Blue: Elisha Koppensteiner, elishanana@hotmail.com  
Red: Sabine Böhm, sabine.boehm-stachl@chello.at  
Yellow: Winnie Scheiblbrandner, winnieshepard@hotmail.com

The new Gakyil of the Austria Regions is:

Blue: Monica Wittib, monicawittib@hotmail.com  
Red: Bernhard Schweizer, bernhard.schweizer@gmx.at  
Yellow: Oliver Leick, dzogchen@aon.at

### ADVANCED VAJRA DANCE-COURSE with PRIMA MAI February 3rd - 7th in München, Germany

This course begins on Friday, February 3 at 17.00pm at the Waldorfschool (Leopoldstr. 19) and ends on Tuesday, February 7 at 16.00 in the Studio Freitänzer (Euckenstr. 15). You should have transmission for this course and know both the Pawo or Pamo parts of the Song of the Vajra.

Fee: Ordinary members 250 Euro, Sustaining members free, Reduced members 140 Euro

Please send payment to the account of:

Dzogchengemeinschaft Deutschland e.V., Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf  
Knt.-Nr.: 11047891, BLZ: 30050110, IBAN DE 40 3005 01 10 0011 047891, SWIFT/BIC DUSSEDEDDXXX

For registration & info please contact:

Regine Zettler, Email: [Regine-125@gmx.net](mailto:Regine-125@gmx.net), Tel: 0049-(0)89-7429824

## PASSAGES

BORN:

Monday, Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>, 2005

On the afternoon of a bright, clear and sunny day here in Austria, our lovely little Tobias filled the air with his strong voice for the first time. Everything went quite fine and all the three of us are healthy tired and very happy!

Merry Christmas & A Happy New Year to each and all of you!  
Bernhard, Manuela & Tobias Schweizer





## Advanced Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra with Prima Mai Geneva, Switzerland February 22 - 26, 2006

This is a special opportunity for advanced Vajra Dance practitioners to deepen their knowledge of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. This course is open to practitioners who have learned part 1 and 2, either male or female.

CONTACT for inquiries and registration:

Jocelyne Carasso

Email: [jocelyne.carasso@wanadoo.fr](mailto:jocelyne.carasso@wanadoo.fr)

Tel: ++33 450 35 11 42

Postal address: 8, rue de Fribourg, CH - 1201 Geneve

Fax: ++41 27 323 23 93.

We will be glad to assist with any information and look forward to hearing from you!

## Mandarava Retreat in Lithuania with Nina Robinson April 9 - 17, 2006

The Lithuanian Dzogchen Community is happy to announce Mandarava Chudlen retreat in Lithuania with Nina Robinson, April 9-17th, 2006 (Easter).

This is only preliminary announcement and we cannot provide details yet. We will be doing 3-4 Thuns per day, probably with one Vajra Dance Thun available.

Regarding lodging it will be either small resort town by the river or rented house in countryside, lodging costs 5-10 euros per day .

We can make invitation letters if needed.

If you are interested please email: [lithuania@dzogchen.ru](mailto:lithuania@dzogchen.ru).

Web site: [www.dzogcenas.lt](http://www.dzogcenas.lt)

## tsegyalgar east & west

**Tsegyalgar, Dzogchen Community  
in America,  
PO Box 277  
Conway, MA 01341  
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473  
Email: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)  
Web site: [www.tsegyalgar.org](http://www.tsegyalgar.org)**

**Tsegyalgar West  
Baja Mexico  
Dzogchen Community  
West Coast  
755 Euclid Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94708  
USA  
Email: [cbass@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:cbass@prodigy.net.mx)  
[carolmfields@aol.com](mailto:carolmfields@aol.com)**

The Tsegyalgar Gakyil is very pleased to announce:

## Kumbhaka with Fabio Andrico

At Tsegyalgar, Conway, Mass.  
April 1 – April 5, 2006

Prerequisites: Transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and experience in Yantra Yoga.

Cost: \$150US before Feb 15, \$175US after

*For more information:  
Dzogchen Community in America  
Tsegyalgar  
PO Box 277  
Conway, MA 01341  
USA  
Tel: 413 369 4153  
Fax: 413 369 4473  
Email: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)*

## SECRETARY WANTED AT TSEGYALGAR CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS, USA

The Tsegyalgar Gakyil is looking to develop its office administration. We are looking for an independent, self-motivated practitioner committed to a strong future for Tsegyalgar.

We plan to open a part-time position at the Gar . Pay will be \$12.50 per hour for 20-25 hours per week. Applicants must provide their own lodging and be able to work legally in the United States.

The position will include the following tasks:

- Public Relations (phones and emails)
- Use of Quick Books for basic accounting
- Sound, video, multi-media set-up
- Activity Scheduling for the Gar
- Collecting and sorting mail
- Working with Gakyil to Coordinate Basic Advertising for retreats and web casts
- Acting as a liaison between the Gakyil and the Community
- Compiling and editing the Community Newsletter
- Maintaining databases

Applicants should be:

- Calm, helpful, and welcoming
- Eager to serve the Community
- Familiar with office organization
- Able to multi-task
- Good communicators
- Attendant to details
- Familiar with basic PC operation (email, Microsoft Office applications, etc.)
- Familiar with the Dzogchen Community and its practices
- Self directed and able to follow through with projects
- Able to work well with others

To apply please send your resume and cover letter to Patricia Shahren, Yellow Gakyil, at [patriciashahren@starpower.net](mailto:patriciashahren@starpower.net) or fax to 413-369-4473 by February 1, 2006. In your cover letter please refer to the number of hours per week you would be available, date of availability, and your pertinent skills.

Please feel free to contact the Tsegyalgar Office at: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org) or 413-369-4153 with any questions.

## Yantra Yoga at Tsegyalgar Jan 29 – Feb 5, 2006 with Paula Barry

The Tsegyalgar Gakyil is pleased to announce a course in Yantra Yoga during Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Teachings on the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha.

### Beginner's Level

Jan 29 (Sun) 11-12:30am

Jan 30 (Mon) 4 – 5:30pm\

Jan 31 (Tues) 6 – 7:30pm

Feb 1 (Wed) 6 – 7:30 pm

### Intermediate Level

Feb 2 (Thurs) 6 – 7:30 pm

Feb 3 (Fri) 6 – 7:30 pm

Feb 4 (Sat) 11 – 12:30 am

Feb 5 (Sun) 11 – 12:30 am

For more information:

Tel: 413 369 4153, Email: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)

## P A S S A G E S

### DIED:

Anne Segal passed away on November 23, 2005 in New York City. Anne was a New York socialite who survived breast cancer and became one of the major benefactors of Sloane Kettering Memorial Hospital and the American Cancer Society. The Dzogchen Community owes her a great deal. Anne made sure that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche received special attention from the directors of Sloane Kettering Hospital and the American Cancer Society when he fell ill in 1994. She didn't just make one call, but she continued to check on Rinpoche's progress throughout his treatment and made sure things were being paid attention to.

Her husband Herb continues to support cancer treatment and research in her name. It would be very nice if we could all do Shitro for her. She said to me once, "I think all these doctors think I have a Guru now, and that your friend Norbu is it." If people would like to make a donation in her name they can do so to: The American Cancer Society and/or Sloane Kettering Memorial Hospital.

Johanna Bennett <[jbcps@hotmail.com](mailto:jbcps@hotmail.com)>



## Tsegyalgar Summer Program on the Sacred Land of Khandroling

Tired of those Winter Blues?  
Plan a beautiful summer retreat on the powerful &  
sacred land of Khandroling!

August: Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 with Jim Valby  
Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga  
Family Camp

Personal Retreat Cabins available.

Further details will be posted on  
[www.tsegyalgar.org](http://www.tsegyalgar.org)

Tel: 413 369 4153  
Email: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)

## Beginning Course of Yantra Yoga with Naomi Zeitz Supervised by Fabio Andrico March 23 – 29, 2006 New York City

Week nights for people with and without transmission  
Weekend only for people with transmission from  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Cost: \$100

Mar 23 & 24 evenings  
Mar 25 & 26 weekend/days & evenings  
Mar 27 – 29 evenings

Kundrolling - New York City  
151 W. 30th St., #403, NYC  
Tel: 212-564 1024

Dear Friends in the Community,

For several months I have been collaborating with the New York City Gaykil to develop Dream Yoga pages on our website. Recently I asked Rinpoche for his permission to also solicit and post lucid dreams and dreams of clarity from the dream yoga retreat participants and the Community at large. The purpose of posting these dreams will be to inspire us to develop the practices of the night. We begin this project by posting one of Rinpoche's dreams originally published in "Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light". Please feel free to visit the website below.

Please also submit your dreams in English fully edited in the Microsoft Word or Open Office format to me at [<zak10016@yahoo.com>](mailto:zak10016@yahoo.com). Appropriate dreams will be posted with initials only.

Thank you,

Michael Katz

<http://www.nydzogchen.com/dream.html>

desde el sur



**fine  
jewelry  
and  
vajra  
dance  
shoes**

Tel: 0054 351 4880994  
Email:  
[desde.sur@gmail.com](mailto:desde.sur@gmail.com)  
Cordoba, Argentina  
Adriana Battisti



## DO YOU HAVE A DREAM? ARE OTHER DZOGCHEN PRACTITIONERS AND BLUE WHALES IN IT?

For the Community-minded, we are offering a 4-month opportunity (December 1, 2005 - April 1, 2006) to secure a fabulously inexpensive casita rental rate for a period of 15 years at Jardin de los Naranjos, the Dzogchen Community Gar in Baja California Sur, Mexico - a 3,000-acre Gar which features 600-yr old white fig trees and exquisite arroyo pools.

You may view pictures of the Gar at [www.bajasangha.org](http://www.bajasangha.org). (<http://bajasangha.org/photos/>)

Subscribers to the casitas have time assignment priority and very inexpensive rental rates for use each year - for the purposes of personal retreat, attending workshops, vacationing, or attending Dzogchen Community retreats.

Jardin de los Naranjos exists as a special yogi retreat within the mandala of the Dzogchen Community. It was discovered through the superior insight of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, our blessed Teacher, who encouraged us despite all odds and doubts to "continue looking."

This is a completely private and wild mountain eco-property, with incomparable white granite rocks and river pools. You can kayak in the Sea of Cortez nearby to visit 21 species of whales in the richest marine biosphere on earth, or make a short drive to the International Airport and Los Cabos, one of Mexico's main tourist areas.

### CASITA EARLY SUBSCRIBER PROGRAM:

We have 19 unfinished one-room casitas, each with its own architect-designed special view and deck. One casita has been completely refurbished for Rinpoche (pictures available), who stayed there during the last retreat. Another is a secure office.

We wish to make the remaining casitas available as soon as possible for all who wish to spend quality, relaxed time on the Gar—near the kitchen, trails, fig and mango groves, the teaching site, and a number of planned other amenities (body-work rooms, hot tub, swimming pool . . .).

The following program is offered to those wishing to stay at the Baja Gar in a fully furnished and completed casita, each with its own shower, toilet, deck and colorful and functional furnishings:

The CASITA A EARLY SUBSCRIBERS, practitioners from the Dzogchen Community, who wish to contribute to the completion of the Baja Gar's casitas for the benefit of everyone as well as themselves, have the unique and limited opportunity to contribute an early subscriber fee of \$1,500 between the dates of December 1, 2005 and April 1, 2006. This fee applies to an individual subscriber, a married couple, or an individual site of the Dzogchen Community. It guarantees 3 rental weeks at the reduced rate, plus additional weeks depending on availability.

If two people (not a couple) wish to share a subscription, the fee is \$2,500 for the subscription. A shared subscription entitles the subscribers to a maximum of 4 weeks of use total annually at the reduced rate (additional weeks if there is availability).

This contribution enables us to completely refurbish and furnish the casitas. The subscribers are then entitled to a uniquely low rental fee of \$200 per week for a casita (up to 4-person occupancy) over the next 15 years (after which the rental fee will be reassessed).

Sites of the Dzogchen Community, which would like to reserve casita time at the Gar for their members, may contribute \$1,500 for a guaranteed one-month of \$200/week annual rental (4 people maximum occupancy) plus one month of free camping at two improved Gar campsites (with showers and toilets) nearby (4-people maximum per campsite).

Casitas will feature solar electricity and hot water heating; purified spring water; compost toilets and grey water irrigation; shaded deck with hammock, table and chairs; screens, windows and doors; outdoor path lighting; decorative and functional Mexican furnishings; as well as a heating

and cooling system.

ONLY EARLY SUBSCRIBERS will qualify for this inexpensive casita rental fee—all others will have regular rates of a minimum of \$350/week. Each Early Subscriber membership is limited to one subscriber, though they can host up to four people per stay as long as they are present. Early Subscribers have priority for times they wish to be at the Gar.

All EARLY SUBSCRIBERS may request 3 weeks any given year (more if available) and will be assigned dates on a priority first-come, first-serve basis with other early subscribers. Early Subscribers MUST accompany guests that they bring to the casitas. ONLY early subscribers qualify for the rental rate of \$200/week. Others who wish to rent the casitas will be assigned their dates after early subscribers have been accommodated. A typical rental season in Baja, avoiding both hot and rainy seasons is Oct. 15 – June 1st.

Those renting casitas may request that meals be prepared for them at an additional cost at the Gar; or they may shop and prepare their own meals in the communal kitchen; and they can obtain information and secure arrangements for a variety of recreational and eco-exploration activities in Baja Sur during their stay. If they are doing personal retreat, they can arrange to obtain support services from the Gar staff during their retreat.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please write to the following: [carolmfields@aol.com](mailto:carolmfields@aol.com).

Your subscription will be deposited at the Dzogchen Community West Coast Winter Gar bank account in California, and you will be assigned a specific contact person, email and telephone number for making your rental arrangements. We expect casita rentals to commence in March of 2007, possibly earlier. Your initial fee is tax-deductible in the U.S.

*Welcoming you,  
The Baja Gakyil ([gar@bajasangha.org](mailto:gar@bajasangha.org))*

## OPPORTUNITIES AT TSEGYALGAR WEST - BAJA, MEXICO

In addition to the Early Subscriber program mentioned in The Mirror, the Baja Gakyil invites each of the Gars around the world to sponsor the completion of a casita. The suggested amount is \$20,000.

In this way each casita sponsored will be named:

"THE REFURBISHMENT OF THIS CASITA IS SPONSORED BY NAME OF GAR, 2006"

Interested Gakyils please contact:  
Baja Gakyil at [Gar@bajasangha.org](mailto:Gar@bajasangha.org) as soon as possible.  
Mark your message: "Casita Sponsorship Program, Attention Carol Fields."

In any case, do come and join us soon in that wonderful place. See the announcements for our two retreats in January 2006. On your way, visit [www.bajasangha.org](http://www.bajasangha.org). We are looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

*The Baja Gakyil*



## south america

**Tashigar North**  
Finca Tashigar  
Prolongación de la Calle Bolívar  
Valle de Pedro González. Isla de  
Margarita  
Tel: 00 58 295 415 5800  
Email: [tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru](mailto:tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru)  
Web site:  
[www.dzogchenvenezuela.org](http://www.dzogchenvenezuela.org)

**Tashigar South**  
Comunidad Dzogchen  
Tashigar  
Calle pública S/N  
Tanti 5155  
Pcia. de Córdoba  
Argentina  
  
Tel & Fax: 0054- 3541-498 356  
Email: [tashigarsur@gmail.com](mailto:tashigarsur@gmail.com)

### Program of Vajra Dance at Tashigar Norte, Margarita Island February – March 2006

We are very happy to announce that international instructor Adriana dal Borgo will hold the following courses of The Dance of Vajra at Tashigar Norte, Margarita Island.

Dance of Song of Vajra  
February 7 - 13, second part  
(For beginners)  
Cost: 400.000 Bolivares (with discounts)

Dance of Six Space of Samantabhadra and Dance of Three Vajras for advanced practitioners:  
March 6 - 10  
(This course is for those who know the basics steps of these two Dances.)  
Cost: 400.000 Bolivares (with discounts)

All the courses will be done only if there will be enough participants, so please confirm your participation by sending an email to Alexey Polionov at [secretary@tashigarnorte.org](mailto:secretary@tashigarnorte.org) as soon as possible.

Thank you,  
Gakyil of Tashigar Norte  
Email: [tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru](mailto:tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru)

### TASHIGAR SUR - SUMMER 2006

January 19 -21  
Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners  
9 Purification Breathings, 5 Tsigjong and 8 Lungsang  
Instructor Marisa Alonso

January 22-25  
Yantra Yoga Course for Advanced Practitioners  
5 Tsandul and its Pranayama  
1st and 2nd Series of Yantras and their Pranayamas - Vajra Wave  
Instructor Marisa Alonso

February 6 - 12  
Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra  
Second Part  
Instructor Nélica Saporiti

Registration and information: [tashigarsur@gmail.com](mailto:tashigarsur@gmail.com)

Welcome to the South!  
Tashigar Sur Community



Yantra Yoga 2nd level Advanced and teacher Training, Margarita November 2005

A. DE FERMOR



Yantra Yoga 1st level Advanced and teacher Training, Margarita November 2005

K. CULLEN

## namgyalgar & pacific rim

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### A Thank-you letter from Thupten Rabgyi Australia

I would like to say many thanks to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche for giving me the opportunity to come to Australia and stay with the Dzogchen Community. I would also like to thank Mark Farrington and Jean Mackintosh for their continuing support and friendship. I feel very happy and much more relaxed than before. I really appreciate all of my friends and I would like to thank everyone deeply from my heart. My life has totally changed and I have a special new home. Rinpoche, all of this has happened from your wonderful grace. I hope everyone is happy and enjoys throughout the whole life.  
Thank you and Tashi Delegs to everyone!  
Thupten Rabgyi

Rabgyi Lama was invited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to take part in the Santi Maha Sangha Program of study at Namgyalgar. In April 1993 at Namgyalgar, he met with Rinpoche and received lungs and teachings for about three weeks before Rinpoche left Australia. Rabgyi Lama stayed at Namgyalgar learning English and reading Dzogchen teachings during the next year. Rabgyi Lama returned to Tibet in 1994 to visit his mother and other family members. Namgyalgar has applied for and gained a permanent visa to Australia for Rabgyi and this means that he can apply for citizenship and an Australian passport in two to three years.

Rabgyi Lama completed fifteen years of study at Traling and Palyul Tharthang Monastery in Golok Tibet under the His Holiness The Third Palyul Lhatrul Ogyen Garwang Nyima Rinpoche. His training has been as a monk in the Nyingma lineage. During this time he had three years experience as Geköes looking after 500 monks. Rabgyi Lama left Tibet to further his studies in India walking out of Tibet into Nepal escaping over high passes. In India and Nepal he studied in Nyingma monasteries in Dharamsala and Nepal. He studied under Chatrul Rinpoche and he completed a three-year retreat. In Namgyalgar he works in different tasks at the Gar as his English improves. He teaches Buddhist scripture to primary school students in Bermagui School and he teaches a Tibetan language class to local interested people. We are very happy to have Thupten Rabgyi Lama with us at Namgyalgar and wish him well for the future!

Jean Mackintosh for The Mirror





possibility we can create something new in the Crimea. For two years we have done retreats there and the political situation in the Ukraine is not so bad. I live in Europe and I know the European political situation very well. I know what a democratic system means and the Ukraine is trying to go in that direction. Russia is going in another direction. People said this was not the idea of Namkhai Norbu, but of Igor Berkin, and that he wants to create a Gar in the Ukraine. Please don't accuse Igor Berkin; he is totally innocent. People insist and go ahead in that way. I don't know what they want to do. If they only want to have a piece of land or a house and are satisfied, they can go ahead in that way. I don't consider that the Dzogchen Community. There is one more notable problem manifesting. People think that Igor Berkin conditions me. They don't know very well that I am a Khampa and not so easily conditioned by anyone. My character is not that way. I am a Dzogchen practitioner and know how to work with circumstances. People are saying that they want to have a place for doing courses of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha around Moscow. We don't need a big place with many problems, like Kunsangar. If people still want something around Moscow, it is not necessary to buy a big place far outside of town. There is already the Dzogchen Community of Moscow that recently lost their place and is looking for a new one. There is no reason to create two different groups; one is enough. It is very important that all Russian-speaking people participate in these projects. I have done my best up till now and will do my best for the future. I went to Russia every year when we had Kunsangar because I was thinking of all the Russian practitioners. You should know that and we still have that possibility. Of course, if you are not interested, there is nothing to do. In that case, you can at least try to organize the web cast. This, in any case, is very important for many different countries. Kunsangar is not the only place with problems. Many places I go, I meet people on the Gakyil who have done First Level and Second Level Santi Maha Sangha Training who do not do what I ask. This is not correct. It is better that you work in the correct way. While I am still alive, I do my best. I take care of Santi Maha Sangha in the correct way. A few years ago when I discovered I had cancer, I told you that my first concern was Santi Maha Sangha Training. It is not my family, the Dzogchen Community people or organization, but Santi Maha Sangha Training. The reason is that Santi Maha Sangha is very important for the continuation of our knowledge. For years I taught, so the people who follow Santi Maha Sangha and want to teach must understand what should be done. It is very important to observe yourselves and think a little. The Dzogchen Community and the Gakyil are not ordinary organizations. We collaborate with each other. That is why we formed the

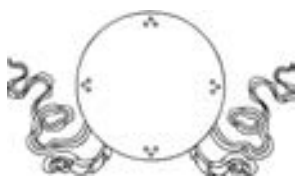
Gakyil system. There is no hierarchy in the Gakyil system. The Gakyil of Merigar is not the leader of all Gakyils. All Gakyils are autonomous, but the people within them are following the Dzogchen Teaching and are connected with the principle of the transmission of teaching. For that reason, we should work in the correct way. We try to do everything in a simple and less complicated way. I ask this also for my son, Yeshe. Yeshe has told me for many years that I should not travel so much and if people are interested to receive the teaching we can organize a web cast. All the different Dzogchen Community Gars and Lings can collaborate. Many years ago I presented a text called the "Fundamental Principles of the Dzogchen Community." I thought it would help and inform all Dzogchen practitioners and Dzogchen Communities as to how we collaborate. Many people in different places in the Dzogchen Community did not agree. I received a lot of criticism. People said this did not correspond to the teaching. They were teaching me Dzogchen! I told them thank you very much, but I don't need your teaching. I try to do my best based on what I know. Some people want to receive teaching without paying for it; one shouldn't have to pay for the Dharma. It doesn't correspond. To pay means the teaching has some value and you say that you offer body, speech and mind, but if you have the capacity to offer body, speech and mind, why can't you offer some money? It doesn't correspond. We live in a modern society in the year 2005. We must understand how the situation and what our condition is: Who pays if you invite a teacher? The teacher needs a place to stay, light, food. Where does the money to pay for these things come from? Sometimes people are flying in the sky. For example, when I sent first sent Fabio to Russia and Estonia to teach Yantra Yoga, they did not give him sufficient food. After a day he felt very hungry and asked them for something to eat. They said they thought he was a yogi and didn't need food. It was similar when I went to New Zealand many years ago. I sent them my program but they ignored it and there was not only a retreat, but also a public talk, and touring around as well. There was not one single free day. I asked them how they thought I could manage this program. I said I felt tired and wouldn't be able to do the main retreat later. They said they never thought I got tired because I am a realized being. I still have a physical body and live like a human being even if I have some realization. You see how much we drink and eat only in one day. We must understand things in a more concrete way and not have too much fantasy. In the Dzogchen Community, Santi Maha Sangha means Dzogchen Community. We learn and train in Santi Maha Sangha; we become members of the Dzogchen Community, and try to do so in a perfect way. I am not saying that all members of the Dzogchen Community are perfect. If there are a few perfect

practitioners working in the correct way, then they can contribute to the Dzogchen Community and many teachers can arise from them. It is not so easy to be a teacher. Some people learn to teach because they can learn more when they teach. You can do that as a kind of exercise, but teaching means you take on a responsibility to communicate something to other people. In this case, what you transmit should be 100% correct. You shouldn't invent anything because inventing something worldly is not the teaching. For that reason we need to learn, for example, each time we do a Santi Maha Sangha training. First we learn the base of Santi Maha Sangha and in that way we can have a little background so we learn more general knowledge, like the final goal of Sutra and Tantra. We learn about Dzogchen Teaching and how we can get in the sense of it. We also do practice to integrate that knowledge, not only to repeat like a parrot. You may be able to repeat many things, but this has not much benefit if you are not integrated. For example, once a Lama doing a long retreat on a mountain heard someone outside chanting "Om Mani Padme Hum". He was interested in this, but when he looked outside he saw only a parrot chanting "Om Mani Padme Hum" and eating insects one by one. He chanted "Om Mani Padme Hum" because everyday when this lama went outside, he chanted "Om Mani Padme Hum, Om Mani Padme Hum". The parrot repeated it. In our Dzogchen Community there are people acting like parrots; they learn some words and become a teacher. I heard there are many teachers manifesting in North America and Spain. They say they are students of Namkhai Norbu, but some have never even met me. They have read some transcripts of my retreats and repeat what I said. You can repeat anything, that is not so difficult, but it doesn't have much value. For that reason we need to receive transmission. We integrate that transmission in ourselves, we communicate that and there is benefit. Teachers must know how to communicate to people. They should not only think, "I am a recognized and authorized teacher, now I can do everything." The first thing a teacher should understand is how the students are: their condition, capacity, knowledge, and experience. You do not only explain what you know; you should enter into the dimension of the student and know what is more important and how to help them understand. Transcribed by Anastasia McGhee and Carisa O'Kelley Edited by Naomi Zeitz

tions so we can buy this place. The situation for having this place at this moment is good, but if we wait even as little as two months, the price of this place can increase. The cost will increase several times after parliament elections in March when the political situation is more established. We do not have much time. The committee organized is still in the process of completing investigating this company; is it a good company, did they pay taxes, did they have debts, etc. The process is partially done and we hope to finish it as soon as possible. So far the situation looks very positive and we don't anticipate many problems, but we must be very careful when entering into this kind of business. This is the situation and now the main point is to accumulate money to purchase this place and to create a new Gar. Of course we are very happy and surprised by the great gift Rinpoche made yesterday by saying that this place could be a kind of Winter Gar for Merigar, which means that we now have a good possibility to collaborate with the international community and not be limited by language and borders. We have more possibilities to integrate into the international Dzogchen Community and from the beginning start things in a precise and correct way so not much reorganization will be necessary. It was also good to hear from Rinpoche that there are some indications for this place and this is very inspiring for us. We are not just buying some land and buildings. More or less I explained what I wanted to explain and hope I didn't forget anything essential. If you have any questions please ask. Rinpoche: How is the ocean connected to this land? Igor: I forgot this important point. This place is on the slope of a mountain, quite a steep slope, so it is more or less 400 meters above sea level. There is a good road to the sea that is about 3 kilometers long. In general it is a very pleasant one-hour walk; it is a good road and you can also go by car. Rinpoche: What is the beach like? Igor: The beach is made of small stones or pebbles. There are different kinds of beaches there and it is possible to go to other beaches. Some of the beaches are wild. Rinpoche: Is there sun? Igor: It is the Southern slope of the mountain so it is warm. In the winter it can be cold, maybe 5 or 10 degrees below zero, but for a very short period of time, maybe for one week or 10 days. Mostly the temperature is above 0 and there is sun most of the year. Rinpoche: What is it like behind this land? Igor: Behind the land there are mountains and there are two beautiful rocky cliffs directly behind this place. There are steep rocks to the side that create a very beautiful view and these rocks protect the land from the North wind and are open to the South. Rinpoche: Are there some caves in the rock? Igor: Yes there are caves in the rocks. Maybe I should tell a little history about this place. This

place is a very international place. It was a Greek colony and then a Roman colony and the famous poet Ovidius was sent in exile there; Greeks, Romans, and Goths have inhabited the region. It has a very good connection with Italy because one of the most famous tourist spots is a Genovian fortress and there was a Genovian colony in the 11<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. There are many caves, catacombs and marble caves; from ancient times these caves were used by different religions. They were used by primitive religions and as catacomb churches of early Christians. Many caved cities existed in Crimea and not far from this place. These mountains are made of material that creates caves. There are also many famous caves. There are many beautiful places in general in this region. The residences of Russian kings were not far from this place, Gorbachov's residence is only 20 kilometers away and also the residences of Turkish Kings were here. This place was very much adored by many kinds of kings and we hope this place could also be very good for the Dharma King Chögyal. [Big Applause.] As a conclusion, for those people who are interested and who understand how important this place can be and that we don't really have much time, please come and speak with the Crimean Committee. Unfortunately I am the only one who speaks English, so probably you will have to come to me if you are interested and we can speak in more detail and also in general if people would like more information. We will also develop a web site in Russian and English where you will be able to see photos and videos.(see below) Thank you for your attention everyone and thank you Rinpoche for this precious opportunity. Rinpoche: Very good. Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz The Committee for Crimean Project: Igor Berkhin <berkhin@dzogchen.ru> Viktoria Adamenko Vladimir Shurkov Web site: http://merigar-east.dzogchen.ru http://merigar-east.dzogchen.ru/description\_eng.htm Merigar Gakyil has opened a special account for Merigar-East project: Associazione Culturale Comunita Dzogchen Conto Corrente n. 3120.29, (abi 1030 cab 72160) Monte dei Paschi di Siena, Filiale di Arcidosso (GR) ITALY Codice IBAN IT64N 01030 72160 000000 3120 29 Codice BIC/swift: PASCITMMGRO Please inform us by email of your kind donations.





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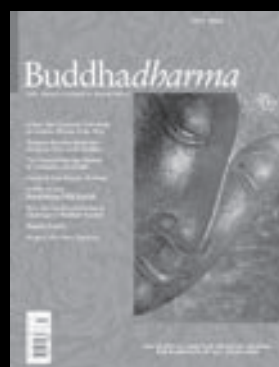
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Hospital Chaplaincy from the Buddhist Perspective

By Chaplain Tom Kilts

In the Intensive Care Unit, Madeline waited for her death, since there was nothing left for the medical staff to do. As the Chaplain assigned to that floor, I was there to comfort her. She didn't have family support and had been in the hospital before. I remembered the last time we visited and I was impressed by her devout Catholic faith and how it sustained her through the tough times of her illness. This time I walked in the room, it was lowly lit, and her breathing was labored. She recognized me and said, "I know I am dying, and soon, what do I do?" This particular question can haunt any Interfaith Chaplain, but that day it seemed especially haunting to this particular Chaplain who happened to be a devout Tibetan Buddhist. I checked the chart, called the priest, and everything on their end had been done; now she was asking for something else from me, but what? I kept my inner panic in check and stayed engaged with her. I remembered in my IPR (Interpersonal Relationships Group) group in my Clinical Pastoral Education program, how I was struggling with how I could use my own "theology" in a clinical environment that consisted of mostly Christian denominations. Up to this point in my ministry, I relied only on my education in various religious traditions and kept my own faith close to my chest. I did this for good reasons, because I wanted to be skillful with others. However, Rabbi Zalman Schacter used to tell me that the only way to do effective interfaith ministry was to be rooted in your own tradition and from there engage the "reality maps," and "theologies" of others. During this time my CPE clinical training experience was calling me to integrate my Tibetan Buddhist faith with my ministry of Interfaith Chaplaincy. Madeline held my hand tightly and again asked me, "What am I supposed to do?" I pulled a chair up and came closer to her ear. I told her to visualize Christ surrounded by healing and warm light. She did so and tears began to well up in her eyes. I asked her to call upon him with devotional prayers and she began to chant her rosary. I walked her through a meditation where Christ was absorbed in her heart and she released light through the top of her head, all the while surrounding herself with the love of Christ. I told her if she lost touch with the visualization to keep going back

to the image of Christ in front of her and then absorb his love and warmth into her being and then release. She started doing this practice and I left to visit other patients in the ICU. Later that day I stopped by and she still seemed scared but assured me that she was continuing the practice and that it was helping. I told her I was going home for the night and for her to contact me if she needed anything. That night I slept after a hard day of work and woke up out of a sound sleep at 1:20AM in the morning. I felt a great sense of peace come over me, wondered quietly why I was woken up so suddenly and then went back to sleep. The next morning I went to the ICU to see if Madeline made it through the night. When I arrived at the Chaplain's office, I was told by one of my colleagues that she had passed during the night. I felt some relief for her. Without thinking about it, I looked at the "expired" list and her name and time of death were printed there. To probably no surprise to the Mirror readership, it was around the same time I had been woken up in the middle of the night. This is just one of many stories of how in my chaplaincy work, how I touch the lives of others and they touch mine as well. This story took place many years ago when I was in a residency program doing my Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) training. It has only been recently that more Buddhists from various denominations are going through the process of becoming trained professional Chaplains in settings like hospitals, prisons, hospices, etc. I went beyond my chaplaincy training to become a certified ACPE (Association of Clinical Pastoral Education) Associate Supervisor. I now supervise CPE units and train ministers from various, religious, spiritual and cultural backgrounds, on the ins and outs of being a professional Interfaith Chaplain. I take my students through an intense formation process that should be recognizable in our Dzogchen community, because its primary concern is with the process of integration. It is through the clinical method of growing into our inner and outer authenticity that we are more capable to invite and companion others in the depths of their suffering and struggle. In a sense, we can only go as deep with another as we can with ourselves. So for those interested in becoming professional chaplains you have to go on an ongoing journey related to what Trungpa Rinpoche called the Tantric journey, where the "path is the goal." To get certified as a Chaplain, you would need to go through the

Association of Professional Chaplains (APC), [www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org). Their requirements are:  
-A Masters of Divinity Degree or Equivalent theological training (look on their web site for specifics of this equivalency)  
-Endorsement and commissioning from your Religious Community stating that you are fit and empowered to function as a professional Interfaith Chaplain  
-Four Units of ACPE accredited Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE)  
-1 year of job experience after you have completed your four units of CPE (note that most jobs hire when you have fulfilled your four unit CPE requirement, and use the term "certification eligible," which means that you have fulfilled the first three requirements above)  
-Meet with a Certification Committee for Review

Taking a one-year residency program at an accredited CPE center can fulfill the four units of CPE requirement. These programs usually offer stipends and medical benefits while you are there. To find the nearest CPE center and learn more about CPE, go to [www.acpe.edu](http://www.acpe.edu). On that web site you can download applications, look through the directories for the listing of centers and learn more about the clinical method. I have found that the career path of Chaplaincy and Pastoral education have been important parts of my spiritual path. They have complimented each other, where the transmission helps me to deepen my capacity to be with patients and students in their suffering, the work itself helps me to deepen my capacity to continually receive the transmission. I call upon all my fellow Vajra sisters and brothers who are called to ministry and service, to consider the path of professional chaplaincy.

**Tom Kilts met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at Tsegvalgar in 2005. He began to read about Taoism and meditation when he was eight years old. Tom called himself a Buddhist by the time he was twelve and was very much interested in the local Tibetan Buddhist monastery. He ran away from home when he was sixteen, finished high school and lived on his own for a period of time. During this time, Tom contemplated joining the monastery and becoming a monk, but that path didn't seem right for reasons unknown to him at the time. Tom studied anthropology and religious studies at college and came under the tutelage of a professor who was a long-time practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism. Tom soon**

*left to study in Kenya, where he studied with a shaman out in the desert. When he returned to the US, he still struggled with his "calling" and wondered what to do. He left to study in India, Nepal and Tibet and while there he met His Holiness the Dalai Lama, His Holiness the Karmapa (while His Holiness was still in Tibet) and was present at Schechen during the enthronement of the new Yangsi of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. While there, he also read Sogyal Rinpoche's "Tibetan Book of Living and Dying" and decided that chaplaincy was his path. Tom went to graduate school at Naropa University and received his Master's Degree in Buddhist Studies. While there, he took Bodhisattva vows with the Rime teacher Ringu Tulku and did intensive Madhyamika training. All this time, Tom worked in a hospital as a chaplain. When he went back East to complete training and start CPE supervisor training in a Catholic hospital, Tom had the fortune to meet and study with Tulku Thondup Rinpoche. Tulku Thondup Rinpoche endorsed and commissioned Tom's ministry work and gave him good advice and guidance. Towards the end of the three years of working together, Tulku Thondup Rinpoche told him it was time to join a larger Dzogchen organization. Tom went on retreats with many teachers, felt connected to the teachings but not one practice or community. He went on a retreat with Chökyi Nyima Rinpoche at this funny-named place, Tsegvalgar, which he couldn't pronounce. While he was at Tsegvalgar, he felt as if he was home and felt connected to the images of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Tom knew that it was the place for him, but it was not until 2005 that Tom met Rinpoche at the last Tsegvalgar Retreat. When he finally met Rinpoche, it confirmed what he was feeling, and now Tom feels as at home as last. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche gave Tom an endorsement and commissioning to do the ministry of Chaplaincy and Pastoral Education. Tom lives in Walnut Creek California with his wife Sarah and 3 and half year-old daughter Indra.*

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Spell

Lion lady,  
moon shaper,  
make me round,  
model my skin,

inside the perfect ring  
Articulate the bones,  
the soft red pathways  
and pale nerves.

At the joints  
and crossings  
sow bulbs  
of flowers.

When my strength ebbs  
sucked from inside,  
pricked and stolen  
by sympathetic reflex,

they'll bear the strain,  
shriveling round the core  
of manna that converts  
pain into sight,

into growth,  
into merciful  
and victorious flowers,  
stars in my inner sky.

Lion lady,  
secret sun shiner,  
make me  
your shaman.

Rowena Hill

Norbunet

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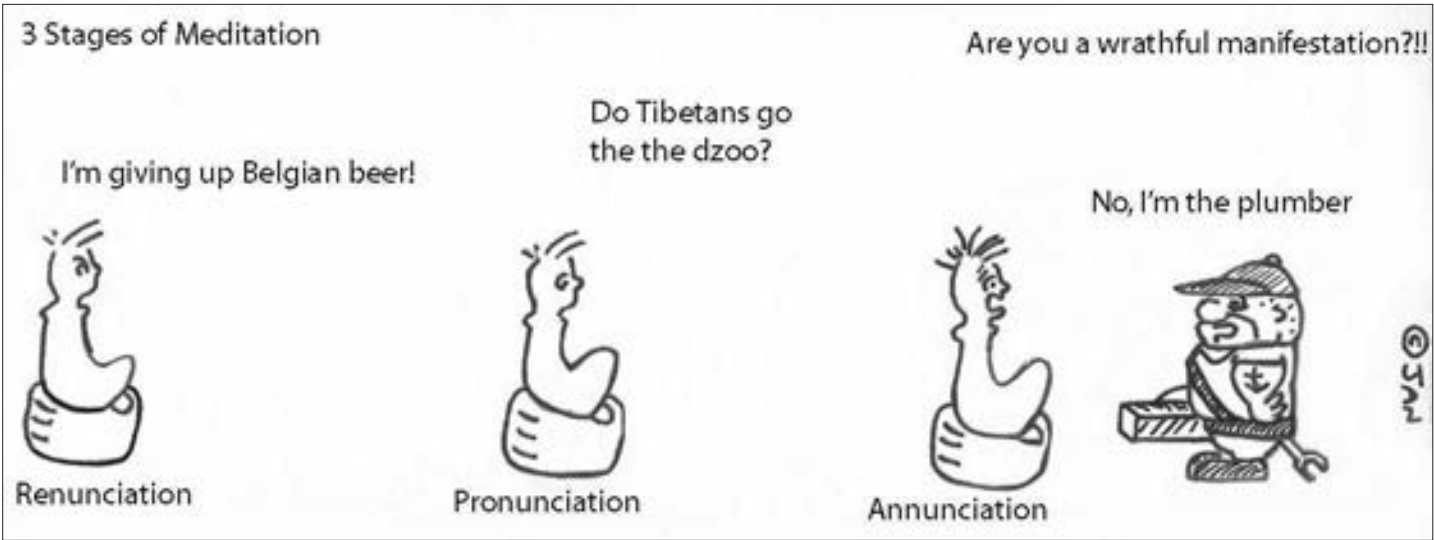
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# EMERALD TREASURES

## A New Perspective on Tibetan Imagery

MARIANNA RYDVALD  
Tibet House NYC Sept. 8-Nov.8 2005

A review by Louise Landes -Levi

Marianna, you are not a ‘normal’ person so how can I write a ‘normal’ review of your show. You are a gigantic person, descended from the Laplanders; a shaman’s voice travels through you and informs your paintings. You seek in the Tibetan, Christian, Meso American and Indian traditions, yet you return to your roots, the *samye*,\* the mother goddess Ka Tara Sha who visited you in the realm of your childhood and who later reappeared in your obsession with Tara: the Emerald Forest Tara, the Rain Forest Tara, and the Crystal Tara. From where do these images emerge?

You tell me the deity itself reveals to you its *mudra* and its ambient. You paint a youthful Yeshe Tsögyal, She is sitting in flames; she is youthful but beyond youth and old age, her brocade of grasses protects her visionary meditation. I easily become Yeshe Tsögyal in this dream you have.

It is 1970. You are living in a converted military base in Denmark. ‘Christiana’ later becomes a national ‘treasure’. You paint an entire building with a mural representing the unity of tradition. Guru Padmasambhava presides over all the activities and images in your painting. A Lama comes to toss ceremonial rice on the facade.

Marianna, you are a woman of this moment. I can’t fit you into any tradition. One afternoon we discussed the difference between the *terton* and the visionary. We understand there is no tradition of *terton* in the Western world. You speak of sky travel, the dreams of the sky travel of your people or a people arriving to the planet. You wonder if is this your people or your tribe? You have teeth like the *samye* \* who have teeth like no other people on earth. You belong to the lineage of liberation and wisdom. You

totally overpower me but secretly I relate to your vision of Tara, of Guru Padmasambhava, to your portraits of the Karmapa with yellow birds, of Kalu Rinpoche, of His Holiness Dalai Lama - all of whom you have met, who have all been your teachers.



Marianna and Alex Grey

L LANDES-LEVI

Other teachers are the birds and flowers of your environment. Your deities are placed in our relative world. You speak of the influences of El Greco, Goya, from early travels in Spain and Diego Rivera and Freda Kahlo from a sojourn in Mexico. You study fresco painting in Stockholm. You marvel at the visionary display of the Russian painter Nicholas Roerich, an early interpreter of the East.

You paint your deities in three-dimensional space. You break with tradition and honor the words of the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa who said, “Marianna, be true to your own style and work on the transition for the old to the new.”

You say that the Karmapa knows you must do this. He blesses your natural inclination. Your deities are rounded and animated. Your teachers are uniformly kind, never

wrathful. Spaceships, crystals, leopards and exotic flowers signify the realm in which your visions dwell.

When you are fifteen you make your first painting. You don’t really know what Buddhism is. You’ve never met a Lama but you feel compelled to paint such a figure. Your painting of forty years ago looks like Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche today. I wonder at this strange connection and send him this portrait by email, done in the visionary space that seems to exist beyond time, place and lineage, at least a recognizable lineage.

Buddhist practitioners have sent your cards around the globe. You paint in many styles but until a few weeks ago, I only knew your Taras.

New York City suffers from the past and the fear of the future. One enters Tibet House and feels the warmth of your display. I cannot say if these iconographies will compel me to sit and recite the mantra of Tara, but I can say their warmth transcended the moment’s ambivalence and lifted me into a spacious equanimity that was your gift.

The paintings of your son Sky in ‘Love From Sky’ and your daughter Ariana in ‘Morning Raga’ were very moving. Your infant son sits with Vajra & Bell in hand. Your daughter is protected by a single HUM. Your Taras manifest from Africa to China. You want to paint a Tara in every major city in the world to save this planet.

You are sixty years old but will still climb huge scaffolds and travel great distances to realize this plan. You adorned – in the 80’s – the Kagyu Monastery in Bodhgaya with images of the Buddha’s life. In the 90’s you paint the Orchestral Hall in Detroit and the Taj Mahal of Atlanta, the most renowned casino in the land.

You tower above me but you are inside of me. I am in a truck, driving your paintings north from New York City to Woodstock without really understanding how I got into such a situation. ‘Karma’ you insist.

*\*Samye-the reindeer herders or Laplanders of Northern Sweden*

Southern Tuscany

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Special Practice Calendar  
Wood Bird and Fire Dog Years  
January to April 2006

11 & 12 Tibetan months of the  
Wood Bird Year

1 & 2 Tibetan months of the  
Fire Dog Year

Anniversary of Garab Dorje  
First Tibetan month – 15 day  
Celebration at 8 a.m. Oddiyana  
time.

Monday March 13 2006

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

Tuesday March 14 2006

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

11 Month, day 8 Sat. Jan. 7 2006

This is a special day for doing the practice of Ekajati so try to do a Long Thun, collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.

11 Month, day 10  
Mon. Jan. 9 2006

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava called Padma Gyalpo: it is the day on which he arrived in the capital of Oddiyana and became prince to King Idrabhodi. Therefore it is an excellent day to do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava with a Ganapuja.

11 Month, day 15  
Sat. Jan. 14 2006

FULL MOON. Today it is important to try to do the Long life practice of Guru Amitayus, Union of Primordial Essences, in the usual way, and, if possible, a Ganapuja.

11 Month, day 25  
Tue. Jan. 24 2006

This is a day of the Dakinis in general, so if you have the opportunity practice a collective

Ganapuja, with the transformation of the Dakini Simhamukha, and recite her heart mantra as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do a Medium Thun either collectively or personally.

11 Month, day 30  
Sun. Jan. 29 2006

DARK MOON. This is an excellent day to do purification practice so try to do the Purification of the Six Lokas and a Ganapuja in the evening.

12 Month, day 10  
Tue. Feb. 7 2006

This day is the anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava's coronation as Prince of Orgyen at the invitation of King Idrabhodi. We can perform a Ganapuja collectively or do the Long life practice, "Universal Wisdom Union" either collectively or personally, according to circumstances.

12 Month, day 11  
Wed. Feb. 8 2006

This is a good day to do a Medium or Long Thun with an intensive practice of the mantra of Ekajati.

12 Month, day 15  
Sun. Feb. 12 2006

FULL MOON. This is in general a day for honoring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the Long life practice of Guru Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences". If possible try to do a collective Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters in the evening.

12 Month, day 18  
Thu. Feb. 16 2006

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen master Longchen Rabjam (Longchenpa, 1306-1363). On this very important day try to do the Guruyoga Akar Lamai Naljor, Guruyoga with the White A, either collectively or personally.

12 Month, day 25  
Thu. Feb. 23 2006

Dakini Day. This is very positive day for reinforcing your energy and creating a stronger contact with the energy of the universe so try to do a collective Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If that is not possible, try to do a Medium Thun alone. In either case recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

12 Month, day 29  
Mon. Feb. 27 2006

This

1 Month, day 10  
Thu March 9 2006

This is the day on which Padmasambhava was ordained by Ananta, or, according to Jigmed Lingpa ('Jigs med gLingpa), the day on which he left the kingdom of Oddiyana to go to the cemetery at Maghadha called Citavana. You can do a Ganapuja in the usual way or if you do not have the possibility you can try to do the Long life practice linked to the Guruyoga of Guru Rinpoche (Universal Wisdom Union) either collectively or alone. Otherwise you can do a Medium Thun (Thundrin) with an intense practice of the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava.

1 Month, day 15  
Tue. March 14 2006

FULL MOON. The anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje as well as that of the founder of Bön, the great Master Shenrab Miwoche, falls on the day of the first full moon of the Tibetan year. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni when he manifested several miracles and the anniversary of the Master Marpa. Thus it is an especially important day for both Buddhist and Bönpo practitioners, in particular those who practice the Dzogchen teachings. On this day, therefore, when it is 8am in Oddiyana, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Garab Dorje. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 4 am.) SEE GLOBAL TIMETABLE There is also a penumbral lunar eclipse on this day.

1 Month, day 25  
Fri March. 24 2006

This is the day of the Dakini and in particular the anniversary of the lady Master Ayu Khandro, so it is good to do the Akar Lamai Naljor or a Ganapuja with transformation into the Dakini Simhamukha.

1 Month, day 30  
Wed. March 29 2006

DARK MOON. This day is suitable for purification practice so try to do purification with the

Namcho Shitroi Naljor, the practice of the peaceful and wrathful manifestations, either collectively or alone, as well as a collective Ganapuja. There is a total solar eclipse today.

2 Month, day 6  
Tue. April 4 2006

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

2 Month, day 10  
Sat. April 8 2006

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

2 Month, day 12  
Mon. April 10 2006

This is the anniversary of Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen (1147-1216), one of the first great Masters of the Sakyapa tradition, so try to do the Akar Lamai Naljor, the Guruyoga of the White A.

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for doing the Long life practice of Guru Amitayus, with a Ganapuja if possible. Try to do it collectively or, if that is not possible, alone.

2 Month, day 20  
Tue. April 18 2006

This is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltsen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dadrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Dundul. It is therefore a good day to do Akar Lamai Naljor, the Guruyoga with the White A.

2 Month, day 25  
Sun. April 23 2006

This is a Dakini day so try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters or if that is not possible, a Medium Thun, either collectively or alone.

2 Month, day 30  
Thu. April 27 2006

DARK MOON. On this day, which is the anniversary of the great Tertön Loter Wangpo, try to do the Akar Lamai Naljor, Guruyoga of the White A with the Master Garab Dorje either collectively or alone, with a Ganapuja if possible.





# Journey in Tibet

A Travelogue from Romain Piro

Excerpts of my diary:

October 1, 2005:

There is not a single cloud in the sky looking out from this big airplane full of Chinese celebrating the first day of the annual week off (I would have loved for my travel agency to tell me that there will be 1 billion 300 thousand people traveling on this day), singing, each with a red flag in each hand and someone video-recording. A strange, annoying and disappointing scene!



Hopefully the real show was happening outside. I am above Tibet, looking at a huge valley, then another one and another even bigger! There are thousands of valleys, peaks, passes, a stunning desert of mountains below. It is certainly one of the most impressive scenes I have ever seen. Unforgettable. My feeling is paradoxical at this moment. I am excited like a child a few hours before Christmas to see all the presents that await him. I am so happy to come back to this holy land to see its great people again. On the other hand, I also feel a strange kind of

Western China. I am so moved by the idea of arriving for the first time in Lhasa; I have goose bumps and almost cry.

October 8, 2005:

The first week in the holy city and all kind of feelings already experienced, from the best to the worst! The best is when I see an entire family of nomadic people arriving from Amdo, Kham or anywhere else in this immense and vast place, with heavy bags of tsampa and butter. They are so excited to be in Lhasa, to see the Potala for the first time, the Jokhang, Ramoche; the three main pilgrimage places of the town. They really look like they come directly from the middle ages; so beautiful, with colorful chubas, amazing hairstyles and jewels. They invest their little money in offerings and do Koras all day long. Far from any way of life I know and very impressive! Then the worst are the buildings, the thousands of cars, the buildings, the pollution, the noise, the buildings, the square facing the Potala, Chinese being photographed wearing fake yellow chubas, the fake plastic palm



shame. I think of Alexandra David-Neel who came all the way from Yunnan on foot! She was without a map, without a clock, without anything, just full of the energy of discovering this amazing country and culture. Tibet. I feel shame to comfortably sit in this plane, imagining all the people down there that I would like to meet, those meetings always so interesting, at least funny, with lovely Tibetans; the people who are smiling like nowhere else. Now I am flying and missing so much. To see Lhasa is an old dream of mine and now I feel that arriving there by plane is not the real way one should go. I am with many tourists in the plane and most of them do not have a single idea about where they are going, they just know they are going to visit

trees in the streets, the buildings, etc. etc. Lhasa is not Tibet anymore except around the Jokhang. It is just another ugly Chinese town and it makes me so sad.

October 11, 2005:

How incredible!! And nice!! I went to visit the Terdrum nunnery where there are fantastic hot springs! They are as hot as Petriolo in Toscana. It is at 4500m (14,763 ft) and a daylong drive from Lhasa. Many people were enjoying the spring and many nuns living there offered a much better and cheaper accommodation than the Chinese. I saw a girl, a Westerner, she was American, and she told me she had come here with some friends, four Tibetans and one American. Nice! It is not so common to meet a Westerner traveling with Tibetans. I met one of her friends, a monk, with a funny moustache. Great, he was able to speak English! I start to talk with him and he asked me: "Oh, did you come to visit this Guru Rinpoche's place?" "What!" I said very surprised. "This is a Guru Rinpoche place!" "Of course, there is a famous foot-print near the spring and one of his retreat caves above the village and also a cave of his consort, Yeshe Tsogyal!" he

made by 31 December.

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said. "How nice!! I didn't know. I must see those places", I said.

We continued to talk and as all Tibetans, he was very curious about foreigners and he asked more things about me. I told him that I spend a lot of time at a Tibetan center in Italy.

"Dove? [Where?]" He said loudly in Italian. I was so surprised to hear some Italian words here and now! "In Toscana, vicino Arcidosso! Perche?" [In Tuscany, near Arcidosso. Why?] "Non mi dire che tu sei di Merigar!" [Don't tell me you are from Merigar?] He said. At this time I really thought I was dreaming and he started to say, "Oh, che fortuna incontrare te, io sono stato la per piu de un anno, qualche anno fa!! [Oh how fortunate to meet you. I stayed there for more than one year some years ago.] Sono un studente de Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche." [I am a student of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.]

I just couldn't believe it was true!

End of diary



# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

by Christina Svane

In my life, the great blessing of meeting Chögyal Namkhai Norbu seemed to come through the spirit of the trees. In all the events leading up to meeting him, trees are like pieces of the puzzle. While I was in college, in 1976, I went to see a friend's new meditation cabin at Stinson Beach, in California, where I lived. Standing alone on the roof, gazing into the blue sky, my awareness spontaneously relaxed and I noticed that the trees were looking back at me, as if I were looking in a mirror, so to speak. I could see that they and I were the same consciousness, but they had chosen to practice in tree form, just as the birds were practicing in bird form. I felt awake for the first time in my life, and asked myself how I got there, at which point, of course, the discursive mind took over again and the experience ended as abruptly as a prison door closing behind me. "Someday I will meet a teacher who can help me get back to that state," was a recurring thought until I met him, ten years later.

Then in 1981, I was in despair after my lover died, while I was on a dance tour in Europe. I remember standing on the roof of a building in Paris, thinking how I could get enough sleeping pills to leave Earth to go find him on the other side. In the midst of those dark thoughts, I looked out into the branches of the chestnut trees and saw a vision of a dancing female figure with black hair and Asian features in brightly colored clothing. She was very powerful, sensual and communicating that I should not kill myself, but instead find the inspiration to keep living through developing my dancing. Today when I think of her, I wonder if perhaps she was Gomadevi. Ever since I was a little girl, dancing had been my way of connecting to my spirit and to what I would later identify as the energy of Tara. Improvisation was my practice, and I would often dance in nature, tuning into the energies there. Spiritually, I felt connected to Buddhism, but didn't have the discipline to do sitting practice. I was too restless, and always wanted to be moving.

Looking back, I would say I was in a kind of underworld for the next four years, living without direction, swinging from reckless impulse to thick shadows, in a kind of jungle of where the flowers of creativity struggled to reach the light through a canopy of sorrows, regrets, and alcohol. Where is my path, I kept wonder-

ing. I went to see a woman who practiced Chinese medicine. She took my pulses and said, "Oh my god, there is nothing holding you together." We spoke a bit, and she gave me some foul-tasting herbs to make tea from, and this assignment: "Go home and write something that you will say upon rising every morning for the rest of your life."

I believe that what I wrote prepared me to meet Rinpoche, which happened a few short months later. It was inspired by my experience dancing with the trees. Because of my emotional state, I had stopped teaching dance classes, or taking them, or being part of a dance company. Instead, I would go every morning to the park and ask a certain very tall sycamore tree to be my teacher. I would stand and wait for the lesson to begin. One morning it was roots. One morning it was the torso. One morning the rhythm of the branches. One day I had an experience of holding my arms up mid air and hearing the tree say, "Now stay that way for 200 years." I held them up as long as I could, and just before I let them drop, I experienced a rush of images pouring through me: goddesses and archetypes of the Divine Feminine, such as Mary with Jesus in her arms, Athena, Tara (though I didn't know her name then), and nameless images of The Great Mother. It was like I had discovered a doorway, a portal to another dimension where this compassionate energy lived. I knew this was my path. When I stopped, two hobos who had been watching me from the bushes where they'd slept, came out and said, "We don't know what you was doing, lady, but it was the purtiest thing we ever seen." The poem I wrote, and said every morning, began:

"All-giving Mother of Life,  
power and beauty unending,  
I am awake and at Your calling."

A few months later, by what seemed like a series of magical events, I had a wonderful job on the faculty of the Dance department at the Theaterschool in Amsterdam. I wanted to share with them my experience with the trees, and took them to the park, asking each one to pick a tree to be their teacher, and see what came through them. They were completely bewildered. Why they should do such a strange thing? Especially in the cold!

They complained to the administration and almost had me fired. I had to promise to become more normal in my teaching, but I kept working with the trees with a few interested students.

One morning a poster appeared in the foyer of the school. It was the photograph



Mark Morrel took of Rinpoche looking out the window from the back of a car in Amsterdam. The moment I saw it, I said, "That's the man I've been looking for!" I went to his announced public talk at a wonderful old venue on the waterfront called The Kosmos. I was excitedly waiting for a robed figure of a Tibetan Master to appear, when a man in corduroy pants came striding down the aisle like he had just stepped off his horse. I assumed he must be the Master's bodyguard. The bodyguard's radiant smile had an amazing effect on the room, putting all of us at ease, and sending out such warmth and joy that I thought, "Wow, this bodyguard is awesome!" I was confused to see him sit down in front of the microphone, though. I kept looking over my shoulder for the Master to arrive. The bodyguard, of course, was Rinpoche.

The next day I went to the retreat, and though I hardly understood anything, I felt an immediate connection to Rinpoche. I also felt instantly accepted into his family of students, and felt very happy, like I had come home. After the retreat, I went every Tuesday night to practice with the little Amsterdam Sangha, though I was too shy to ask them to explain to me what we were doing. We did Chöd every week then, and for a long time I didn't know one part from

the next. It didn't feel like it mattered to me, I just wanted to stay connected to Rinpoche. Immediately, this became the most important thing in my life. I was baffled myself when I'd turn down invitations to parties, dinners, events, holding the practice nights sacred.

Then for Easter, 1987, Martin Buchter said he was driving from Amsterdam to Merigar, and offered space in his van. Louise Landes-Levi, a wonderful poet and longtime student of Rinpoche's, told me, "You should go. Merigar is a special place, where Rinpoche teaches in Italy. It is near a beautiful village called Arcidosso. You are Rinpoche's student now, so you should feel like it is your home, your spiritual home. You should feel like you are part of this family now, and you have a right to be there." Her words had a profound effect on me, and I decided to go. I remember we left about 2 a.m.,

driving along the canals out of Amsterdam, taking turns driving all night and day, singing the Purification of the Elements, Vajrasattva and Song of Vajra, as we headed south on our pilgrimage. I also tried desperately to memorize the Chöd on that trip. I could not believe how beautiful it was, when we arrived at Merigar. The trees were bursting with white blossoms, sheep grazed on the hillsides, and Monte Labro towered across the little valley, against the blue skies of Toscana. In those days, there were so few people, Rinpoche would sit on the big rock and give the retreat in the grove of trees below where the Gonpa is today. The only building at Merigar then was the yellow farmhouse, where Rinpoche lived upstairs, and the Sangha ate and slept downstairs. There was also a very small Gonpa in the yellow house, where the children played usually. One morning, in the grove, in the middle of giving a teaching, Rinpoche looked straight at me and said, "If you look at a tree and see a goddess, and you are worried because you don't know which is real, don't worry, they are both equally real." Then he simply returned to the topic he'd been teaching. I couldn't believe it. I had never spoken to him about my dancing with the trees, how inspiring it was for me and how much trouble it was getting

me into. I walked up the hill that day feeling walls inside me tumbling down profoundly moved by his capacity to see into me. I felt like he was extending his hand, to help me get over the barrier to trusting a guru. I had grown up in San Francisco in the peak of the Haight-Ashbury times, and had seen so many people give up their identity to follow "gurus". I didn't want to be one of those people. As I walked up the hill to the yellow house, I said to myself, "Oh no, I never wanted to be someone with a guru!" But it was too late.

I think it was at that retreat that Rinpoche explained about the relationship between Guru and disciple being for as many lifetimes as it takes. Not like earthly marriage, which ends when someone dies. I could feel this connection, and it felt like something inside me that had been falling for years finally came to rest. There was someone in my life now that I trusted implicitly.

One night, everyone went to a party at the Faggio Rosso restaurant. I didn't go because I had no money, and I was not in the mood. I sat in the dark on a bench outside the yellow house and thought about Rinpoche. How strange that I felt shy with someone to whom I am more deeply bonded than a lover. It was up to me, I realized, to allow myself to feel that bond, that love, in my life. Under the stars, alone on that bench, I tried, and I did. Rinpoche always speaks of a sweetness that can't be shared through talking, only through tasting. How do you describe it? I know we all get to this point in our stories, and have to surrender. All I can say is tasting it brought tears, of being overwhelmed, of gratitude, joy, sorrow and relief. More than anything, I wanted to see him, the way you ache when you want to see your true love. Suddenly I heard feet crunching on the gravel. Out of the darkness Rinpoche appeared, with two others. He stopped in front of my bench, and greeted me, seeing my condition. Instead of going in the house, he began to tell funny stories, acting them out under the stars. I wondered then if I was dreaming. Now I know I am.

*Christina Svane lives in Hatfield, Massachusetts with her husband and two daughters, is the director of the Tsegylgar Gakyil and runs workshops in Embodied Awareness through Movement, Writing and Voice.*

*Tregchöd continued from page 1*

vision. Chöd means 'to cut'; rather, we enter into action, we break the cord of our dual vision.

*"We are something like a bound object with our three existences of body, speech and mind, bound up with all our tensions and filled with confusion. With this however, we relax into our nature and this is what we call Tregchöd. But to relax does not mean to let go without any presence. Relax means the inner state of presence." (Namkhai Norbu, 2000, p. 110)*

We relax in how it is with all our sense organs; not conditioned by our judgments, by the concepts of mind! This is how we discover and how wisdoms manifest. In our daily lives, step-by-step, we are aware, mindful and present; we get familiar. This is how we integrate presence: when driving a car, eating or working. While doing many different things, we can develop continuous, undistracted presence. When we start, it is not easy, yet it is the most important practice. To be present means knowing what the circumstances are. Time always goes ahead; we do our best.

Instant presence is what we discover through direct transmission, that is Guruyoga. Through Guruyoga, we develop instant presence.

Rinpoche stated that Dzogchen is just the vehicle; it all depends on our capacity. The methods are relative to our own experience. We discover through our own experience. This how we develop confidence. Rinpoche further stated that continuing to be in a state of confidence is Tredchö – total relaxation!

On day five, our last day, Rinpoche encouraged us to practice. He further gave

transmission for different practices. Finally, Rinpoche reminded us that the aim of following the teachings was to achieve realization; not to create confusion in samsaric vision. Rinpoche ended the teachings by saying: "MY PRACTICE IS TO BE PRESENT". He very gently added: "DO YOUR BEST!"

*References  
Norbu, N. (2000).  
Lonchenpa's Precious Ship.  
Arcidosso:Shang Shung Edizioni*