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INTERNATIONAL
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Front cover: Earth element, Lam, painted by the Dynamic Elements Artists (DEA) group using traditional thangka colors made with natural pigments, gold leaf and real gems. More information about this group on page 39.

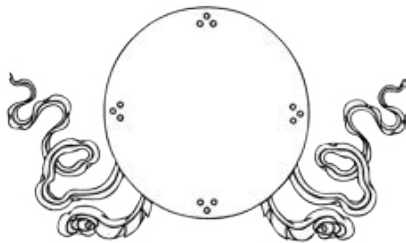
Back cover: A detail from the Dzamling Gar gardens. Photo by Lesya Cherenkova

Editorial

Somehow, in a somewhat synchronistic fashion, this issue of The Mirror is featuring Tibetan Medicine. In 1997 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu founded the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine at the Shang Shung Institute in Conway, Massachusetts, USA. In 2001, Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo became the director of the US program and then in 2012, Rinpoche chose Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo as the program's International Director. Since then, the medical school has been developing and spreading its activity under Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo's tireless guidance around the world, with the primary programs being offered in the USA, Russia and most recently in Spain.

As Rinpoche says in the talk on page 8 of this issue, "Tibetan Medicine is something very important, not only for us, but for all the world." Rinpoche speaks about the two most important things that Tibetan culture has to offer to this world, which are Tibetan Medicine and the Teachings, the spiritual path. Tibetan Medicine, because without good health, it is not even possible to follow a spiritual path, and therefore, in a sense, Tibetan Medicine can be seen as vehicle to provide a base to be able to follow the Teachings.

This unique four-year program offered by the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine, was developed in alignment with the traditional curricula of traditional Tibetan Medicine programs offered in universities in the autonomous region of Tibet. Graduates of the four-year programs are invited to participate in internships under senior Traditional Tibetan Medicine practitioners at Xining Tibetan Medical Hospital, so to date the graduates of the 2009 and 2012 classes from the USA and 2017 class from Russia studied and practiced in Xining.



The first class, 2009, of the 4 year Tibetan Medicine program on Men Tog (herbal identification) in the mountains of Amdo, Tibet with the professors from tso ngon Tibetan Medical college.

Until now there are two active schools of Tibetan Medicine, one at the Shang Shung Institute, USA in Conway, Massachusetts, which opened in 2005. When this school was established in 2005, it was the first four-year Tibetan Medical Program in North America and was licensed to operate as a Private Occupational School in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. It still maintains its position as the only licensed four-year Tibetan medical program in the US. The first class graduated in 2009 (see *Mirror 100* <http://melong.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/TheMirror100c.pdf>) and that class, as well as the class of 2012, went to the hospital in Xining, Qinghai Province, China for an internship. (see *Mirror 98*, page 7) (for more information please go to <http://www.tibetanmedicineschool.org/history/#>)

The second School of Tibetan Medicine opened in Russia in 2013 and the first graduation was held in 2017. Thirty-five students graduated and recently sixteen of those graduates went to Tibet to complete their study and practice at the medical school in Xining. (see page 18 here and issue 137 pages 18–21) (for more information please go to <http://www.tibetanmedicineschool.org>)

At Losar 2018, four of the first graduated class of 2009 from the USA went to Dzamling Gar to receive authorization as future Tibetan medical instructors and on February 19th, 2018, Rinpoche gave them diplomas. (see *Mirror 139* page 21)

The third Tibetan Medicine Program, still in its infancy, is at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, Spain where there are not yet long-term courses. There are two ongoing courses – one course is in the external therapy Ku Nye and the other is in Diet and Nutrition. These courses are held twice a year and those who complete these trainings will be considered experts in these two branches of Tibetan Medicine. (see *Mirror 139* pages 19–20) (for more information i.faccioli@shangshunginstitute.org)

We should also mention that Australia has been actively attempting to officially start a Tibetan Medical School; it has the curriculum and instructor in place, as well as Menpa Wangmo's approval, but the program has not yet been accepted.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's determined dedication to the preservation and continuation of Tibetan Medicine is not only for the benefit of Tibet, Tibetans or Tibetan culture. Tibetan Medicine is called *men* and *men* means "benefit". Rinpoche knows very well that Tibetan Medicine benefits all sentient beings, regardless of birthplace or culture, and it is for that reason he created and developed this program.

The Mirror hopes that what our readers discover through this information on Tibetan Medicine contributes to a greater knowledge and understanding of the profound wisdom and value of Tibetan Medicine on this earth today. It is our hope that our readers will continue to research and support the continuation of this precious cultural heritage.

Thank you.

The Mirror Staff
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Man, Medicine, and Society

A talk given in 1983 at the two-week First International Conference on Tibetan Medicine held in Venice and Arcidosso organized by Professor Namkhai Norbu.

Reproduced from Shang Shung Publications' recent book 'The First International Conference of Tibetan Medicine'.

You may have noticed that on the poster for our conference there is a figure that may look like either a man or a woman. It depicts Yuthog Yönten Gönpö the Elder, one of the most famous and important Tibetan doctors of the past, who we think lived towards the end of the seventh century CE. Tibetans consider this doctor a Master. I have personally met many masters, spiritual masters, that is. For instance, I spent five or six years in a college where we studied mainly Buddhist philosophy, but the master of our college was a great doctor under whom I studied for the first time the famous *Four Tantras* of Tibetan medicine.

Later on, I was on the border between China and Eastern Tibet, where I met another teacher who was very famous as a spiritual master, and not so much as a doctor, but who was, in truth, also a great doctor. I studied under him the Four Medical Tantras again. Lastly, I met the man who was for me one of the most important spiritual teachers. He was known as a doctor, and he often and mainly introduced himself as such. As a matter of fact, a teacher will manifest in different roles. At times, we can meet a teacher who will present himself as a doctor, or as a monk, or as the head of a monastery. Alternatively, we can meet doctors who are also yogis, practitioners; or doctors who will introduce themselves as normal people and live a normal lay life. The last teacher I mentioned was mostly this type of lay person, he was not a monk, but in truth he was one of the most important spiritual teachers of his time. This means that those who practice medicine must possess true knowledge.

Generally, we see human beings and medicine as subject and object, but we always need to understand the principle well. In Tibetan, the true meaning of *men*, medicine, is "benefit," medicine, therefore, is something that benefits the individual. But in order to truly bring benefit, we must first of all understand the existence of individuals. Someone may have a physical problem, for example, a headache. But this headache may have a deeper cause: beyond the physical level there is always the individual's mind. A doctor must understand this fact in order to be able to heal through medicine. When we speak of medicine usually we mainly mean material things, especially in the Western world, where technology is very developed. For example, if someone asks their doctor for medica-

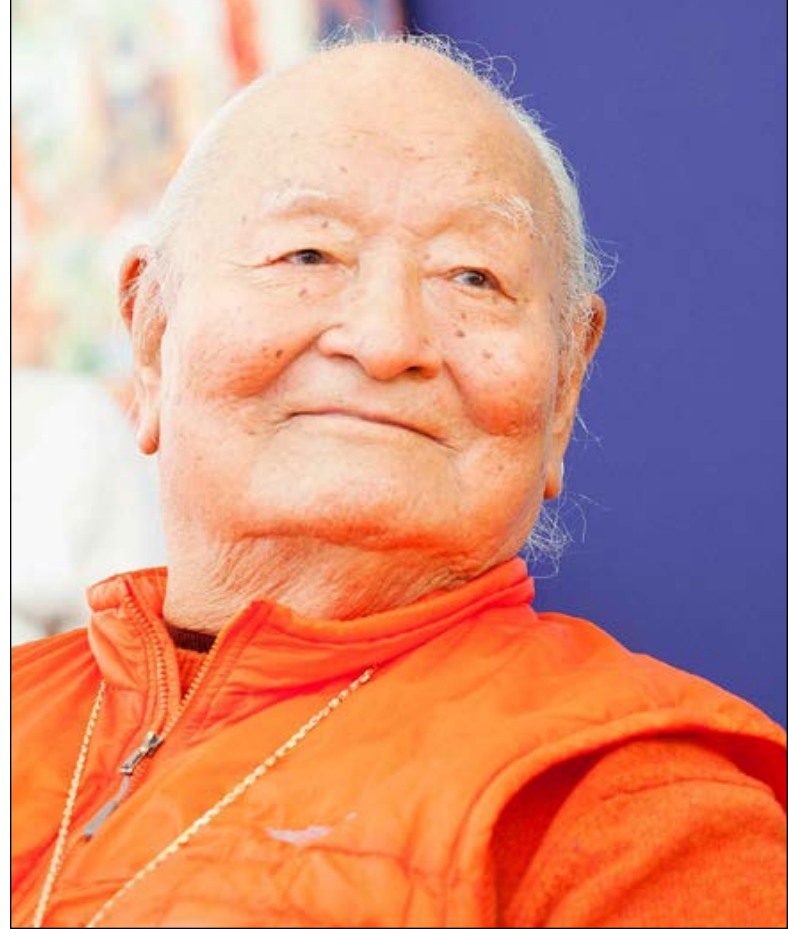


Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

tion to get rid of a headache, the doctor may offer a more complete explanation, saying that perhaps a massage may help, or they may suggest a certain kind of diet to overcome the problem. But today many people are not satisfied with these remedies and will say that they do not have time to do those things, and they beg the doctor to prescribe an effective medication to quickly get rid of the pain. This is the current situation.

Eventually the doctor ends up satisfying the patient, enabling that attitude. Society depends on economy and circulation of money. If I, as doctor, prepare a medication that cures the deep root of the illness, but that does not have an immediate result, people most likely will not be interested in it; on the other hand, a medicine that makes pain immediately go away will be very successful. Everyone works a bit in this direction, so our knowledge decreases. Going back to the earlier example, if we get a headache, there must be a very precise reason: it could be bad digestion, a liver problem, a sinus infection; it could also be nerves – there could be multiple factors. Thus, we need to know how to work concretely with the existence of the individual and to understand if the problem depends on energy, mind, or simply is at the physical level.

Perhaps many people are getting tired of hearing every day Tibetan doctors speak about the cause of an illness, that is, of the three humors, *lung*, *tripa*, and *peken*, or, going more in depth, of the three passions, but this is a very precise and concrete principle. Even in the West people say, "Do not get angry, or you will ruin your



liver!" It is the same principle. Passion is mostly connected to mind. The endless workings of mind slowly disturb energy, which in turn triggers disease at the physical level.

By medicine, we do not even mean that the doctor will make a kind of miracle to heal the patient: rather, the doctor has a certain knowledge of the condition of the individual, but complete remission can only happen through the collaboration of the patient. The individuals themselves must be interested in gaining certain knowledge: this is what we call awareness.

For instance, healing a disease is not just about taking a medication: one of the most important medicines is diet, what we usually eat and drink. Medicinal substances have a certain power, and generally we use those as well. But in the Western world there is a specific way to see things. For example, if you ask advice about diet in general, on what is good and what is harmful, perhaps a doctor specialized in macrobiotics will tell you that eating tomatoes is not good. But for Italians not eating tomatoes is a problem, because Italy produces tons of them! That is not exactly the principle: there is no food that is always beneficial, and another that is always harmful. For this reason, yesterday and over the past few days, the doctors have spoken about many different substances, of their worth, of the energy they possess, and so on. And they have also spoken of the way in which they use decoctions. Many know a medicinal plant, and they use it to make a decoction. Thinking that perhaps it is good for the liver, they harvest it and make a tea out of it. But this is not how medicine works. At times a specific decoction can be used for a specific problem, but there is no individual whose only organ is the liver, there are other organs, other functions. Something that we think is good for the liver, if taken excessively, will damage the heart. This principle is the fundamental basis of the diet.

Therefore, the explanation Doctor Jigme gave yesterday was very important. When we speak of pharmacology, we must consider the taste, energy, and quality of a substance. To truly know which substance will benefit us, first of all we must know ourselves, our condition: only then will we be able to assess what we need most. I believe that most of you have a book I wrote, *Birth, Life, and Death*.¹ In the last pages you will find a short analysis that can serve as an example, a list of foods used on a daily basis. I am not saying that eating a specific food is beneficial; rather, next to each item you will find three kinds of numbers that refer back to earlier tables. Each number gives a precise idea of the characteristic functions of the substance. Before this list, there is also a table that explains how we accumulate *lung*, *tripa*, and *peken*. If we read closely what causes their imbalance, we understand that in our diet all the substances that help to decrease them are positive for the individual. But it is not only a question of diet in general, another very important factor is conduct, behavior. For example, in the West it is very common that when people are tired because of their job, they will go and rest immediately after a very large meal. This is considered a normal thing. Nowadays also Tibetans in India have taken up this habit because in a warm climate, with a full stomach, one gets sleepy easily. Why does one get sleepy? It is a manifestation of *tripa*. The characteristic of sleep belongs to *peken*. To sleep in the afternoon disturbs *tripa*, bile. In Tibet, we never let a

sick person sleep in the afternoon. In the case of certain diseases, to sleep in the afternoon immediately causes fever. There is an illness, called *nyenka*, in which the influence of negative forces that disturb an individual plays a role. One of the worst disturbances of this kind is caused by sleeping in the afternoon. One can think: "I always sleep in the afternoon, and nothing has ever happened to me." It is not for sure that the disease will manifest immediately, but once it does, it is there, and it is not positive.

Medicine in general helps us to live well, in an aware manner. For instance, people who have a *lung* tendency that is particularly strong do not usually sleep well at night. But if they start walking up and down, like many do, when they cannot sleep, after a while they will exchange night with day, and this is not going to help them. On the contrary, this will develop the *lung* even more. So, we have a whole series of structures and behavioral habits that can either help an illness develop or calm it down. There are many diseases, especially *peken* disturbances, that necessitate open air, luminous places, like the mountainside; with other diseases, instead, it is best to stay indoors, in the dark. This means that we cannot have fixed rules for the behavior either. The best thing is for the individuals to become a little bit aware about their own existence, which includes body, speech, and mind. This is very important: any teaching you will meet will always be based on these three considerations, just like any cure for illness must be based on this knowledge.

The physical body is connected to the entirety of our material dimension. We always apply this concrete knowledge, but we then have mind. Mind is not a material object that we can see and touch; thoughts, however, arise constantly, and we tend to follow them and to fall into reasoning. If you observe well and try to understand where thoughts come from, you will find nothing. Still, they keep arising without ceasing. In Buddhist philosophy, we say: "There is, but there isn't." Some say that this is just dialectics, but it is not like that. It is a real and concrete experience. When we say that there is not, it means that we cannot find anything that we can establish as object. And yet, even if we find nothing, we cannot say that there is nothing either, because many strange ideas keep arising. It is very simple: mind is like this.

For example, if we have a thought of hatred, and we follow it and develop it, rage and anger grow, and from these emotions actions ensue. If we observe well, all confusion comes from mind, not from the body. But what connection exists between body and the so-called mind? The connection, in our terminology, is called energy that in yoga we call *prana*, vital energy, and is connected to breathing. For this reason, in yoga it is said to train in breathing, which is considered one of the most important means to coordinate energy. In Chinese medicine *prana* is called *qi*; the Japanese, in Aikido, call it *ki*. In any case, the true meaning is that breathing is always connected to energy.

Any teaching, no matter what, is always introduced with three principles: to apply it, we first of all explain the position for the body, then the specific way of breathing, and finally the condition for the mind. Why do we always speak about these three principles, that is, body, speech, and mind? Because this is the condition

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Trogawa Rinpoche
at the cloister of the Cini Foundation.
Photo by Carlos Ramos

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of the individual. Even in medicine we must be extremely aware of these three aspects. If we do not have this knowledge, medicine becomes like an object through which we try and do something. With medicine, we do not mean the situation in which a doctor, in their study, examines a patient, prescribes some medication, and then the patient leaves: this is relative. The most important thing is to make the individual responsible. Doctors must have this understanding because they will always have to face sick people; if they do not have it, the patient will simply ask for medications to eliminate pain.

Western doctors, in meeting Tibetan medicine, ask first of all how to learn it. This is a rather difficult enterprise because, given that this medicine is written in Tibetan language, we must first of all to have a certain understanding of that language which, unfortunately, is not as widespread as English or other languages. Not only that, but there is no organization to teach it to foreigners. So, there are obvious obstacles in this sense. It is not easy to understand Tibetan medicine, but at the same time I am not saying it is impossible.

It is necessary first of all to understand what we mean by "Tibetan medicine" and its principles. We must, in other words, acquire an understanding of the existence of individuals. When we speak of a way to heal a disease or to conduct analyses, it means that we are entering a very specific field. Specific things can be learned slowly, they are not indispensable to Western doctors because Western medicine is for sure already quite developed. I am convinced that the great benefit Western doctors can take from Tibetan medicine is its way to conceive of human beings and of medicine itself. This does not entail changing or giving up on West-

ern medicine and embracing another. Many people immediately put limitations saying "ours" and "yours." Others tend to build the stereotype of Tibetan medicine as spiritual, different from other medical traditions, and in so doing, they create problems between the Western tradition and the Tibetan one.

I personally do not see a conflict; rather, I believe that the fundamental point is to understand that we are all human beings and that we exist. Our being Western or Eastern people does not change a thing: a nervous Tibetan is no different from a nervous Westerner. What we need to understand is why a person is nervous, and what is the best way to overcome this nervousness. This is not so much related to nationality. Humans utilize their culture because that is the knowledge they possess. For instance, Western culture is very different from the Tibetan one. And we are not talking about the West in general: specifically, Italian culture, for example, is different from the English one. Accordingly, the knowledge of individuals depends on where they were born, how they were educated, how they grew up, and everyone finds it easier to use their own culture which they have experienced. But in order to utilize one's own culture, one needs to enter into the principle of knowledge: we each must become a bit aware of its meaning so that we will not find conflicts between cultures; rather, our knowledge will increase.

I will give you an example. Someone suffering from appendicitis, a very painful condition, may think that they do not want to undergo surgery, preferring natural medicine, and they want to use Tibetan medicine as a cure. So, this person will perhaps have to suffer for a long time, whereas it would be much easier for them to go to the hospital and have the appendix removed with one simple surgery. But someone refuses to have the surgery saying that



today, in the modern world, everyone acts as if we were machines. In my opinion, this view is not correct, because we have situations in which surgery is necessary. Considering human beings just like machines whose parts can be replaced is not correct either, however. If human beings were only physical bodies, it would be easy to take out parts and put in new ones. But in many situations, we do not know how to connect them to energy, and then we can block many things. We need therefore to acquire a principle of knowledge and apply it as much as possible. If we have a certain understanding and knowledge, both Western and Tibetan medicine can truly be helpful and important. As I always say, medicine must help those who have problems and who want to overcome them. When someone has a problem, their first wish is to overcome it in any way possible: a doctor must keep this in mind quite clearly.

In Venice, I heard some doctors say that Tibetan doctors were explaining rather complex things, and they asked how they could apply them here. It is true, it is not easy to use such things, because Tibetan doctors have been studying for years, and explaining matters in two or three days, or even in one week, can not solve everything. Other interested people asked where they could deepen their knowledge of Tibetan medicine, explaining that they could not study it at their universities, where it is not taught, and that there are no Tibetan doctors who will be constantly on the road to teach courses. It is not easy, this is true. And yet, if we understand the principles, something can develop, one way or another. Thus, it seems to me that the main point is not to enter in a very detailed fashion in specific topics. In this conference, the most important thing for us is to understand the point of view of Tibetan medicine. This is the key to know it, and it may also be a key to increase awareness in our daily life.

By medicine we mean neither a theoretical study conducted on books nor medications. As we have already said, Tibetan medicine comprises three parts: medications, behavior, and diet. Medications relate to two different issues, namely to strengthen the body in such a way that it continues to be healthy and to heal it when a physical disturbance has already occurred. The same holds true for behavior and diet: if we understand this point, we have a way to collaborate with our own selves.

This is why I think that the most important thing is to be aware. Awareness encompasses everything. I will give you an example. Usually we discuss all sorts of problems: a doctor will speak about the specific issues of a patient, or about health matters within a hospital, like the number of beds available, medications, and so on. All our efforts are directed towards the material dimension. This is the case not only with medicine, but with society in general. But the most important thing, in the end, are the individuals who make up society. What does society mean?

Society is formed by individuals. It is like when we speak about numbers. "Numbers" is a generic plural noun, but in a concrete way we must start to count from number one, and then we have two and three, and so on. If we did not have "one," we could not have "one hundred." It is therefore very important to understand one, rather than one hundred or one thousand. The number one is actually the awareness of the individual, otherwise all of society's problems we constantly talk about are false. The qualification of human

beings is the capacity to reason and to understand. And if this is the case, society cannot be compared to a flock led by a shepherd. This means that we are the number one, every single one of us: I am part of society, also someone else is part of society, and thus many people together are called "society." Then I must be first of all aware of my existence, of having a physical body that is related to the entire material dimension. If I eat something that is not good, I will not feel well, and my physical body will be disturbed by it. ❀

1 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *Birth, Life, and Death*, Shang Shung Publications, 2008.

Tibetan Medicine

Words from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo
Losar 2018, Dzamling Gar

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

I would like to say something about Tibetan Medicine, because it is not only the people in the Dzogchen Community who are interested in the Tibetan medicine. Tibetan Medicine is something very important not only for us, but for all the world. You know that today, for example, Tibet is part of China. And Tibet is a minority. But Tibetan culture is not a minority. Tibetan culture has two things that are very important for everybody in this world. Relatively, it is Tibetan medicine. Tibetan Medicine is very important because originally it comes from Shang Shung, an ancient Tibetan kingdom. They integrated and developed it for centuries and centuries from the medicinal knowledge of India, China and many other countries. So it became really very important for everybody. We need to understand that and we must not lose the possibility to have this knowledge of Tibetan Medicine in this world.

For example, which are the two most important things in a person's life? Relatively, it's very important to have good health so that everything goes well. Definitely, what we need and what is more important is a spiritual path, spiritual knowledge. That's why everywhere in Tibet all people learn Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. All these sources come from Tibet.

For example, in Tibet we have the Kangyur, a collection of all the words of Buddha in more than one hundred and eight volumes. There is also the Tengyur, which contains ancient knowledge of the spiritual path and Tibetan medicine translated from Sanskrit to Tibetan. Tengyur has more than two hundred volumes. There is no other nation that has such a wealth of a spiritual path and medicine in this world. This is a treasure of all human beings, not only of Tibetans.

For that reason, it is very important that we do not lose the Tibetan language. Even if the Tibetan language is spoken by a minority, the Kangyur, Tengyur, the origin of all the knowledge of this spiritual path is in the Tibetan language. For this reason, when we apply these words in the Shang Shung Institute and the Dzogchen Community, we also give importance to Tibetan medicine.

You should understand, for example, that our organization ASIA in the Dzogchen Community does not only work for Tibetans, we also work in Mongolia, Nepal and many other countries. So as I said already, it's very important that everybody supports this, ASIA, etc., and we need to develop in that way. This is something important that you should know and understand.

Thank you very much for your attention. ❀



Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

Thank you! The first thing I want to say is Tashi Delek for Losar. In general, we use "Tashi Delek" in Tibetan for congratulations. So, my congratulations for the year of the Earth Dog. And secondly, on behalf of my family, I want to say thank you and long life to our dear Master. Happy Losar, Rinpoche!

So today I would like to speak about Tibetan Medicine. Our Tibetan Medicine program is not something that was created by me or something that is my idea or a group of people's idea. It is one of Rinpoche's activities and I want to make sure you all understand who created this Tibetan Medicine program and why we are doing this. I am doing this because it is Rinpoche's wish and also one of Rinpoche's activities.

Another thing I want you to understand, and I am sure you understand it very well, is the reason Rinpoche wanted a Tibetan Medicine program. It's not something for the benefit of Tibet only, or the Tibetans or Tibetan culture. The medicine is called *men*. *Men* means "benefit". Rinpoche knows that Tibetan Medicine has such a value to benefit all sentient beings and, for that reason, he created and developed this program because he understands that Tibetan medicine is good not only for Tibet or Tibetan culture, but it benefits all sentient beings.

Many times when I talk with people, they react thinking: "Oh, you are Shang Shung" or "You are Tibetan Medicine". It looks like they feel, or maybe it's my misunderstanding, like there is a boundary between us. So, I want to say, preserving Tibetan Medicine is one of our Master's activities. We all know that our Master is very much beyond any human condition and he has many activities of this kind. One of his activities is yoga, one of his activities is Dzogchen Teaching, and his activities include many things that I cannot count due to lack of my knowledge. But one of them is the Tibetan Medicine.

All people who work under Rinpoche's guidance try to do their best. And our Tibetan Medicine team, we do our best. So far, we have two schools of Tibetan medicine, one is in Tsegylgar East, USA. We opened this School of Tibetan Medicine in 2005. Today the first graduated students came here to become Tibetan medicine teachers for the future. On February 19th, Rinpoche will give them diplomas. This is a sign of continuation of our activities. The second School of Tibetan Medicine was opened in Russia. We started in 2013 and the first graduation of students was in 2017. We have thirty-five graduated students and this coming year and in April we are going to Tibet for practicing Tibetan medicine.

There are several reasons that we go to Tibet, but the main reason is that all the Tibetan medicine doctors, experts, professors are in Tibet. We take our students to Tibet to practice in front of them, clinically and with some knowledge, and take the final exams. If the students pass the exam, we will get the equivalent degrees from the government city level, which means that people who studied Tibetan medicine either in Russia or in the USA and people who studied Tibetan medicine in Tibet have the same knowledge, the same equivalence. That's one of our main goals.

How can we check in Western countries if some particular Tibetan medicine doctor is qualified or not? In Western countries people have a lot of knowledge, there are a lot of talented people, but when it comes to the Tibetan culture and Tibetan medicine they don't have such knowledge so far. For that reason, it's important to bring our students to Tibet, in front of all those standard scholars, to take the final exam in order to make sure that our students are equally qualified to people who practice in Tibet. For that reason, also what we teach, the books we use, methods of teaching, everything that we do is in standard with what they use in Tibet and the way they teach Tibetan Medicine. Simply, how I learned Tibetan medicine in Tibet thirty years ago, that is the same method I use to teach my students.

Another thing is that now we are here, in Dzamling Gar, and we have the Tibetan medicine program that we are going to realize here. Two years ago and also last year I received two letters from Rinpoche when I was in Russia. Also I showed them to some of my friends in Russia. He said, "Dear Pungmo, your Tibetan medicine house in Dzamling Gar is ready". He asked, "When can you come and how long can you stay?" At that time I couldn't make my visa for some reason and I couldn't come. And a few months ago, again, I received another email from Rinpoche saying: "Now the Tibetan medicine house is completely ready for you". So now I am here. It means that Rinpoche really cares about Tibetan Medicine and about benefiting sentient beings. That is the Rinpoche's goal.

Here, in Dzamling Gar, we do not have long-term courses so far, because here the construction is still going on, but we have two ongoing courses now. One of them is the course on Ku Nye, which is an external therapy. We did the first level this time and will continue. In the future we will do the first, second, third, fourth level and so forth

and keep doing that. During the second course we studied the diet of level one. We are also going to continue that doing level one, level two, level three, etc., until a person becomes an expert. We already have the curriculums, standards and everything. I updated all those programs with Khandro Rosa Namkhai and she approved saying it's very good. This is my future job and I will work on that.

Now what I need is the Community people's support. We do not need ideas, as Rinpoche mentioned, we already have ideas, we have a path. Now we need to concretely move ahead.

Working for Shang Shung is a privilege and also a responsibility. I see the people who work for Shang Shung Institute in the USA or Russia and also here, and at the end of the day they are completely exhausted. After working for Shang Shung Institute for several months they start to look ten years older. It's supposed to be that working for Tibetan medicine we become younger, but no, very quickly we start to look like old people because we don't take time to take care about ourselves. That is because we have a shortage of people, human resources, working on these jobs. For that reason, please join us. Think of it as karma yoga, and you accumulate merits, it's your practice. Working or volunteering for the Community is part of your practice.

I want to thank my students. These students are from Russia or the USA, and they do a lot for Shang Shung Institute. Without their help the School of Tibetan medicine of the Shang Shung Institute would not be able to function. And I also thank people who volunteer for the Tibetan medicine and also Gars, like, for example, people from Kunsangar, who were very kind and generous for the School of Tibetan medicine, same as also Tsegylgar, whose gakyil were very kind and supportive for the School of the Tibetan medicine. I hope that the Gakyil of Dzamling Gar will, like other Gars, support the course of the Tibetan medicine program.

This year is the year of the Earth Dog. The dog in the Tibetan astrology means "very faithful". Once you become friends with a dog, it will never leave you. It does not matter how you change, whether you become rich or poor, crazy or beautiful, the dog always stays with you. The dog feels that the family, the house where it lives and its property all belong to it. We are the Dzogchen Community and the individual Gars of the Dzogchen Community are our home, so Dzamling Gar is our home. I hope

this year of the Earth Dog everybody understands which is our home and we make it physical. Besides, it's an earth dog. Earth means "stable". Even if you have a thousand ideas, you will be able to select one and follow it. So this year is very special.

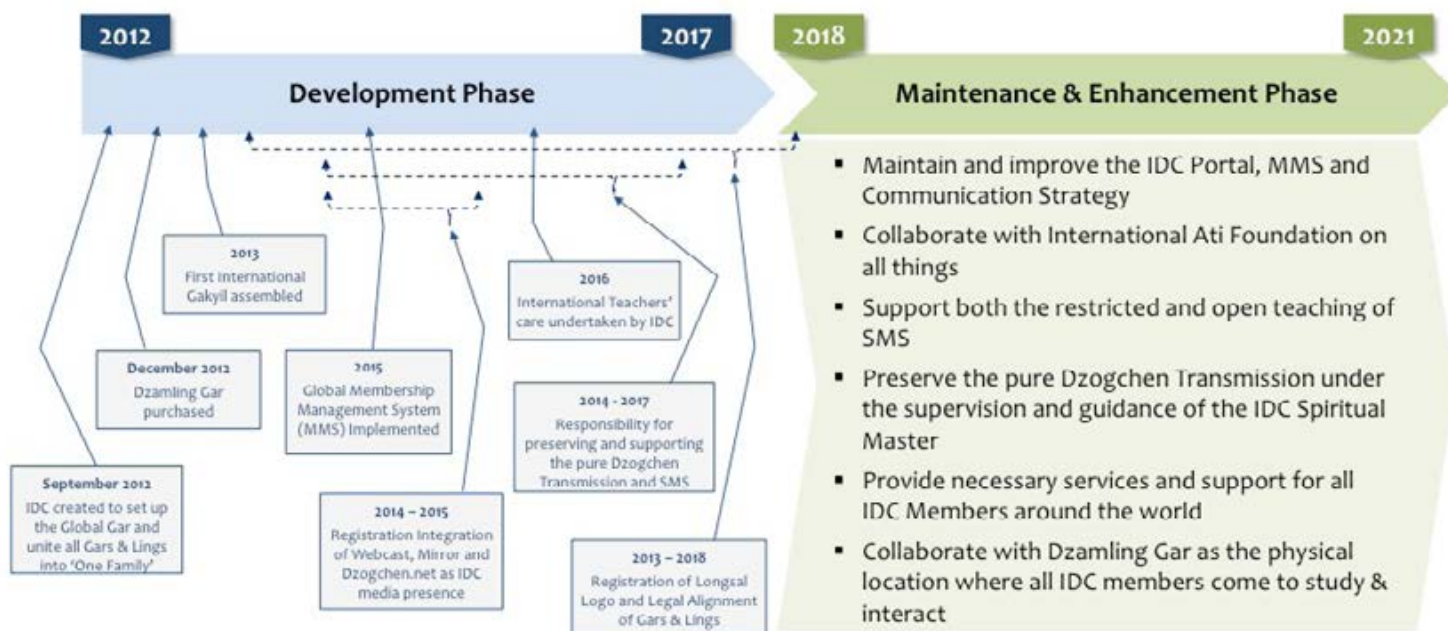
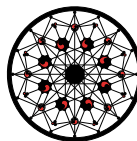
I hope you are already doing a lot of group things for the individual Gars, also for Dzamling Gar, but I hope, particularly, if we take this opportunity starting from this year we will be able to do better and take on more responsibilities. In the Tibetan teaching system we call it *gyu*. *Gyu* means "lineage": lineage of the teaching material, lineage of the attitude, lineage of the determination and the lineage of the faith. Everything we need is to try to, for sure we cannot be like Rinpoche or Khandro or Rinpoche's children, but we try to learn that path. This is what I wanted to say.

Many people say that the Tibetan Medicine is still not legal in the rest of the world. Don't worry. Laws are made by humans. The first Tibetans who came to America and other countries were not citizens either. They wanted to stay, showed their good qualities and did not do any negative things, so slowly, slowly they became citizens. All laws are made by humans, so if you have knowledge, if we have correct knowledge, the laws will change, everything is impermanent. Impermanence means that something positive can turn negative but also something negative can turn positive, because everything is impermanent. At first, when we opened the schools in the USA and Russia, they were not legally documented. Now both schools are under the governmental law meaning that they are registered and approved. At the beginning we studied the Ku Nye, an external therapy that people call a massage but it's not an ordinary massage, but simply we can say that it's a Tibetan type of massage. When we did the Ku Nye in the USA it was not approved, it was illegal. Now it has received the Massachusetts state license and it is legal. So you see, everything is interdependent.

Thank you very much! All the best wishes to all of you and long life to Rinpoche. ©

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Evolution of the IDC Mission in 2018.

International Dzogchen Community's AGM & ICC Meeting

On April 1 in Dzamling Gar, the International Dzogchen Community's Annual General Meeting was presented by members of the International Gakyil. Reviewing a range of activities during the Calendar Year of 2017, the meeting covered a host of recent issues shared by the Global Sangha of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Although Rinpoche was unable to attend, IDC President Steven Landsberg welcomed participants and offered inspired introductory remarks. Current International Yellow Gakyils Roberto Zamparo and Mark Farrington presented the 2017 Annual Report and members approved the 2017 financial statement. There was a clear review of the history and evolution of IDC's Mission, as well as the Proposal of the 2018 IDC budget and approval of the 2018 IDC mission and budget. In a clear and thorough manner, the IDC has now succeeded in its initial goal of bringing nearly all international Gars that are logistically feasible into legal alignment as a unified and cohesive whole.

In addition to the presentation, there was a discussion of International Gakyil succession. Barbara Giurlanda from Italy was officially welcomed as a new IG Yellow, and Anton Rutkovsky from Ukraine was officially welcomed as a new IG Red. Scott Townell from the United States will now step back from his position as IG Red into an advisory role after years of dedicated service to The Community. Although Scott maintained a low profile, his hard work and tremendous diligence has been deeply appreciated as he contributed to IDC's establishment of operational and organizational infrastructure in tremendous ways.

Following the AGM, there was a more informal meeting of the International Coordination Committee, in which all members discussed the ways local Gakyils can facilitate and simplify a number of functional issues. The role of Gar Gakyils in coordinating the legal alignment of Lings was discussed, as making the Affiliation Agreement Requirement for new ling Gakyil members less complicated. There was strong interest in Gars and Lings implementing auto-renewal methods for membership that are increasingly easy to address with updated technological applications. There was also a short workshop for all Gakyil members to improve organization, communication, and collaboration.

Overall, attendees were pleased with the clarity, professionalism and relaxed flow of exchange between members in this forum, and many commented that the day was a good example to apply to their own local Gakyil meetings and Annual General Assemblies.

The Mirror is pleased to present the two new members of the International Gakyil for 2018: Barbara Giurlanda for the Yellow and Anton Rutkovsky for the Red Gakyil. ☺

International Gakyil 2018/2019

President: Steven Landsberg

Blue: Scott Diamond,
Libor Malý,
Fabio Risolo

Red: Monika Walczak,
Anton Rutkovsky

Yellow: Roberto Zamparo,
Mark Farrington (VP),
Barbara Giurlanda

Welcoming New International Gakyil Members!

Barbara Giurlanda
Red International Gakyil



I was born in Sicily, Italy, and moved to Milan when I was eighteen. According to my mixed education: classical studies, a degree in Business Administration, a Post Graduate Diploma in Tourism Management and a Master in Organization and Human Resources, I first gained a strong experience in marketing of tourist destinations and then I started to work as a business consultant with a focus on family business. Nowadays, I have been accumulating long-lasting professional experience in leading projects focused on family-owned companies, while always taking care to find a balance among family values, ownership structure and business issues.

I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Dzogchen Teaching in July, 2009, when I went to Merigar West to receive the Global Transmission. I became a Member of the Dzogchen Community in 2009 and since that time I have been doing karma yoga, both in Dribselling (Milan) and at Merigar West. Every time it was possible I tried to collaborate with the local Gakyils or to support the organization of a course or a retreat. Afterwards, I was appointed Yellow Gakyil in Dribselling from 2013 to 2015.

What I think I can offer as one of the International Yellow Gakyil is that I hope to have the opportunity to support the IG and the whole Community by using my educational and professional backgrounds in terms of legal and financial experiences, team work, project management and budgeting skills with an organizational attitude.

I really appreciate the collaborative spirit of the IG from the perspective of service to the whole Community and in order to move forward on this direction, my first commitment is to learn as much as possible from Roberto Zamparo. Roberto is legally going to retire from his role in the next year, so I'm trying to get ready for becoming responsible for the main activities Roberto currently manages, such as the membership system and the development of IDC annual budget. ©

Anton Rutkovsky
Yellow International Gakyil



I was born in Kyiv, Ukraine, in 1985, into the family of two computer engineers – both my mother and father were working with programming languages and the computing machines of that time. I had my first computer in 1989 when I was four. I did not become a programmer by myself, but all my life I dealt with the digital world. I have received my Bachelor degree in Economics at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy in 2007. Since 2008 I've been co-founder and manager of some digital marketing and web/mobile-development companies. For the last few years, I own and manage a web/mobile-development and branding agency in Kyiv.

Since I was twelve years old, under the influence of my mother and my Godmother, I was interested in different kinds of religions and teachings: Orthodox Christianity, Rastafarian, Castaneda, Osho, Krishnism, Shaivism, and Buddhism. By the time I was eighteen, I had read a number of books related to those teachings and started to practice some kind of meditation. When I was twenty-four my Godmother, who I would always speak to about spiritual topics, gave me a book with a man on a cover dressed in a black Tibetan suit sitting near a small table with a tea cup on it. It was "Crystal And The Way of Light", of course. My Godmother received transmission at the first retreat at Merigar East, but she had never told me about Dzogchen before. So 2009 was first time she told me about

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IDC organizational structure.

International Atiyoga Foundation

Merigar West was the venue for a three day meeting, June 5–7, 2018, between the Board of Directors of the newly established International Atiyoga Foundation and the staff of Shang Shung Foundation Italy.

On the first day of the meeting, there was a brief presentation of the Atiyoga Foundation. On 16 February 2018, the first day of the Tibetan Earth Dog Year, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu announced the birth of the Atiyoga Foundation via web cast from Dzamling Gar, the Global Gar, to the whole Dzogchen Community, with the signing of a document called its “birth certificate” by its founders, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Rosa Namkhai, Carlos Ramos, and Nancy Simmons. Rinpoche explained that the new foundation (ATIF) would be the “umbrella” of all entities that are part of the Dzogchen Community.

ATIF has five members of the **Board of Directors**: Marco Baseggio, who is president of the Board and its legal representative, Alex Siedlecki, Director of the Muse-

um of Asian Art and Culture (MACO), Oliver Leick, Director of the Shang Shung Foundation, Pia Bramezza, the Merigar West accountant and Head of the Administration Department, and Ester Escudero, ASIF’s representative in Spain.

The mission of the new foundation is to make available “favorable conditions for bringing out the potentiality of the human being” (Article 5 of the Statute). This will be done in a non-religious way, through the many manifestations of ancient and contemporary art, through knowledge such as scientific, philosophical, psychological, medical, and humanistic research, but also simply communication of knowledge, making use of the tools that are deployed in the different departments and institutes of which it is constituted.

Vision. The Atiyoga Foundation will be a cultural foundation that works not only with cultural traditions – such as the Tibetan one that contains the most ancient knowledge of man – but also with new frontiers of culture and science in the contemporary world, with the intent to build relationships and synergies with institutions such as universities, museums, schools and academies for the creation of courses, workshops and cultural events.

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Rinpoche and gave me the book “Crystal”. I read the book in one breath and all my spiritual explorations came to one complete picture – it felt like the pieces of an old puzzle were finally getting together. In that same year, I met Khyentse Yeshe and received Yeshe Sangtal transmission from him at a two-day retreat in Kyiv. In the next year, in 2010, I went to my first retreat in Kunsangar South with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Since 2011 I started to help local Gakyils in Kyiv as blue. In 2013 I started to be Blue Gakyil at Kunsangar South and also passed my Santi Maha Sangha Base exam that same year. From 2016 to 2017 I was the Yellow Gakyil at Tobgyalling (Kyiv). From 2011 until now, I have been registration and communication team leader and karma yogi at Kunsangar South, Kunsangar North and Dzamling Gar during retreats with

Rinpoche. In 2016, I was the project manager of the Mandarava Retreat at Dzamling Gar with Rinpoche.

In 2018 I sent my application to the Red Gakyil at the International Gakyil. I thought that my communication, project management and IT related skills could be useful in the current situation. Particularly I want to help Alexey Polionov, who has done great work with creating the **dzogchen.net** portal, and also to help other IG members to move on with developing portal user interface and functionality, creating a more pleasant user experience for IDC Members and Gakyils, in particular, when dealing with the Membership Management System. Also I have an idea to provide more digital services to IDC members and Gakyils related to communication, retreat/course management, traveling to Gars and Lings and online trainings. ©



Among its main **Objectives** the Atiyoga Foundation intends to contribute to preserving and making sustainable the organizations created by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. This may include the establishment of autonomous organizations (departments) under the umbrella of the Foundation.

The Foundation will also require financial strictness and transparency in all its departments. This will be implemented by management software that will work with the costs center system. Each department will correspond to a cost center.

This management system will include fundraising.

There will be a self-sustaining financial report / initial budget for each department with a related program of activities at the beginning of each fiscal year and a final financial report at the end of the year, with possible adjustments during the year. All documents will be made available to the public.

Departments. All departments will be contained within the legal and management structure of the Atiyoga Foundation. They will be autonomous and responsible for themselves. They will retain their identity and – if deemed appropriate – their own organization.

Shang Shung Foundation currently has its own legal structure. In order to become part of ATIF, SSF must be dissolved and liquidated legally, but this does not mean that it will necessarily have to lose its identity.

The other Shang Shung Institutes around the world will retain their identity and structure.

The Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO) does not have its own legal structure and is considered an asset of the Merigar Dzogchen Community Cultural Association. MACO will be transferred to the legal structure of ATIF while maintaining its identity and its function.

An **ATIF Italy**, offspring of the international ATIF, will be created in which the Shang Shung Foundation and MACO will continue their activity autonomously and responsibly.

Yantra Yoga, Khaita Joyful Dances, Vajra Dance and the Visual Arts are currently managed by the SSF for courses outside the Dzogchen Community. SSF and the instructors involved can create a department / institute for these activities autonomously from the Shang Shung Institute, but always within ATIF.

The School of Tibetan Medicine should be an autonomous department / institute within ATIF and based in Dzamling Gar.

Cultural tourism. In a long-term perspective, the tourist activity managed by Migmar Tsering will also be legally integrated into ATIF at the express request of Rosa Namkhai and the Master.

Friends of the Foundation. Donors, cultural associations and other legally recognized entities may become "Friends of the Foundation" on selection by the Founders' Council.

In addition to the Board of Directors of ATIF and Nancy Simmons (as one of the three founder of ATIF), the following people attended the meeting: Tiziana Gottardi (for Merigar), Fabio Risolo (for the IG), and then for the different branches of SSF: Gaetano Ruvolo, Ilaria Faccioli, Fabian Sanders, Kamil Selwa, Margherita Pansa, Mirella D'Angelo, Giorgio Dallorto, Igor Legati, and Migmar Tsering for the International Cultural Ati Yoga Association. ©



SHANG SHUNG FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR TIBETAN CULTURE

News on the Translation Project

Shang Shung Institute Austria

Dearest friends and supporters of the translation projects of the Shang Shung Institute Austria,

In the last weeks all those who received the Thögal transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu received some wonderful information from Shang Shung Publications: the book "The Upadesha on the Self-Perfected Thögal" has been published and is available for those who have received that transmission.

It is so incredible and hardly believable, that we so easily have access to these extraordinary teachings – after having received the transmission – and can purchase this book just for 25 euro. Adriano Clemente worked two years on the translation of this book and now, after being edited and revised several times, we can order it from Shang Shung Publications. How wonderful!

We are all really so fortunate!

But that is not the only book the translators, Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco, have been working on in the last year(s). As Adriano and Elio work full-time on many different translations, I will give you some information about the work they have been doing and are still are doing.

Here the list of the books **Adriano** has been working on or is still working on:

Klong gsal thod rgal gyi man ngag 'grel pa: Commentary on the Longsal Thögal – the work on this book started in 2015 and was finished in 2017, now it has already been published

Klong gsal ati lam gnad kyi man ngag 'grel pa: Commentary on the Longsal Essential Preliminaries – the work on this book started in 2016 and the book should be published in May 2018

Longsal Volume Ten (including Kalachakra and Rushen) – the work on this book started in 2017 and it is planned to be published in 2018



Gsal stong gi man ngag 'grel pa: Commentary on the Longsal Saltong Tsalung – the work on this book started in 2017

Ati dgongs pa ngo sprod 'grel pa: Commentary on the Longsal Introduction to the state of Ati – the work on this book started in 2017

Mkha' klong rdo rje'i gar: The Vajra Dance of Space – the work on this book started in 2013

Nam mkha'i grig cha: The preparation of the Namkha – the work on this book started in 2015

Klong gsal khregs chod ky'i 'grel chen: The great commentary on the Longsal Tregchod – the work on this book started in 2017

Klong gsal nam mkha'i rgyal po 'grel bshad: Commentary on the Longsal King of Space – Adriano is translating this text in these days

Here the list of the books **Elio** has been working on or is still working on:

The Secret Map of the Body – this book was already published in 2015

Healing with Yantra Yoga – this book was already published in 2016

Outer Rushen: Going Beyond Limitations – this book was already published in 2017

A Manual of Tibetan Massage – it is planned to be published in 2019

The Biographies of 84 Mahasiddhas – it is planned to be published in 2018

The Practice of Amitayus and the Chulen of the Three Kayas – it is planned to be published in 2018

The Stairway to Liberation (new revised edition) – it is planned to be published in 2018

Precious Questions and Answers: Words of the Great Master of Oddiyana – it is planned to be published in 2018

Nyangyud Khorwa Tongtrug – it is planned to be published in 2019

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Nine Days of Tibetan Language Studies at Merigar West

April 21–22 & 23–29, 2018

Carisa O'Kelly

Towards the end of April we had nine days of Tibetan language study with Lobsang Zatul who had traveled from Switzerland to teach us.

The nine days were divided into two parts.

Part I – the weekend

Saturday and Sunday mornings were colloquial Tibetan with Lobsang Zatul while the afternoons were grammar and calligraphy.

Having been serenaded by the splendid vocal sounds emanating from the work-

shop in the Sala Mandala, for the afternoon session we moved to the bird-song-laden terrace of the Ser Khang. And there in the afternoon of the first day we worked with Fabian Sanders on grammar and very helpful structural information.

On Sunday afternoon we were treated to a lesson in calligraphy with Giorgio Dalorto. This included a brief introduction to u-med, (the more cursive style of writing in Tibetan). It was really interesting to get a little insight as to how that is formed.

Part II

Seven days of Colloquial Tibetan. Lobsang Zatul has many years of experience in teaching Tibetan language to a wide variety of students and this showed in his manner and style of working with our group. He was consistently conscious and aware of where each student was and would, in a very relaxed way, engage the student and make sure they arrived at an understanding of the material.

The program was very well prepared and each lesson had a direction, moreover, there was also a flexibility in the flow, as we would divert to clarify various questions that would arise, and then return to the prepared handouts. Many of the students had attended last year's course and we all look forward to the next opportunity we will have to study together again. Many thanks to everyone who made this such a smooth and enjoyable time at Merigar. ©

The Multimedia Archive at Merigar West

Between historical memory and a look to the future

Mirella D'Angelo

Films, audio recordings, photos, writings and documents. There is a great wealth of different materials in the Shang Shung Foundation Archive at Merigar West. There are forty years of history of the Dzogchen Community, beginning with the testimonies of master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's first students who, in the 70s, felt the need to make known what was happening and what was changing their lives. This desire for sharing has never stopped.

From every part of the world, hand in hand with the growth of the International Dzogchen Community, documents about the Master's Teachings have arrived and continue to arrive also in the form of stories, games, dialogues or simple looks or gestures.

The great events that the surprising spirit of collaboration of the Community has made possible can be found in the Archive at Merigar: conferences, cultural, intercultural and interreligious events, small and large, fun moments, and celebrations. The testimony of how the Community has interacted and developed with the places,

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Sri Singha's Commentary to the Total Space of Vajrasattva – it is planned to be published in 2020

Rinpoche's Oral Explanation of The Invocation of Samantabhadra – it is planned to be published in 2020

Compilation of Rinpoche's teachings on The Prana and Channels (Tsalung) related to Yantra Yoga – it is planned to be published in 2020

The Root Tantra of the Dra Thalgyur

Thank you dear translators so much for your precious work.

Thank you so much for your excellent qualifications, to make these texts of wisdom available for us to read in English.

This enormous and important work is based on three fundamental factors:

- on the real understanding and tireless dedication of our translators,
- on the excellent work of the editors and the team of Shang Shung Publications,
- on your generosity of supporting all activities of the Shang Shung Institute Austria related to translation.

In order to be able to continue our important work we ask you to continue to support our activities. You can also contribute and send your donation on a monthly basis.

Please send your donation to our bank account:

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Thank you so much and very best wishes, Oliver Leick

Director of the Shang Shung Institute Austria

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the people and the institutions that have hosted it clearly emerges.

A jewel of the Archive are the wonderful journeys to places of great spiritual and historical importance undertaken by the Master with groups of his students, and in some cases documented by the Master himself.

There are recordings of the Teachings of important Buddhist Masters, who were hosted in the places of the Dzogchen Community. And then the recordings of the Instructors' courses on the different practices, on Santi Maha Sangha, on Yantra Yoga, Kumar Kumari and the Dance of the Vajra.

The material, which has mostly come from practitioners, has become a communal patrimony, accessible to everyone. Over the years it has been organized and catalogued thanks to the work, interest and dedication of other practitioners and thanks to generous donations.

In 2002 there was the first project to digitalize a part of the material collected, converted and recorded on CDs and DVDs.

In 2008 the first Server arrived to preserve original digital material that was beginning to be produced.

In 2013 two important workshops were organized that were a source of inspiration for a general reorganization of the Archive. The first, held at the Castle in Arcidosso with international experts in the field, focused on digital archiving. The second workshop, which was held at Merigar, was conducted by two internationally renowned archivists, Bruna Colarossi and Peter Horsman.

Then in 2014 Trenpa was created, a digital storage platform developed internally at the Shang Shung Foundation, with the aim of further improving the process of inges-

tion, archiving and preservation of physical and digital multimedia material.

At the same time, with the setting up of some workstations, a process started of converting analog videotapes that were in the Archive and which risked the demagnetization of the magnetic support and therefore their illegibility into high resolution digital format.

The number of digitized videotapes in the Archive is 6200. 1470 still need to be done. The digitization of 12,000 audiotapes, however, has concluded.

Parallel to the digitization, the relevant metadata has been inserted into Trenpa, in order to allow a quick search.

In 2015 there was a total reorganization of the physical Archive. The audio and video material was rearranged by topic, in chronological order and according to 15 different formats. Everything was placed in labeled boxes indicating essential data.

The photographic material, however, was divided into collections, with a description of the subject, the author, the period, the place, the format, etc.

In 2016 a Classification Scheme was created and introduced into Trenpa. It is a system of organizing the archival material, which makes the placement of and search for documents much simpler and clearer and consequently the preservation of common memory more secure. The Classification Scheme is a simple but professional tool, which gives homogeneity and continuity to the cataloging of documents over time and which can be made available to all the other Archives of the International Dzogchen Community, something which can be very beneficial.

The work done was impressive but it is not finished. There is still much to do.

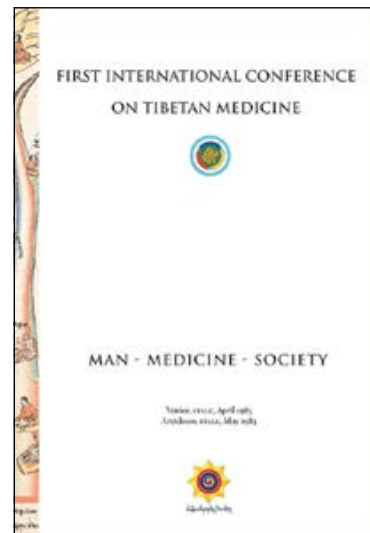
More than 300,000 digital files still need to be indexed! At this moment the human and economic resources of the Archive are very limited so it is fundamental that all those who care about the conservation and development of our heritage contribute.

Our call for collaboration is aimed at the entire Dzogchen International Community but above all the Community of Merigar, where the Archive was born and continues to grow.

Preserving the integrity of historical memory with modern instruments means guaranteeing the possibility of continuing to be present in a changing world.

Those who would like to join us on this path can contact

m.dangelo@shangshunginstitute.org ©



The First International Conference of Tibetan Medicine

In 1983 Namkhai Norbu, then professor of Tibetan language and culture at the Istituto Orientale at the University of Napoli, managed to organize, with the help of a handful of students, the first international conference of Tibetan medicine in the West, by gathering the principal experts of Tibetan medicine as well as some among the most important European representative. Venice and Arcidosso were the locations for this conference that took places over two weeks' time. The materials gathered in this book contain the proceedings from this special event.

Contents

1. Inaugural Speech: Opening speech by local authorities
2. Professor Namkhai Norbu: Introduction to Tibetan medicine
3. Doctor Tsarong Jigme Tsewang: Fundamental Principles of Tibetan medicine
4. Doctor Trogawa Rinpoche: History of Tibetan medicine. Medicine and Dharma
5. Doctor Lobsang Drolma: Obstetrics and gynecology in Tibetan medicine
6. Doctor Trogawa Rinpoche: Pulse Diagnosis, Part I
7. Doctor Trogawa Rinpoche: Pulse Diagnosis, Part II, and Other Diagnostic Methods
8. Professor Namkhai Norbu: Dealing with Incurable Illnesses
9. Doctor Lobsang Drolma: Delivery and Post-natal Care

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SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS

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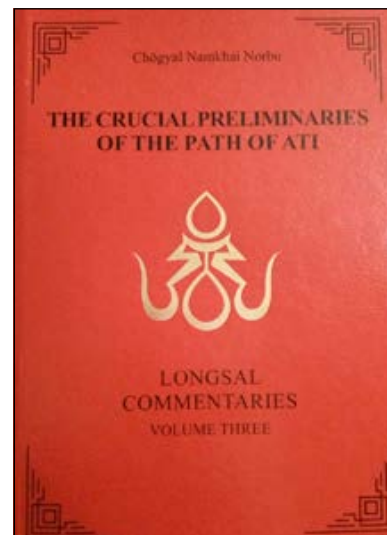
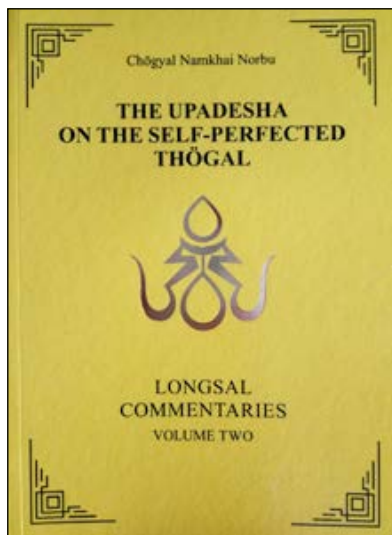
10. Doctor Tenzin Chödrak:
Astrology and Medicine
11. Doctor Tsarong Jigme:
Pharmacology and Pharmacodynamics
12. Professor Barrie Simmons:
Psychotherapy, Self-acceptance, and
Tibetan Medicine
13. Professor Rakra Tethong Rinpoche:
The Education of Tibetan Children
in Switzerland
14. Doctor Tashi Tazan: The Tibetan Youth
Association in Europe
15. Professor Namkhai Norbu:
Medicine and Yantra Yoga
16. Doctor Trogawa Rinpoche:
Mental Illness
17. Doctor Tenzin Chödrak:
The Nature of Mind
18. Doctor Lobsang Drolma:
The Nature of Mind
19. Professor Namkhai Norbu:
Man, Medicine, and Society

List of Invited Speakers

Doctor Jampa Thinley, Director of the
Lhasa Institute of Tibetan Medicine
Doctor Troru Tsenam, Director of Studies
and Scientific Research in Tibetan
Medicine in Lhasa
Doctor Tsarong Jigme Tsewang, Director
of the Institute of Tibetan Medicine in
Dharamsala
Doctor Trogawa Rinpoche, Sikkim's most
famous Tibetan doctor
Doctor Sangyey Tenzin, Tibetan medical
doctor in the Bön tradition
Doctor Ama Lobsang, Tibetan medical
doctor in Dharamsala
Doctor Tenzin Chödrak, doctor for His
Holiness the Dalai Lama, Dharamsala
Professor Namkhai Norbu, faculty member
in the Istituto Universitario Orientale
di Napoli

The book is now available in the webshop
of the Shang Shung Publications:

shop.shangshungfoundation.com



New and Upcoming Books from Shang Shung Publications

We'd like to share with you some news about newly released and upcoming books.

Recently published

* *The Upadesha on the Self-Perfected Thögal* is the second volume in the series of Longsal Commentaries (the first volume in this series was *The Root Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde*). It is restricted to those who received the transmission of Longsal Thögal from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

* *The Crucial Preliminaries of the Path of Ati* is the third volume in the series of Longsal Commentaries. These instructions focus on the series of practices of Rushen, especially on a special Purification of the Six Lokas combined with the practice of Guru Vajrasattva, as well as the Seven Semdzin and other teachings that are the foundation of the path of Dzogchen. A shorter version of the main practice, called Ati Lamgyi Ngondro, is also included. This wonderful teaching from the Longsal cycle helps not only to purify practitioners from obstacles and increase their clarity, but also helps them to discover their real nature in dif-

ferent ways. Rinpoche already gave these teachings many times in the past and we're going to publish His oral commentary in the Transcription Series, too.

Upcoming

Some information about books being currently in review:

* Adriano Clemente finished the translation of several other Longsal commentaries, and will work with Rinpoche to resolve the difficult points when possible. These include, for example, the *Yoga of Prana for Clarity and Emptiness* (the related oral commentary has already been published.)

* The tenth volume of Longsal Teachings has also been translated. It contains, among others, *The Instructions on the Outer, Inner, and Secret Rushen* transmitted by Rinpoche in Dzamling Gar in 2017 as well as *Khorwa Yedal* taught in New York in 2014.

* The initial draft of *Longsal Tregchöd Commentary* was prepared by Jim Valby and reviewed by Elio Guarisco; it's being checked by Adriano now. It's a huge volume with a compendium of all Upadesha practices useful for Dzogchen practitioners, including, among others, detailed commentary on the 21 Semdzin as well as various secondary practices for developing and enhancing the practice. Because of its size and scope, there is a big number of issues Adriano needs to clarify with Rinpoche Himself.

* Last summer Jim Valby finished the initial draft of the *Dra Thalgyur* tantra, in-



Three New Khaita Video Tutorials!

We're happy to announce the availability of three new Khaita video tutorials:

MfT 11.01 Yul Khyad-pag (M 2.2.05)
M 1.1.05 Jid-kai Trin-zang
M 2.5.05 A-mai Bu

Each tutorial contains the complete dance performed in a perfect way, suitable for practicing together, as well as complete explanations of each movement to facilitate the learning process. The drajor and translations of each songs are also provided.

Each video costs €3 and can be downloaded from the webshop of Shang Shung Publications:

<https://shop.shangshungfoundation.com/en/54-khaita-joyful-dances-video-tutorial>

The Khaita and Shang Shung Publications Teams ©



United Kingdom
Shang Shung Institute

THE LONDON INSTITUTE OF TIBETAN STUDIES

Festival of Mind at Lekdanling London

Alex Studholme

The contemporary cult of mindfulness is in the vanguard of the spread of Buddhism in the modern world. In the UK, it is even sponsored by the state, in the form of free mindfulness-based cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) on the National Health Service. There are two

university departments – in Oxford and in Bangor, North Wales – dedicated to its promulgation. Mindfulness is now widely taught in schools. What better subject, then, for the Shang Shung UK Institute's first Festival of Mind symposium, held at Lekdanling in London over the weekend of May 11–13th 2018?

This was an innovative event, using Lekdanling as a forum for speakers from inside and outside the Dzogchen Community and inviting an audience from the general public. SMS teachers Elio Guarisco and Igor

» continued on the following page



cluding hundreds of notes, and it's now being reviewed by Elio Guarisco.

* *Parting from the Four Attachments* is Rinpoche's commentary to the famous text received from Manjushri by Sachen Kunga Nyingpo and to its commentary by the Sakya master Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen. In the past, we published another commentary to this text based on the teachings of His Holiness Sakya Trizin. These teachings clearly explain the pure way to practice the Dharma.

* *The Long-Life Practice of Amitayus and The Chülen of the Three Kayas: Oral Commentary* is the long-awaited commentary to the practice of Long Life of Guru Amitayus and the related practice of Chülen, including the full translation of these practices prepared by Elio Guarisco, Adriano

Clemente, and Charles Jamyang Oliphant of Rossie.

Thank you!

We have been able to publish and continue to work on several different books thanks to the kindness of our Master, great skills of our translators and the whole editorial team, as well as many practitioners who helped in many other ways, such as patiently transcribing hours of teachings, proofreading, working on design and layout, and in many other ways. A huge "Thank you" to all of you!

Do you want to help?

If you want to help us in publishing more books, you can do it in many ways.

* If you are able to, please support the Kater Project – any amount counts, no matter how small.

<http://www.shangshungpublications.org/paypal.html>

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<http://www.shangshungpublications.org/help/>

Finally, if you have any skills you think could be useful for a publishing house and you want to offer them on karma-yoga basis, please contact us at publications@shangshungfoundation.org.

Thank you!

The team of Shang Shung Publications

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Berkhin – who both led workshops on the Sunday – shared a platform with a range of other luminaries, including psychotherapist Laura Donnington, dream yoga teacher Charlie Morley and Paul Wielgus, a former disciple of Lama Thubten Yeshe, who now represents an organization called the Potential Project, taking mindfulness into the workplace.

Lekdanling's old friend Ian Baker, Himalayan explorer and author of *The Heart of the World*, gave the opening presentation, outlining the roots of the modern mindfulness movement in the appropriation of Burmese *vipassana* teachings by western students such as Jack Kornfield, Joseph Goldstein and Jon Kabat-Zinn, the person mainly responsible for taking the practice out of its Buddhist framework and into a secular dimension. Ian also argued for an augmentation of mindfulness with more dynamic, energetic techniques – illustrated by the lives of the *mahasiddhas*. This point was taken up by the UK's new Yantra Yoga instructor Leo Isacchi, who spoke on the somatic basis of mindfulness and led the audience in a practice of the nine purification breaths.

Are we living through an "epidemic of distraction" – terminally addicted to what Chogyal Namkhai Norbu refers to as our "small telephones" – for which mindfulness is the cure? Does mindful presence contain an inherent ethical value, or is it really an amoral tool that can be used, for instance, to train an army sniper how to kill? Is there an uneasy tension between secular mindfulness teaching and its Buddhist roots: the one aiming at greater efficiency and enthusiasm, the other promoting detachment and renunciation? Does secular mindfulness risk betraying the true principles of Buddhism, or is it, as the writer Stephen Batchelor puts it, a Buddhist Trojan horse?

Paul Wielgus reported that the Dalai Lama, when asked such questions, answered that mindfulness *should* be taught in secular garb, insisting that a traditional Buddhist presentation risks alienating people – an example, perhaps, not only of the open mindedness of His Holiness, but also of the fundamentally pragmatic nature of Buddhism as a whole. The first Festival of Mind proved to be a most enjoyable and successful gathering, hosting a multiplicity of viewpoints, lively discussion and a relaxed party – including Tibetan music and dance – on the Saturday evening. Plans are afoot for a second festival in 2019. ©



SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ИНСТИТУТ ТИБЕТСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ



News About Internship in Tibet

The Russian graduate students of the School of Tibetan Medicine

As many of you know, last August the first group of students who undertook the four-year course on Tibetan medicine completed the official part of the program in Russia. This year the group of 16 graduates went to Sinin (Qinghai) for three months' practice. This is the first time that Qinghai University College and Arura Hospital have received such a big group of Russian doctors. The practice program is very rich and consists of 99 hours of theory, 24 hours of *lung* transmission of the four tantras (*rgyud bzhi*), 238 hours of clinical practice and 49 hours of collection and identification of the raw material in the mountains. The practice will continue till 17 July, and at the end the young doctors will have to pass an internal examination for their Bachelor's degree on Tibetan medicine.

The trip to Sinin requires major expenses on the part of the students and at the end of the program we will have to cover big costs for finishing the program which

are not included in the budget covered by the School of Tibetan Medicine. We will need to organize a festive event in traditional Tibetan style and offer presents to express gratitude to the Tibetan professors in a proper way.

If you want to support this project and Shang Shung Institute Russia activities in general, you can transfer any amount to our PayPal account:

v.belyaev@shangshunginstitute.ru (in case of big offerings of more than 250 euro, please contact Vladimir Belyaev first on the same email).

If you have questions about our projects and activities, please write to:

info@shangshunginstitute.ru. Thank you!

After the students finish their practice in Tibet we will write a big report with wonderful photos!

With best wishes,
Shang Shung Institute in Russia
www.shangshunginstitute.ru
<https://www.facebook.com/shangshungrussia/>

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Dancing in the Rain!

For the third season in a row the valiant Khaita team of dancers braved the rain and cold to dance in the 12th Annual New York City Dance Parade. This year we were fortunate to have along with us Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo and Kunga, a professional dancer from the group of Derghe Dancers, based in Queens, NY.

Thank you to one and all for your dedication and participation!
Shang Shung Institute USA

Welcome to Our New Administrator, Travis Riemer!

Travis is a third-year Tibetan Medicine student and a Massage Therapist licensed in Ohio. He is a yoga practitioner, and is preliminarily authorized by Fabio Andrico to teach the Eight Movements of Yantra Yoga.

Travis recently moved to Conway and has been getting familiar with the work of the Administrator. His main focus now is the new Massage Therapy and Tibetan KuNye External Therapies Program.

See here for more info: <http://www.tibetanmedicineschool.org/massage-therapy-program-intro/>

We are so happy to have Travis here with the Tibetan Medical School. He can be reached at travis@shangshung.org or 413-369-4928. Please give him a warm welcome. Many thanks,

Board of
Shang Shung Institute of America

Bring the Precious Healing Benefits of Kunye to the World



Join this new, one of a kind 2-year program on Massage Therapy and Kunye External Therapies, that starts late August, 2018 in Conway, MA. Become one of the few rare massage practitioners with in-depth 900-hour training in the Foundations of Tibetan Medicine and Kunye External Therapies, including cupping, oil compresses, hot stones, moxibustion and more. It is a wonderful chance to become a licensed massage therapist, prepare for MBLex and offer time-tested Tibetan Medicine wisdom to your clients. Apply now for a 45% discount at www.TibetanMedicineSchool.org.

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The Spiritual Inheritance of Tibet on Mount Amiata

Project by ASIA in collaboration with the Dzogchen Community of Merigar

It would be very hard to find a Tibetan adult, whether a monk, Tantric, or lay person, who has not undertaken a pilgrimage at some time in their life.

Tibetans use the term *nékor* (gnasskor) to refer to a pilgrimage, meaning going around the *né* (gnas), which is a sacred location or person. The pilgrim is known as a *nékorwa* (gnasskorba), one who completes a ritual circuit around a sacred place or person.

Therefore, a pilgrimage for a Tibetan is much more than a simple act of travelling to a sacred location. It is associated with ritualistic and religious activities that have a sociological, cultural, economic and literal meaning.

In Tibet, there are three types of pilgrimage destinations: (1) natural sights, such as mountains, lakes and caves; (2) sites built by humans, such as temples, monasteries and retreat locations; (3) and the secret grounds, or *béyul* (sbasyul).

A fourth type of pilgrimage consists of going to meet and pay homage to a Master or a person with special spiritual knowledge.

Tibetans also go on pilgrimages outside of Tibet, for example in India and Nepal. Here Buddha was born, taught and died, like many other masters tied to the Buddhist and Bönpo traditions.

Pilgrimages to sacred locations are not unique only to Tibetans, but are common to all other major monotheist religions around the world.

Undertaking a pilgrimage is a journey towards knowledge and an act that a pilgrim carries out to earn merits.

For Dzogchen believers and disciples of Namkhai Norbu, Merigar, the first Gar of

the International Dzogchen Community, is a sacred location. Pilgrims travel here to meet and pay their respects to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to receive his Teachings, and to practice and meditate.

Merigar is an important sacred location where there are many remarkable buildings, such as:

- The Temple of Great Contemplation
- The Stupas
- The Zhikhang with the Mandala Hall
- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Retreat Cabin

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's retreat cabin needs urgent maintenance.

Objective

Over the last 30 years, ASIA has been committed to Tibetan culture and spirituality in Tibet, India and Nepal. ASIA has also realised many projects to raise awareness about Tibetan practices and culture and disseminate Tibetan values in the West.

For this reason, in 2018 we have decided to launch a fundraising campaign to restore the Retreat Cabin of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in collaboration with the Gakyil of Merigar.

Planned Activities

Restoration work on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's retreat center includes:

1. Treatment for external walls
 - a. Staved walls
 - b. Gutters
 - c. Flooring
 - d. Stairs and wooden banister
 - e. Columns
2. External sewer
3. Restoring the stone flooring of the stairs and walkways
4. Structural consolidation work

Beneficiaries

The beneficiaries of the project will be Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, all his followers and all those who practice Dzogchen, and more broadly everyone who is interested in the culture and spirituality of Tibet.

"When I started teaching Dzogchen we decided that people practicing this tradition would have to help one another. I not only find joy in teaching and informing. My goal is to try to help people understand the real sense of the teaching. I am very happy when people understand and work together, doing something correctly: this is what Dzogchen teaching is all about."

Excerpt from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's speech on 3 January, 2017 – the last day of the Yangtig retreat at Dzamling Gar.

Methodology

ASIA will oversee the fundraising, promoting and dissemination of the project.

Merigar will be in charge of realising the project, monitoring, restoring, and reporting on the use of the funds.

Cost

The total cost for the project is 20,000 €.

How to donate

By bank transfer to Asia Onlus
IBAN: IT 43 M 05216 03226 000000013004
Swift BIC: BPCVIT2S

By credit card or PayPal on the website:

www.asia-ngo.org/merigar/en

Please reference "Merigar Retreat Cabin"

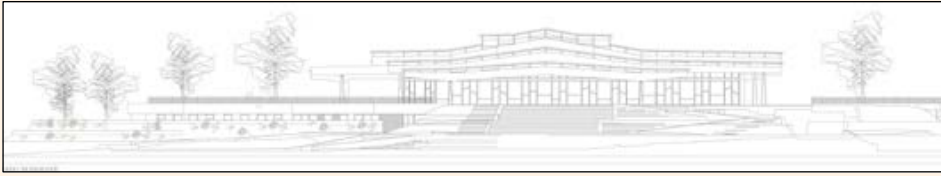
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Dzamling Gar Gönpa Inauguration & Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Birthday Celebration

December 7–9, 2018

The moment has finally arrived! After five years in the making, the Dzamling Gar Gönpa project will soon be realised. In December 2018 the first phase of the Gönpa construction will be completed and it will be time to celebrate this momentous occasion together with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's birthday!

The Dzamling Gar Gönpa will not only be a marvelous place for practice, but also an important conference center that will support the development of culture, medicine, education and arts.

The inauguration and birthday celebrations will be a unique occasion bringing together Community members worldwide, local communities and official representatives. This is a key moment in the evolution of our International Gar and also a grand celebration of the life's work of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Events Schedule Summary

December 7

Gönpa Inauguration Ceremony
Museum of Oriental Art and Culture
Exhibition Opening
Exhibit stands for IDC and Gars

December 8

Birthday Celebrations
Performances
Vajra Dance and Khaita presentations

December 9

Presentations & Workshops
Closing Celebration

Come celebrate with us and help make this momentous occasion a great success!



Photos by Paolo Fassoli



Current Gakyil of Dzamling Gar, from left: Alejandro Acuña (red, vice-president), Nadia Yermakova (secretary, yellow), Inna Ossinkina (yellow), Michal Gibowski (blue, president), Ludmila Kudriavtseva (red), Urara Taoka (blue)

New Gakyil of Dzamling Gar

Dear Vajra Family,

Last Friday, 13th of April an Annual General Meeting of Dzamling Gar was held. One of the important points was a change in the structure of Gakyil.

We would like to thank very much Dragana Lukic and Jan Kompis for their wonderful work and effort! They both ended their Gakyil service this year. At the same time we welcome two new members – Ludmila Kudriavtseva (Red Gakyil) and Urara Taoka (Blue Gakyil). With many Tashi Delegs! Dzamling Gar Gakyil



Dzamling Gar Summer Program

July 13–16

Collective practice retreat of Purification of Six Lokas and Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings

July 15–29

Yantra Yoga holidays and children's camp

August 6–15

Collective practice retreat of Gomadevi, 25 Spaces of Samantabhadra and Vajra Dance

Dzamling Gar

Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain

www.dzamlinggar.net



Update on Merigar West

Tuscany, Italy

Walking along the path at Merigar on a windy day a fox came to meet me downwind. He was hurrying along with his head down, and only realizing that I was there at the last moment, turned around and retraced his steps along the path that leads to Gönpa. The little fox is a keen witness of the projects that have started or are about to at Merigar West.

The Path of Awareness is one of the projects that have been presented for funding with the aim of developing and creating areas for individual and group meditation in the open air. They will be places where one will be able to get in touch with oneself, to discover or train a relaxed presence and an open awareness, immersed in a total and profound relationship with the magical nature of the land around Merigar.



On the advice of our consultant at the Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione e il Restauro in Rome, an inspection of the structure of the Gönpa and the surrounding land has been carried out. Ms. Cavezzali reminded us of the importance of the Gön-

pa as a valuable architectural monument that has become part of the artistic patrimony of the territory. Its magnificent structure in copper and glass needs to be pre-



served with restoration works so that it can exist over time as precious place of practice.

The results of the structural survey will allow us to prepare the restoration project, starting from the structure and the roof and finishing with the precious interior paintings and the decoration of the exterior.

Below the Yellow House, work has begun on the preparation of the new road leading to the Mandala Room and the Library.

This springtime the meadows of Merigar are green and multi-colored wildflower-

Merigar West Summer Courses & Events

June 29–30 & July 1
Kumbhaka Course
with Fabio Andrico

July 13–15
Khaita Joyful Dances Deepening Course
with Adriana Dal Borgo and Salima Celeri

July 27–29
Shamatha – Calming the Mind
with Elio Guarisco

August 3–8
Dance of the Song of the Vajra Base
Course second part with Prima Mai, senior
instructor, supervising two candidates:
Issa Cox and Adrian Mascherpa.

August 4–5
Kumar Kumari
with Laura Evangelisti

August 6–8
Yantra Yoga instructors meeting

August 8–9
Dance of the Song of the Vajra
Deepening Course
with Adriana Dal Borgo

August 16–18
Chöd explanation and practice retreat
with Costantino Albini

August 18–21
Kalong Dorje Kar or Dance of Space of the
Song of the Vajra study group
with Prima Mai



Photo by William Marcozzi

The Mirror of the Mind

The wonderful retreat held in
Merigar West June 8–12

Elisa Copello

Approximately 250 people participated in the very intense and really enjoyable sangha retreat at Merigar West. A lot of practitioners were involved in the organization and everybody worked at his/her best to create the friendly atmosphere indispensable to make everybody, no matter whether “old students” or newcomers, feel at their ease, “at home”, to

August 21–24
Combined practice retreat: Gomadevi and
the Dance of the Vajra
with Prima Mai

August 25–31
Yoga Holiday for adults and children ©

quote what our precious Master has repeated several times.

The retreat was focused on the explanations taken from “The Mirror” one of the very first books written by Rinpoche transmitted for the first time to the fortunate students who were present at the retreat of Lucomitoni in Sardinia in 1977 with some of them present at this retreat as well.

Five instructors were involved and each of them dealt with a specific topic. Oliver Leick, Elio Guarisco, Fabio Risolo, Igor Legati and Gino Vitiello gave very detailed clear explanations alternated with short practice sessions aiming at calming the mind, observing the flow of thoughts and recalling the state of presence. Amazing and moving was how all of them spoke from the depth of their hearts manifesting the knowledge acquired after many years of practice, giving examples drawn from their personal experience, telling relevant stories and anecdotes in such an impressive way that they were really able to involve the audience and lead meditation sessions in a skillful wise way.

Then every day in the afternoon other sessions were organized: Elio led two sessions
» continued on the following page

ers dot the landscape. We are preparing to welcome practitioners and visitors for the many activities on our spring-summer program, with the hope that the Master recovers all his strength and is able to come to Merigar for this beautiful summer that awaits us.

The summer program is intense and varied: events, workshops and courses are planned for people approaching the Dzogchen Community for the first time as well as for expert practitioners. Most importantly, the June retreat will be an opportunity

to gather together, practice and relax with different types of activities. People will be able to participate in guided meditation sessions, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Teacher Training, and many practice weekends and days.

Events for children, teens and adults are planned, such as the day dedicated to Kyudo Archery or the week of Yoga Holidays for adults and children.

The complete and updated program is on www.dzogchen.it

We are all waiting for you to participate in the courses, to practice together and to walk on the path of Merigar hoping to meet our friend, the fox, along the way. ©





Paris Sangha Retreat, June 2018

Jean-Pascal Pillot

The retreat, organized in Paris by the three French-speaking Lings, Pal-riling, Dejamling and Tengyaling, in the beautiful hall of the Foundation of the United States, classified as a historical monument, in the Cité Universitaire Internationale of Paris, was a great success with the presence of 136 participants.

Activities began with Khaita dances and training for the Dances of the Vajra on the evenings of May 30 and 31, and continued on June 1, 2 and 3 with a dense program that included the various types of practices taught by our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

For the Dance of the Vajra and Yantra Yoga, demonstrations and practices were organized every day, as well as a presentation and an introduction to Harmonious Breathing.

As for the door of Mind, the retreat was organized around the interventions of our two teachers, Elio Guarisco and Igor Berkhin, who alternated their lectures to

introduce the subject "**Mind and Beyond Mind**". In five clear and exciting presentations, they brought the public, composed of members of the Dzogchen community as well as people seeking their first contact with the teaching, to better understand and experience the functioning of the ordinary mind and to realize that there is an immutable presence.

The presentation, intended for a wide audience, took place in five steps:

- Presence and awareness
- Training the distracted mind
- Emptiness and clarity
- The view of Dzogchen or Total Perfection
- Integrating Presence and Awareness in Daily Life

In addition to Elio and Igor, all the teachers of every discipline were certified by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and members of the three organizing lings.

The organization and success of this retreat prove that beyond the absence of our beloved Master, which we hope to be temporary, the Dzogchen community must find the capacity to stabilize and manifest the spiritual inheritance received from Him.

This is the challenge that the Community faces and members will show, as in Paris, that we can assume her Samaya links. ☉

Merigar East Camping Extension

Second Episode

Alexandru Anton, Merigar East geko

After finishing the bulk of the new camping kitchen in the autumn of 2017, this year we were set on giving it the final touch and also completing the other facilities such as showers, toilets etc. We had excellent weather for most of the time and luckily the needed karmayogis also appeared.

We are grateful also to the people from outside the community who appeared and generously offered their help. It is wonderful to meet people with whom we can collaborate.

This year, our team consisted of brave helpers from Bulgaria, Romania, Sicily, Slovakia and The Netherlands. Sisi got a very warm traditional welcome from the 23 August villagers the moment she stepped out of the bus: a delicious icecream from the non-stop shop.

Thus the noble feminine presence was with us also this time, beautifying the atmosphere and elevating our spirits: Gyongyi and Maria Grazia and Sisi who was an inexhaustible pool of energy, at times refusing to play and insisting to help the karmayogis.

We were very happy and grateful that Gyongyi and Feri from the Romanian DC decided to have a two-week work-and-leisure combined holiday and come to the Gar and help for this project! It is not so easy to stretch the chords of the samsaric "ring" and make time for such events, especially when there is a family, a job etc.

» continued from previous page

sions of practice of the Rushen of the body and of the voice, Fabio Sanders explained the importance of the language in study and practice, Laura Evangelisti presented Yantra Yoga to newcomers, Prima Mai presented Vajra Dance, Annamaria Moscatelli explained Ganapuja to new students, Salima Celeri explained the origin and the importance of Khaita, Adriano Clemente illustrated the importance of studying the text Dorje Sempa Namkhai Che, following

the indication of Rinpoche and there was a Chod practice led by Nina Robinson as well.

As usual during the retreat there were sessions of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Khaita led by various instructors, beside the presentation of ASIA activities and other more mundane events like an excursion to the source of the Fiora river in a nearby village and a wonderful cocktail party organized by Monica Patiño for everybody on Sunday evening.

I am sure that at the end of the retreat all participants went back home with a sense of profound gratitude towards all the instructors and in particular to Rinpoche, the source of all who, even if not physically present, was there with all his compassion, energy, and transmission, inspiring all the instructors and giving us the sense of being a strong community, able to practice, to develop and to proceed on the path of personal and collective evolution, following his teaching and his example. ☉

Much appreciation also goes to Ivan from Plovdiv for coming for a two-week leisure-and-bodybuilding holiday, Galina and Dancho from Varna who came to help and also introduce us to some 20 year-old Bulgarian strong “rakia”, Vlad and Vlad from Romania and last but definitely not least, Mihai the previous geko who stayed with us full power for one week!

kitchen lies now in the present a barbecue area, carefully layered with gravel stone and with its own “herbal and aromatic garden” area.

Heading on to the showers – this was really a challenge and one could notice some huge differences in the construction “culture” of different countries, with some otherwise basic materials proving

and a brand new LED-striped bar to enjoy during the hot summer nights in the Gar!

Thank you, Rinpoche, for your precious support, dedication and inspiring vision!

Many thanks to everybody who has contributed so far with their time and energy! It is still possible to support this beautiful project, to help us fully cover the expenses and to set a base for the next phase. We



Top left: New Camping Kitchen.
Top right: Barbecue Area.
Bottom: Toilets and showers.

Of course, all this would have been very difficult without Lubo's continued dedication to this project, both coordinating and doing much of the hard work – for this we are very grateful.

As for enjoying and having fun, please don't worry that we neglected this aspect. The Khaïta background soundtrack for our works, The Game of Liberation, outside barbecues, team-building at the local fish restaurant and two birthday celebrations are just a few mentions.

But let's have a look at the structures!

The new camping kitchen got its colors – with the floor painted in “wenge”, a dark brown nuance, and the pillars and roof beams covered in “cherry” – altogether a very Japanese flavor!

Around the new kitchen there is a dried reed enclosure, to shield against rain and wind while serving a hot soup under the roof. These reed “mats” were from remaining stock from the old camping kitchen, so it is a nice continuation across time. All in all, we got a local fishermen and Japanese style mixture!

We kept the old hippie-style camping kitchen as a temporary storage space for tools. In between the past and the future

very hard to find in Romania. But the main shower structure is ready, with roof and all – and two (out of four) showers will be operational as soon as the water pipes get connected.

Last, but not least, four toilets are waiting to be finished during our third camping episode. For now they are nicely put into place.

are still missing around 3500 Euros. Any contribution is welcome!

https://dzogchen.ro/component/option,com_zj_donation/Itemid,101/controller,donate/id,20/task,donation/

Hope to see you soon in the Merigar East camping lounge! ©



Sisi on site.

At this stage, the new camping kitchen is awaiting its guests, with handmade seats and tables, light-and-motion-sensor bulbs

Merigar East Summer Holidays

We are very happy that, after the camping extension work from this year, we will have one more opportunity to concretely contribute to the Gar – through the Merigar East lungta initiative. Helped by Vitek Pulda from the Czech community, we will start a regular lungta production so we always have fresh prayer flags to hang in the Gar. The strong local winds will spread the benefits far and wide.

Apart from this, the hard-working Merigar East gakyil has helped prepare a number of very attractive retreats with highly experienced instructors. We hope to meet you here at the Black Sea, enjoy together and make new connections in the DC web! Here is the retreat menu. Please help yourself!

Semdzin Retreat

with Elias Capriles

June 16–17, Bucharest

Contact us if you would like to participate and get more information:

blue.me@dzogchen.ro

Lungta Workshop

under the guidance of experienced practitioners and Lungta makers

June 23–July 1

Please register at: <https://goo.gl/forms/nGQ35DWyOrtSyXK63>

For hanging the lungtas for some concrete place or person please fill this registration form:

<https://goo.gl/forms/woqxvSRhLsMlccf2>

Chöd Retreat

with Steven Landsberg

July 10–15, Merigar East

Details and registration at: <https://goo.gl/forms/5zPCdoNxohpGhMe92>

Ati Yoga Retreat

with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

July 27–31

On the basis of latest information about Rinpoche's state of health, this event is most likely not going to happen but stay tuned and don't worry if you already bought your tickets for coming to the Gar, very soon we are coming with a rich and attractive alternative program with Dzogchen Community instructors!



Photo by Yuliya Mikheikina

Mindful Collaboration Conference in Kunsangar North

Dear Friends!

On **May 25–27** the Russian Dzogchen Community held a conference on **Mindful Collaboration in Kunsangar North**. The idea was suggested two months ago by SMS Level 1 instructor **Alexander Pubants** who moderated the three-day conference. Thirty-three participants took part in the event in person and 36 Dzogchen Community members joined us by webcast.

We discussed burning issues faced by the Russian Dzogchen Community in three main topics:

- * Scope and nature of activities carried out by Gakyil and Geko of gars
- * Creativity and business aspects in Dzogchen practice
- * Potentiality and future development of Dzogchen Community

.....

The Dance of the Song of the Vajra Retreat combined with the Practice of Gomadevi with Zoli Cser.

At the end – Vajra Dance Drubchen.

August 2–7

Details and registration at: <https://goo.gl/forms/2n4atIUARM9mirdE3>

The practice retreat of Inner and Secret Rushen from the Dra Thalgyur Tantra

with Elio Guarisco

August 22–28

Details and registration at: <https://goo.gl/forms/H6DjQipe40tIWlp42>

See you soon!

Merigar East geko,

Alexandru Anton

Keynote speakers and their reports

Alexander Pubants – Functions and Responsibilities of DC Structural Units and Their Collaboration and Socially Useful Activity of DC as Dzogchen Practice in Current Circumstances;

Roman Grachev (Gekoe of Kunsangar North) – Basics of Mindful Collaboration and Challenges of and Outlook for Karma Yoga and Volunteer Programmes;

Victoria Adamenko (Yellow Gakyil of Kunsangar North) – Responsibility of Individual Practitioners and Dzogchen Community as a Whole for Gar Maintenance and Development;

Elena Fokina (a member of Rinchenling, The Form of Choir stage director) – The Importance of Creative Activity as an Aspect of Practice in Dzogchen Community;

Ilya Shirobokov (Yellow Gakyil of Rinchenling) – Development of Business Collaboration and Cooperation between Dzogchen Community Members;

Mark Farrington (Vice-President of International Gakyil of Dzogchen Community) – Collaboration of Gars and Lings with International Dzogchen Community (by webcast);

Igor Tokarev (Saratov DC), Elena Sychova (Gekoe of Kunsangar South), Galina Surmina (Samara DC), Natalia Makeeva, Valery Peskov, Svetlana Vaschenko, Alexander Chuev, Andrey Plotnikov (Omsk DC), Elena Gruzdeva (Yellow Gakyil of Kunsangar North) and Andrey Pushkarev contributed a lot in the discussion.

At the Plenary Session, the conference participants outlined recommendations for collaboration in Dzogchen Community. The editorial and publishing team (A. Pubants, G. Surmina and N. Makeeva) will soon publish the related content.

Andrey Pushkarev, Ilya Shirobokov and Valery Peskov joined the project to facilitate efficient communication across Dzogchen Community based on advanced Internet technologies.

The conference participants also elected members of the Organising Committee for the next conference – Alexander Pubants, Marina Novitskaya and Roman Grachev. Information on the date and topic of the next conference will follow later on.

If you have any questions about participation in the event, please send them to elzikmor@gmail.com ©

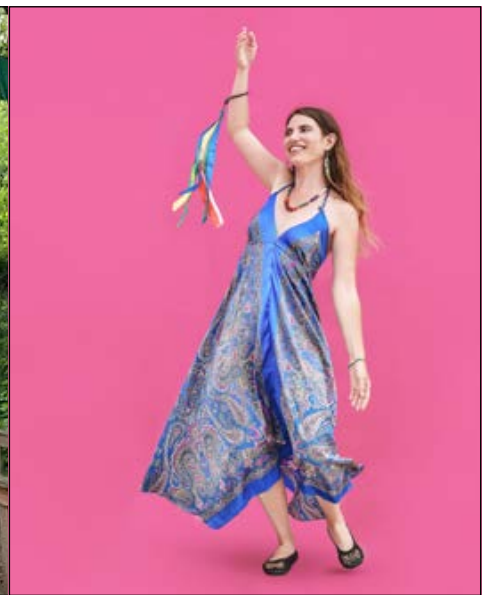
Tsegyalgar East June 2018 Updates

June has arrived at Tsegyalgar East. The leaves on the trees are bright green and the flowers are blooming. Our monthly movie nights have ended for the season, but our Gar remains active with our weekly Vajra Dance Thuns, Khaita, Yantra Yoga and a myriad of practices. We also have two scheduled courses in June – Mariano Gil will be giving a World Wide Transmission explanation on June 15, and Meditation in Four by Four – The Foundations of Mindfulness Workshop on June 16 and June 17. Naomi Zeitz will be teaching Harmonious Breathing on June 29 and Understanding Kumbhaka on June 30 and July 1. Last but not least, we are busily preparing Khandroling, our sacred land, for our summer programs.

We are now dancing on our Universal Mandala at Vajra Hall, and we are excited that our Vajra kin will soon be arriving to practice with us. This summer we have organized our 3rd Annual Summer Sangha Retreat from July 21 through July 29, followed by Dance Dance Dance at Khandroling – an intensive dance practice weekend led by several wonderful instructors from August 2 to August 5, and a Vajra Dance That Benefit Beings course from August 11 to August 12 and summer-long Khaita taught by Alejandra Krasnogor. We hope that many of you will be able to visit and attend.

Meanwhile, we are hard at work updating and renovating our Gar, Rinpoche's cabin and the many beautiful acres at Khandroling. The Gar has updated various rooms, and our Gönpa is being beautified. On Khandroling, Rinpoche's cabin renovation is nearly complete. There's much more work in the offing and we are enormously busy. We welcome all available Karma Yoga help offered, and we plan days where we get together and work together.

This progress has been made possible through the volunteer work of our members as well as through our tireless fund-



raising efforts. We have been gratified by the response and always welcome new participation.

Please come practice with us and join our Karma Yoga efforts this summer!

The Community and Gakyil of
Tsegyalgar East

For more information visit tsegyalgar.org

©



*Tsegyalgar East 3rd Annual
Summer Sangha Retreat
Saturday, July 21 – Sunday July 29, 2018*



THE MIRROR

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Annual Meeting at Tashigar South

At the end of April, we had our Annual Meeting at Tashigar South, and we shared four days of an intense practice program. We began on Saturday morning practicing Purification of Six Lokas and in the afternoon we joined the world chain of Ngagkong carried out for our Master.

On Sunday, the 29th, we gathered at the Gönpa to celebrate an Extraordinary Meeting called with the purpose of reforming the statute of our association, a legal step required to formalize the alignment with the International Dzogchen Community.

At noon, we did a Mandarava Ganapuja dedicated to the health of our Master. After that, the Annual Ordinary Meeting took place, with the election of new Gakyil with six members, formed as follows, and the reelection of Daniel Altamirano as Gekö.



From left to right: Daniel Altamirano (gekod), Elena Gastaldi (red gakyil), Alejandra Krasnogor (blue gakyil), Noemí Riner (yellow gakyil), Marcelo Frischknecht (red gakyil) and Soledad Mariani (secretary). Not in the picture: Griselda Olivera and Daniel Barreto.

Yellow Gakyil:

Griselda Olivera (Director), Noemí Riner

Blue Gakyil:

Alejandra Krasnogor, Daniel Barreto

Red Gakyil:

Elena Gastaldi, Marcelo Frischknecht

We finished dancing Khaita together and enjoyed a delicious dinner.

On Monday the 30th, in the morning, we did the practice of Mandarava and then

we met to internalize some issues that concern us all as a Community. Carolina Mingolla, whom the Gakyil appointed as Project Manager of the rental project, gave us a detailed report of the task carried out by the team, informing about the activities that were carried out, income, expenses and the many benefits that this undertaking has brought for Tashigar South. Next, Clara Bordeu informed us about everything concerning House 5, which together with Tashigar North we have in Dzamling Gar.

In the afternoon, an open meeting took place between the Gakyil and the instructors, in order to coordinate the year's activities. In the evening, after a full *thun* of Vajra Dance, the joy continued at the dining room with delicious pizzas and a birthday cake!

As a finishing touch for Tuesday, May 1st, after a morning practice of contemplation, we enjoyed an intensive course of Dzamling Gar dance and song, and we ended the four days meeting dancing happily and relaxed! The closure took place in the dining room, where our Gekö was awaiting for a "chorizo" barbecue, a truly local taste. A big hug to all and long life to our beloved Master! ©



Workshop on Dzamling Gar Dance and Meaning with Alejandra Krasnogor on May 1st, 2018 at Tashigar South.



"Breathe – Meditate – Dance". A course for beginners from May 25-27, 2018 in Tashigar South with Ricardo Sued, Carolina Mingolla and Alejandra Krasnogor.



Course "Training on 7th Lojong" from May 25-27, 2018 in La Plata, Buenos Aires, Argentina with Marisa Alonso and Sergio Oliva.

Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat – The Five Capacities

At Namgyalgar June 2–7, 2018
with teachers Arnaud Coquillard,
Angie Gilbert, Oni McKinstry

Sally Price

A group of about sixteen practitioners from all over Australia gathered at Namgyalgar in the beautiful Glasshouse Mountains to participate in a retreat, led by Arnaud, with the general theme of relaxation. Arnaud cleverly designed the retreat format to embody this theme by making only one morning session each day, from 9.30 to 12.00, of formal teaching and practice.

The rest of the time, we had to rely on our own resources to choose activities. The choices included Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, Khaita dance and bush walking, along with anything else we wanted to do, such as private rest or reflection, meditation, socializing and so on. This program created so much space, and while some people shared at the end of the retreat that they found it challenging, many of us just loved the idea of no boundaries between teaching and experience.

There was a different capacity to focus on each day – Participation (or Faith), Perseverance, Presence, Contemplation and Intel-



ligence. By the time we got to the last day, we learned how, by applying intelligence, we could integrate all of the five capacities. There was the opportunity to ask many questions, give our own input during the sessions and empty afternoons to practice in any way we wanted. This seemed to have the effect that time slowed down. People were looking at the roster for meal preparation and insisting that it was tomorrow!

It was extremely helpful to have both teaching and practical advice on how we can practice in everyday life and the difference between presence and “Presence” or “instant presence”, contemplation and “Contemplation” as Rinpoche explains it in the Dzogchen teachings.

As a “local” to Namgyalgar, it was so wonderful to catch up with our Dzogchen family from all corners of Australia with

people traveling down from Cairns, up from Melbourne and Sydney and over from Perth. The weather was kind to us, turning on perfect winter sunshine and at night we would gather around the bonfire while Angie led us in Chöd practice and marshmallows were toasted.

Oni also presented the breathing techniques of the 7th Lojong, which merged with our practice of Semdzins. Angie joined Arnaud in explaining the teachings in practical detail, which led to a feeling of confidence that we could all go home and have less division between our practice and everyday life. ©

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A Brief Introduction to the Life and Poetry of 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-sgron

An Outstanding Twentieth-Century Tibetan Woman

Iacobella Gaetani

The following article is an excerpt of The Luminous Necklace of Pearls, a paper by Iacobella Gaetani contained in Garuda Verlag's 2016 publication Sharro, Festschrift for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. This compendium of writings is a token of appreciation for Rinpoche's lifelong dedication to the preservation of Tibet's endangered cultural and spiritual heritage. The Luminous Necklace of Pearls introduces the life and poetry of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's elder sister, 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-dbyings sGron-ma. Due to limits of space, we are publishing this reduced version of the paper devoid of its clarifying footnotes.

Iacobella Gaetani graduated from Naples Orientale University and among other Tibetan texts she has translated Rinpoche's The Practice of Long Life of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava and The Temple of Great Perfection, The Gonpa of Merigar.

Introduction

In this paper I intend to introduce the life story of a remarkable Tibetan woman, 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-dbyings sGron-ma (hereafter 'Jam-chos) the elder sister of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, drawing mainly from her poetry as a source of reference. 'Jam-chos' life reflects the dramatic changes that took place in her country in the twentieth century, from a privileged upbringing spent at the court of the sDe-dge royal family, through adulthood as a young learned, respected and independent woman, to long years of confinement and house arrest when her country was shaken by political unrest.

I was fortunate enough to meet her in 1984 during a pilgrimage to Māratika in Nepal led by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. On that occasion I had the chance to appreciate her strength and resolution which despite her age, enabled her to walk from the small airport of Lamidanda, on a four day arduous hike... In the evenings during the quiet moments around a campfire after a long days trek, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu would give us short glimpses into the extraordinary life of his elder sister. With

admiration he would tell us of her knowledge and skills in Tibetan literature and poetry quoting 'Jam-chos' poem 'Invocation for my daughter gYu-sgron Lha-mo who has gone beyond' as an example of a perfect Tibetan poem where emotions and feelings are subtly hinted at, veiled behind metaphors...

Her poetic works, which I will briefly introduce here, help us understand the remarkable story of an educated and religious woman who since early childhood was destined to play a significant role in the history of her country while also revealing her deep devotion and commitment to the spiritual path...

Life and Times of 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-sgron

The main sources for this short introduction to the life of 'Jam-chos are her poetry, mainly her autobiographical poem entitled 'Sincere Verses about My Experience' (*Rang myong gi drang gtam tshigs su bcad pa bzhugs*), found in her collection of poems called 'Jam chos rtsom bris phyogs btus bzhugs, and on a series of interviews with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu recorded on different occasions, in which he narrated his eldest sister's life story.

'Jam-chos was born in 1921 in dGe-'ug in lCang-ra, a district in sDe-dge, into the Nor-bzang family, the eldest daughter of Tshe-dbang rNam-rgyal and Ye-shes Chos-sgron. Her beloved maternal grandmother was Lhun-grub-mTsho, a great Dzogchen practitioner who considered 'Jam-chos to be the incarnation of her teacher, the yogini A-phyi 'Ug-sgron. Her maternal uncle was the great master mKhyen-brtse Chos-kyi dBang-phyug, whom she devoutly assisted until the end of his life. Her brother was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, whom she loved dearly, and her paternal uncle was the accomplished master rTogs-ldan U-rgyan bsTan-bdzin...

Thanks to her father's ties to the royal family of sDe-dge, 'Jam-chos was permitted to study at the court with the prince and the three royal princesses under one of the greatest scholars and masters of her time,



Jam-chos wearing the clothes she had to repair for years while looking after the pigs. Photo courtesy of ChNN.

Khu-nu bLa-ma bsTan-'dzin rGyal-mtshan, who was born in Khunu in India...

She studied grammar, the five traditional Tibetan sciences, Sanskrit and poetry from this master and soon became his best student. She lived at the court until she was sixteen and became a close friend of the prince and princesses. During that period she befriended bDe-chen Lha-mo, the daughter of a well known lama, 'Jam-dbyangs Grags-pa. Her friend proposed that she become a nun in order to be able to study the Kālacakra Tantra and the instructions on astrology related to it, with her father. Encouraged also by her parents, she took monastic vows and followed her friend. She stayed about two years at 'Jam-dbyangs Grags-pa's monastery to receive teachings and instructions and to practice.

When she was eighteen years old 'Jam-chos gave up her robes, let her hair grow and renewed her friendship with the princesses of sDe-dge. Not long after, she started a relationship with Tshe-dbang bDud-'dul, the king of sDe-dge.

Thanks to the benevolent assistance of the sun-like blazing king Tshe dBang bDud 'dul I had the opportunity to unfold the lotus of knowledge.

Regarding the general reactions to her disrobing she writes:

When I was eighteen years old
although many people disapproved
of my decision
to renounce my nun's vows for some
time,
your (the king's) attitude towards me
didn't change.

From these verses we can understand that besides the king, most people did not approve of her decision. A woman at that time had only two possibilities: either to marry or to become a nun. 'Jam-chos chose to distance herself from the socially accepted custom and entered into a difficult relationship with the most prominent man of her country, the king.

After the king's arranged marriage to one of the princesses of the nearby kingdom of Nang-chen, 'Jam-chos continued her relationship with him in secrecy until discovered by the new queen. At that time 'Jam-chos started to lead an active political life.

As she mentions in her verses:

To increase positive circumstances
in the mundane condition
I became involved in beneficial
politics,
which awarded me with many gifts.

From these lines one can infer that although she played an active role in the political scene of those years in her country, the motivation behind her mundane activities was the Mahāyāna vow of acting for the benefit of all sentient beings...

Describing 'Jam-chos' public and family role, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu told us that although she was very attractive and admired by most ministers, she developed a sense of independence and authority uncommon for women during that time in Tibet. She dressed as a traditional eastern Tibetan woman but carried a pistol and rode the best horses available in the country. A part of this independent and self-determined attitude was her decision to not get married, the same decision that initially led her to become a nun in order to continue her studies and spiritual quest and later determined her choice of rejecting various suitors.

Distanced from the court, 'Jam-chos' family which until then had been associated with the Aja- ruling family, sought alliance with a rival faction headed by the minister Bya-rgon sTobs-ldan.

Soon the family became an easy target for an unscrupulous member of a powerful noble family who tried to seize a piece of land that the Nor-bzang had just bought. As her father did not want to get involved in a dispute, 'Jam-chos resolved the case in a very bold and direct way: she set fire to the crops grown by the other family on their land.

Soon after this incident, against her father's wishes, she fell in love with Sri-gcod rDo-rje, the younger son of an impoverished noble family. They had a child, a young daughter. A smallpox epidemic broke out in the region and the child died shortly after, when she was only one year old. This left 'Jam-chos devastated. Thus she expresses her grief:

My beloved g.Yu-sgron Lha-mo!
Although one can't bear to be
separated from one's heart
the conditions that broke my heart
caused me such sorrow that I lost
my own heart.

On the tomb, placed in the wall of the family house, where her daughter's body was laid inside a small coffin covered with salt crystals, she inscribed the words of the poem 'Invocation for my daughter g.Yu-sgron Lha-mo who has gone beyond' that she composed shortly after her daughter's death:

You, my beloved one,
beautifully adorned by an iridescent
(*pan dza li ka*) cloth
while you were peacefully sleeping
for some time
I understood a warning of time.
Even though from the garden of
beautiful lotuses
the pollen of the white magnolia
flower
did not blow in my eyes,
a luminous necklace of pearls has
fallen from them.
Although you have passed away
you are still present in my mind
I pray that I will meet you again in
your next life.

With the death of their daughter, 'Jam-chos and Sri-gchod rDo-rje ended their relationship. 'Jam-chos totally devastated, turned her back on worldly commitments, and decided to dedicate herself to the spiritual path by following the teachings of her uncles mKhyen-brtse Chos-kyi dBang-

phyug and Togs-ldan U-rgyan bsTan-bdz-in by entering retreat for a year. Since her uncle mKhyen-brtse, as time passed, was spending most of his time in retreat in the mountains, he decided he didn't need an administrator anymore to run the main monastery's proprieties and herds, of which he was the head. 'Jam-chos realized that now, without anybody overlooking the management of the monastery's livestock, her uncle's means of sustenance were in danger. Therefore she left the capital and lived for many years at sGa-gling-steng.

With the deterioration of the military and political situation in sDe-dge, many lamas and families were in danger. 'Jam-chos' family including the young Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, decided to leave for the relative temporary safety of Central Tibet. mKhyen-brtse did not want to leave. 'Jam-chos decided to remain with him to look after him. Not long after, mKhyen-brtse was arrested. 'Jam-chos and many devoted local people forced their way into the jail and released him. Pursued by the army, they escaped onto the grassland and lived among the nomads for many months. On March 13, 1959 they were finally captured on the banks of the Yangtse River while mKhyen-brtse was conducting the funeral rituals for rDzogs-chen Rin-po-che who had just died.

'Jam-chos was also captured and taken to the prison of sDe-dge rDzong where she was condemned to forced labour. She could however, still get messages to her teacher and relay messages from him to those with whom he wished to communicate. He asked her to relay a message to two great masters, rDzogs-chen 'Brug-sprul Rig-'dzin and Zhes-chen Rabs-'byams, who were in the same prison. The message was one phrase. 'Jam-chos delivered the message. On the following morning, all three teachers were found dead in meditation position.

Her teacher, whom she had served loyally and for whom she had endangered her own life and accepted imprisonment, had passed away. Thus she describes her trials and punishments:

The little knowledge I have, I gained
through the kindness of my wise
parents.
However the ones who don't possess
knowledge attacked me
accusing me of being an intellectual
belonging to the ruling class.

» continued on the following page

» continued from previous page

Later, as part of her internment, she was assigned the task of raising pigs. She was required to find food for them from by finding them the leftovers from the military quarters, offices and school kitchens. Even in these difficult circumstances, she was able to excel. So soon from the initial nine pigs in her care she managed to raise eighty-four fat pigs. As a reward, the Chinese officers released her from forced labour.

'Jam-chos now free, wished to join her dispersed family in Lhasa. However she had no money. So by collecting grass and wood in the mountains to sell to travelers on the main road to Lhasa, after three months of hard work, she managed to save enough money to reach the capital.

After much hardship, finally 'Jam-chos arrived in Lhasa, only to learn that some of the members of her family were dispersed and that her youngest brother and father had died.

At this point, 'Jam-chos was determined to help her two sisters assist their old and suffering mother. However, shortly after her arrival, some local people reported her to the authorities. 'Jam-chos was again imprisoned, tried and held under house arrest in a small hut for seven more years. In isolation, 'Jam-chos continued to compose poetry and to practice meditation.

'Jam-chos was only able to perform the death ritual for her mother from her unusual retreat place. She remained under house arrest until 1978. After so many years of hardship, finally in 1982 'Jam-chos was able to embrace her beloved brother Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who had managed to come to Lhasa with his Italian family. 'Jam-chos could also enjoy meeting her nephew, mKhyen-brtse Ye-shes for the first time, the young reincarnation of her late master, 'Jam-dbyangs Chos-kyi dBang-phyug. For 'Jam-chos it was like a dream come true! In 1984, as mentioned earlier, 'Jam-chos and her sister bSod-nams dPalldan flew to Kathmandu to join their brother on a pilgrimage to the sacred Long Life Cave of Mārātika. 'Jam-chos died a year later in 1985 in Lhasa.

Poetics

'Jam-chos' collection of writings *'Jam chos rtsom bris phyogs btus bzhugs*, can be divided into two parts: the first one includes several poems and invocations by her grandmother Lhun-sgrub-mtsho and poems written by 'Jam-chos before 1951; the second part are poems composed by 'Jam-



'Jam-chos and her sister Asod or Sodnam Palden, Nepal 1984 taken by ChNN.

chos in Lhasa during the years of her confinement. Because she had lost the use of her right hand, she dictated her poems to mKhan po Kar-ma bkra-shis who wrote them down. Later on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to whom 'Jam-chos entrusted the manuscript, edited it and eventually made a digital version out of it. He then kindly provided me with a copy. To better understand and appreciate 'Jam-chos' poetry it is worthwhile to briefly introduce the art of Tibetan poetry.

Tibetan Poetry can be divided into three broad genres *glu*, *mgur*, and *snyan ngag*. *Glu* which is still used today in Tibetan as a general word for song, is the most ancient and indigenous form of orally sung poetry. *Mgur* or 'spiritual songs' initially also sung, were later written down as in the famous devotional songs of Milarepa. The Tibetan term *snyan sngag*, that literally means 'melodious speech' is the translation of the Sanskrit term *kāvya* and may be both spiritually inspired or secular. *Snyan ngag* appeared in Tibet after the thirteenth century when Daṇḍin's seventh-century handbook on Sanskrit poetics, the *Mirror of Poetry* (*Kāvyaḍarśa*) was introduced into Tibet... *Kāvya* is characterized by elaborate metaphors and similes, allusions and rhetorical adornments (*alaṅkāra*). Daṇḍin's text was meant to be a handbook to teach poetry and to list the various embellishments (*alaṅkāra*) which include: thirty-two types of similes, hyperbole, double meanings, various types of rhymes and the repetition of sounds and syllables. For each of these Daṇḍin gives examples. He lists, for instance, twenty-five ways to compare a beautiful face to a lotus flower.

It was the Sa skya master and scholar Sa-skya Pandita, (1182–1250) who introduced Daṇḍin's work in Tibet by including excerpts from the *Mirror of Poetry* in his famous *Entrance Gate for the Learned* (*Mkhas pa rnam la 'jug pa'i go*). Thereafter, this text was translated into Tibetan repeatedly over time... From the thirteenth century onward, Tibetans resorted, in writing poetry, to the four-line stanza, the Tibetan version of the Sanskrit ślokaḥ used in *Kāvya*, the "ornate poetry".

S'lokaḥ, the Sanskrit verse, consisted of two sixteen-syllable lines of two eight-syllable sections (*pāda*) each. Thence Tibetans, accorded to each *pāda*, a full line of an equal number of syllables, mostly seven or nine. Within the ślokaḥ and four-line structure, 'Jam-dbyang Chos-sgron mastered most of the embellishments such as starting each line with the same syllable or word, repeating the same syllable or word in each line and the use of the alphabetical poem or acrostic (*ka rtsom*, *ka bshad*). The latter consists in writing a thirty line poem where each line starts with one of the thirty letters of the Tibetan alphabet, starting with the first Ka and finishing with the last A. Each letter has to have a complete meaning as in the poem 'The little song to remember the kindness of my grandmother, Lhun sgrub mtsho' (*A phyi lhun sgrub mtsho'i bka' drin rjes dran gyi glu cung bzhugs*).

I will conclude this paper with the poem entitled *'Brug chen zhabs drung rin po cher phul ba'i legs skyes tshigs su bcad pa bzhugs* (Verses as a gift offered to 'Brug chen Zhabs drung Rinpoche), dedicated to her brother Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in

which 'Jam chos expresses the deep love she felt for him and for her special family:

With devotion holding my hands
joined at the heart, I pay homage
To Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,
Manifestation of Bla ma 'Grol 'dul
Lord of the mind teachings of
Samantabhadra.

I believe that it is so very rare to find
In the three worlds, someone like
you
Than enlightens, with the state of
Samantabhadra,
The great darkness of the
widespread five defilements.

I also never had doubts
On what the supreme conqueror
Karmapa
Predicted clearly
That your enlightened activities will
spread everywhere.

Even if the sound of the *tampura* of
your profound teachings
That completely liberates the nature
of the mind
Briefly arrived to my ears
Only a small part reached my mind.

I who am extremely entangled in
samsāra,
Even if it is difficult to follow you
now,
I pray to obtain the good fortune
To one day find the state of my
mind.

I hope that you, supreme glory of
the teachings,
Will remain, with your lotus feet,
firm in the dimension of the
vajra,
And that your activities, for the
teachings and for the sentient
beings,
Will spread in space
Without obstacles, spontaneously.

Brother born from the same parents
For a long time we all have been
together
Even if for a while we had to be
separated because of karma
I pray that soon we will be together
again. ☉

CRAZY LOUISE or La Conversazione Sacra

Station Hill Press, Barrytown NY
2017, Uitgeverij 261

Review by Rowena Hill
Merida Venezuela, March 2011
Cover photo by Ira Cohen (1938–2011)

The Extreme Wisdom of Louise Landes Levi

This is a book for women, because they will find themselves reflected and projected here beyond what they have ever imagined or suspected about themselves, but it is also one in which men will find a visionary power and courage in facing exposure to the fiercest experience that is rarely recognized in women. Even the Tibetan masters usually ignored women's capacity for wisdom, especially of the 'crazy' kind that informs Louise Landes Levi's book, and women as poets have been expected to limit themselves to 'feminine' domains of sense and sentimentality.

Many female sacred figures make their presence felt in the book, starting with the Madonna of the Sacra Conversazione (the subtitle), who is listened to from her throne by a gathering of reverend characters. Machig Labdron, the Tibetan regent of a dimension of extreme, even disgusting and appalling experience, hovers over many of the poems. The references to the mother and to women's love and suffering reflect, though they are not named, the aspects of the dakinis, their joyful, peaceful and wrathful manifestations.

But this is not a treatise on female spirituality, and what is most impressive here is the interpenetration (at times perhaps confusion) of levels of experience and awareness. The book opens with a disturbing encounter of the poet with the sexuality of her sick and decrepit mother, who seems to be demanding satisfaction from her. Other poems about mother reveal her cruelty to the little girl, her "body beaten and broken", while later ones reveal forgiveness and compassion toward her. The mature woman's acceptance of apparent incoherence and extreme exposure must have been the necessary condition for forgiving – and in this way Crazy Louise tells us the price of becoming a holy madwoman.



CRAZY LOUISE

"Mother" is the main theme of the poem. The ambivalent and ambiguous relation between the personal mother and the spiritual Mothers, wrathful, joyful and loving, is the tone of the whole. Love, abuse, death, sex are all suffused with it. Love remains under the shadow of rejection: "Mother flesh you do deny me". Ultimately, beyond this cauldron of sensations and insights, the mother is "the divine Mother inside", the source of psychic and spiritual growth. The muse, poetry, language is conceived as feminine, and this is related also to the spontaneous origin of the poems. So that in the end all the threads of the book's complex world lead to the divine female source, which can be seen as both their origin and their goal. ☉

Interview with Louise Landes Levi

A Selfie for The Mirror

What led to the publication of Crazy Louise?
The book was originally published in a very small edition. My 'self publications', at least in Amsterdam, w. the printer Felix Mansingh, began with my meeting w. NNR. They were the blossoming of the meeting – the manifestation, of my own potential, which had been 'lost', so to speak, 'in translation'. I had met Namkhai Norbu in London, Xmas, 1979, in fact the first retreat the master gave outside of Italy was planned in the room where I lived, but that is another story. The meeting, in Amsterdam, in 1982 to which I was magically 'called' (from Paris) initiated the profound change in my life which was Namkhai Norbu's 'seal' upon it.

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In 1982 or so, a publisher, Uitgeverij 261, in Holland, was printing a series of poetry books called, The Amsterdam School, 12 American & Dutch writers were included. I was, by miracle, one of the 12 but the venture was cancelled after the first 6 volumes – lack of funds. I thus had a book (The Water Mirror/Die Water Spiegel) but no publisher. I was sent to Felix Mansingh, aka. Felix Off Set, to inquire as to printing costs, they were beyond my means. A year later, at the Central Station in Amsterdam, I was trying to get to London, to a teaching of Rinpoche's, & understood I shouldn't try but should instead go to visit Felix, the printer, who ordinarily – it was a Saturday – wld. not be opened on that day. He was however & when he saw me he said *'I've been thinking about that book, let's do it. I asked how much would it cost? Nothing* was his reply.

Eventually together with Sophia Bentinck – the mother of one of Rinpoche's main translators (Jacobella Gaetani) – I formed a small press, Il Bagatto (sic. The magician), named after the ice cream parlor in Arcidosso. We realized many projects together. Sophia, died in 2013, but I continued the press. The printer's situation had also changed but continuity is a principle – of the creative process & the teaching – so I continued (nb.: *tantra* – in Sanskrit: continuity). The printer could no longer afford to print the books, for Sophia & I, without pay, & I could afford to make only 40 copies.

I was selling them, one by one, in 2014, at a retreat of the Jnana Dakini, in Conway when Ed Goldberg, a practitioner in NYC, took an interest in the work & showed it, during the retreat, to Sam Truitt, director of Station Hill, who immediately wanted to publish it in a trade edition, of course.

I was thrilled as Station Hill was one of the early publishers of Namkhai Norbu & also a press for whom I had worked, typing manuscripts (including the Tibetan glossary to John Reynolds biography of Padma-sambhava), raking leaves, & sweeping. A former editor of mine (Claudio Rugafiori, RASA), when I told him I was sweeping, said *'sweeping is very good work'* & so it was.

Most of my work, my own poetry had been thrown away by an ill meaning or perhaps mad concierge, who encouraged me to leave the work in his care then threw it away, just 1 day before the garbage strike in Paris (1978) wld. have preserved it despite his madness or cruel intention. I was therefore forced to start over. The Dharma,

as it turned out, was my vehicle, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, my support.

Rinpoche, as you may know, studied poetics with his sister, who was a friend of the princess of Derge. In most cases, the study of poetics was reserved for royalty, but as Jamchos was a close friend of the princess, both she & her brother were permitted to study. Jamchos became a well known poet in Tibet & later a profound student of the dharma. She has been beautifully translated by Jacobella Gaetani, who also wrote a brilliant essay on her life & work for the honorific book that was presented to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 2017, in the gönpa of Merigar. I felt safe with the master & that he understood my direction, my loss & my longing. *'Longing lasts longer'* as the poet/performer Penny Arcade, who also wrote a blurb for the book, has said –

What distinguishes this work from your previous books (ed. Guru PUNK & The Book L, Cool Grove Press, Le Lampade di Casa Sono State Acsesse MA & Banana Baby, Super Nova Press (bi lingual). Chorma, Porto dei Santi, Avenue A & Ninth Street, Shiva Stan.

Some books, by Buddhist authors in the West, or books about Buddhism, treat the subject in abstraction. The poetry, in general, indicates but does not reveal personal passion or does so with a minimum of direct reference to the confused states which may arise, or the very humiliating ones.. My approach, related, to my practice of Dzog Chen, was rooted in a marginal, rather than in an academic or any other kind of role & an almost conscious approach to the inadvertent effect & influence of the teachings, as I understood them. Many of the great poets in the Buddhist tradition, at least in America, were seminal students of Zen, Phillip Whalen, Joanne Kyger, Gary Snyder or Vajrayana, Allen Ginsberg, their champion, even Jack Kerouac practiced a kind of Catholicism cum Vajrayana (not dharma), mostly on an intellectual but intellectually brilliant level. (Mexico City Blues is, within the American poetic tradition, a *direct introduction to open mind* (Chogyam Trungpa).

Dzog Chen implies & initiates an opening of the sense function, as you know, it is rooted in immediate apprehension of the senses. We are taught to practice, to understand EKA RASA one taste, rather than to reject the difficult, even the disgusting or to mitigate personal passion (in the words of Patrul Rinpoche *'we are not conditioned by the passions but by our attachment to them'*).

Guru Punk was a spiritual being, on the road, as in the tradition of the above mentioned JK, but Crazy Louise is rooted in the specifics of personal trauma, both of the author, & her mother, the central figure in the text, & generally, in the genocide rendered upon the Jewish populations of Eastern Europe, in the last century however camouflaged this is, in the poetic deliberation of the text.

Interwoven w. this is a more deliberate, tho spontaneous occurring, inter linear technique, extreme fragmentation & a departure fr. the formal considerations of all previous collections, as is written, in the excerpt fr. Ian Macfadyen's review, on the back cover.

Are you satisfied with the result – the transformation of your work from a simple edition, meant for a limited public, to a well distributed trade edition of same?

There are always permutations, but as Namkhai Norbu has taught, we adjust to the circumstances. I cld. not impose my personal vision on a book to be published by another publisher. The fruit of such an effort, as from the beginning, Namkhai Norbu & other lamas insisted my practice was my poetry, is first of all that it functions as offering.

I have tried to follow the master's instruction; however strange this may appear to those completely unfamiliar w. the internal & mysterious process that produces a poetic form or formula. In this case, the very publication of the book brought about a tremendous reconciliation within my personal family unit, as if by kind of magic. I won't go into the details. Suffice it to say, the energies of the text, at a certain point, manifested in the very place (geographically in Venice) where I had done much of its editing – in the ghetto there. These energies were very powerful, almost demonic, I struggled to remain present & I practiced, at a certain point, there was a kind of 'victory' & the process of reconciliation cld. manifest. Very interesting & very gratifying for me.

Sometimes one must & in this case, the poet or author must pay for the printing of the trade book, in exchange for an agreed upon amount of the books, once printed. In this case, the fee was perfectly reasonable, what I wld. have had to pay for a self published edition. With the help of interested parties & the students of NN, interested in poetry all these were more than covered. I wish to thank all who have participated until now in such a useless pursuit, except for me, as it is a practice. ©

Review of *The Tale*

A Film by Jennifer Fox

Distributed by HBO

<https://www.hbo.com/movies/the-tale>

Jacqueline Gens

Tsegyalgar East | Dakini Day | June 9 2018

Jennifer Fox makes films that address big themes like War, Interracial marriage, Feminism, Family and currently Sexual abuse, in her first feature film, *The Tale*, which premiered on HBO recently. For twenty years she lovingly documented the Namkhai family resulting in the Emmy nominated film *My Reincarnation*.

Her work has won her numerous awards as a documentary filmmaker with an unique approach that features innovative interview techniques of far ranging cultural diversity and inclusive presence she shares with her camera's eye in a give and take between self and other. Through the prism of differing points of view, her films often capture in minute detail her keen field of perception that illuminate the present moment with crystal clarity and a largess found beyond the merely personal or one-sided. Memoir, for many of her films, acts as the catalyst to these larger issues. At her best she's an artistic original in so many ways even though at times her preoccupation with her own angst might seem self-indulgent. But then, truth be told, all artistic expression is personal.

The Tale fully employs all these techniques in addition to a dynamic investigative inquiry between present and past individuals such as, grown-up Jenny in conversation with young Jenny and others. Part mystery, part drama, the film slowly unwinds the tight cocoon of narrative the young Jenny wove about her so-called "relationship" with an older man while still a child and how the mature Jenny courageously unravels it to reveal a classic case of manipulative "grooming" leading to acts of inappropriate sexual behavior between an adult and child. I leave the details to watch in the actual film now streaming on HBO TV.

The Tale is her most intimate film to date and yet its universal theme resonates in perfect timing to an emerging social context that addresses this mostly secretive world of sexual abuse beyond brute facts. Especially synchronistic is its initial pre-



mier simultaneously with an international empowerment by women characterized by the "Me Too" movement and global awakening to no longer remain silent.

For those of us (men and women) who have experienced sexual or any kind of abuse, for that matter, the film offers insight into how we craft our stories into narratives that elude uncomfortable recognition of personal trauma and hurt by reshaping them into more tolerable story lines redefined in the abstract while denying the visceral or reacting with a lifetime of blame. I am reminded here of the Irish poet W.B. Yeats, who once said that poets are "hurt into poetry." No less true here for this filmmaker whose exploration of her own "hurt" is at the epicenter of the film, *The Tale*.

Equally true is the knowledge that the body never forgets even on a cellular level. Recent studies on the effect of the holocaust thru generations indicate that trauma is passed down genetically from parent to child. In other words, it lives in us, in our bodies even if our minds are not cognizant. The film handles this in sensitive and subtle ways as the child Jenny's romantic story is at odds with the physical rejection she experiences vomiting after each act.

As a practitioner now in my third decade of this journey what I have come to respect is the beginning of the beginning – that first baby step from the comforting arms of ignorance. This film triggered for me many responses and deep consideration from a Buddhadharma perspective. How *does* one relate to deep personal hurt? When asked to teach, the Buddha initially declined but in the end agreed. At the cornerstone of his

teachings he began with the Four Noble Truths – the first being the Truth of Suffering. His gesture to signal his awakening was the earth mudra of touching ground. I am always moved in reflecting that his enlightenment was not witnessed by angels or gods but humble earth – a stable ground.

Many would have us regard that all, which happens to us, is unreal like a dream. Others even more evolved might have us simply rest with relaxed mind in the moment beyond time and cause and effect. These justifications, when realized, of course, lift us beyond personal suffering. And yet, as Issa, the great Haiku poet expressed upon the death of his beloved daughter:

The world of dew
the world of dew.
And yet, and yet

Somewhere between the pendulum of negation and eternalism is the eye of the storm of our personal suffering from whence the beam of awareness can incinerate the lump of coal we so carefully harden our hearts around to protect ourselves. Until we recognize the truth of our own suffering can there be compassion for others or progress on the path?

Why is it important to go into the cellar of our darkest hurts? I have known accomplished practitioners of meditation who remain clueless about their own suffering in which they condemn themselves (and those around them) to act out decade after decade the same drama, or drink themselves into oblivion, torture their Vajra brothers and sisters because they can not forgive themselves, or drag the chain of a deep shame enveloped in a heavy cloud of depression.

The Four Noble Truths are the cornerstone of realization – the recognition of our suffering, understanding its cause, ending our suffering, and finally the path to liberations. Unless we embrace this, we will just play out the same old patterns without awareness stuck like a warped record.

It is said that a bodhisattva feels the suffering of others like an eyelash in one's eyelid, a constant irritant. This is the spot of sand that turns our suffering into a pearl of wisdom.

A film like *The Tale* shows us how we can allow that grain of sand to awaken our full potential. Be brave – that's the message of this film and look into the mirror of your mind. ©

A Meditation Session with Igor Berkhin

A guided meditation session given during the International Conference on Presence and Awareness held at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, March 31 & April 2–4, 2018

Igor Berkhin is a SMS level 2 instructor and also gives public courses in presence and awareness both in a Buddhist and secular context. He is a co-founder of the Russian speaking Mindfulness Teachers Association.



Good morning. Today our topic is mind and we are also going to learn something about meditation.

Usually when we talk about anything including meditation, we immediately have an idea that we need to do something. But in the real sense, it's not about doing something but rather about not doing anything. That is why many practitioners in Tibet call themselves *bhusuku* because it means someone who is doing nothing.

First of all I would like you to sit comfortably. I saw that someone was moving. If you were moving after you were asked to sit comfortably, it means that you were not sitting comfortably. The reason is that we are not very aware of how we are sitting and how we feel.

So take a look and understand in which position you are sitting. You don't need to move or change your position. Just check how the position of your body is. You can also check to see if it is balanced. Balanced means that we don't need much effort, because if we are not balanced, we are working, we are doing something.

The head should be balanced in relation to the body and your leg muscles should not be involved in keeping your body vertical. Find a position that maintains itself. How can we find this balanced position of our bodies? We need to move a little bit. We can move forward and notice how the sensation changes in the body and how tension increases. Then slowly you go backwards and observe how you feel. Then you notice again how the tension in your body increases. Maybe you move a bit to the left and the right and observe the sensations in your body. Then at a certain point you can

notice the tension in your body is minimal. This is more or less a balanced position. It's not a point but more like a zone. We discover it not with our body but with our mind.

If you notice that your mind is wandering somewhere, that some sound or sensation or thought is distracting you, as soon as you notice it bring your mind back to where you are and check to see if your position is still balanced, if it is still stable, comfortable, relaxed but also alert at the same time. So let's work like that for a few minutes. Find a balanced position and enjoy it. And if your mind goes away somewhere, just notice and bring it back...

If you notice that something is constantly distracting you, don't fight with it. Just place your attention on the very fact that it is distracting you...

We always work with the circumstances in our situation, however, I wasn't expecting to do a meditation class on a building site [background noise of building work at Dzamling Gar]. But we use whatever we have. So we'll change the program a little bit and use the sound, so instead of trying to bring your attention back to where you are, just remain in the dimension of sound, listening to all possible sounds that exist. But if you notice that you are starting to think about those sounds, this is a distraction and you should bring your awareness back to hearing. If you notice that you are distracted by some sensation in your body, bring your awareness back to hearing. Just remain in this dimension of sound...

Now just continue without trying to do anything. Just remain in your state as it is, not trying to change anything, not pursu-

ing any goal or task, but do not start anything new...

Now you can relax.

When in the beginning we were just trying to maintain balance and not allow our minds to engage in something, could you really manage to do this or were you distracted by the sound of construction work? Then when we were listening to the sound, were you able to listen to the sound without going into thinking? It seems that this sound is very strong and distracts us from our mental activity, but when we try to follow it and just remain in the sound then immediately we start to think about something and get distracted from the sound. This shows that our capacity to govern our minds, our attention, is limited.

Did you immediately recognize when you were distracted, or did it take some time to understand that your mind was wandering? When we do not immediately recognize this wandering it means that at this moment we don't really know where our mind is. But at some moment we recognize it and when we do, this is the moment of awareness. This is an example of what this famous awareness is. When we recognize where our mind is, this is awareness. When we recognize if our body is balanced or not, this is also awareness. When we recognize how our attention is moving, this is awareness. We know what is going on. When we decide something and we know we have decided, this is awareness. We have some kind of understanding, recognition.

The way to increase these moments of recognition is to set up a kind of mood in the beginning, "I want to recognize my distractions. I want to recognize when my mind is moving as soon as it starts moving." If we have this kind of intention at the beginning, it can increase the probability of recognizing more quickly where our attention is in the moment.

For example, when we hear sound, through what do we hear this sound? When we see forms, ugly or beautiful, we see through our eyes. We have various sensations in our bodies – pain or pleasant sensations – we have skin, tactile feelings. Our body is an instrument, a gate, for receiving this information. We recognize all these sensations through our tactile feelings, through the capacity of our body as a sense organ. And this is something concrete.

But how do we recognize that we have thoughts? Through what do we recognize that we have thoughts? We call it mind. In Buddhist phenomenology we have a specific word for this because it has a very developed terminology to describe different functions that we have, but we still call it mind as an organ of the senses. With what do we recognize that we have thoughts? Not with our body, not with our eyes, not with our ears or nose or tongue. We recognize we have thoughts with something, and that something is mind.

We also have emotions. For example, when we were doing practice and discovered that we are next to a construction site at first we felt angry and then irritated because of the building noise. Through which instrument do we notice that we are angry? Then when we have the intention to do something, to experience something, with what do we recognize our intentions? With what do we recognize all these events that take place in our condition? You might notice that you are totally distracted and daydreaming, so instead of being here in this hall, you are completely in another place. But with what do we recognize that we are daydreaming? This factor of recognition we can still call awareness but the organ that maintains this function is mind. It is a kind of virtual organ because we cannot see it or describe its shape. The reason that we cannot describe its shape is because it is not unfolded in space.

In Buddhist phenomenology, which was developed for describing events, cognitive functions, etc, we call it 'capacity' rather than 'organ'. 'Organ' is something physical, but 'capacity' is not. So mental capacity unfolds not in space but in time. It is also connected to our previous experience. How do we return to sound? Or how do we return to the state of balance? We return because we remember. As soon as we remember the sound, our mind returns to sound. As soon as we remember balance, our mind returns to balance. This function we call presence, but originally it is recollection or remembering. This is one of the most important mental functions that we have and this recollection brings our attention voluntarily from one place to another. This is the way to maintain awareness, to maintain different mental factors in our condition, not just awareness.

So try to notice how you notice. With what do you notice thoughts? With what do you notice your distractions, although they are not really distractions but just

objects to study. We usually call thoughts 'distractions', but thoughts are just events and we develop awareness of these events.

Now let's try to do this again. Find a balanced position then your body does not distract you too much, and as soon as you notice that your mind is wandering somewhere, or you are daydreaming, bring your mind back to where you are...

Now just remain in your condition as it is, not changing anything or trying to do something new or old...

When we work with our visual faculty, how do we recognize what space is? Space is not an object that we can really see but we all understand what it is. But how do we know space? We have objects and we notice some distance between ourselves and the object. For example, this cup - there is some distance between myself and this cup. I feel this distance. And then there is another object and again I notice the distance. I look around and I notice many objects and with each of them I have some kind of distance. And then if I try to be present to all possible visual objects that I see and all possible distances that there are between myself and all these objects, then I discover what space is. So space is just an accumulation of distances between myself and objects. If we make a mental experiment and imagine ourselves in outer space without any objects, can we really know what space is if there are no objects? So space and objects are interdependent. There cannot be recognition of space without objects. But there also cannot be recognition of objects without space.

Then we can turn to sound. We are not trained to recognize sounds unless we work with sound professionally, but we can recognize that there is a distance between ourselves and sound. There is distance and direction, so if we observe different sounds we can discover the dimension of sound which sound engineers call 'soundscape'. It's like a landscape but in sound. It's a dimension of sound with all auditory objects that manifest in this dimension. When we start to try to recognize this dimension, it is not easy, but after some training we can recognize this soundscape.

But what about our minds? When you notice a thought, or an emotion, or an intention that manifests in your dimension, in your body/mind psychosomatic organism, do you notice it as an object or not? Do you notice some distance between yourself and the thought? We can notice it with the distance. Then there is intention. For ex-

ample, try to hear, to understand very well what I'm going to say. Do you notice your intention to do this? How do you notice it? You feel some distance between yourself who is noticing this and this intention.

In this way when we gradually develop our capacity to just be present to whatever mental events appear, we can develop the feeling, the perception, of space where all these events and distances take place. The dimension of mental events, the dimension of mind, which is like space, is not visual space, it is not 'soundscape' but a kind of 'mentalscape'. So instead of being conditioned totally by a single object - for example if there is some construction work noise so that all of our attention is totally conditioned or captured by this object - at this moment we may not perceive the 'soundscape' or the totality of sound. In the same way we can be conditioned by a thought or emotion or an intention that manifests in our condition. But if you release this attention a bit, we start to notice not just objects but also the empty space where all these mental events occur.

Let's try to remain a little bit in whatever position you feel comfortable in. The position should not become an obstacle. Just sit comfortably and try to observe, notice, through all mental events that occur, the dimension where they take place...

And when you notice that you start thinking about something, return to a support, to your body, to sound, whatever, and then release your grasping this support and just maintain recognition of mental events with their space...

We just maintain this presence while listening, and even though we have to shift our awareness to the sound to listen to these words, with what do you understand the meaning of these words? Where does this meaning unfold? Still in the same mental space? And we notice that I understand or I don't understand. This is not a thought. You understand or you don't.

Then there is a thought that describes this event, and we can recognize this as just another thought. We don't need to recognize this thought as a description of something but just as another thought.

Then again I ask you a question related to our visual perception because our visual perception and the sphere of our visual perception is the closest metaphor to mental perception. It's not the same but it serves as a metaphor because when we enter some new field of knowledge we use

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terms from something we already know as a metaphor. For cognitive functions we use metaphors. We say, "Do you see?" when we mean 'understand'. Or "I have to digest this information" which is a somatic metaphor for the cognitive process of understanding. We use metaphors from our visionary perception, from our somatic processes, to describe something that takes place in mind. So space is another metaphor. It's not really space but a metaphor.

When we see objects through our eyes, besides space, besides distance, what is the indispensable prerequisite for seeing objects? We need light to see shapes and colors, which are characteristics of objects. Not just space but also light. It doesn't really matter which source of light we use, but we need light. If there is no light even though our faculty of perception is perfect, even though we have objects in front of us, it doesn't work. We need some kind of luminosity of this space, whether artificial or natural, in order to see, to notice objects in space.

We apply the same metaphor to our minds. Do we always recognize mental events? Do they occur all the time or not? We can suppose that they occur all the time – I don't mean that we are distracted with something else – and we don't recognize them. I mean situations when they occur but there is no light, for example, when we faint. This is an extreme situation. We faint and we don't really recognize what is going on. Probably we still have some hormonal processes in our body, which are recognized as emotions. Probably we have some neuro-processes in our brain that are recognized as thoughts. They take place physically for other people, but not for us because we are blank, in a faint. And sometimes we can recognize thoughts clearly while other times they are a bit murky. So there is a gradual scale. But the point of this scale is that there is some kind of luminosity in our minds. So besides recognizing the luminosity of space, we can also recognize the natural luminosity of our minds, luminosity that allows us to notice thoughts.

So let's just remain and recognize mental events, noticing not just the quality of spaciousness but also the quality of luminosity that allows us to recognize whatever heaven or hell is going on in our minds...

So we can train for that. It is not an easy task but it is possible to train to remain in the recognition of this empty luminous space, regardless of objects that appear and disappear in this space. A thought arises and ceases, an emotion arises and ceases, sounds arise and cease, but we just remain in recognition, in awareness of this spacious and luminous quality of mind. And as soon as something arises and catches our attention and we become conditioned, we lose perception of the spaciousness and luminosity so it is important that we immediately recognize that and release this grasping. And when we fall into some daydreaming vision, we immediately recognize that this is just daydreaming and it disappears.

Another important thing is to maintain continuity of this recognition with presence, with a kind of recollection, and then if we can train like this, maybe we get some interesting results. We don't need to advertise what kind of results. It can just be interesting if you remain in this recognition. But then there can be another question. There are thoughts and usually we say that mind produces thoughts. Then there is noticing these thoughts. So the mind that is producing thoughts and the mind that is recognizing these thoughts, is it the same entity or not?

For concluding our session, summarize for yourselves what you have learned. What have you discovered, if you discovered anything? Maybe you developed a bit of some skill, so summarize it. On the base of whatever good happened during this session, just notice if you are satisfied with what happened. If you enjoyed it or are satisfied with it because it was something useful. But it is so easy to lose it. As soon as we get up from this seat to go to the toilet, what we accumulated may remain in this hall, may not go with us to the toilet. So for this we need a kind of intention on the base of what we have accumulated: we make a wish that whatever we have accumulated is not dissipated or lost but remains, matures and brings beneficial consequences both for ourselves and other beings. With this intention we conclude our session. ☉

Transcribed and edited by L. Granger



The space element (spazio) by the Dynamic Elements Artists.

The Art of the Dynamics of the Elements

The Dynamic Elements Artists (DEA), a group of painters at Migmar West, have created a series of paintings – from which the cover of this issue of The Mirror is taken – of the Elements according to Tibetan elemental astrology. The paintings will be used as part of an explanation about Tibetan astro-science.

People can also order a painting related to their personal astrological chart in order to protect their weak points. The Group will also explain how astro-science works so that people can do their own paintings of the Elements. The following is one of those explanations.

Drawing the five elements in their symbolic aspect is a method that mainly serves to harmonize the elements that are not in harmony at the time of one's birth, and to relax the mind while producing an object of great ornamental value.

Why is it necessary to harmonize the elements related to one's birth? Everything, internal and external, is made up of the five elements. Internal refers to every sentient being, the external to everything that appears. When these elements are in harmony everything goes ahead in the best possible way, when they are in conflict life is shortened and the capacity, health and fortune are diminished. But harmony can be restored and rediscovered. There are various methods to harmonize the discordant elements: some are general, such as the four methods of development and the *namkha* which favor the harmony of the elements of all four personal aspects (life, body, capacity and fortune). Others, however, are specific methods to harmonize some of these aspects: for example the *lungta (rlung rta)* harmonize above all the elements related to fortune, and the *tar-chog (dar lcog)*, according to the mantras written on them, eliminate obstacles and lengthen life.

But how does the principle of design work? There have always been two methods for communicating and developing knowledge: on one hand the sound and the words, on the other the image and the drawing. This applies both to practical and to symbolic aspects. For example,

The Dynamic Space
of the Elements

Are you a
young artist?
Would you like to
join our
artistic project?
Sign up your name
and e-mail address
and we will contact you!

For more info contact: cecilia@atiyogachina.com
migmar@atiyogachina.com
cell: +39 3313039304

in the tantric teachings the teacher shows a drawing in order to transmit the energy and the potentiality of the mandala depicted in the image. The drawings of the five elements have also been used since ancient times in order to harmonize the elements themselves, but they are not widespread because they make use of both astrological and artistic knowledge. Astrology and art, however, are not usually studied together because astrology is often associated with medicine, while art has developed above all in an ornamental sense and to reproduce images of the masters and the deities. In fact, in order to make the drawings of the elements, one must first of all study basic astrology to understand which elements are disharmonic and how to harmonize them through drawing.

Consequently in order for these drawings to carry out their function correctly, they are personalized according to the year, month and day of birth and, like all tantric methods, require an attitude of trust and the intention to make use of this

method, both when we make drawings in person and when we ask someone to make them for us. According to the principle of interdependence, seeing and being in contact with images created in this way, for example by placing them in an area of the house where we often see them, will harmonize the elements.

Making drawings personally under the guidance of a qualified instructor helps to calm the mind. In fact, the instructor teaches how to draw in a relaxed way, without fixations or anxieties, according to the characteristics of each student.

And of course the drawings are beautiful! We can really enjoy looking at them and we can use them to decorate our homes with extremely unique and auspicious images. ©

Artists in the Dzogchen Community

Triptych on the Nature of Painting

J.W. Fox

1. Art is the Memory of Humanity

The *Bardo Thodol* (Liberation through Hearing in the Bardo) of Karma Lingpa, was among the first Dzogchen texts translated and published in my country in the 1980's. There, "Memory" is contrasted with "Ignorance" as the defining activity of navigating enlightenment. According to the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*, the choices facing the practitioner in the post/pre-mortal sequence of bardos is described, among other things, as a choice between strong, bright colors of Natural Light versus shadowy hazy colors of samsara (spoiler alert: go for the bright ones!).

In the Greek pantheon, Memory is the mother of the Muses: Μνημοσύνη. Memory is the child of Space (Uranious) and Earth (Gaia). Within this narrative, a love affair with Zeus, (Dios), the sun, results in the birth of Nine daughters; The eldest is Καλλιόπη: "She of the Beautiful Voice", considered a leader of the muses; associated with the heroic and epic patterns. Hesiod, a contemporary of Homer, begins his *Theogony* with an enumeration of Nine Muses, asking they illuminate his telling of the origins of the universe. According to Varro of Rome (116–27 BC) there are only three Muses. They were called *Melete*: "Meditation", born from the movement of water; *Mneme*: "Memory" who makes sound by striking the air and *Aoide*: "Song" embodied only in the human voice.

As with the Greeks, "Memory" as described in Dzogchen liturgies like the *Bardo Thodol*, is the defining factor of each individual's future life. In this sense, the mother of the Muses might well be seen as the mother of enlightenment, regardless of which tradition or language one might prefer on this water bubble *thigle* we call "Earth", to remember your true nature is key.

Longchenpa's "Cho Ying Rinpoche Zod" (Padma Publishing 2001, p. 54) states:



"Salut John" 2015, (6th of 7 parts) watercolor; pencil on paper, 51" x 44" (130 x 113 cm).

Such a state of awakened mind can be understood in three ways:

By a metaphor.
By it's underlying meaning.
And by the evidence.

Space is the metaphor for awakened mind.

The underlying meaning is that mind is self-knowing awareness equal to space.

The evidence is that anything can and does arise due to the dynamic energy of awareness.

We might say that the variety of Song is evidence of the underlying awakened Memory of the infinite space of Meditation. We might venture to say that the "self-knowing awareness equal to space is the Mother of the Muses, and we might remember that Song was and remains a powerful mystical tool: in the Mantrayana as in most of the world's known religious and artistic traditions, from the worlds greatest and most ancient painting/singing tradition: the Songlines of Aboriginal Australia, to the Night Way Songs of the Navajo, to Hindu music theory, right up to now, Song is much more than mere sound. Song is the



"Aristaeus Mourning the Loss of his Bees (#1)" 2014, watercolor; pencil on paper, 16" x 12" (41 x 31 cm).

nature of existence, the archetype of existence, the voice of God, the memory of humanity.

2. Visions

The world we see is a painting
Born from the brush of discursive thought.

Within or upon it nothing truly
existent can be found.
Knowing this one knows reality;
seeing this one sees what is true.

Second Dalai Lama (1475–1542).

Remember that Painters are members of ancient cult. They worship the Sun. And they understand that the light of the sun is an analog of the luminosity of the enlightened mind in the space of nature, just as Picasso understood that the bull fight was an ancient Sun cult sacrifice ritual, the deep metaphor is there, waiting to be seen. At the Eastern end of the Mediterranean, Hebrew versions of the Greek and Egyptian creation myths describe light as having a spoken origin. In Modernist Paris, Apollinaire's "voix de la lumière" was the theoretical marriage of Orphic Mysticism and abstract painting. As elsewhere in the world heritage of Inner Light (Natural Light), Speech, song, and the act of breathing ("a wind from God") is a source of luminosity: As an unknown poet of bronze age Palestine put it so famously ... "the earth



James Fox in his studio.



"Ruin Solaire" 2013, (5th of 9 parts) watercolor, pencil, oil on paper, 55" x 39" (140 x 100 cm).

was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God sang "let there be light"; and there was

ple." (CYZ p.101) The Muses have sisters and cousins who often seek ill.

In 1663 the British scientist Isaac Newton made an experiment on his vision. His

iment of spirit into flesh is of concern to all of us, artists or not. The child of the marriage of Heaven and Earth is of vital import to the entirety of humanity, and perhaps non-humans as well...



"Les bleuités du cimetière marin" 2016, (triptych) watercolor, pencil on paper, 66" x 148" (167 x 345 cm).

light..." As an artist, the integration of the world heritage of illumination and song feels particularly vital today.

The downside of all this is that Ego. Rinpoche is like an endless museum of paintings. We wander the halls of our images and recount our tales, all the hard work of our discursive thoughts should be honored, no? Our story should be honored! As Longchenpa said: "if you stray from your fundamental nature, the functioning of conceptual mind is samsara, pure and sim-

pencil drawing of how he pressed the side of his eyeball with a "bodkin", a slender knitting needle, in order to produce "colors" is one of the signal moments in the science of Optics (and scientific bravery!). Is it not possible that one of the strands of the science of Newtonian Optics is related with Dzogchen knowledge of vision and the development of visions?

The creation of a painting, to take just one example of creation, is a symbol of the creation of the world. The transmission of energy into substance and the embod-

3. Anything and Everything

The extreme austerity of an almost empty mind
Colliding with the lush, Rousseau-like foliage of its desire to communicate
Something between breaths, if only for the sake
Of others and their desire to understand you and desert you
For other centers of communication, so that understanding
May begin, and in doing so be undone.

John Ashbery, *And Ut Pictura Poesis Is Her Name*

The evidence of our awaked nature is pretty much everywhere all the time. If we remember to see it. Matisse said, "allow yourself to be simple, and what is within you will come out." He was describing an approach to the graphic arts, but his words could go beyond that, into how we think, how we practice. ©

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Yatzek Mahovsky

The 1980s in Poland was a very interesting time. On one side there was the old depressing Communist way of life that was gradually disappearing, and on the other young people started to feel this wind of change blowing from the West.

There was *Solidarność* – a peaceful social movement breaking down the political situation – and then a state of war with tanks on the streets. And in this really strange political environment, a group of us teenagers felt like we were living on some strange planet. *Solidarność* had a very Catholic background and we were looking for new horizons. We created some outsider space a little bit like flower power, with sex and drugs and rock and roll, or rather Punk Rock. So, that was my background during my teenage years. However, it started to degenerate very quickly when heroin came and a lot of people went down and just became junkies.

I spent six years inside this story between the ages of 15 and 21. Finally I discovered that most of my friends had HIV, and so I was quite sure that I also had it. Since I didn't believe in God I realized that I had to find some spiritual path so that I could die in a good way – I didn't believe in God but neither was I a nihilist or materialist. I was like a bee flying from flower to flower: practising hatha yoga in the morning, then trying Zen meditation, at midday it would be the Mormons or Jehovah's Witnesses and in the evening there was the Hare Krishna group. But I still didn't feel it was mine!

One day a friend came to my flat and, when he noticed that I was looking for a spiritual path, he took me to a Karma Kagyu center for the meditation of the XVI Karmapa. It was before this lineage split in two currents.

I sat down and started to listen to the leader of the group: "Now everything is becoming like a dream" – and everything became like a dream! Everything was going on just as he said. When it was the moment of meditation on the three lights of the Karmapa, I felt my hair starting to stand on end. When my friend and I left, I said: "Now you have to spend the rest of this day

with me and tell me everything about it. It was stronger than any drug I ever took." And he said: "You cannot do meditation instead of taking drugs!" I answered: "No, no! Drugs were in my life because I hadn't met this meditation!" And it was perfectly true!

He told me what I should do, so I started to do a "little *ngöndro*", just doing 10,000 times Refuge, etc., even though I had had no formal transmission of these practices. Then Ole Nydahl came with the Phowa practice and many, many great lamas from the Kagyu lineage.

For three years I did *ngöndro* – 100,000 prostrations, Vajrasattva, Mandala Offerings and Guruyoga. There was a lot of pollution going out from my three doors which is why I couldn't do it faster. All my six years on drugs was going out from me like black smoke. On my spiritual trip I tried to be so good that I even took the *Genyen* Vows of a lay practitioner... it was a mistake. I also did a blood test and it came out that I didn't have HIV! It was strange!

I not only did *ngöndro* but also many other meditations, and when you do them so intensively, many tensions manifest and also old karma grows fast. One night my friends came with LSD and said: "We don't see you anymore! You are sitting at home all day and only doing meditation! Take a break, man!" And I broke my *Genyen* Vows ...

We had one of these incredible parties, but when I woke up next day I was still on LSD. And the next day too, and the next, and the next ... And it wasn't funny anymore! I realized it was connected to broken *samaya*. What could I do? I just continued doing *ngöndro* and tried to handle

this Acid energy, which was really strong, somehow. It was like losing a field of protective energy around me. Total openness, but not in a good way... You know: "... it's a wild world ..."

When I finished the *ngöndro*, I went to Tenga Rinpoche to ask him if I could become his disciple in order to receive the next meditations – *guruyoga*, *Yidam* etc. While I was sitting in front of him waiting to ask, deep inside my heart I heard two words: "No! No!" It was so strange! Not in Polish, not in English, but in another language... Like Italian...? So, I just followed the voice of my heart and went home to continue *ngöndro*.

Then someone told me that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was coming to Poland. I already felt Him one month before his arrival. Some big, great energy was coming! He landed exactly on the day I finished the *ngöndro*. Then, when I went to His teachings, the LSD just stopped working for a moment. When He left Poland I knew I had to follow. I made some very fast money, selling sunglasses on the street, and I followed His whole trip through Russia up to Baikal Lake in Buryatia. At the end I came to Him and I said: "I want to be with You!" He said: "OK" and shook my hand.

I returned to Poland and then immediately went to Italy. I made some fast money in Venice, selling toys on the street, and went to Merigar. There was a retreat and then Rinpoche left for South America. After a few months living in the dormitory, and working for Merigar, my parents called me and said that I had some money because they had rented my flat so it was possible for me to go to Argentina to see Rinpoche!





In order to have more time for the Dharma, I found a part time job as a care taker. Here I am with my patient. I am on the left.

I went immediately and there something really strange happened.

In those times Rinpoche had to do everything with community people – eating together, swimming in the pool, riding horses to the waterfalls. It was a great time to be so close! During one trip to some local sacred place Rinpoche was resting on the rocks. It was beautiful weather, when suddenly a black cloud appeared in the blue sky and it started to rain. Everybody went to some nearby restaurant and only Rinpoche, Fabio Andrico, Bodhi Krause and me remained on the rock. We were drinking wine in the rain. After some time it started to thunder around us and I just knew that it was Rinpoche doing something strange with the weather. I'd already seen it with some other lamas, so I was not surprised. What surprised me was that we were the only people who remained with Rinpoche, drinking wine in the rain between the bouts of thunder!

In the evening there was a big party. I had brought a necklace of amber from Poland to sell, but I decided to give it to Rinpoche. We were dancing in a circle and he was playing with my necklace. I turned to Bodhi and said: "We have to open ourselves! That's all!" And in that moment Rinpoche put the necklace on and looked straight into my eyes. It was impossible that he could have heard what I said, but I was sure He knew. In the same moment all the energy of the LSD that had been with me for so many months just stopped, like fire when you put water on it.

I returned to Merigar and started to party with Luca T. and my friends from the joy division of my teenage years. They just came there following Rinpoche and Luca's house was a base. My parents gave me their old car and I went around Monte Ami-



ata with a toothbrush in my pocket and met many incredible Dakinis, who probably wouldn't want to be mentioned in this story. It was an extraordinary three years, and I could see how the community was 20 years after. In Poland it had just started and there were not so many old practitioners.

It was the time when Poland made restrictions about foreigners buying land and properties and also in Italy Polish people

couldn't buy anything. My parents wanted to give me some money but it was impossible to buy anything so I couldn't be legal there. When I couldn't see any future, I just came back to Poland. I participated in many of Rinpoche's retreats. I also followed Him on pilgrimage to India and Nepal to the four main places connected to Buddha.

During this time Rinpoche seemed to be disappointed in me, never smiling, just looking wrathful. Of course there was a reason. I used to party a lot in this time. I didn't touch drugs anymore, but there are still other means of enjoyment. My friends were still alive so we had a good time. Finally Rinpoche suggested that I follow SMS training.

And that's how I met Rinpoche and the teachings.

I changed my life, met an incredible girl, married her, and made a career in advertising agencies as a specialist in desktop publishing. I followed SMS training till the 4th level and then became a SMS Base instructor. Recently I became a member of the International Publications Committee of the Dzogchen Community for Polish publications.

And life is still not boring at all! ©



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