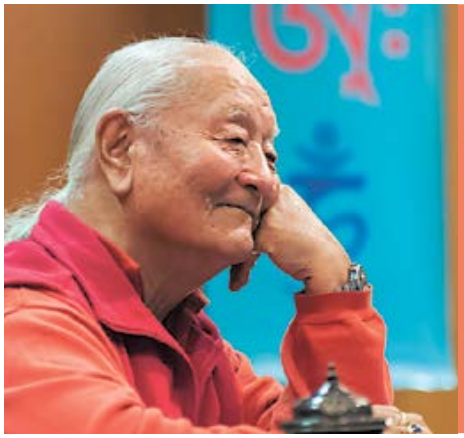
The Mirror

No. 126
December 2014

INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY



Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Photo: P. Fassoli

2015

Spain
Tenerife
January 16–20, 2015
Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat

January 23–25, 2015
Khaita Festival

January 30–February 4, 2015
Teachers Training Meeting

February 19–March 5, 2015
Drubchen of Mandarava Chudlen from Tibetan Losar until the day of Guru Garab Dorje

March 4–5, 2015
Worldwide Transmission
Anniversary of Garab Dorje

March 13–15, 2015
Tibetan Culture Event

March 16–17, 2015
Tibetan Medicine Event

Barcelona
March 20–22, 2015
Tibetan Medicine Meeting

Tenerife
March 24–26, 2015
Santi Maha Sangha Base Exam

March 27–April 1, 2015
Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 Training

April 8–12, 2015
Longsal Longde Retreat

April 17–19, 2015
Dzamling Gar Meeting

May 1–3, 2015
Multicultural Meeting

May 8–10, 2015
Event to be announced

UK
London
May 22, 2015
Presentation of the Tisei 'Odzer

May 23–24, 2014
London Retreat

Greece
May 27–31, 2015
Greek Retreat

France
June 5–7, 2015
French Retreat

June 12–14, 2015
Karmaling Retreat

Italy
June 19–23, 2015
Merigar West Retreat

USA
July 1–5, 2015
Tsegyalgar East Retreat

Colorado
July 9, 2015
Public Talk

July 12–14, 2015
Colorado Retreat

Tara Mandala
July 17–19, 2015
Tara Mandala Retreat

Russia
July 24–28, 2015
Kunsangar North Retreat

Poland
July 31–August 2, 2015
Polish Retreat

Ukraine
August 5–9, 2015
Kunsangar South Retreat

Romania
August 13–17, 2015
Merigar East Retreat

India
August 28–30, 2015
Indian Retreat

Bhutan
September 4–6, 2015
Bhutan Retreat

Singapore
September 11–13, 2015
Singapore Retreat

Malaysia
September 18–20, 2015
Malaysian Retreat

China
September 25–29, 2015
Samtenling Retreat

October 2–6, 2015
Santi Maha Sangha or TBA

Japan
October 15–18, 2015
Tokyo Retreat

Taiwan
October 23–27, 2015
Taiwan Retreat

Australia
November 3–8, 2015
Namgyalgar North Retreat

November 13–15, 2015
Namgyalgar South Retreat

Argentina
November 20–24, 2015
Tashigar South Retreat

November 25, 2015
Rinpoche travels to Tenerife, Spain

Contents

Schedule 2

Editorial. 3

Origin of the Tibetan Script and Shang Shung 4

Excerpt from the Teaching from Light of the Sun 10

ATMA Conference 11

International Symposium For Contemplative Studies 13

Warmly Welcomed and Happy in Bhutan 14

International Gakyil 18

The Shang Shung Institute in 2014. 19

Shang Shung Publications 21

ASIA – ADOPT TIBET. 23

Interview with Lama Tsultrim Allione 24

Interview with Harvey Kaiser 26

Focus on Dzamling Gar 29

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, One of the Honored "Women Healers of the World" 37

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 38

Editorial

The Mirror and the International Dzogchen Community have gone through several changes as we ride the year of the Wood Horse, now approaching the home stretch.

This year was the first since 1991 that the printed version of The Mirror, the English language newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, did not appear, due to the high costs of offset printing and international mailing. In its place we have brought you a more dynamic and instant reading experience of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Teachings and talks, and the latest news about the Community's activities through our new redesigned website – www.melong.com - created and managed by Luigi Ottaviani and Yuchen Namkhai.

In addition to the English language website, in order to reach those in our Community who are not English speakers we created parallel sites in Spanish – El Espejo at www.es.melong.com – and Russian – Zerkalo at www.ru.melong.com – with human translations and managed by Laura Yoffe (editorial) and Paola Damonte Vargas (technical) for the Spanish and Catalina Ponomarenko and Anastasia Eremenko for the Russian version.

However, over the year, it has become clear to us that while the online newspaper offers an immediate and efficient way of bringing you information and a searchable archive by date or subject, it does not fulfil the role of recording the milestones in the life of our Teacher and the growing worldwide Community in the traditional way that the newspaper version used to do. And many of our readers have pointed out that they prefer to have a traditionally styled paper edition which they can keep on their bookshelf or in their bag and pull out from time to time in order to browse an article that was particularly interesting.

So in order to offer a comfortable reading experience for many people, and also to continue to have a traditionally formatted version of The Mirror which preserves the printed word for posterity, we have created a new smaller PDF format of The Mirror that has been posted to our website. This version will be downloadable and readable on all of your technical devices and since it is now magazine A4 size, it can also be printed on home printers or taken as a file to a local copy shop and printed there. In this way, we can continue to offer a print layout version of The Mirror to our readers, although you will be individually responsible for printing your own copy if you wish to have it on paper.

There is a small charge to download each issue, payable through the website, to cover the extra costs of production. We plan to offer this PDF version approximately three or four times a year, in each issue featuring a different Gar or Ling.

We hope that Gars and Lings will download and print each edition for their own archives and reference collections. It can also be a valuable PR resource to have some copies available.

We hope you enjoy this renewed version of The Mirror and find it valuable. We always appreciate feedback, questions and comments.

Looking toward the Wood Sheep Year for what awaits us!

Best wishes and warm regards,

Naomi Zeitz, Liz Granger, Julian King-Salter, Thomas Eifler
The Mirror Team of the International Dzogchen Community
www.melong.com ◎

Origin of the Tibetan Script and Shang Shung

In an exclusive interview broadcast in Tibetan on August 6, 2014 with Kunleng VOA Radio station in the USA, Chögyal Namkai Norbu, Head of the International Shang Shung Institute, discusses his research work on the origin of the Tibetan script, the impact of Shang Shung on the Tibetan culture, and his books regarding the Bön tradition and Dzogchen practice.

Kunleng: The great scholar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, while residing in the West over many years has worked in connection with the Tibetan culture and religion and has written several books on [the ancient kingdom of] Shang Shung as the origin of Tibetan language, script and culture, and on the practice of Dzogchen. These days Rinpoche is in New York to attend a conference on Tibetan Medicine and the Kunleng office has taken the opportunity to specifically invite him for this interview.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, first of all we would like to welcome and thank you very much for having come today to the Kunleng office of the Voice of America Tibetan News here in New York.**Rinpoche**: Thank you.

Kunleng: Rinpoche, what is the main reason for your visit to New York?
Rinpoche: I came here mainly for two purposes - to attend a conference on Tibetan medicine organized by the American Tibetan Medical Association, the International Shang Shung Institute and the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine, and also to participate in the inauguration of a new building the Dzogchen Community has recently constructed.

Kunleng: So one of the main purposes of your visit is to participate in a conference on Tibetan medicine. Tibetan medicine has a very long history. What is the situation of Tibetan medicine today, and why it is important to preserve and ensure its continuation?
Rinpoche: In the Tibetan culture there is not only Tibetan medicine but the so-called five traditional sciences [language, dialectics, medicine, arts and crafts, and spiritual knowledge]. These five sciences are the foundation of all Tibetan culture and are very ancient. I did research for many years [on their origin] when I was working at the University in Italy. In particular I wrote three books [i.e. The Light of Kailash] of which the first two have already been translated and published in English. The third will be published at the end of this year. In these books I explain not only [the ancient origin of] the language but also that of the other four sciences – logic, spiritual knowledge, medicine, arts and crafts. Among these the most important is spiritual knowledge.

Later, however, language, and Tibetan medicine came to be regarded as the most important aspects of Tibetan culture, while spiritual knowledge was not considered as such. When I did research on these traditional sciences I discovered that they had an ancient history and were not just sciences imported from India and China that spread later on. I did research on this for about six or seven years.

This is an important matter which Tibetans living inside Tibet as well as those living abroad should take interest in. This is because our ancient culture is of benefit to all people, all races of the world, not only Tibetans. This is true for Tibetan medicine as well. Tibetan medicine has its origin in the medical tradition of Shang Shung, which has an ancient history. In the documents discovered at Dun Huang there are two texts of Tibetan medicine: one deals with the

treatment of illnesses, and the other with moxibustion or Metsa. In the [colophon of the text] on moxibustion, it is written that it came from Shang Shung, hence it is important that doctors and people of culture understand that [Shang Shung] is the foundation [of the Tibetan culture].

Kunleng: Rinpoche, you have taken great interest and have done a lot of research into the history of Tibetan culture and civilization. What is the particular reason for such interest?
Rinpoche: The main reason for my interest is the following one. When I first worked at the University in Italy, the subject I taught was the Tibetan language and writing. The Tibetan language course consisted of only two years [of study], while the other language courses such as Indian, Chinese and Japanese were of four years, at the end of which students could receive a diploma. But it was not so for Tibetan language. So I inquired at the university why the studies of Tibetan language there were only two years. They replied that the languages like Indian and Chinese that had an ancient history were the main subjects of studies and were awarded with diplomas, but since the Tibetan language did not have a ancient history it was considered only a supplementary topic of study, not a main one. I had no opportunity to say that that was not the case and that we Tibetans had a long history. I knew that Tibetan culture had an ancient origin and understood that I had to research such an ancient source; that is how I began my studies on the history of Shang Shung.

Kunleng: Rinpoche, a year ago, in an interview you said: "The source of Tibetan culture and Tibetan history should be searched for in Tibet itself. It is a great loss if we assert a source of culture and history that just follows what other people say. With great courage, taking real history as the base, I composed the *Necklace of Zi* and the *Necklace of Jewels* in which I prove through logic and reasoning that the early ancient authentic history of Tibet came from Tibet itself or Shang Shung." So more than thirty years ago you wrote the *Necklace of Jewels* in Tibetan, and after that the *Necklace of Zi Jewels*. Why did you write these two books? For the reason I have just mentioned [from your own words] or for the new generations so that they understand the source of Tibetan culture?
Rinpoche: In general, most Tibetan scholars consider India to be the source of the Tibetan culture and indeed it is true that India is one of the sources. Buddhism came from India, and as the result of its introduction into the country many aspects of the Tibetan culture underwent great development. [On the other hand] it is not really correct to say that the foundation, the origin of the Tibetan culture was in Tibet itself because Tibet as a country did not come into existence [until later].

I have written three books related to Tibetan history [The Light of Kailash]. In the first book I deal with a period in which there was only Shang Shung [and Tibet did not exist as a country]. It is only in the second book that I begin to explain the establishment of Tibet as a country. Why must [the origin of the Tibetan culture of Tibet] be traced back to Shang Shung? The foundation of Tibetan history lies in the six original Tibetan clans [*mi'u gdung drug*] who are said to be the source of the Tibetan race. In Tibetan history it is said that these six clans came from a monkey, who was an emanation of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara, and a rock Sinmo [*brag srin mo*]. But if we look at the ancient history of the Bönpos, it is said that the six original clans came from the cosmic egg that is the essence of the elements, and from that came the three: Lha, Lu [Klu], Nyen. Among these, the human race originated from the Nyen lineage, and in particular the six original Tibetan clans. Thus, the lineage of the six clans came about in that way.

King Ligmincha's seal in Shang Shung sMar writing

This is very ancient history and before Tönpa Shenrab [the founder of Bön] there are only a few orally told histories, and no written history. At the time of Tönpa Shenrab the Shang Shung script called Martsug (*smar tshugs*)was created, and from then onwards, the knowledge [originating from] Shang Shung such as Bön, astrology, rituals, etc., were gradually written down. Thus ancient history was written down at the time of Shang Shung, not in the era of Tibet.

The era of Tibet is when Thonmi Sambhota created the script. It is usually said that Thonmi Sambhota created the Tibetan script taking as an example the Indian language. Thonmi Sambhota was very kind in creating the Tibetan script, however, before that, from the time of Nyatri Tsenpo up to Songtsen Gampo, i.e., during the dynasties of thirty-one, or according to others, of thirty-two kings, however many kings there were, it is said that the country was ruled through Drung, Deu, and Bön, but it is not said that there was written language. However, later when I did some research I found a lot of evidence of the existence of a written language. [For example] in a history written by Nyang Tingdzing Zangpo, he says that the ancient Tibetan kings used a written language. Therefore, whichever way we think, [there must have existed a written language before the time of Thonmi Sambhota].

We have two kinds of Tibetan script: Uchen [headed letter] and Ume [letters without heads, i.e. cursive letters]. The Uchen script and its grammar were definitely created by Thonmi Sambhota on the basis of the Indian script, but the Ume script originates from the Shang Shung script, of which there are mainly two kinds: Marchen and Marchung. Among them, in particular, the Marchung corresponds to the so-called 'Script Descended from the Devas [*lha babs*

» *continued on the following page*

» ***Tibetan Script and Shang Shung*** *continued from previous page*

yi ge]'. I studied that script when I was in my native place, and used it as example in the *Necklace of Zi*. [The letters in] Uchen are written from right to left, and Ume from left to right. I see this as a great difference between the two scripts.

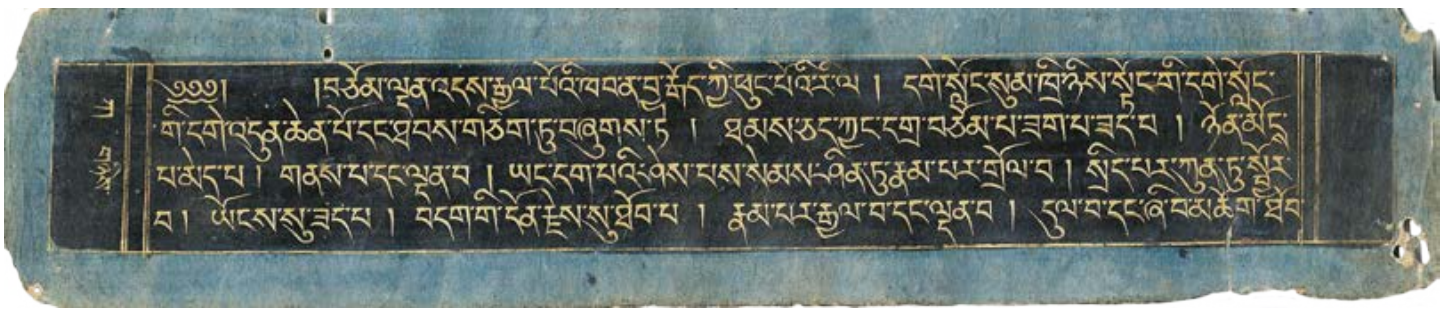
I generally have a great consideration for whatever Gendun Chöpel has taught, but I do not agree with him when he says that Ume developed from writing Uchen in a fast way. This is absolutely not the case. For example, there is the so-called "quick Bhutanese script" that certainly comes from writing the Uchen in a quick way.

Kunleng: Rinpoche, according to most of the explanations [we find in] Tibetan history and by Tibetan scholars, the Tibetan language was first created anew by Thonmi Sambhota. But in the *Necklace of Zi*, you say that the Tibetan script originated from the time of Shang Shung and thus it was used from ancient time. What are the Dung Huang document sources and the proofs for such a statement?

Rinpoche: One of the proofs is as follows. If we consider the *Dag Yig* or *Sum rtags*, the grammar and spelling composed by Thonmi Sambhota, there are but five genitives, while in the language of Shang Shung there are eleven genitives. If we look at the Dun Huang documents, at the time when Thonmi Sambhota had already composed his works, in some documents occasionally genitives still appear that were used in the language of Shang Shung. So this indicates that they existed from an earlier time.

Ancient handwritten pecha with two different styles of Umed script.

Ancient pecha in Lha-babs-kyi-yi-ge script, 'descended from the gods'.



Ancient manuscript with Uchen script in gold. (Private collection)

But this is not the case with Uchen and Ume – even if one writes Uchen in a quick way for centuries, it will never become Ume. The reason why Ume is quicker is that one starts to write [each letter] from left to right. Thus it is good if we consider the Shang Shung script as the origin of Ume.

Khyu-yig cursive script from the Merigar West Gonpa.

Kunleng: Are you saying that Thonmi Sambhota made the Tibetan language simpler and easier to write, and composed new grammar texts, but apart from that writing existed prior to that time?
Rinpoche: The Tibetans used and were able to use the Shang Shung language. If we read attentively what Songtsen Gampo said: "We Tibetans, in Tibet, needs our own script." He did not say that there was no written language and that they needed to create one. Why did he say: "Tibet needs its own language"? Because many earlier kings did not like and undermined the Bönpo, and they tried many times to make Tibet a strong country, for example, at the time of Drigum Tsenpo [*gri gum btsan po*, 8th dynasty], but did not succeed. Also during the reign of Tagri Nyenzig [*stag ri gnyen gzigs*, 21st dynasty] a similar attempt was made. Why they did not succeed? Because, at that time, the Tibetan culture and the rule of the kingdom all relied on Shang Shung sources, and for this reason Tibet was not able to become a strong country. The influential power of the Shang Shung culture extended over the Tibetan kings.

We can understand this if we look at the histories of these kings. The kings had two kushen [*ku gzhen*, Bönpo priests]. From the time of Nyatri Tsenpo until the last dynasty of the Tibetan kings, each Tibetan king had a Bönpo priest. The priests named the kings and even when Buddhism had spread and Guru Rinpoche and the other [masters] had come to Tibet, the Bönpo priests continued to name the kings. The Bönpo priests had two functions: one to name the king and the other to perform the ablution rituals [*sku khrus*] for the newborn king.

What was the reason for kings to have Kushen? When Buddhism began to spread in Tibet, [the kings taught that] if the ancient traditions [of the Bön] were discontinued, the Bönpos would have sent some curse, or there would have been some calamities, and for that reason they had Bönpo priests [at the court].

Therefore the Bönpo culture had a very strong foundation and the Tibetan kings, thinking that this prevented them from becoming powerful, tried to destroy the Bönpos in many ways. And it is for this reason that Songtsen Gampo developed a new culture through relations with India and China, and favored the introduction of Buddhism, and in this way overcame Shang Shung.

Kunleng: Rinpoche, in your books you say that the source of the Tibetan culture is the kingdom of Shang Shung. However, nowadays all Tibetans consider and say that our culture and habits are very much connected to the Buddhist religion. When you say that the Tibetan culture has its source in Shang Shung, are you speaking of what nowadays we consider to be our present culture or something different?
Rinpoche: All the aspects of our present culture, even if they had their source in Shang Shung, have, of course, undergone some change and developed. Take for example medicine that originated in Shang Shung. Over many centuries [with the integration of medicines] from India, from China and also from other countries, Tibetan medicine developed a great deal. This did not occur only with regard to medicine; other aspects of our culture, too, developed in a similar way. Tibetan religion and culture developed, but apart from that there is no need to denigrate our existing ancient culture.

Kunleng: Whatever Tibetan culture we have now is the continuation of the culture of Shang Shung?
Rinpoche: The origin or primordial source of the Tibetan culture is Shang Shung. The language of Shang Shung had its own grammar, [for example] as I mentioned before, eleven genitives were used in the language of Shang Shung. Thonmi Sambhota simplified that grammar, by having only five genitives.

Kunleng: Rinpoche, you are a Buddhist practitioner and on the top of that, in particular, you are a Dzogchen practitioner. What is your particular reason for your interest in Dzogchen?
Rinpoche: The particular reason for my interest in Dzogchen is that I met my teacher, who was a Dzogchen master. Having received teaching from him, I came to understand that Dzogchen was the essence of all the sutras and tantras, of all the teaching of the Buddha. Dzogchen is not at all something that belongs to the Bön [tradition]. But when I was doing research on [ancient Tibetan] history I came to know that Dzogchen teaching existed in Bön. Therefore, there is the so-called Shang Shung Nyengyu that definitely has historical validity. In that [transmission] there is an explanation of Dzogchen in twelve [verses] that clearly present the view, the meditation, the conduct, and the result, each distinguished in three aspects. That teaching [in its present form] originated from the Bön teacher Nangsher Löpo, who was the teacher of King Ligmincha, the last king of Shang Shung.

» continued on the following page

Ancient bronze statue of Songtsen Gampo. (Private collection)

›› ***Tibetan Script and Shang Shung*** *continued from previous page*

Limincha was murdered during the lifetime of Songtsen Gampo, who then overpowered the kingdom of Shang Shung. However, sometime later, Songtsen Gampo fell ill. These events are recorded in the Dun Huang documents. Songtsen Gampo had a nerve disease, and not one of the doctors was able to cure him. The Bönpos from Shang Shung told Songtsen Gampo: "Your illness that none can cure was caused by a curse from Nangsher Löpo, the teacher of [king] Limincha whom you had killed. So nobody can cure you except him." Thus Songtsen Gampo sent his ministers to search for Nangsher Löpo. Once they found him they invited him [to Songtsen Gampo's court] where he performed a ritual and Songtsen Gampo was cured from his illness.

After he recovered from the illness in thanks Songtsen Gampo donated the land where [the monastery of] Meri in Tsang is now situated, where they could stay permanently. From that time onward, the Bönpos could dwell there and that is why we have the thankas of the ancient kings of Shang Shung, and the old things from Shang Shung. Bönpos residing in other places were sometimes expelled somewhere else.

Nangsher Löpo had that Dzogchen teaching, but no written Dzogchen text existed prior to him. There were only Nyengyu. Nowadays when teachers write some teachings they entitle all these Nyengyu [oral transmissions]. But in Dzogchen Neyngyu consists of just few words, which are not written down but spoken in the ear of the person. In periods of social unrest when texts and so forth were not allowed, these Nyengyu continued to exist.

In the very ancient texts of Dzogchen it is said that twelve teachers of Dzogchen have appeared, the last being Buddha Shakyamuni. Eleven teachers appeared before him in very ancient times. At the time of Garab Dorje nothing remained of what these eleven teachers had taught, not even a Dzogchen scripture existed. Only Nyengyu remained, and Garab taught them again. When we introduce the view of Dzogchen even nowadays these Nyengyu are taught.

Kunleng: In one of your books while discussing whether Dzogchen belongs to Bön or Nyingma you wrote that the practice of Dzogchen is not limited to the Bön or Nyingma but is found in all schools [of Tibetan Buddhism]. What is the reason for this statement?

Rinpoche: If we really study the principle of Dzogchen we understand that Dzogchen is not a spiritual tradition. Dzogchen is the ultimate state [of the individual], and as such it is the arrival point of all spiritual traditions such as the Nyingma, Kagyü, and Sakya. Apart from that there is no Dzogchen. But in our world we always label everything: "This is this, that is that." We don't set things together but distinguish them. Thus Dzogchen is the ultimate essence, the final goal, of all Buddhist traditions.

Tonpa Nangwa Tampa painted by Dugu Choegyal Rinpoche from the Merigar West Gonpa.

In Dzogchen [it is said that there were] the twelve [primordial] teachers of Dzogchen, the first of whom was called Tonpa Nangwa Tampa, who appeared in the age of perfection. The main tantra that he taught in that age of perfection is the root tantra of the Dra Thalgyur, the Dra Thalgyur tantra. That tantra it is still extant nowadays, but if we read it, it is not so easy to understand all its content. However, there is a commentary to that tantra written by Vimalamitra.

When I was living in Tibet I never saw that commentary, but when I went abroad I heard that there was an original copy of it in the library of the Fifth Dalai Lama in Drepung.

Twice [when I visited Tibet] I gave lectures to young Tibetan students of the College of Science [Tsanrig Khang] and became friends with them. They made an insistent request to the local authori-

ties for permission to put the texts in order, and they received this permission and made a list of them which they sent to me. When I looked at the list I saw that there was a commentary to the Dra Thalgyur composed by Vimalamitra. I thought: "Oh this is amazing. I must get a copy of that text."

I had some friends at the Science College and asked them to make a copy of that text and send it to me. But they told me that it was not possible to make copies, and that they would not get the permission to do so. I told them that I absolutely needed that copy, and to do whatever they could to get it. In the end they were able to make a copy and sent it to me. The text in the cursive script was difficult to read and had many mistakes. I worked for three years checking and correcting everything, and now I have it in my computer.

In the Nyingma system they speak of the nine spiritual vehicles. In general these vehicles are listed as the three of shravaka, pratyeka, bodhisattva, the three outer tantras of Kriya, Ubhaya and Yoga, and the three inner tantras Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga. However, in that tantra [the Dra Thalgyur] the nine vehicles are not listed in that way. Instead of being listed as the vehicles of shravaka, pratyeka and bodhisattva, the first three are as follows: the worldly vehicles of humans and gods; the vehicles of the shravaka and pratyeka, and the bodhisattva vehicle. The worldly vehicle of humans and gods includes all possible spiritual paths, and [that tantra says that] the very essence, the final destination of all these is Dzogchen. Therefore Dzogchen is the essence of all spiritual paths.

Kunleng: Nowadays what is the situation regarding the upholding, preservation and propagation of the Dzogchen teaching, inside and outside Tibet?

Rinpoche: Nowadays, in the area of Amdo there are many Lamas who are Dzogchen practitioners, and who have a very good education. Outside Tibet there are also many khenpos and lamas with experience and realization. Thus the condition of the Dzogchen teaching is excellent.

From my perspective, since Dzogchen is the essence of the spiritual teachings, in foreign countries, [I teach] that Dzogchen is the essence of all teaching to anyone who is interested in spiritual matters. The benefits of its practice are not limited to the spiritual field, but also extend to secular life in general.

Regarding the fundamental principle of the view and meditation, Dzogchen is known as the state that is free from limitations and partiality. In our world, leaving aside for the time being the spiritual field, let us take as an example secular life. Even in a single country there are always many social conflicts, and conflicts between parties and so forth. If we were to understand and have some experience of Dzogchen, we would be able to free our own minds, and if we could do that the benefits would reflect on the country, on the society itself. Thus [Dzogchen] would help everyone. I usually try to explain this to people as much as I can.

Kunleng: In the introduction to the *Necklace of Zi* you say: "Whether Tibet and Tibetans will remain for long or not will depend on whether the Tibetan culture will remain for long or not. It will depend on how the Tibetan culture will stand by itself." The society and the generations inside and outside Tibet are changing considerably. According to you, what is the condition of the culture and in particular the language nowadays, and what should we as Tibetans pay special attention to?

Rinpoche: My great hope, and a very important thing, is that people inside and outside Tibet – the scholars but also other people – should be able to show the dates of the very ancient origin of the Tibetan culture and history.

In the books on history that I wrote, I combined our calculations [of dates] based on the Mewa cycles of 60 [*sme phreng*] and 180 years [*sme 'khor*] with the dynasties of the kings [*rgyal rabs*] and centuries [*dus rabs*]. According to these calculations, in this year, 3931 years have passed since the origin of the Tibetan culture. All Tibetans should research this, otherwise to those people who say that the history of Tibet is [only] 2000 years old, there will be no way but to [say] that it relied on India or China.

It is not like that. Almost 4000 years have passed since the beginning of the Tibetan culture. Thus people who understand that will think: "Ah, the Tibetan culture is very precious. We should take great interest in it." I really hope that this will happen.

Kunleng: Whether one studies the [Tibetan] Buddhist teaching or does research into [Tibetan] history, one needs [knowledge] of the Tibetan language as the basis. Looking at the condition of Tibetan society nowadays, in your opinion, is what is being done nowadays with regard to the responsibility of preserving the Tibetan language sufficient or should something more be done, and if that is the case what should be done.

Rinpoche: It is almost two years now since I first heard some [modern] Tibetan songs while was staying on the island of Tenerife. One of these songs said: "With songs and melodies we make our feelings and our condition public," and I thought: "Oh, I must listen a little to these songs." Usually I never listen to Tibetan songs but from that time onward I have listened to these songs and their contents.

Many of these songs talk about the decline of the Tibetan language and writing in Tibet, and about it falling into disuse, and of many other sad situations. Thus, I thought that people – whether Tibetans or foreigners – ought to know about this situation.

In general, I am not interested and do not engage at all in politics, I only do cultural work, thus I thought that these songs were valuable. So now I listen to these songs, I transcribed them, had them translated, and ask my Western students to study and sing these songs. This is because I think it will greatly help the survival of the Tibetan culture, and in particular the language.

Kunleng: Rinpoche even though you have a tight schedule here New York, you had time to come to the Voice of America radio and we wish to thank you for giving us the possibility to organize this interview.

Rinpoche: Thank you. I am very happy. It was a good opportunity to talk together.

Kunleng: Thank you.

Translated from Tibetan by Elio Guarisco
Edited by L. Granger

Excerpt from the Teaching from Light of the Sun

Longchenpa's The Precious Mala of the Four Dharmas

Tsegyalgar East
July 18, 2014

Photo by P Barry

We are learning the teaching of Longchenpa, the Four Dharmas, and yesterday we listened to the explanation of the First Dharma, *blo chos su 'gro ba*, the First Dharma means our mind is directed to that dharma, to the path. We live ordinarily with dualistic vision. We think about how we can be comfortable and this is our dualistic vision. What do we need? We need clothing for our body, we need to drink and eat to maintain our physical body; we are sacrificing only for that, there is nothing else really we are thinking of. This is considered our comfort. So some people have realized that comfort, some money, some potentiality for living, and then they are satisfied. This is our ordinary life. That means they have no idea that our life has something like a continuation. If we know there is some continuation, then of course we know that is not sufficient. If that is sufficient then we are the same as animals; animals can also do something for eating and drinking. When their stomach is full, they are happy and remain. We have a little more capacity than animals, because even if we are full in the stomach we are not satisfied because we know there is tomorrow and there is also our family and there are many other problems to overcome. This is our superior capacity. But we are not thinking very much of the continuation of our life.

When Chandrakirti explained our present and future life, he gave an example of breathing in a very simple way. Breathing is life. We inhale and after inhaling what will there be? Exhaling. And after exhaling, there is inhaling. Otherwise there is no continuation of life. In the same way, our life is going ahead and it is not sufficient, even logically, that we can't see something concrete regarding the next life. It is complicated. But we can understand what Buddha explained for example. In the condition of the human being, Buddha says that our condition is in this moment is not always the same, everyone has different circumstances, differences of birthplace, of parents, of situation, wealthy, poor condition, etc. So why do we have this? This is related to cause and effect, there had been cause before, and before does not mean when we were in the mother's womb, because in the mother's womb we are not producing any cause. But we can understand there was something before and there is also something in the future, otherwise everyone would be the same. So why are we different?

Buddha said *sngon mar ci bya da lta'i lus la ltos*, "To know what we did in our past life, we observe our present condition." In the present, everyone is different and this is the production of our karma. There was cause and this is the fruit. Now we are in the fruit, how we are is the fruit. So how do we deal with the next time? Then we can also understand if there is something different in this life, there had been cause, and of course, there will also be future. In the future then, good or bad, we should observe our actions. Now we are alive and we do our best and our best means we are producing good cause and there will be some good fruit. If we are ignorant of that, then of course we create many problems. So this is the teaching of cause and effect from the Buddha and we do our best to apply it and not commit negativities.

So the teaching means we are following, thinking and observing. It is not only sufficient that our stomach is full in this moment, but we must also think for the future, for the next time - how we can have a better condition. So when we have this idea that when someone has many problems, illnesses, etc. – we understand that these problems are a production of the negative cause we have accumulated before – many times we say that the illness is connected to a karmic cause. All situations that manifest in our lives are related to a karmic cause and for that reason we purify and do our best. So this means when we have this kind of idea we go to the direction of the path, *blo chos su 'gro ba*, which means not only thinking of our stomachs. *blo chos su 'gro ba*. That is what we explained yesterday.

Today we have the second argument, *chos lam du slob pa* means when we are going in the direction of the dharma, we think, "Oh, now I am going in the direction in the dharma", and we think that is sufficient. It is not sufficient. For example, we start with a relationship, bodhicitta, and we try to understand what it means and how it works; what is its function. When we know, we apply everything in a perfect way. Then *chos lam du slob pa* means how we give instructions from the teachings in a perfect way and the instructions do not remain as a good idea, but become something concrete and useful. This is the real meaning of *chos lam du slob pa*.

In general, we have many of these kinds of problems with our distractions. For example, some people are interested in the teachings and there are some teachers giving teachings and explaining and we go and say, "Oh, how nice, many explanations I like, these

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu delivers the Keynote Address at the ATMA Conference.

teachings are fantastic." We write down what the teacher said, but why are we writing it down? We are writing it down because we think it is interesting and one day we want to do something, but that 'one day' never comes. And then tomorrow another teacher comes and we receive more teachings, so instead of applying what we had written down, we think, "Oh, there is a teacher and teaching and they are going there and this teacher is also explaining, giving many nice things", and you write down the second collection, the third and fourth collection, all the life we are only making a collection. The idea is that one day we want to do this, otherwise we don't write it down. But this famous one day never arrives and our life is passing. One day we arrive at the end of our life and at that moment what we have is a collection of paper. We are not integrated and we did nothing concrete. This is something dangerous in our lives; with distraction we go on that way.

Even if we have a very nice collection, we cannot bring it to the bardo. When we die we leave all. It is not even useful for our children, at least if it was something of use for the future generations, for our children, but it is not useful because children want to do just like you did, because they are children and they have their lives. They want their own collection. So then our teachings and what we learned in a lifetime become useless. We must not become like that. Then it becomes like chos lam du slob pa, what we learned – at least a small thing becomes something useful in our lives. Concrete. Then any kind of teaching becomes something really important. So this is the conclusion of the second argument. You must not lose the essence when you go after words and many explanations.

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz with the kind assistance of Jakob Braverman and Adriano Clemente

ATMA Conference – American Tibetan Medical Association

Rubin Museum, NYC
July 25–27, 2014

Second International Conference on Tibetan Medicine co-presented by the American Tibetan Medical Association, Shang Shung Institute, and Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine

Excerpt from the Keynote Address by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Given at the Second International Conference on Tibetan Medicine
July 27, 2014
Complete address at www.melong.com

"Good morning. I am very happy to be here with you. And I want to first of all thank the ATMA organization for successfully organizing this meeting on Tibetan medicine; this is very important. Also I want to thank all the doctors from different places for coming and participating and also the people who are participating. It is very important because Tibetan culture, not only its medicine, but in general Tibetan knowledge, and history, are really very ancient. And this has a great value for the whole globe, for all peoples, not only for Tibetans. It is important people know that the value of Tibetan knowledge, culture and particularly medicine is very important for all human beings. So this is not only for Tibetans but all traditions.

In Tibetan we say the science of the knowledge of medicine is *Sowa Rigpa*. *Sowa* means healing. Why? Because we are living in a physical body and in a physical body there are always problems, not only for Tibetans, but also for everyone. We call medicine *sman* in Tibetan. *sman pa* means doctors, (those) who are taking care of and

» *continued on the following page*

Board of Directors of ATMA including the three founding members: Seated to Rinpoche's right Dr Phuntsog Wangmo, the Director of the International Shang Shung Institute's Medical School, standing second from left Dr Kalzang Yangdron and standing last on the right Dr Kunchok Gyaltsen.

Entire group of Tibetan physicians, attendees and organizers together with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – at Rinpoche's right a special guest the Venerable Lama Khempo Pema.

» *ATMA Conference continued from previous page*

applying that. *sman* (also) means (to) benefit, and is a verb in Tibetan. When we say we benefit, we do *sman pa*. Everyone in the human condition has body, speech and mind. Particularly body. While we are alive, we each have a body, and medicine is indispensable because our condition is composed with five elements and when the five elements are not balanced there are some problems, and we are not healthy. So there are always problems."

Excerpts from a Report on the Second International Conference on Tibetan Medicine

Lauri Denyer and Bret Bourman

Complete report at www.melong.com

On July 25, 26, and 27th of 2014, ATMA gathered together a group of distinguished Tibetan doctors from China, India and the US for the second international conference on Tibetan medicine entitled "Ancient Medicine for Modern Life – Tibetan Solutions for Stress Management, Chronic Illness, and Mental Health, and Assembly on the Standardization of Tibetan Medicine."

The conference was co presented by ATMA, Shang Shung Institute and the SSI School of Tibetan Medicine. It was hosted by the Rubin Museum of Art in New York City in concurrence with its exhibition, *Bodies in Balance, the Art of Tibetan Medicine*, which included an extensive exhibit of rare thangkas, medical texts and tools, and other related artifacts. The exhibit also generated a luxurious and informative exhibition catalog edited by Theresia Hofer with the same title. The Rubin Museum's theatre was filled as TM conference participants and audience were seated for the first and subsequent sessions throughout the weekend.

ATMA, the American Tibetan Medical Association, was founded in 2007 to promote, develop and support the practice of Tibetan medicine in the US. The standardization of Tibetan medicine in the West is an important step in the process of obtaining recognition for Tibetan medicine as a healthcare option. The TM Conference was a milestone event toward that end, and the great deal of effort that went into making it possible was rewarded, Dr Phuntsog Wangmo said, "in every way." She was very happy with all the results, which were the support and keynote address given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the participation of so many illustrious doctors, their support and ratification of the proposed standardizations of Tibetan medicine, the welcomed suggestions for improvements, and the successful collaboration between the Rubin Museum of Art, SSI, SSI's STM and ATMA.

We all know that the Shang Shung Institute's School of Tibetan Medicine is the only school of its kind in the US, and the first of its kind in the West outside of Tibet or India. That is why it has always attracted serious students from all over the earth. What is not so easily known is how extremely valuable this work is, not in an abstract way, or for only a few people, but for everyone. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said, when offering the TM Conference's keynote address: "It is important people know the value of Tibetan knowledge, culture and particularly medicine is very important for all human beings. So this is not only for Tibetans but all traditions." He went on to state, "Everyone in the human condition has body, speech and mind. Particularly body. While we are alive, we each have a body, and medicine is indispensable."

In discussing the origins of Tibetan medicine in pre-Buddhist history, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said, "Tibetan medicine has developed very perfectly, combining many traditions, not only that of Shang Shung." He added, "If someone has a very heavy illness, almost dying, the desire of that person is to be cured or to overcome the illness, and it doesn't matter if the method is western medicine or eastern medicine, Tibetan or Indian, etc. – no one is choosing on that basis. So, if there are benefits or knowledge, integrating Tibetan medicine and western medicine, this is something very important, and we must develop that way."

Sometimes the connection between what the Dzogchen Community as a whole is doing and what the Shang Shung Institute does seems to be intangible, even faint. In response to a question from the audience about the connection between Dzogchen Teachings and Tibetan medicine, Rinpoche had this to say:

"When talking about medicine, medicine in the Teaching is also very important. We can really understand the sense of medicine, for example, in that the name of Buddha Shakyamuni is "Great Physician." .... *nye rgyu* means disordered *rlung, mkhris pa, bad kan*. Why disordered? Because they are related with the three emotions: attachment, ignorance and anger. So these are the original bases of illness, no? Buddha's teaching is for overcoming that."

International Symposium For Contemplative Studies – What Did We Learn? – How Can We Change?

Päivi Ahonen
University of Oulu, Finland

We were over 1500 participants from all around the world in Boston for four days, discussing and analyzing how science can contribute to the development of a better life for everybody on this planet. During the interactive keynote dialogue called Science and Society with **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**, the hall was packed with 1700 active listeners from 23 countries. **Richard Davidson** and the President of the Mind and Life Institute (MLI) **Arthur Zajonc** welcomed His Holiness. In his introduction, Dr. Davidson recalled the beginning of MLI while speaking to the large audience and remembering how few people have been involved for 27 years.

His Holiness shared his feelings and thoughts reminding us how all 7 billion human beings on this planet are interconnected: a happy life for each of us depends on other members of the world community. As an opening to the theme of the symposium, His Holiness continued, "I am a Buddhist monk. The Nalanda tradition I belong to follows the Buddha's instruction not to accept his teaching out of faith and devotion, but as a result of investigation and experiment." He mentioned that the study of science has now been formally introduced into the curriculums of the Tibetan monastic universities re-established in South India. Scientific findings today have revealed the important role a calm and happy mind has on our physical health. But, he continued, we cannot forget how in the past scientific developments employed in fearsome weapons systems have contributed to greater fear. "If we were all to consider one another as members of one human family there would be no grounds for quarreling and killing each other."

During the discussion His Holiness was asked about his interest in science and he replied that it dates back to his childhood when he would dismantle his toys to see what made them work.

His Holiness continued to analyze a phenomena of how among the 7 billion human beings alive today, there are at least 1 billion for whom religion no longer has much appeal and who may take interest in secular ethics. He was looking forward to hearing what cooperation between science and spirituality had to offer and was met with applause by the audience.

Dr Amishi Jha, a member of the panel, continued a discussion about secular ethics and asked how that relates to these shared fields of inquiry. His Holiness responded: "Firstly, the ultimate source of happiness is here in the heart. To achieve it we need knowledge of mind and emotions. In order to draw up a curriculum of secular ethics we need a map of the mind. In addition to physical hygiene we need mental hygiene. Anger, fear and hatred make us uncomfortable, whereas other emotions bring inner strength. It may take academic study to establish what mental hygiene should consist of. We have seen, for example, that inner happiness is good for our overall well-being, which can be of benefit to all 7 billion human beings. This involves voluntary mental transformation."

Towards the end of dialogue, His Holiness was asked to comment on climate change. He said he did not know what to say, but shared his thinking of the role of trees in the Buddha's life. Buddha was born under a tree, attained enlightenment under a tree and passed away beneath a tree. His Holiness further pointed out that monastic groups would move from one retreat to another and among the incoming group's responsibilities was caring for and watering the saplings planted by their predecessors. There were also rules about not polluting the water supply. All of these considerations have an environmental aspect. He also mentioned that in his private life he is saving water when washing and also switching off lights whenever he can. "This is our only home; if we destroy it what are we going to do? Where can we go?"

The keynote opening address by **Diana Chapman Walsh** from Wellesley College gave a thorough overview about Education for Ethical and Compassionate Leadership. The speaker analyzed increasingly fragile social institutions of our time; political systems' increasing inequality, financial markets creating unsustainable debt and economy that drives ever-escalating consumption. How to solve the crises in health care, education and life-support systems of planet Earth? What we can do as individuals, each of us within our own life?

The keynote presentation by **David Germano**, (University of Virginia) was titled "Contemplation in Contexts: Tibetan Buddhist Meditation, Across the Boundaries of the Humanities and Sciences". This interesting talk explored the key challenges of the contemplative sciences: the role of contexts in contemplation and the possibility of consilience between the humanities and sciences in contemplative research. The presentation focused on Tibetan Buddhist tradition and practices. According to Dr. Germano the focus is particularly appropriate, since the Tibetan Buddhist tradition constitutes one of the world's most diverse contemplative traditions that is also subject to considerable scientific investigation and scholarly analyses. Dr. Germano also talked about ancient Dzogchen tradition, also referred as the Great Perfection, and the connections of Dzogchen and other Tibetan traditions. Should all the different Tibetan traditions and prac-

» continued on the following page

Warmly Welcomed and Happy in Bhutan

Pilgrimage in Bhutan with Chogyal Namkhai Norbu

Päivi Ahonen

» **Symposium** *continued from previous page*

tices unite? How to cultivate this call and how to build cooperation with different academic fields? He asked, is Great Perfection really so different e.g. from Vipassana and other traditions? Finally the speaker raised the questions we all can ask ourselves: How does contemplation change your life?

The closing keynote presentation by **Tania Singer,** gave us all hope and trust that transformation for new solutions and change for solving global and economic problems is possible. The presentation was titled "Insights from Social Neurosciences: From Training the Brain in Compassion to a Caring Society". Dr. Singer, carrying out her research in the Department of Social Neuroscience at the Max Planck Institute for Human Cognitive and Brain Science in Leipzig, has obtained positive results that may help in the efforts of achieving positive change. Her research shows that training of mental capacities such as mindfulness and compassion are indeed effective and lead to changes in brain functions associated with increases in positive effect, pro-social behavior, and positive health. With great wisdom and humor, Tania addressed the complexities of measuring first, second and third person effects of contemplative practices and the larger social impact they can have.

During the symposium academics and educators from all over the world gave master lectures and presentations on different topics and fields of contemplative education and science. More than 100 concurrent sessions and over 200 poster presentations were scheduled for the four days. My poster presentation was titled: "How is Bhutan's Gross National Happiness (GNH) Policy Reviewed in the Context of Education for Sustainable Development?" Over the period of two hours many people passed by and stopped to discuss the initial results of the interviews of educators and government education officials in Bhutan in July 2012 and the students' and teachers' replies for the questionnaires at three schools in Bhutan in March 2014. ◎

The eight buses that took Rinpoche's students through Bhutan on the pilgrimage. Photo by Valter Bianchini

Two weeks in the beautiful Kingdom of Bhutan with Rinpoche and about one hundred and thirty of his students from all over the world – what a challenge to the organizers – and all went perfectly well! We came from east, west, north and south to Calcutta, India, stayed in the Hayat Hotel for one night and enjoyed the most relaxing swim with Rinpoche in the hotel swimming pool before the travelling started.

Rinpoche is welcomed with traditional dances at the Zhiwa Ling Hotel. Photo by M. Simmons

The next day we took a chartered flight from Calcutta to the airport town Paro, in Bhutan. For the first time in my life I went to the airport without a ticket! But I had the list of all of us, who had been issued a tourist visa by the Tour Operator Druk Kithpai Yuljong Tours & Treks. So we smoothly entered the plane and were soon admiring the mountaintops through the airplane windows. In Bhutan we moved by bus from one town to another; we traveled, we enjoyed visits to the Dzongs, we danced, we climbed to Tigers' nest in Paro, we enjoyed sharing with Rinpoche life in Bhutan while sitting in the sun in front of the temples. We were participants from Costa Rica, Australia, Japan and Uruguay, from Norway, USA, Lithuania, Spain, Canada and Italy, from China and from Singapore; somebody counted twenty-nine nationalities. Many of the participants lived outside their home country so the question often was: "Where are you from, and where do you live now?"

Welcome to Zhiwa Ling

On our arrival at Paro Airport we were spontaneously divided into eight buses to be taken to the three or four different hotels. My hotel, Tenzinling Resort in Paro, had nice spacious rooms and the most helpful and kind staff. I shared the room with Jocelyne, who I had known from the time I had attended a one week program of Tibetan folk dances in Tenerife. The resort also had an area for the Bhutanese traditional specialty, the hot stone bath. Some days after,

Rinpoche and students at Kyichu Lhakang built by Songsten Gampo in the 7th century. Photo by M. Simmons

Punakha Dzong, built by the first Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal (1596–1651). Photo by Valter Bianchini

we had a relaxing moment sitting in the wooden baths under the sky, enjoying the water heated in the open fire by the special hot stones outside.

After lunch on the first day we were invited to the Zhiwa Ling Hotel, where Rinpoche and his closest students and helpers were staying. We found our seats in the spacious and beautiful lobby, admired the paintings and wood carvings while waiting for Rinpoche to arrive. When we were ready to start, we were all inspired and happy about the cordial welcome we received. The organizer' welcome speeches for Rinpoche were respectful and knowledgeable – the time was right, everyone – the organizers and all of us who had joined Rinpoche's journey – were happy to see everything moving well, and to see Rinpoche enjoying the travel. The traditional dances were most enjoyable with different costumes and masks. I'm sure all of us were very eager to know more about the contents, meanings and the symbolism of each and every dance. The performances were esthetically most beautiful, but it's obvious we missed something of the spiritual part – at least some of us. After the program Rinpoche expressed his appreciation and thanked all the performers and officials, who participated.

Visits to the Dzongs

The next day we visited the Kichu Lhakhang Temple, one of the oldest temples in Bhutan, built in the 7th century. Honorable Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche had a residence nearby the temple, from the time he came Bhutan from China. This area is now a museum with a statue of Dilgo Khyentse, photos of him and some furniture that he used while he was living in Paro. When entering this museum Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche received a warm welcome from the Lama who takes care of the premises.

The visit to Kichu Lhakhang Temple was the first time we practiced together with Rinpoche during the journey; we did these practices upon entering different temples and Dzongs. I loved the thun practices together in the main temples during the two week pilgrimage. I was touched by this great opportunity to be here with Rinpoche and all of us. As we often said to each other: "This is the voyage of one's life time. This is a special honor and source of happiness." How could one be more lucky; to travel with the long time Teacher – for me twenty-four years – and his students from all over the world, in the country which has developed the philosophy of Gross National Happiness

Photo by Maria Simmons

and is guided by this philosophy for developing the country. Later on we practiced together in Punakha Dzong, in Bhumtang Valley in Kuje Lhakhang and in Paro Takstsang. Every time was precious and empowering.

Punakha was our destination on the third day. On the way we stayed for some time in Docu La pass – the highest spot on our journey towards east. It is 3150 meters. The pass is decorated by one hundred and eight chortens and many, many colorful prayer flags. Slightly cooler weather and rainfall got us moving, so after busy photographing and filming – there were several film crews in our group – we jumped back to our buses to continue.

The Dzong in Punakha is the most impressive of all dzongs in Bhutan. It's architecturally beautiful, located between two rivers, Pho chu (male) and Mo chu (female). This time we entered the dzong by crossing the river and walking along the long iron bridge. During my previous visit to this Dzong in 2010, I remember sitting in the main temple for long time and having the "day dream" of Rinpoche saying, "You are here now, and we will all come here later together." This was the time and here we are – all of us. We quietly moved forward and again when entering the main temple, all of us gradually found ourselves practicing. We had a chance to light the candles and when Rinpoche came, we did a short thun practice together.

The Temple of the Divine Mad Man

A special experience in Punakha was to visit the Chimed Lhakhang, temple of Lama Drukpa Kunley (1455–1529), the Divine Mad Man. We enjoyed the twenty-minute walk to the temple along the paths in the mid-

›› continued on the following page

Prostrations at Chimed Lhakhang. Photo by Maria Simmons

On the way to Chimed Lhakhang, the temple of Drukpa Kunley.

» **Bhutan** *continued from previous page*

dle of the rice fields, met women carrying heavy loads and children who wanted to sing for us. I asked the man coming across the path, when is the rice growing around ready for harvesting? It's so easy to communicate in Bhutan – everyone speaks English. The rice looked already fairly heavy, but the man knew that it would be ready for harvesting only after three weeks, in early October.

The Divine Mad Man is the Lama behind the flying phalluses that can be seen painted on the wall of the houses in Bhutan. He traveled throughout Tibet and Bhutan using humeros songs and outrageous behavior to dramatize his teachings.

In the temple we moved around, listened to lamas and Bhutanese women and men chanting the prayers. Some of us did prostrations and we walked around the temple turning the prayer wheels. In one of the temples we did a short thun with Rinpoche. After the thun I managed to meet the Lama who did divinations by playing the dice. We thought of an important wish, the lama got certain numbers and depending on the number, the wish came true or did not. Both of my wishes will successfully come true.

In another temple there was a powerful bad karma releasing exercise. We had to stand in line for more than half an hour, since so many of us wanted to get rid of bad karma. We were wearing a heavy iron blanket in our back and had to walk or run with that blanket around the temple inside, through the corridors. It took about two minutes and of course it felt so much lighter after the run!

Bumthang and visit to the Longchenpa Temple

On the way to Bumthang, we admired the spectacular and longest Dzong in Bhutan in Trongsa. The Trongsa Dzong was built in the 16th century. It is said to be the most aesthetic and magnificent work of traditional Bhutanese architecture, with street like corridors, wide stone stairs and beautiful stone courtyards. We did not have time to visit this exciting looking building, so the Trongsa Dzong is for sure on the program of the next visit to Bhutan.

Hundreds of Bhutanese people attended Rinpoche's teachings at Hotel Taj in Thimphu. Photo by Valter Bianchini

In Bumthang Valley we entered Kurjey Lhakhang, the temple named after the body print of Guru Rinpoche, preserved in a cave inside the oldest of the three buildings. The Saint Padmasambhava visited Bhutan first time in 746 and was invited to use his supernatural powers to save the King of Bumthang of those days, called Sindhu Raja. We practiced together with Rinpoche and visited the modern temple nearby.

The next day we traveled by bus for two hours through beautiful countryside to Tharpaling, the temple that was established by the Nyingma philosopher and Saint Longchenpa (1308–1364). We were invited to typical Bhumthangpa lunch, wet picnic, by the organizers. The day was very special and memorable. We enjoyed the performances, dances and singing of Bhutanese women. We moved around on the grassy land and had our nicely served delicious lunch and finally we ended up sharing the Tibetan dances we have learned with Rinpoche over the past years with the women and our guides.

In the hotel after the full day, Dr. Saamdu from GNH Centre was waiting for us. We had invited Dr. Saamdu to share the latest news and activities of the GNH Centre, which has a rural center located in Bumthang. Twelve of us managed to come after the long day. We were impressed to hear how Bhutan GNH experience is spreading all around the world, and how much effort Bhutan has taken to include the GNH experiences into the process of UN post 2015 development agenda. The 20th of March is also announced by UN the International Day of Happiness proposed by Bhutan.

Rinpoche's Teachings in Thimphu and Paro

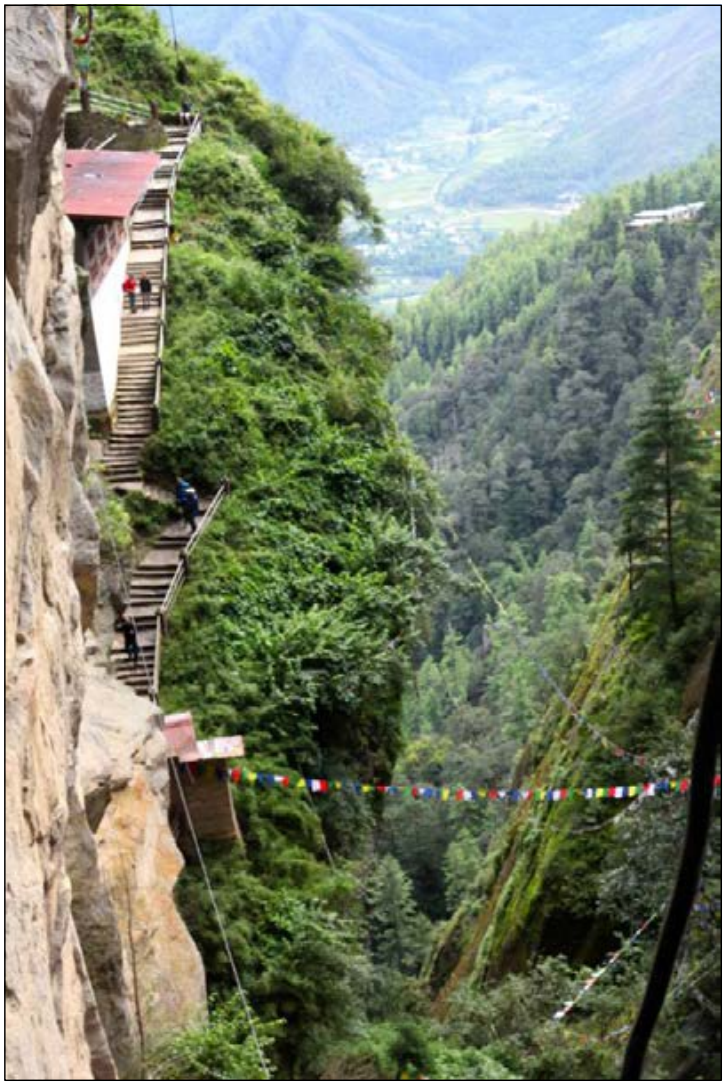
The travel back by road from Bumthang to Thimphu took one whole day – the specialties of the long bus drive were the two hours waiting along the road caused by the road maintenance and the massage in the bus by a member of the Bus 7. The students of the College of Science and Technology were waiting on the road at the same time. We shared our visit's purpose and they were happy to share the latest development of hydropower technology in Bhutan. The students also entertained us by dancing and singing. As for the massage – there was a massage professional in our bus, so what a treat! Thank you Pascal!

In Thimphu Rinpoche gave teachings at the Taj Tashi hotel for hundreds of Bhutanese who gathered to listen to the teachings and receive blessings from Rinpoche. The teachings were followed by short introductions and practices of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance by Rinpoche's students Fabio Andrico and Prima Mai.

The last evening in Paro, Rinpoche gave a presentation to hundreds of Bhutanese students in the Paro College of Education. The presentation gave the background of the origin of the Bön tradition in Tibet, and the connections of the Bön tradition with Tajikistan. Rinpoche also talked about Shang Shung as an important source of knowledge of Tibetan tradition and about how Buddhism was introduced in Tibet. In relation to development in Bhutan, he mentioned the importance of a national language as a way to keep culture, arts, medicine and different traditions alive. At the end Rinpoche talked about Buddha's Four Noble Truths and Dzogchen as a spiritual path. Rinpoche concluded by sharing his experiences in the discussions with the peace organizations. "We need to free ourselves not to have wars but practice peace".

Climbing to Taktshang

The last day in Bhutan we climbed to the most famous of all monasteries in Bhutan, Taktshang. The name means 'tiger's nest'; it was named because Guru Rinpoche is said to have flown to the site on the back of a tigress. He then meditated in the cave there for three months. The site has long been recognized as a holy place and was visited by Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal in 1646. Milarepa is also said to have meditated there and it is now visited by pilgrims from all over Bhutan and world.



The 900 meter climb to Taktshang, the 'tiger's nest', where Guru Rinpoche is said to have flown on the back of a tigress.
Photo by J. Oliphant

We drove from Thimphu in the early morning and started to climb the 900 meters about 10 am. When returning at about 6 pm it was also getting dark. Everyone had their own way and strategy to get to the Taksthang, depending on their age and physical condition. Some people got the horseback ride about the half way, some of us walked in the groups, some alone. Rinpoche was carried by the eight porters in the palanquin constructed of two parts. He looked very comfortable while sitting in the palanquin, but it was only until the stairs. The stairs were too narrow for porters. From the point the stairs started, Rinpoche walked by himself supported by helpers on each side.

While in the temple high up, we moved slowly from one area to another and did a short thun in a tiny little temple. Some of us could not find a seat, so it was my first practice ever done while standing. We returned fairly soon to avoid the dark when moving down, and indeed we did walk at the end for some time in the dark. Another adventure and all of us returned well and happy to the buses.

It was the best ever of all my travels to Bhutan, this being the sixth time. I enjoyed every minute and made a lot of new friends, as did all of us. We were all happy to see Rinpoche enjoying and having the spirit and strength to enjoy the adventure. I would like to thank first of all Rinpoche, the organizers: Tsering, David and Tsering's brother, Samten Wangchuk, all our wonderful guides and drivers, the film crews and everyone who participated in this special pilgrimage.

Päivi Ahonen
paiviahonen@yahoo.com
Dzogchen Community Finland
Helsinki, Finland

28th of September 2014

INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY GAKYIL

What Happened in 2014?

Dear Vajra sisters and brothers.

What was the most exciting moment of your life in 2014? Well, we asked the same question at our regular International Gakyil meeting, but instead we asked about our worldwide Dzogchen Community. This simple question started a nice discussion; so let's look together at what happened with the IDC this year.

2014 seems to have been an exciting and challenging year for many of us and for our entire global Dzogchen family of practitioners. At the beginning of the year in Tenerife, Rinpoche appointed a new Gakyil for Dzamling Gar, which after some initial training has started to work well. Also, Rinpoche moved into a newly reconstructed house inside the Gar complex, and together with several important retreats and events, Dzamling Gar has become a real global center of our Community!

Before going to Merigar West, Rinpoche surprised us by sending us a letter headed: "THE VIRTUES OF GENEROSITY AND DONORS", highlighting the importance of generosity, as the way the Community should make the Dharma available. In reality, it means that Gakyils are now free to choose between donation-based admission or charging a fee, according to local circumstances. Merigar West's Gakyil was the first to test this new principle of generosity and even though they did not have enough time to fully prepare themselves, the retreat was still an overall success. Many other Gakyils have since followed the lead of Merigar West and it is now becoming the new norm to run retreats in this manner. Although it may be a bit more demanding for Gakyils to raise enough money in this way, it is also much more useful for those who donate, so they can one day experience benefits of the great paramita of generosity!

Also, our dear Mirror magazine has gone through challenging times, as it has become only an on-line publication. There was not enough income to cover all the costs for printing and distribution of the paper version, but as you can see right now, the on-line version was not the only change and so the good old "paper" version got a new form – a nice PDF document, which you can download right now. The Mirror has also added Spanish (El Espejo) and Russian (Zerkalo) versions of its online content, so now almost all our members can read the news!

During the entire year, Enrico Dell'Angelo worked hard to bring new status to our Community around the word. All Gars and Lings are slowly becoming part of the recently created International Dzogchen Community organization. Enrico would be very happy if the process was much faster, but we need to respect circumstances and so we are pleased that most of the important Gars around the world have already changed their status and formally joined the IDC. What does this mean to us regular practitioners? We will just become members of both organizations – of a local legal entity – for instance of the local Ling - and at the same time we will automatically become members of the International Dzogchen Community. This is also the way of non-duality in the form of double membership manifesting in this world.

This change in the legal status of our respected organizations around the world and their membership needs to be reflected in our newly created MMS (Membership Management System). After many years of preparation and many unexplainable failures in the past, it now seems we are ready to roll out the first really functional MMS that is now almost ready and being slowly and carefully loaded with membership data from around the globe. It seems like an easy task, but we need to respect on one hand the necessary requirements of the database serving us, and on the other the many legal challenges around the world that sometimes touch the legal aspect of privacy, which of course is a sensitive issue for all of us.

Also what is happening this year is a fresh look and feel to our websites around the world, which are slowly being redesigned to respect modern, simple and clean design trends. These are not only websites of Gars and Lings, but also Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and modern Tibetan dances around the globe.

In September, Rinpoche, with a group of about 150 members of our Community, visited Bhutan, a small kingdom in the southern Himalayas. It was a perfect success. We were very kindly invited by all the local guardians and so even the complex task of arranging travel and accommodation of such a large number of people at the same time went almost without any major problem! Perfect!

From Bhutan, Rinpoche went on to teach in China and the very new Asian Gar, Samten Gar, was born. So now even Asian practitioners have their own Gar. As this is just very fresh news, the transformation of Samten Ling into a Gar is in the process right now, so we ask everyone to send a wish that this newly born Gar will become perfect in the near future – as are all our Gars.

As this calendar year will soon be over, let's wish to all of us a joyful path to realization and good luck to our worldwide International Dzogchen Community so it can effectively serve us on this path. ◎

Libor Maly
For the International Gakyil

The Shang Shung Institute in 2014 – Grounding the Foundations

Maria Grazia Testa

Foreword

Dear everyone, with 2014 coming closer to an end, the Institute would like to take the opportunity to share with everyone the work done during this intense and fruitful year. It's a story full of news and marked by important steps, taken with the intention to deepen our commitment towards Tibetan culture and its stakeholders and enhance our ability to foster relationships and broader networks of cooperation. Enjoy the reading!

Raising the appreciation and integrating knowledge - our courses in Europe

Ku Nye Massage Courses

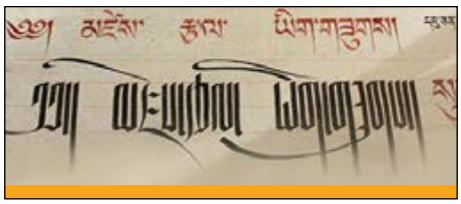
From this year we have launched some new educational plans that will facilitate interested students to gain their diploma in Ku Nye Massage.

The traditional course is now broken down into specific didactic segments, which students can attend at different times, in different regions, choosing to follow the entire course in the same location or attending different sections in any of the places where Ku Nye courses take place.

Courses are offered in 3 continuous weeks format, suggested to Gars wishing to associate the course to long retreats or for residents of the Gars; 5 week-ends format, ideal for those who are not able to book vacations to attend the course; 3 separate weeks format; 4 days deepening and update course for those who have already gained the diploma.

The attendance grants didactic credits for the 5 years course in Tibetan Medicine with Doctor Phuntsog Wangmo, in Moscow, Conway or online.

In 2015 we are planning courses in London, Moscow, Kunsangar and Tenerife, so stay tuned to discover the new dates.



Tibetan Arts Workshops

Through a call for collaboration issued at the beginning of the year, the Institute has strengthened its collaboration with some of the most estimated experts and artists active today in the field of Tibetan Arts to convey the gist of these rich traditions through didactic settings and methods which meet in inspiring and innovative ways the western mindset.

New Tibetan Arts courses available in 2014/15 include Tibetan Thangka Painting, Tibetan Calligraphy and photography workshops inspired by Buddhist knowledge.

Tibetan Modern Dances workshops and performances

Modern dances workshops are a good opportunity to make direct experience of Tibetan culture and of its value: the symbolic richness conveyed by each movement, the emphasis on space awareness and group choreography, the play of female and male counterparts and the highly joyful sentiments fulfilled with grace and power make learning the dances an experience of enjoyment and a great way to foster collaboration and harmony amongst people.

Moved by the enthusiastic pace taken by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the Institute has launched a serie of workshops to learn the choreographies guided by the Community main choreographers and dancers. In 2014 they have been teaching and performing for the public in Munich, Prague, Naples, Rome, Milan, Tallin and Tenerife.

Tibetan Language

While the Institute in Austria continues its tremendous job with training beginners, intermediate and translators in Tibetan Language, we continue offering Drajor courses, for the correct pronunciation of Tibetan. The course takes place in combination with practice retreats and focuses on the text of the practice.

Organizing a Course in collaboration with SSI

We believe that Tibetan culture is a live and vital source of knowledge for humanity and that it can, through exchange and communication, contribute to the improvement of the life and evolution of individuals and society in our current challenging times.

You can participate to this process by being the successful promoter or inspirer of an event in your city, offering the opportunity to a general public to get in touch with aspects of the Tibetan culture and contributing to a general appreciation of its relevance.

For each course the Institute develops the course objectives, didactic plans, didactic materials, instructors curricula and promotional materials, which are made avail-

» *continued on the following page*

» SSI *continued from previous page*
able to the hosting organization and the students

Each course is financially based on a sustainability principle: profits are not sought, but we try to work the budget together with the hosting organization to ensure that all expenses incurred into are fully covered on both sides

The Institute looks after web promotion of the events, through its network of mailing lists and socials

The Institute keeps track of registrations and answers all requests for information from course candidates, instructors and organizations

We issue a Quality Survey at the end of the course to students and organizers, to verify and improve our methods, didactic materials and the skills of our instructors.

If you would like to request or propose specific courses on subjects which are not listed you can write to us your ideas and we will support them through our organization and team of academics, artists and experts in various fields such as medicine, astrology, history, culture and the arts, in the awareness of the importance given by Tibetan tradition to the interaction between the various disciplines.

Courses are being planned in several European main cities and Tenerife in 2015! Get in touch with the Institute to plan one of our courses in your city.

Culture integrity, preservation and accessibility

The Library and the Archives are entrusted to the Shang Shung Institute in Meri Gar. While the Library contents range from medicine to philosophy, art and religion, astrology and ancient history, language and logic, the multimedia Archives, as well as containing documents relating to the history and culture of Tibet, run through the recent history of the spread of Tibetan Buddhism and in particular of Dzogchen in the Western world, documenting the path by which this knowledge has been translated and has been integrated in contemporary culture, through its foremost contemporary representatives (above all of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu) and through the activities of the large community of students and practitioners of these teachings in the west.

A year of improvements for the Multimedia Archive

The audio-video archive is an amazing collection of tens of thousands of unique documents (approximately 75,000 hours of recordings).

This year some fundamental actions have been taken to improve the security and availability of the archive environment and its contents: the Institute has improved the user request service of recordings from the archive: members of the Dzogchen Community can request the recordings by sending an email to archive@shangshunginstitute.org; video ingestion hardware and software has been implemented to speed up the conversion of videos residing on perishing media (tapes) resulting in the ingestion and cataloguing of 1300 MiniDV tapes in just 3 months. The archive database has been updated allowing the possibility to list all the events and link them to video, audio and photo collections.

We have also completed the back up of the two servers, the archive rooms are being renovated to allow the adequate storage of all the original tapes and we are working with hardware providers to assess and quote the renovation of the server storage systems.

The Photographic Archive

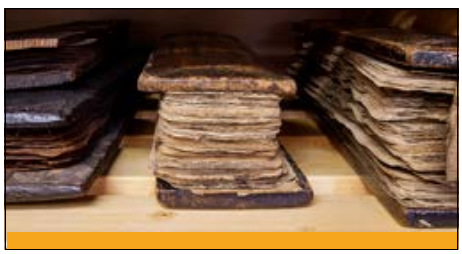
The photo archive contains an incredibly vast repertoire (more than 50,000 images), contemporary and vintage collections, in two main sections: the first, of particular prestige, is a collection of 109 original silver prints belonging to the archive of Fosco Maraini, dating back to the 1930s and an impressive collection of prints from the Lhasa Archives. The section includes also beautiful contemporary images, authored by the photographers who have been collaborating with the Institute during the years. The second section is a very circumstantial documentation of the life and activity of the Dzogchen Community worldwide, with thousands of photographs of events, people, places, activities, celebrations and beautiful formal and informal moments, some of them authored by the finest photographers of the Community.

17455 items have been inventoried this year including 288 distinct collections, providing for each of them the author, date, place, main subject, format, size, support and notes on the value, the settings, context and participants.

The Zikhang Library

The Zikhang Library has been developed during the years with the aim of preserving the texts that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu brought with him from Tibet and the works that during the years became necessary to his studies. Today the Library contains 12.738 volumes.

1,240 volumes this year have been catalogued through Library World. We have completed the entire dPe cha collection: more than 2300 volumes are now divided by school (*bon, rnying ma, sa skya, bka brgyud, bka' gdams, dge lugs, ris med, jo nang*), each with its own specifics and sub-categories.



The Manuscripts Collections

The collection comprises of an initial core of texts brought from his travels by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the manuscripts of Chang-

chub Dorje and other manuscripts fruit of donations by private collectors. The earliest units of the collection date back to the 18th century.

The Institute has moved on to the delicate task of cataloguing this precious collection. Photographs have been taken of the texts, to document their current state of preservation, the miniatures depicted and the calligraphy used.

Public access

Users can access the online catalogue and search and browse the titles by author, title and other criteria. Copies of some of the volumes can be requested emailing library@shangshunginstitute.org.

Support the integrity, preservation and availability of our heritage

The work of the Institute, its development and success, is only supported through collaboration and financial support by donors. Its activities require a tremendous variety of competences and resources, intellectual and physical. There are several ways to support this activity and each of us can contribute in meaningful ways:

Help financing the Institute's activities: get in touch with the Institute's personnel to request detailed documentation about all our projects and the resources they require. Lead donors are invited to periodic reviews to verify the progress made with their participation and we commit every year to detailed financial reporting and transparency. Without financial contribution the Institute's work simply cannot continue.

Invite the Institute's representatives to share our goals, our activities and projects with you and your organization, in your city or country. Knowing our work is the best way to build relationships, foster collaboration and think of joint initiatives that can benefit the public and our mission.

Collaborate with your competences volunteering some of your time to the Institute: we are always in need of Information Technology, Communication, Fundraising, Video Making and Production, Graphic and Web Management competences. ◎

Shang Shung Publications in 2014

Building an efficient organization able to face our future growth

Gaetano Ruvolo, Artur Skura

SSP internal organization

As many of you probably know, Shang Shung Publications (originally Shang Shung Edizioni) was founded in 1983 in Merigar. During the last 31 years, hundreds of people have collaborated in one way or another with SSP, both through their volunteer and/or paid work, to help realizing the Publishing House objectives. The number of books published during these 31 years has been astonishing, and there are still many more we need to produce in order to continue offering to the world the precious wisdom of ancient knowledge coming from the Tibetan culture.

In 2014 we have tried to organize our staff of translators, editors, transcribers, editorial supervisors, graphic and layout designers, in order to grant an efficient process flow to our organization.

Production

We are using a number of printers, both locally and internationally, to meet our productive needs in terms of quality and sustainability. Our pricing policy reflects our effort to make more easily available to everyone the wealth of knowledge our books carry.

For this reason we have increased, and plan to extend it as far as possible, our eBook production, in order to make our texts and audio video content quickly available, at the reduced price which electronic distribution allows.

Logistics

In July 2014 we have done a stock take which has given us these final figures:

- Books: 235 titles with a total of 23,281 units in stock
- CDs and DVDs: 72 titles for 2,840 units in stock

There are now plans in 2015 to re-unite all of our stock in one single location, to rationalize our logistics and distribution operations.

Distribution

We are liaising with the different Shang Shung Institutes International branches, Gars and Lings to ease our book, CD and

DVD distribution within the Dzogchen Community.

On March 1st 2014, we have signed an agreement with Dzam shop in Merigar to let them take over the sale of our books to people visiting. This collaboration has immediately proved very satisfying, especially for customers visiting over the weekend when our offices are closed. It will definitely continue in 2015.

Starting as early as January 2014 we have started working on a new webstore site, which will go live in 2015. The new webstore will have a cleaner user interface than the existing one and will generally increase customer experience and satisfaction. It will also allow SSP staff to review sales statistics and increase stock control and availability.

Finally, our public books are now also available worldwide via Amazon.

Books Publication

As usual, there have been many books published in 2014. Probably the highlight of the year has been the long waited release in April of *The Temple of the Great Contemplation. The Gönpa of Merigar*, a beautiful hard cover, full color, bilingual (English/Italian) volume of 365 pages illustrating the history of the construction and decoration of the Gönpa of Merigar, inaugurated in May 1990 by HH the Dalai Lama. This richly illustrated book is a well researched, detailed portrayal of the symbolism and iconography of the temple. In addition to a translation of the design description written by Rinpoche prior to construction, the book includes inspiring biographies of the 148 masters depicted in the Gönpa, representing all of the main Buddhist and Bön traditions in Tibet connected with the Dzogchen transmission.

Here is a list of the main books and multimedia products released in 2014:

» *continued on the following page*

» ***Publications*** *continued from previous page*

Public books

Message from Tibet: Tibetan Songs of Today
Compiled by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Also available as an e-book

The Temple of the Great Contemplation: The Gönpa of Merigar
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Light of the Sun: Teachings on Longchenpa's Precious Mala of the Four Dharmas
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Also available as an e-book

Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Beyond Words
by Judy Allan and Julia Lawless

Books for practitioners

Mandarava Tsalung Practices
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Shine and Lhagthong in the Dzogchen Teaching (transcripts from oral teachings)
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Also available as an e-book

Oral Teachings on the Yoga of Prana for Clarity and Emptiness
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Also available as an e-book

The Longsal Divination of Dorje Yudronma
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Practice of Guru Medicine Buddha
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

DVDs

Kumbhaka Training Course
with Fabio Andrico
Format: MP4 video on DVD.
Length: approx. 8 hours

CDs

Discovering the Health Benefits of Yantra Yoga
With Elio Guarisco
MP3 on CD, downloadable MP3
Format: MP3 audio on CD.
Length: approx. 8 hours

Public e-books

The Necklace of Zi
Two Dzogchen Texts
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

E-books for practitioners

Secondary Practices of the Dzogchen Community
(transcript from oral teachings)
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Teachings on Lojongs, Rushens, and Semdzins
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Finally, let us have a look at 2015 SSP Publication Plan:

Public Titles

The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
In summer 2011 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu kindly transmitted to his students the famous teaching by a prominent 17th-century Kagyüdpa master Karma Chagme, who was both the teacher and student of the famous tertön Mingyur Dorje. This teaching presents the essential points of Buddhist path in a way that is easy to understand and apply in practice.

The Light of Kailash, volume III
The History of the Later Period: Tibet
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
This third volume of the series offers insight into a more known period usually associated with the reign of great Tibetan kings.

Tibetan Kunye Massage
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
A few years ago Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote a short text on Tibetan massage published by Shang Shung Publications under the title The Practice of Tibetan Kunye Massage. The new edition has been enriched by elaborate explanations by Elio Guarisco, describing in detail the different methods of applying the massage on the energy points of the body.

The Benefits of Yantra Yoga from the Point of View of Tibetan Medicine
by Elio Guarisco and Dr Phuntsog Wangmo
This book is a collection of lectures by Elio Guarisco and dr Phuntsog Wangmo on topics related to the practice of Yantra Yoga, explaining different kinds of channels and energies and the way they're influenced by movement, breathing and visualization.

Hidden Description of the Vajra Body
by Gyalwa Yangönpa
This long-awaited book contains an elaborate description of the so-called Vajra Body – the subtle energy channels (tsa), the pranas moving through them (lung), and the nuclei of energy (thigle). This knowledge is useful above all during tsalung and completion stage practices. The biography of the author, a great master of the Drukpa Kagyüd school, is included.

The Biography of Ayu Khandro
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
This is another biography presenting the life of one of great teachers of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The female master Ayu

» *continued on the following page*

Follow us on Social Media and promote our activities through your networks:
www.facebook.com/InternationalShangShungInstituteforTibetanStudies and
www.facebook.com/shangshungpublications
Stay tuned with our websites: www.shangshunginstitute.org and
www.shangshungpublications.org
Check our webstore: www.shangshungstore.org

SSI Branches

Shang Shung Institute Italy
Località Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso (GR, Italy)
Phone : +39-0564-966940
info@shangshunginstitute.org
www.shangshunginstitute.org
www.shangshungstore.org

Shang Shung Institute Austria
Gschmaier 139, 8265 Gr. Steinbach, Austria
Office: 0043 3386 83218 Fax: 0043 3386 83219
www.shangshunginstitute.org
www.ssi-austria.at

Shang Shung Institute UK
The London School of Tibetan Studies
The London Centre for the Study of Traditional Tibetan Culture and Knowledge
www.shangshunguk.org

Shang Shung Institute of America
18 Schoolhouse Rd, P.O. Box 278
Conway, MA 01341, USA
Phone (main-Anna) 413 369 4928
Fax/Bookstore 413 369 4473
www.shangshung.org

ASIA ONLUS

Is There a Little Room in Your Heart? ADOPT TIBET

Tibet is experiencing a real cultural emergency, as its spiritual and cultural traditions – one of the world's richest and most ancient – might disappear soon.

The ADOPT TIBET Campaign was therefore created to help us reach a new goal. The schools and monasteries that ASIA supports are now asking for help, and by 31 December we must find sponsors for 300 children and 200 monks.

Five monasteries have been facing great difficulties, as they cannot count anymore on material support from the surrounding villages.

Nine schools need our help. The majority of them were built by ASIA in remote areas of the Tibetan Plateau, with the strong support of the local community, that worries that children will forget their original language. These schools do not receive enough funding from the government, and cannot continue to ensure adequate living conditions for the children that live and study there all year long.

ADOPT TIBET is ASIA's new campaign that promotes long-distance sponsorship. We aim to ensure an education for Tibetan children and monks that is in harmony with their cultural roots, and to fulfil their basic needs (food, clothes, heating). By taking part in this Campaign, you will give children the opportunity to continue studying, and therefore become responsible adults. You will also give practical help to monks, who are the guardians of Tibet's cultural and spiritual heritage.

How to start a long-distance sponsorship
Visit website: **www.adoptibet.org/wp/en**
Call to ASIA: +39 06 44340034
Write to: **adozioni@asia-onlus.org**
You can pay by:
· bank transfer to ASIA Onlus
IBAN: IT06 F01030 72160 000000562 272
SWIFT BIC: PASC IT MM XXX
· credit card on **www.adoptibet.org/wp/en**

Become a Testimonial
You could take a picture with a leaf where you should write "I Adopt Tibet #adoptibet" and share it on your Facebook page or profile (in the text remember to write *http://bit.ly/HP_ADOPTIBET #adoptibet*) and post it in ASIA facebook page **https://www.facebook.com/ngo.ASIA** too.

ASIA Branches

ASIA Onlus
Via San Martino della Battaglia 31, 00185 Rome, Italy
Tel +39.06.44340034, Fax +39.06.44702620
info@asia-ngo.org **www.asia-ngo.org**

Association for International Solidarity in Asia, Inc. ASIA
Post Office Box 124, Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA
Phone: 413.369.4153, Fax: 413.369.4473
andreamnasca@yahoo.com
www.asia-ngo.org/en/

Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V.
c/o Gisela Auspurg
Königswieser Str. 2, 82131 Gauting
Tel.: 089 / 127 630 32

›› ***Publications*** *continued from previous page*

Khandro Dorje Paldron spent more than fifty years of her life in dark retreat, achieving a high level of realization. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu visited her in 1951 and received teachings from her. On that occasion he also asked her about the events from her life, which are presented in this volume.

Restricted Titles

The Light of the Precious Lamp

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
It will contain the complete instructions related to the different types of the Dance of the Vajra that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu received from the Wisdom Dakini. The text will be accompanied by several color illustrations explaining the movements of the feet and hands.

Kumar-Kumari Yantra

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Several years ago Chögyal Namkhai Norbu taught Kumar-Kumari Yantra: a special version of Yantra Yoga for children. The practice of Kumar-Kumari Yantra, apart from the general benefits of Yantra Yoga, has the special function of helping in the correct development of the body of the child.

Guru Nirmanakaya Jnanadakini

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
On more than one occasion Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has transmitted this particular version of the practice of Jnanadakini. This book will contain the complete explanations related to this practice.

The Practice of Long Life of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The new edition of the long life practice of Mandarava will be published in a richly-illustrated format, similar to the already published books of Thun and the Practice of Gomadevi, in order to facilitate learning the mantras, mudras and visualizations and applying them in a correct way.

Thank You!

This article is an extract of the Shang Shung Institute 2014 yearly report. To get a copy of the full report write to ***info@shangshunginstitute.org*** *or order one of our books to have the report mailed to you.* ◎

Interview with Lama Tsultrim Allione

Merigar West
November 17, 2014

Lama Tsultrim and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Tara Mandala in Colorado.

The Mirror: First of all I'd like to thank you very much for dedicating your time to giving this interview. Many years ago when you lived in Italy, you were a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu like many of us here today at Merigar. Then you set up your own centre, Tara Mandala in Colorado in the USA. In recent years you have come back to Merigar on different occasions, but in the role of a teacher. How does it feel to be back in Merigar after all these years but in a different role?

Lama Tsultrim: It feels good to come back. Merigar is a kind of spiritual home for me, I have a lot of friends here and my kids grew up here. There's one level of it. And then I really feel that Merigar is the seat of Rinpoche's teachings, even though he is not here so much any more. The Gonpa is like a *terma* in itself, there are so many blessings in it. The library is also very important. And this is really where he began the whole idea of a Gar. I remember the first meeting about the Gakyil and I was actually on the first Gakyil here, on the blue, although I don't feel that I was very effective, we were just learning what a gakyil was supposed to do.

Merigar is a kind of power place connected to his teachings, and so for me to teach in the Gonpa under the painting of Machig Labdron is such an honor. Rinpoche's teachings are so unusual – there are lots of Tibetan lamas but there is nobody who teaches like he does or who has the dreams and revelations that he has.

The other thing about Merigar is that he actually physically worked here, put his energy into this land, this place. I recall that a friend of mine from the States who didn't know Rinpoche came here and asked where Rinpoche was, to which people replied that he was digging out the latrine. It was his first centre and he put a lot of his own energy into it and I feel that being here. I feel his presence very strongly and his blessings.

The Mirror: We understand that last year on behalf of Tara Mandala you signed an agreement with Rinpoche and the Dzogchen Community called *Dam Trog*. Can you tell us what this agreement involves now and in the future?

Lama Tsultrim: It was actually Rinpoche's idea to make this *Dam Trog* relationship between Tara Mandala and the Dzogchen Community. When he was at Tara Mandala, we were outside and did *sang* early in the morning in front of the Gonpa and when we came back inside he said, "I know what we should do. We should be *Dam Trog*."

The way I understand it is that we are connected through s*amaya*, but independent so we can make our own decisions and so on, but there is an acknowledgement of the connection and an honoring of that connection. I think it is a way to have Tara Mandala involved in the Dzogchen Community and at the same time be independent.

Rinpoche knows that we do other things and at the same time we are connected. So it seems like a category in the organizational structure that allows for that.

This is how I understand it and this is what the agreement says – that we are connected yet independent.

The Mirror: Recently the Dalai Lama has been talking about how the common ethics of Buddhism and other religions can enter the mainstream of modern life, but without all the religious trappings. What do you think about this secular approach and applying it in a practical way within our Sangha?

Lama Tsultrim: Well, I think there has to be the whole range. The most important thing in the world today really is that people figure out how to get along and stop hurting each other, so compassion is a universal need and goes beyond any religion or ceremony or form. And now mindfulness has also really gone into the mainstream. Both of these are two key components of Buddhism. So to be able to infuse Buddhism into the world without it being a religion is very important because the principles in Buddhism are so important. If people think that now they have to become Buddhists and do this or that, then that's a whole other level of them feeling that they're taking on something foreign. But if they are encouraged to just develop the capacities that they already have using these methods, then they don't feel like they are taking on something foreign.

That said, however, I also think it's important that traditions such as the Tibetan tradition, any of the Buddhist traditions, are kept intact. That we can have everything from the extreme such as mindfulness and compassion going into the mainstream without being called Buddhism and then at the other end of the spectrum really keeping, for example, Tibetan culture because the cultural aspects also have value. Tibetan culture is so rich. So what I'm saying is don't just throw away all that and go into mixing things to make them universal but holding the whole spectrum of the tradition is important – from the traditional cultural aspects all the way to these universal values that can benefit vast numbers of people.

For example, all around the world I teach 'Feeding Your Demons' to lots of people who don't know that it has Buddhist roots. The book is now in fifteen languages. But then at Tara Mandala we do very traditional things like *Drubchens* (ten day great accomplish-

ment ceremonies) and we make traditional tormas and do the traditional dances and so on, so that's what I mean about holding the whole spectrum. That it is important to find methods that make it accessible and not to have the images, the tradition, whatever, alienate people and, at the same time, not just throwing those away because they are also important.

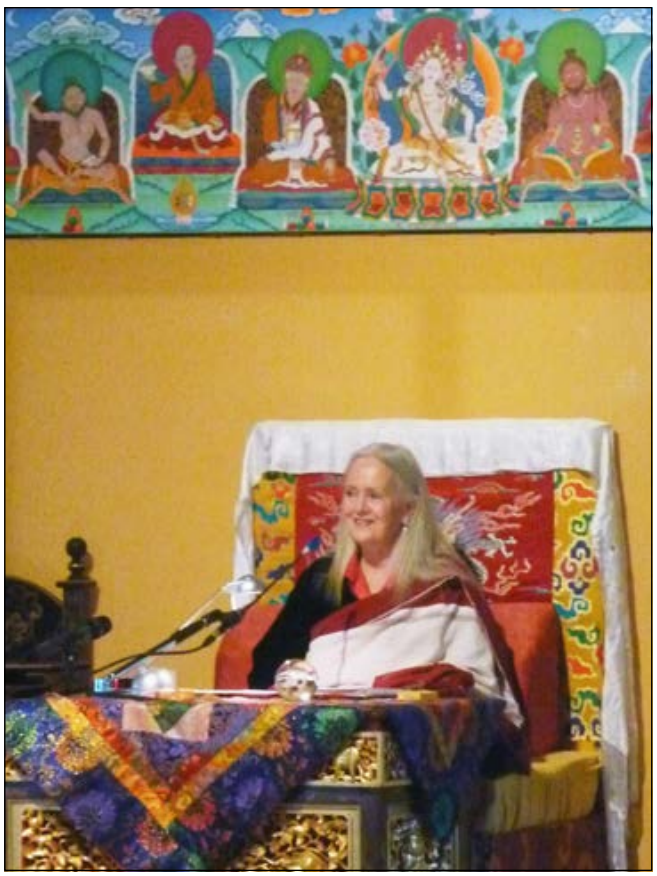
The Mirror: From the time that your book 'Women of Wisdom' was published, you have given a lot of emphasis to the importance of the female role in the Sangha. Why do you think it is so important to give emphasis to this aspect?

Lama Tsultrim: Well, it's not only to the female Sangha, it is the need for the sacred feminine in the whole world. In the process of writing 'Women of Wisdom', which I wrote really without much awareness of this, but just feeling that I, personally, needed the stories of women. After my daughter Chiara died, at that crucial moment, I wasn't finding support in reading Milarepa's biography or Padma Sambhava's life story. It wasn't helping me, and neither were the other male biographies that existed at that time.

But in the process of writing 'Women of Wisdom' I began to read other writings about the sacred feminine and realized that our world really is very out of balance, not only in the Buddhist tradition but also in the Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other traditions.

In most Buddhist retreats and in churches and so on, you find a majority present are women, but those in leadership positions are generally men. And so we need to rebalance and to have both voices represented. We need the presence of both male and female leadership, with both being valued equally. For me it is essential for the survival of the world, it is an urgent matter. Also I believe that women bring something different to the table and so it is not a matter of everybody being the same, but the genuine feminine voice is hopefully different. Right now the world is so out of balance, and even though we are not wearing burkas, in the West we are dictated to by fashion stereotypes or women intimating men in business suits. Where is the deeper sacred feminine that would nurture both genders? This is something I am interested in bringing forth.

So my idea is not that women or the feminine is better than the masculine, but that there needs to be a balance between them, which is also really emphasized in Vajrayana, with *yab yum* and female deities being equally as important as male deities. So it is in our tradition, but we need it in the whole world and this is something that the Dalai Lama is now talking about, that the Karmapa is talking about, it's needed. We need the balance. Karmapa has said publically he feels he is a man outside and a woman inside. The Dalai Lama referring to rising economic inequality around the globe, that the world needs leaders with compassion. He has also said that he might reincarnate as a woman. In his mind the world needs more female leaders. Whether this is true or not is debatable, but he has said it several times. Also if you look at Rinpoche's termas they are often connected to the sacred feminine through Jnana Dakini, Gomadevi, Mandarava and so on, this energy is being brought forth through him as well.



Lama Tsultrim at Merigar West for the recent Song of the Vajra retreat November 14–16, 2014. Photo by L. Granger

The Mirror: How do you apply Buddhist principles in your daily life and what do you advise your students to do?

Lama Tsultrim: There are several ways. One of them is an awareness of awareness, to bring the mind back from its outward journeys that lead to grasping at various things, to rest in the ground of being. That is a constant practice and to try to develop a habit of doing that so that there is a habit of resting in the nature of mind, rather than being carried away into distraction. So awareness is one important thing in daily life.

Another is an awareness of karma. We are always creating karma in our thoughts as well as our actions and in our speech. So to be aware that we are creating our future in our actions, this is something I also think is important.

And compassion, empathy, caring for others and really feeling not separate from others. If someone is suffering, they are connected to us, even if they are not our family or friends. Because of interdependence, somehow they are connected to us so to do whatever we can to relieve suffering. So I would say those three things: awareness of awareness, awareness of karma and development of compassion.

The Mirror: Throughout your life you have had many roles – Buddhist nun, wife, mother, disciple, spiritual guide and also grandmother. How do you think parents, grandparents and those caring for children can impart basic Buddhist principles to them?

Lama Tsultrim: The example of the mother is one of the primary examples in Mahayana Buddhism. The idea that all beings

» *continued on the following page*

» **Lama Tsultrim** *continued from previous page*
have been our mother because we have been born so many times that all beings have had that role of caring for us – of getting up in the middle of the night to take care of us, sacrificing as parents do – that is really part of the Mahayana. That image is used a lot.

For me being a grandmother is amazing. I'm really surprised by how in love I am with my grandchildren, by how much it's touching my heart to have them. It's magic just to see these new little beings and to see your children become parents. And they have a new appreciation for their mother [laughs], especially my daughters now that they are mothers – "Wow Mom. You had three!" So there is that level that I can share with them.

But I try to expand that beyond my own children and grandchildren to feel that sense of mother-love for all beings, for everyone that I am connected to – my students, my friends, people in my life, just to try to feel that motherly connection with everyone.

There is always that tendency to make your own special, which of course they are. You can't get around that. But at the same time not to have a non-equanimous relationship with others where you value your own but don't really care about others.

I teach quite a lot on the Four Immeasurables, one of which is equanimity. In that practice you visualize the person you are most attached to on one side, the person you don't like or find challenging on the other side, and a neutral person you don't really care about in front of you. And then during the practice you release those likes and dislikes and just be with both of them with loving compassion because the one you really like, even though you like liking them, it is a kind of tension that you are holding, to hold on to the person. And it works the other way – there's a lot of tension in not liking someone. And so to release that and rest in a feeling of one taste about both is, I think, an important practice – equanimity.

And so with children and grand-children, you have that special relationship and you have a special role in their lives, but to not have that be a way to eliminate or not value others.

The Mirror: Those were the questions that I wanted to ask you. Is there anything you would particularly like to comment on?

Lama Tsultrim: I recently realized that the internet is really potentially a very powerful Dharma tool because of the rapidness of communication. For example, right now with Tara Mandala we're doing a million mantras – the 20th Tara, which is Tara who wears a skirt of leaves and her speciality is epidemics – for an ebola campaign. So I realized the potentiality of the internet – you can have many people practicing at the same time and linking their mind streams to a certain purpose. And because the practice is so powerful, to use the internet – like during the worldwide transmissions that Rinpoche does or his other webcasts – it suddenly exponentially expands the amount of benefit that can come from the Dharma to people.

For example, when I was teaching the Song of the Vajra here at Merigar, I realized that when a group is singing the Song of the Vajra, the power is multiplied by the number of people, so if a hundred people are there it is a hundred times more powerful than if one person is sounding it. And also I was thinking about the sounding itself of the Song of the Vajra and putting that sound into the world. What if a million people on the earth were singing the Song of the Vajra at the same time and that sound was going out all around the world at the same time – that this would actually affect the earth.

Rinpoche is very advanced in his thinking about that and the idea of connecting at the same time he has been doing a lot longer than other people. So when that happens a field of energy is created and to me that is something very exciting and has a lot of potential.

The other thing that I wanted to mention is that it's very important at Merigar that Rinpoche's practices are really practiced and that people reach realization, not just doing a *tun* now and again, or going to a *ganapuja*. I see that the whole path is here, it's been given and people should really do practice and retreat and bring themselves to their complete potential and not just depend on him, thinking, 'I have an amazing teacher so I am amazing'. We have to come up to the level of the teacher and not ride on his magnificence but really apply and bring to fruition. ◎

Interview with Harvey Kaiser

An Artist in the Dzogchen Community

October 6, 2014

The Mirror: So Harvey, you are a musician and you have been so since when?

Harvey Kaiser: Since I was about 18 years old I have been playing music for people's listening and dancing pleasure and my sound journey has brought me to the Dzogchen Community.

M: So can you talk a little about your sound journey and your relationship to the Dzogchen Community?

HK: Well I started noticing that music really has an impact on people's behavior, feelings and attitudes, on how they function, whether they are listening to the radio or a video, a soundtrack or dancing and as a maker of music I have an acute viewpoint and notice how the quality, the style and intensity of music, the volume, the source, how all of that affects people in different ways.

I guess the first real breakthrough for me was in the early 70's when I became acquainted with a master Indian singer called Pandit Pranath, and among his disciples were Lamont Young, and Terry Reilly, and a school of New York minimalist composers. Lamont Young was an electronic musician at that time, and he was using the Vedic model, 5000 years old, of the drone and the drone, of course, is common to all Indian music, north and south, and is usually made by a tambura. The idea of acoustic sound and electronic sound raises some significant issues for me and maybe for the purpose of this discussion. So anyway, Lamont discovered that every pitch has a separate receptor on the brain, so if you tune the tambura in a perfect 5th, there are certain frequencies being generated, and people often say, "When we listen to Indian music its like real meditation", etc.

My personal involvement was with American jazz music. Someone who explored this in a significant way was John Coltrane. He traveled to India and he listened and experienced Indian music. There was a big movement in the 60's of Westerners trying to integrate Eastern music into their art form. We don't have really great documentation of this, but in 1886 at the Paris Exposition, Claude Debussy and Erik

Photo by N Zeitz

Satie and perhaps a host of others, heard Balinisian gamalen orchestras for the first time. That blew everybody away. And many of these composers, consciously and unconsciously, incorporated this aesthetic into their orchestral music – people talk about the beautiful, calming, peaceful aspect of Debussy's music. Well, American jazz musicians were also influenced by this French orchestral music, so everything is connected; we're on the planet, we're on this world global mandala, and it's larger than us individually and when artists seem to think they have to come up with something new and original, to make their mark on history, this is a delusion because there is nothing really new, there is just discovering what is already here. Everybody has to do that in their own process and time, and someone like Charlie Parker* who only lived to be 35 years old, made his discoveries very early in life and then he was done.

I am still working at my process, I had my 68th birthday, and the Song of the Vajra has been the next significant piece in my process because in the same way that the drone and tambura in the orchestral music of east and west induces a certain state of mind, the Song of the Vajra, which is more or less unique. I have done Vajrayana practice for a number of decades and there was nothing in that body of knowledge that I was aware of, that had the same impact as Rinpoche's teaching of the Song of Vajra. It's kind of an extension of this tambura idea, because there are a number of different pitches, and a number of different mantra-yanic syllables, that are stimulating a number of different receptors in our internal mandala, as well as in the head, heart and throat chakra.

For me, playing jazz music, which is what I still do and people tell me that even if I am playing the old tunes, my energy is different. They say that when I come up on the bandstand and join a very good group of proficient musicians, I bring something different and it informs the whole group dynamic. Music is a collaboration, unless you are playing solo piano style, so the quality of the collaboration, because everyone is sensitive to each other, is really about listening. The best music, jazz or otherwise, is when you get out of your own way and the ego takes a back seat and you become a channel for the sound of universe; the source of all sound. It's kind of hard to work in that way if you're showboating, if you're in the spotlight, if you're the big star, which is so prevalent here in America with the music industry. So that is really a different story. That's an external story and we're talking about more of an internal event, which then can be shared, if everyone is doing the same thing.

M: Do you think the nature of jazz is a more internal experience?
HK: Oh I think that's been my inner truth. I think that is one of the reasons jazz is not awfully popular anymore because as a listener you have to pay attention, you have to focus and dedicate time, and in fact, a dear friend of mine Burl Crone, made many jazz films on Public Television in the 70's and 80's and PBS said to him, we are really sorry but we're not going to be able to show your movies anymore, because the American audience doesn't have the attention span to listen to a jazz solo, so it is no longer prime time material. So what does one attribute this to as an artist and a musician? Well the 21st century has many distractions in the electronic field, which interrupts our mind-stream. So this is an issue for practitioners and meditators, because it is very easy to get seduced by technology and it is an important tool that we all use but it can also become an entrapment. I think it is a subtle energy source, and music is a subtle energy source, so there is a conflict of interest on a certain level.

M: Do you want to say a little about how you came into the Community?
HK: Interestingly, I came to the Community through music. One of my old colleagues, Chuck Stein, who was for many years a fine woodwind player and saxophonist. I met Chuck at Bard College when I was doing my MFA [Masters of Fine Arts]. So Chuck Stein asked me to give him a ride to Conway. When we arrived Rinpoche was finishing a week of a Goma Devi Retreat. This was May 2005. I had also met Barbara Leon [another practitioner from the Barrytown area] prior to this. Her husband was a supervisor in the BOCES school where I was working and he had a brunch and invited me over, he had had some contact with Mahayana Buddhism, and when I went over there Barbara asked, "Is this the Buddhist guy you told me about?" And he nodded yes and she grabbed me and spirited me up the side of the mountain to her mandala. She has had a mandala for many years and she is a wonderful dancer, and then I subsequently helped her repaint this mandala, and I didn't really know the dance, I watched her do the dance by herself, but I never saw a full mandala of dancers. So I had a clue, so to speak, and this is before I met Rinpoche.

M: You had been a practitioner of Vajrayana for many years, right?
HK: Yes and that is where I met Jim Valby in 1973 and 74.

M: So you went to the retreat and met Rinpoche?
HK: Yes and I got the transmission of the short Goma Devi practice; it was Sunday, the last day of the retreat. And when I was driving Chuck back, he said, "Gee, I wonder where Jim Valby was today.." and I said, "Jim Valby?!" and Chuck said, "Yea he is a translator for the Community and he makes books", and I said, "Jim Valby, the graduate of Professor Herbert Guenther's program?" and he said, "Yes" and I said, "Well I know Jim Valby." We had not seen each other for 35 years. So all of these mandala threads came together for us. And I am really happy to have been in the Community now for nine years. And I am getting ready to go back to Italy to do another concert cycle with another Vajra brother from the Akashmani Orchestra of Adriano Clemente, Ramano Consoli, another great saxophone player and I have been a guest on their new CD, which we are going to present.

M: Can you talk a little about how the Dzogchen teachings have impacted your music?
HK: The teachings have absolutely impacted my music. People have different notions of what jazz is. Its been academized in the last 20 years and there is a process of teaching

» continued on the following page

›› **Harvey Kaiser** *continued from previous page*
jazz which has become far removed from the oral tradition of what jazz really is and in that regard makes it very similar to East Indian music. There is a lineage of master to disciple, where you have to sing before you play the instrument. And in the study and practice of American jazz music, you have to sing what you want to play before you can play it. If you can't hear it in your mind, if you don't have the inner space, which is not cluttered with a lot of static and interruption, you don't have the presence of mind to have this inner experience of hearing the music that you are attempting to express through your instrument. So there is a vocalization, an internal psychological process, and then what happens as a result is that you begin to play that on your instrument. So as the mind becomes more fertile in this regard of having the capacity to do this, which is kind of like a practitioner; it's very similar, we talk about being distracted, we talk about emptiness, we talk about being able to do a Vajrayana style practice, you need to have a certain calm state. So playing improvised music is very much like this.

And that is what jazz really is about. Just memorizing a lot of phrases and becoming fluent at regurgitating, some people think that that's jazz, but that is really lacking soul; the heart, the open heart, the heart energy which informs the technique of the music. It has to be imbued with this subjective power and as a practitioner I think working with the practices and the Guruyoga especially, has sort of facilitated this capacity for me. For some it happens later and for some it happens early on, bright flames sometimes burn out really soon. I am really content to be sort of a slow boat to China, and really enjoy the fruit of my years. I guess I am an old timer at 68 in the world of jazz, if you check the biographies. There's no fast rule about how long a musician is going to endure. But I am grateful in this regard, to discover what is working as I go along.

M: You've also been involved a lot in the musical renditions of the Song of Vajra, like the beautiful video they did in Tenerife with the choir and musicians, and also related to Rinpoche's wish to have live music performed when people are dancing. Can you talk a little about that?

HK: Costantino Albini first shared this with us when he came to Conway to lead a Chöd retreat some years ago. The Vajra Hall was a pile of sand and girders before other things started to manifest, and we did a first Ganapuja to be done in the Vajra Hall with the beginnings of a live orchestra; there were just 3 of us. Costantino shared that it was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's intention and vision in terms of his own *terma* experience, that there were to be live singers and musicians sitting around the edge of the mandala. So that was the beginning of the idea that we had to have the Vajra Orchestra and not just use CD's. The CD's are practical of course when we are learning to do the dance, but when there are auspicious occasions, when the Master is visiting, when you are doing something on a larger scale, to have such an orchestra. The second opportunity was an invitation to visit Tenerife at the inception of Dzamling Gar and this took place at a local hotel up at the end of the highway in Playa Paraiso. We had a great filmmaker Hans Hansen and a gathering of international singers and players and we rehearsed in the hall and on the roof of the hall, where all the filming took place. We rehearsed the singing first, you see that was Costantino's prime objective to get us all to sing the Song of the Six Spaces, in tune and with inflection and intonation. So we would spend the morning singing and after we had gotten connected through the voice, and then we began to play our instruments.

If you don't mind, I would like to relay a small story that recently happened related to the topic of this interview. I played at a wedding this past Saturday and it was a unique opportunity to regroup the old band and play for the wedding for a young woman who used to hear the band when she was a teenager years ago. So there we were under a tent in upstate NY in the rain, playing this wonderful old acoustic jazz. The band was made up of real top shelf guys who came up from NYC, and we brought our collaborative expertise to this occasion. The people really enjoyed the music, there were young people who were accustomed to DJs etc, in fact the groom is a professional DJ, but he acceded to his bride's wish to have us at their wedding. So two-thirds of the way into the reception one of the guests had a cardiac event, and, of course, a pall descended on the whole wedding party. So 100 people are left in shock and how do you get a party going when you have another hour left to play; they are all worried about what is going to happen to their friend and relative. So we looked at each other and said wow what do we open with now? So the piece that I chose was the very wonderful and gentle Mood Indigo of Duke Ellington, it is a trio, very soft and very gentle; the sounds of these horns and the instrumental brought people up a notch and before 15 minutes went by, they were up and dancing in a way that they hadn't been dancing. Everybody was relieved and happy and the band was really vibrating beautifully and then, I have to say, when we finished then came the DJ. The music was at a decibel level that was beyond conversation.

Our bodies are 80% water and water is very much affected by sound vibrations, if we change the sound of the universe that we are channeling, if you want to talk about dharmakaya, the sound of A, manifestation of sound light and rays, if you technologically tweak this, sure it's a part of it, everything is an extension of the original sound, but in terms of what our experience is as a human being body, the goal posts are being changed a bit. And the effect that it had on me and my colleagues as we were packing up is that we became agitated, we became hurried, we were trying to escape from this onslaught on our senses, and the whole energy of how we felt was quite different from an hour before when we were bringing these people back from this tragic occurrence. So here was a very concrete example of stuff that we talk about, that we want to think we know something about, that you asked me to talk about and three days ago I can say with certainty that yes it is true, sound, light and rays, that's what's happening and if we want to evolve in a positive and harmonious way, we cannot deny this and many of the things that have been offered to us, sold to us, insisted to upon us, if that means anything, are not really that helpful in many cases. That's all for today. ◎

Focus on Dzamling Gar

Dzamling Gar Khaita dancers participate in the El Tablero Rural Festival of Arts in Tenerife.

Dzamling Gar, The Global Gar

Dzamling Gar, which has just celebrated its first birthday, is one of the youngest Gars in the International Dzogchen Community and has been designated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as the Global Gar. This issue of The Mirror is dedicated to reporting on its current status and developments. Herein you will find information on gakyil activities, an update from the Gar's on-site engineer, an interesting and extensive account of the work of public relations, a statement from the mayor of the Gar's municipality, Adeje, and a piece from one of our academics who has already stepped up to participate in the collaboration with the University of La Laguna (ULL). In addition, we have a report from one of our sister sanghas, Sangha Rimey, outlining the collaboration between our Communities.

Where?

The Gar is located in the town of Playa Paraiso in the southern part of the island of Tenerife, the largest of the Canary Islands, a Spanish archipelago situated in the Atlantic Ocean off the northwest coast of Africa, 100 km west of the southern border of Morocco. Being on the same latitude as the Sahara Desert, Tenerife has a warm climate year-round although the southern part of the island, where the Gar is situated is much warmer and drier in the winter than the north. The island is dominated by Mount Teide, an active volcano with its peak at 3718m, mostly snow covered in winter. The surrounding area of Teide National Park, designated a World Heritage Site by UNESCO, is a wonderful place for hiking, cycling and other outdoor activities. Furthermore, the Observatorio del Teide, at an altitude of 2390m, is considered to be one of the world's major observatories due to its excellent astronomical seeing conditions.

How the Gar was established

Dzamling Gar opened its doors to the world for its official Inauguration November 15–18, 2013. As a place for all worldwide Gars and Lings of the International Dzogchen Community, it is the fruition of Rinpoche's vision for "everybody and everywhere" to collaborate and enjoy. While this large-scale project is still a work in progress, it has rapidly become the heart of the International mandala.

However, there is quite a long story of how the Dzogchen Community came upon this piece of land in this place. Those involved in the search spent a long time looking for this land and were not sure about what could be found and where the best place was because there are so many different aspects to Tenerife. At the beginning they considered that perhaps the north part of the island would be more 'natural' with its beautiful coast, and abundant nature. But they suddenly realized that the climate in the south of the island was much more clement, particularly in the winter months, and since it was difficult to find land in the south they spent much longer looking for the place of the future Gar.

The piece of land that is now Dzamling Gar was actually one of the first that they found, however, they thought it would be impossible to buy because of budget, because of size, because of difficulties. But then they gradually understood that the Master had this piece of land in mind and, by chance, it was a moment when this land became available because of many factors and it was possible to buy it. So this was the beginning of the story. [In a future issue we would like to present first hand accounts of that process, so, if you were involved or know others that were, let us know. In the coming months while in Tenerife we hope to interview people.]

The Gar

The property that was to become Dzamling Gar was already half-built, so there was a situation created for tourists already in place that is now being gradually transformed for the needs of the International Dzogchen Community.

The thirteen houses on the land are almost totally built and the purpose of some of them was determined during the inauguration of the Gar when Chögyal Namkhai

» *continued on the following page*

Preparations for the 2015 season

Ilaria Faccioli

The Dzamling Gar gakyil is currently busy with the restyling of the Gonpa (a new wooden platform for Rinpoche's chair was recently made), finding sponsors for the retreats and preparing Rinpoche's house.

2015 Retreats

Regarding the 2015 retreats with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Dzamling Gar has decided to follow Rinpoche's advice about the Paramita of Generosity, which means there will be no fixed fee for participating in the retreats. Participation will be by donation. The gakyil would like to let people know that this does not mean that the retreats are for free, because each retreat has a budget of costs. They ask everyone to donate according to their possibilities, remembering to apply generosity in order to help people with fewer possibilities to attend - particularly local people, some of whom have been involved in Joyful Dances and have shown interest in attending the teachings.

As Rinpoche has reminded us, generosity, the first of the Six Paramitas, has three aspects, the first being the Gift of the Teaching, in this case creating favourable conditions for others to receive the Dharma.

We ask those people who have more possibilities to sponsor at least part of a retreat by contacting the yellow gakyil and offering their support – yellow.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net.

A Lift for Rinpoche's House

The main construction of Rinpoche's house has been completed and we are very happy that he was able to move in at the beginning of April 2014. Currently Rinpoche's apartment at Dzamling Gar consists of two floors where he, his family and guests will stay during the time they are here. However,

Rinpoche's house.

» ***The Global Gar*** *continued from previous page*

Norbu specified that some of them would be used and shared by the Gars of the same name – Dzamling Gar, Merigar, Kunsangar, Tsegyalgar, Tashigar, Namgyalgar, and Samten Gar, the new Gar in Asia.

The plan to develop Dzamling Gar is in three phases. The first and second phases are well under way and involve developing the lower and middle parts of the land, which include the current gonpa tent, the cafeteria and the basement area, the swimming pool and the houses.

The third phase comprises the completion of the huge unfinished structure on the upper part of the land. Due to its size alone this part of the development presents a major challenge and will need a lot of sustained effort and energy to complete. The reward will be the center of Dzamling Gar, places for healing, gathering and practicing, with splendid views of the ocean.

In the meantime, in the midst of so much construction work, thanks to the consistent efforts and dedication of a number of people, the Gar is becoming embellished with colorful, lush, tropical plants and trees – a real paradisiacal oasis for the senses and the spirit.

As Rinpoche says in the Dzamling Gar Song that he composed:

Dzogchen Communities of the whole world,
As soon as possible, in a relaxed manner, come to Dzamling Gar
Happiness is present,
All is perfected nothing is missing
Come to enjoy happiness,
Let's enjoy this happiness together! ◎

right now, the two sections of the apartment are not joined and it is necessary to use a set of stairs outside of the building in order to move from one part of the house to another.

For this reason we want to install a lift inside the house so that he can move freely from one part to another without having to go outside.

We warmly invite you to become a sponsor for this project:
http://www.projects.dzamlinggar.net/support-the-global-gar-main/development?view=campaign&id=130

Sustain the Gar's Beautiful Gardens!

The Gar's gardens are flowering and looking more beautiful each day thanks to the dedication of our gardeners, but to continue watering them and buy new plants we need your help.

In Dzamling Gar we have both ornamental and permaculture gardens. Both have precise and systematic watering and irrigation methods that aim to use only the water that is really needed. Our Gar is in a semi arid climate, therefore knowing how to use this precious natural resource is crucial to the sustainability of the gardens. Still, the amount of water needed to nourish our ever-expanding gardens is substantial and this is expensive!

By helping us to water the gardens, you truly are giving the gift of life, not only supporting the life of the plants but the whole life cycle of the animals that live on the Gar!
http://www.projects.dzamlinggar.net/support-the-global-gar-main/maintenance?view=campaign&id=129

Fill a Jar for Dzamling Gar

We are also working on peer to peer fundraising with an initiative called **Fill Your jar for Dzamling Gar** that was suggested by the Gdansk ling in Poland. They have asked everyone to join them in a very simple and nice FUNd-raising campaign - filling a jar at home with all of your small coins between now and January 2015.

You can see all the details on our Facebook page: Fill a Jar for Dzamling Gar https://www.facebook.com/groups/307098496161205 and read about it in The Mirror http://melong.com/?p=2867

Practising at the Gar

I just want to add that Dzamling Gar has been very active with Khaita. There is a daily session of Joyful Dances every day at the Gar. Since Rinpoche left we have been dancing almost every day and also studying new dances with the videos on the Khaita YouTube channel. Since the inauguration of the Gar in November 2013 we have been invited by the local authorities to present Joyful Dances on many public occasions. We have also been practicing Vajra Dance every day. An ongoing beginners course was done in August and September and an advanced one in October. In addition there has been a long weekend dedicated to the OM A HUM irregular form and a Six Spaces course for beginners. Since October Sasha Pubants has been leading a SMS base course twice a week, studying and practicing together as well as a course on the Ganapuja: melodies, mudras and other aspects.

Dzamling Gar is our sangha's Global Gar so everyone is invited to come and enjoy the place and the atmosphere, but also to share the responsibility to accomplish Rinpoche's vision of a Gar where the entire Dzogchen Community can collaborate to make it a place for the Dzogchen treasure to manifest in its self-perfected state. ◎

Photo and top photo by Carles Jañez Brucet

Work on the Dzamling Gar swimming pool is nearly finished with the inauguration planned for New Year's Eve.

Update on Construction Work at Dzamling Gar

Giovanni Boni, one of the architects for the Dzamling Gar project, gives an update on the work that has been done on the project at the Gar in the last few weeks.

At the end of September an updated program of the works that have been done on the individual houses belonging to the Gars was prepared. Work is currently going ahead on the external part of the individual houses that were allotted last year to Merigar, Kunsangar, Tsegyalgar, Tashigar, Namgyalgar as well as for the new Gar in Asia, Samten Gar. The program has been sent to Rinpoche and to the Dzamling Gar Gakyil who will inform the different Gars and the people in charge of the houses about the work that has been done there and how it is progressing.

The works on the external part of the houses and the area surrounding them includes exterior masonry, exterior painting, stair handrails, aluminum fittings, external connecting plumbing, installing link and power input, structural repair, systems for collecting greywater (wastewater generated from wash hand basins, showers and baths, which can be recycled), sanitation facilities, telecommunications, and lighting.

Currently about 80% of the systems for water and electricity have been completed. The external restructuration of the houses has gone ahead and will most probably be finished in December. The pathways linking the houses to the rest of the Gar have not been completed yet because during the other works they may get spoiled.

In the estimates that were initially sent to each Gar with a request to cover the costs of all the external work (45,000 euro for each Gar), the external door and window fittings to seal the houses, were not included. For this reason they have not been ordered yet.

In response to Dzamling Gar's request to the international Gars to participate in the costs of the external restructuration listed above, some Gars have sent more money while others have sent less. You can consult Dzamling Gar's webpage on Supporting the Global Gar [http://www.projects.dzamlinggar.net/support-the-global-gar-main/development?view=category&id=55] to see the current situation regarding the donations to each of the Gar houses.

The Pool and a Lift for Rinpoche's House

The most important works that the Gar is trying to finish before the end of the year and the Master's arrival are the large swimming pool at the entrance to the Gar – works there also include the external part, the showers, the surrounding paths – and the construction of a lift for Rinpoche's house to link the upper and lower floor so that the house will be more comfortable for him because the upper part of the house is a bit small for him to live in. In addition there ongoing works to prepare the Gonpa and the area below the cafeteria so that they can be used during the retreats. The idea is to organize a new year's eve party to inaugurate the swimming pool.

The most important point now is that all the Gars participate in sending the amounts that have been requested for the external work around their individual houses. ◎

Dzamling Gar – Outreaching to the Island

Ana Sanchez

The following is a short report of activities I began as blue gakyil in 2013 and have continued since becoming the public relations representative for Dzamling Gar in March of this year. Some of the results of my meetings and presentations have taken the form of Khaita Joyful Dances presentations, the promotion of Tibetan culture and the deepening of relations with Universidad de la Laguna.

Since April, my focus has been on connecting to the municipality of Adeje and local associations. Khaita Joyful Dances gave presentations to diverse audiences, ranging from students and their families in the closing ceremony of the school year, to residents of El Tablero, a borough of the capital Santa Cruz, in its annual festival to preserve their rural lifestyle. These presentations have had the importance not only to show the dances to a wider public but also to place us within an institutional network that promotes interculturalism, and harmonious coexistence in society while preserving cultural heritages.

This is how we joined the 5th Open Space Forum in La Laguna in June. The Forum is a working meeting aimed at sharing ideas to build together different social realities, launched by the celebrated initiative Together in the Same Direction/Juntos en la Misma Dirección. This strategy is linked to the Department of External Affairs of the Cabildo (government) of Tenerife and the Tenerife Immigration Observatory (OBITen). In this forum I took part in two discussion groups: one on Interculturalism, with Asociación El Patio de las Culturas and the other on Interreligious Dialogue, with representatives of the Hindu, Baha'i and Hare Krishna communities, citizens and students from La Laguna University (ULL).

It is of great value to attend these events and develop an understanding of how society, university, municipalities and government agencies work and develop together here in Tenerife. Getting to know local needs and aspirations, as well as existing programs, enables us to hone the content and format of our proposals. Establishing good rapport, we received more invitations for dance presentations in events.

That is how we joined the Grupo de Participación Ciudadana/Citizen Participation Group in El Fraile. After a Khaita Joyful Dances presentation at the Intercultural Festival of Traditional Dances and Games/ I Jornada de Bailes y Juegos Tradicionales (July), I returned to El Fraile for a meeting to evaluate the event. This led to my participation in organizing an event to discuss the concept of solidarity and how the elderly are treated in their countries of origin. For this event, the First Intercultural Panel on Customs/I Jornada Intercultural de Costumbres,

Dzamling Gar sent our geko, Thupten Rabgyi as a panelist. This was a very special moment as it marked the first collaboration of Ghe Pel Ling, Center for Buddhist Studies of the Canarias with Dzamling Gar. Tibetan society was our theme. We brought the Tibetan and Ghe Pel Ling, the translator (into Spanish). They teamed up very well and the presentation was very fluid!

Tibetan Buddhism has considerable representation in Tenerife. There are two Kagyupa centers in the north, a Rigpa center in the capital Santa Cruz and Ghe Pel Ling (Mahayana) here in Adeje. Driven by our attitude of non-sectarianism and willingness to have partners to promote Tibetan cultural events, in 2013 we approached Ghe Pel Ling. Warmly greeted, we discovered that we shared the same ideals with respect to culture and education. The founder of Rigpa, Sogyal Rinpoche, and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche are personal friends and when it coincides that they are in Barcelona for their teachings, they always meet and spend some time together. In 2012 they talked about meeting in Tenerife as well. Our contact with the Rigpa organizers in Barcelona naturally led us to the Rigpa center in Santa Cruz, extending the friendship.

In August 2014, we took an important step by promoting a meeting with Rigpa and Ghe Pel Ling. We talked about creating a network of dharma centers throughout the Canary Islands. One possibility is to create a platform to let people know about the centers and the teachings and activities offered. We discussed the possibility of organizing an itinerant exhibition of Nick Dudka's thangkas and of organizing ourselves to belong to the European Buddhist Union.

In 2008, the European Buddhist Union obtained an official participatory status in the Council of Europe. Its mission is to facilitate international exchange and spiritual friendship and to support social actions and ideas that express Buddhist values. This coincides with the goal of all of us of identifying and joining programs to be socially active. We ended this first meeting with the purpose of inviting the Kagyupa and the Zen Buddhist representatives to join this conversation. Professor Francisco Diez de Velasco (Historian of Religions, ULL), an acquaintance of all of us, was informed of our project and asked to support us, when time and circumstances lead us to work with the university, another common goal.

Photo by Carles Jañez Brucet

In this flow of auspicious connections, in September Lama Denys Rinpoche (Karma Ling, France) and a group from Rimay Sangha came to Playa Paraiso for a visit and we also enjoyed time together. We organized a meeting with Prof. Diez de Velasco and Prof. Maria Teresa Miro (Faculty of Psychology, researcher in Mindfulness, connected to Mind and Life Institute) in La Laguna University to introduce Lama Denys Rinpoche, his projects for Tenerife and of collaboration with Dzamling Gar. Conversations are taking place and we expect an Open Mindfulness program with Lama Denys Rinpoche to be held in ULL in 2015.

Since 2010, the first time Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche taught in Tenerife and when we had the First Tibetan Cultural Week, Prof. Diez de Velasco has been an important collaborator for us. Author of *Buddhism in Spain*, he first approached the Dzogchen Community in Barcelona, whose beautiful center Kundusling is portrayed in his book. In 2013, when we started to gather information on how to obtain the status of educational and research institution for the

IDC / SSI, the indications led us to deepen our collaboration with Prof. Diez de Velasco. Prof. Emilia M. Carmona Calero, Director of Secretariat at the Vice Rectorate of Relations University and Society advised us to find opportunities for professors who are members of the IDC to start taking part in activities at ULL.

Once presented with our project, Prof. Diez de Velasco agreed to take part. We started contacting members of the IDC teaching in universities around the world. The first task was: to join a "restricted working seminar" with professors and post-graduate students at ULL. This kind of seminar evaluates academic life, research and publications, as well as identifying common interests to establish partnerships. At the conclusion of such seminars a program of activities is drawn up.

Due to its relevance for Prof. Diez de Velasco' studies and also for another member of this group, Prof. Alfonso Miguel Garcia Hernandez, anthropologist, thanatologist, and professor at the Nursing School, death was the first subject chosen.

Elias Capriles, from Universidad de los Andes, Venezuela, was the professor who showed interest in this initiative and applied for the restricted working seminar. In December 2013 we visited the Universidad de la Laguna accompanied by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Enrico Dell'Angelo, to greet the institution at the dawn of this partnership. Enrico Dell'Angelo made an inspiring presentation about the International Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies and, upon request, Rinpoche told the small audience about his experience of being educated in Tibet and then going to teach and research in the western educational system. They left right after and work with Elias Capriles took place for the whole afternoon.

» continued on the following page

The Mayor of Adeje (second row standing, 4th from left in white shirt with Gekö Rabjye on his left) and representatives of cultural and religious associations at the launching of Adeje Together.

» **Outreaching** *continued from previous page*

All pleased, the decision to apply for the Summer University in Adeje with a course on Buddhism was taken. As we left the Faculty building, we visited the Aula Magna of this campus envisioning the first event this partnership would promote. Unfortunately, some circumstances dismantled our plan and for 2014 no event was organized.

We kept in touch and discussed the concept for our partnership: academic events, public events, collaboration with society, events taking place in ULL, Adeje (through its Cultural Center, Summer University and others) and at Dzamling Gar. Science, education, culture, solidarity will be integrated in the proposals. Exchange between Institutions will be sought. The agreement signed between Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Arura Foundation in 2013 (at the closing of III Tibetan Culture Week) continues to be a reference to us. In this sense, we are working to promote the next working seminar with ULL in 2015.

Regarding Prof. Miro's Mindfulness treatment and research program, we asked her to give some thought to including Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Khaita Joyful Dances among the therapeutic resources in the program she runs. She showed interest in doing so.

Out of the need to communicate ourselves to institutions in a professional and visually appealing way, we started building a portfolio. The process made us understand its value for other Spanish speaking communities. Once it is done, this portfolio will not only be shared. It has a feature that will guarantee it will become a live resource: we have included a section called La Comunidad De Todos/The Community of All of Us. There is a selection of events, activities, and services of the worldwide community which have been offered to society through its instructors, gakyil, community members, etc. Examples: Yantra Yoga classes in a psychiatric hospital in Peru. Vajra Dance course for people with special needs in Venezuela. New activities will be uploaded to this portfolio as they happen. This will also become a tool to shorten the distance between communities. We can share know-how and promote each other as part of the same great initiative.

From all of this one can envision how great our chances are to deepen relations with educational, social and cultural institutions and engage in meaningful social activities. For this to be effective, engaged community members are needed, people who will take the project as their own, who are native speakers, fluent in the Spanish language or are dedicated to learning it.

One of the conditions for integration is the skill of communication. We are an international community and by choice, took English as the common language. This is a touristic area, but local people are not fluent in English. So it is a sign of respect and appreciation that we learn Spanish and also in our dealings with institutions and organizations it is imperative that we comply with their timing and procedures.

This abundance of opportunities is here for those who want to come to Tenerife and not be an island. We are devoted to building a gar for our global community but we must keep perspective, and so, at the same time, build pathways to belong in the local community.

Dzamling Gar, different from all the other gars, is seated on the street, having neighbors all around. Could we have a better metaphor for the task to integrate in society?

To dedicate myself to this accomplishment, in the early days of the global gar, has been an honor and a gift for me. ◎

José Miguel Rodríguez Fraga, Mayor of Adeje

It has been an honour for the borough of Adeje to welcome the Dzamling Gar centre, part of the Dzogchen Tibetan community, into its environs. In Adeje we are lucky to have people from more than 120 different nationalities from all corners of the world living here, and we have built a society where people live in harmony, where there is respect for different beliefs and cultures. Adeje was delighted to welcome the Dzogchen community and people have been taking part in the activities, the dances and workshops and of course we celebrated the Tibetan New Year together. From the Adeje council we continue to offer our help with all of the projects and initiatives which contribute to the broadening of the bonds of friendship and affection in the community and this is something we are achieving thanks to the collaboration of everyone in our borough.

Festival Rural de Creación 'Las Eras de El Tablero'

(Rural Festival of arts creation: The Threshing Places in El Tablero)

Carlos Mora, organizing member

El Tablero is a country village located in the southwest area of Tenerife Island. The village has a rural landscape and quality of life and defends its historical roots, which are still alive. Life on El Tablero goes ahead quietly and peacefully, a quality of life inherited from its origins in the eighteenth century. Nowadays this village can be considered like an isolated oasis in the capital city since it is only 10 minutes away from the city centre.

Over the years, life and times on the island have been changing and evolving. Many small towns and villages have become cities, but other places have tried to keep their identity, like our village. They did this by maintaining agricultural and small farm works, and never forgetting their cultural origins.

During the last 20 years urban planners pinpointed El Tablero as a place to create a new residential area, which could have been the beginning of the "end", but a new innovative idea to defend the area was created – The Festival.

A combination of rural stages, "the threshing places" (Las Eras), opened the way to present creative and artistic performances like dance, painting (on street walls or pictures), as well as all types of music, sculpture etc.

This cultural meeting invites public visitors to share our way of life that revolves around arts, rural life and culture. Painters and poets from Lanzarote island have participated in the Festival, as well as contemporary dancers from Gran Canaria island, with a very important welcome to Dzamling Gar, which brought Tibetan modern dance to the Festival, but also a message of Tibetan culture, a land that maintains its "identity" through its Arts and Culture just like we do in El Tablero. ◎

Cooperation is Stronger than Competition

Ossel
for Denys Rinpoche & the Rimay Community

The connections between the Dzogchen Community and the Sangha Rimay in France [the community of practitioners linked to the inherited transmission of Khyabjé Kalou Rinpoche and his successor Denys Rinpoche] first started during a meeting between Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Kalu Rangjung Kunchab when Lama Denys was his assistant. From the inspiration of this early meeting many connections between the two communities were made over the years.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was invited and came several times to Shangpa Karma Ling in France for teachings, and Lama Denys Rinpoche requested him to bring the Vajra dances into the Rimay community, which he agreed and encouraged. All these connections led to what has been called a "*damdrö*", a "samaya alliance" between both communities and teachers, which is a very good example of bodhisattva cooperation in an open *rimay* attitude.

Recently this cooperation took a closer dimension with the founding of Dzamling Gar. I came as Denys Rinpoche's personal assistant to represent him at the inauguration [in November 2013]. Two months later he came to Tenerife, looking for a warmer place for winter, inspired by the example of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and very happy to connect with him and the Dzogchen Community. Some fruitful and inspiring exchanges started, and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu invited Lama Denys Rinpoche to participate in a conference at La Laguna University. That was a good occasion to connect with the university and particularly to provide teachings through an open, non-religious and secular approach, which has been a long-term orientation for both.

Along those lines, a couple of months ago, Lama Denys Rinpoche, Ana Sanchez and I initiated a partnership with the University of La Laguna to implement an Open Mindfulness course with the university. We also discussed the possibility of starting mindfulness retreats within Dzamling Gar's 2015 program, with the Open Mindfulness program Denys Rinpoche has developed in recent years (over 8 days or 8 weeks) and, possibly, also with a presentation of contemplation based on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's book "The Mirror: advice on the presence of awareness" interfacing and setting the Open Mindfulness secular program within the traditional Mahayana and Dzogchen formulation.

Fortunately, due to auspicious circumstances we were able rent the house where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu stayed before he moved in his personal house in the Gar. This will give us the opportunity to spend the winter 2015 there and to study how to further cooperation. Different possibilities are considered, all depending upon circumstances.

Also, since Lama Denys Rinpoche has been president of the European Buddhist Union and worked a long time with UNESCO,

» continued on the following page

Elias Capriles comments on the importance of the partnership with Universidad de la Laguna (ULL) and the Dzogchen Community

One of the important things that the Dzogchen Community at Merigar achieved was to establish a network of constructive relationships with the authorities in the Arcidosso area. Now that the Dzogchen Community (DC) has established Dzamling Gar as the Global Gar on Tenerife Island, it is important that we achieve the same here. And it seems that it is being achieved, for the Mayor of Adeje, the area to which Playa Paraíso belongs, and various Adeje town councillors attended the inauguration of the Gar, and the Adeje Council has collaborated with Rinpoche and the DC, having hosted a lecture by Rinpoche at the Council's theater and open air cultural activities in Adeje.

It was also a great fortune to have established contact with Professor Francisco Diez de Velasco – definitely the most important Historian of Religions in Spain – who sits at the Chair of History of Religions, University of La Laguna (ULL), and is an advisor to the Religions and Cults Department of the Spanish Ministry of Justice. In fact, Professor Diez and the ULL have participated in a series of events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and DC academics including Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, Elio Guarisco, Giacomella Orofino and myself – as well as the head of the Rimay Sangha and Dzogchen Community associate Lama Denys Rinpoche.

True enough, the DC and SSI have an ample academic career, since our Master taught for many years at the Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples and was the teacher of many of the top Italian Tibetologists and of quite a few non-Italian, and although his Italian colleagues initially rejected the aspects of his research that contradicted the views of Giuseppe Tucci – the most important Italian Tibetologist at the time and the man who brought Rinpoche to Italy – they finally ended up adopting Rinpoche's views.

Likewise, many DC scholars teach and research at Universities throughout the world. And, moreover, the Shang Shung Institute UK and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of London University have established a joint lecturing program. However, so far as I know this might well be the first time that the DC and the Shang Shung Institute (SSI) have established regular exchanges with a country's most important historian of religions and the main University and in the area where a DC Gar has been established – an event that, since Rinpoche spends several months every year at the Gar, might offer unprecedented possibilities and as such might be a milestone in the history of the DC and SSI.

It was also fortunate that Professor Diez was very happy with the enumeration of the defects of psychedelics from a Dzogchen point of view I offered in Vol. IV of my 2013 book *The Beyond Mind Papers*, which contrasts with the naïve views concerning the substances in question of some Spanish Buddhists, and, more important, that I had the opportunity of introducing him to the true colors of the so-called "New Kadampas:" I offered him, as a pdf file, the Book by Stephan Boyer *The Cult of Tara*, which describes the heinous crimes committed by Pawonkha in Eastern Tibet during the early twentieth century and which he read avidly, and showed him the book by Raimondo Bultrini *The Dalai Lama and the King Demon*, which describes the crimes ascribed to the sect toward the end of the twentieth century, and which then he ordered through the Internet. He commented that he always suspected there was something more substantial behind the conflict between the splinter sect and H.H. the Fourteenth Dalai Lama than the mere purported banning of the cult of a supposed deity. This may be particularly useful because through Professor Diez the Department of Cults of the Spanish Ministry of Justice might become aware of the true colors of the splinter sect, and because that heinous sect has a center in La Laguna (Tenerife). ◎

Elias Capriles

» **Cooperation** *continued from previous page*

he often stresses the importance of cooperating and networking saying that "cooperation is stronger than competition, which is particularly true in the context of Dharma. Unfortunately many water their branches but do not water the roots". Therefore we sincerely and deeply rejoice at this inter-community cooperation. It is very important for the transmission in the West and it has to open beyond narrow minded and narcissistic self-satisfaction. For the good of the dharma in general and all its branches it is very important to have deep exchanges and cooperation, in a friendly and open way. This is certainly a main cause for the success of the diffusion of dharma in the West and is a win-win strategy.

"Since it is quite rare nowadays to see such cooperation between two communities, I am very happy that we could do that *damdrö* and I pay homage to the realisation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for having this openness and compassionate vision." ◎

Lama Denys Rinpoche

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, One of the Honored "Women Healers of the World"

By Dr. Diane Kramer
Buddhist Psychologist and Treasurer, Gakyil, Dzogchen Community of America

A new book, "Women Healers of the World, The Traditions, History and Geography of Herbal Medicine", by Holly Bellebuono, has just been published. One of the featured healers is Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, head of the International School of Tibetan Medicine of the Shang Shung Institute.

In the Introduction to "Women Healers of the World", Holly Bellebuono writes: "The women in this book have many similarities: "They are all remarkable, hard-working, kindhearted women who pursue their life's passion with drive and a sense of purpose..." She continues: "Dr. Phuntsog studied with her aunt and older brother the ancient Tibetan Medical Practices that she now fervently shares with the world."

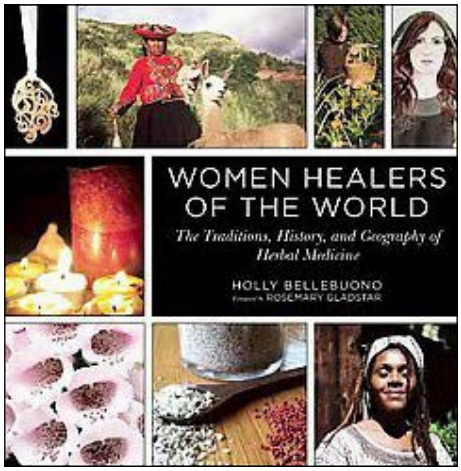
Before learning about this book, my interest in Tibetan Medicine and Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo had already intensified, based on this story:

One of my fellow Gakyil members told me that Dr. Phuntsog had solved her blood pressure problem - her blood pressure would not stay regulated no matter what medicines her doctor prescribed. She and her Western doctor were both seriously concerned.

My friend visited Dr. Phuntsog during the last retreat at Tsegyalgar East last summer, 2014. Dr. Phuntsog examined her, using Tibetan Medical Practices, and prescribed herbal pills, diet, and massage. Amazingly, upon returning home, my fellow Gakyil member's blood pressure settled into a consistent normal range. Her Western doctor was astonished and now wants to meet Dr. Phuntsog.

As my interest in Dr. Phuntsog deepened, circumstances ripened and I had the good fortune to hear Dr. Phuntsog speak about plans for the Tibetan Medicine School, to meet with Dr. Phuntsog for medical purposes, and to be given a copy of the new book, "Women Healers of the World".

Tibetan Medicine School Plans – I was delighted to speak to Dr. Phuntsog about her plans for the Tibetan Medicine School during a meeting between the Gakyil of Tsegyalgar East and the Shang Shung Institute in America. Dr. Phuntsog said that the Tibetan Medicine School, founded in 2005, is in expansion mode. She and her staff have already begun offering the four-year curriculum in an online form for English speaking students. Meanwhile, they have about 60 on-site students in Russia, where Dr. Phuntsog goes every winter. Expansion plans include turning the current Conway, Ma headquarters into a Tibetan Medical Center and Spa, becoming accredited as a college, and offering various aspects of the Tibetan Medical Program to health and mental health specialists, either online or in person.



I asked Dr. Phuntsog what types of ailments Tibetan Medicine best served. She told me the focus was on blood pressure, bone strength, cholesterol issues and mental health (depression and anxiety). As a psychologist and a semi-retiree, I was excited. Could Tibetan Medicine help my patients and/or myself?

As I was up at Tsegyalgar, I made an appointment to see Dr. Phuntsog and discover how she could help me personally.

My Medical Appointment With Dr. Phuntsog

I was ushered into Dr. Phuntsog wonderfully warm and inviting office in the Conway Schoolhouse filled with shelves of books, plants and herbal mixtures. Tibetan Carpets, comfortable sofas and chairs completed the scene. What an appealing setting, so different from the sterile environments of Western doctors.

Dr. Phuntsog sat in a chair opposite me, observed me closely, and asked me to describe my symptoms. She listened carefully and completely, taking notes on her laptop. She asked questions about my sleep, my exercise and diet, my mental health, my water consumption and my elimination. She was very thorough in her questioning and invited me to describe my symptoms. Then Dr. Phuntsog read my pulse – on both wrists. She did not count my pulse like Western medical doctors. Instead, it was like she was playing my wrist like a flute, feeling with her fingers for the patterns within.

Once she had finished the examination, Dr. Phuntsog told me the results. She spoke of the organs and elements out of balance in my body that resulted in my symptoms. Then she prescribed three different kinds of herbal medicine to take before breakfast, after lunch and after dinner, a diet to follow and a type of tea to drink daily. She said what not to eat as well. From her store of Tibetan Medicine herbal pills, she gave me a month's supply. The thoroughly charming and detailed exam was over.

Returning home, I continued the regime. Unlike Western doctors, Dr. Phuntsog actually reached out to me in an email to inquire how I was doing. I was delighted to have a doctor who really shows she cares.

Currently, I am feeling fine but have not yet been re-tested for cholesterol and bone density. I am happy with how I feel though, and will continue Dr. Phuntsog's regimen until tested in about six months.

About Dr. Phuntsog and the Book, Women Healers of the World, The Traditions, History and Geography of Herbal Medicine", by Holly Bellebuono.

Once home from Conway, I dove into the book with relish to learn more about herbal healing and Dr. Phuntsog's methods specifically.

In the book, I learned that Dr. Phuntsog's school is the only school for traditional Tibetan Medicine in the West.

Dr. Phuntsog began studying medicine in Tibet when her uncle, who knew her inclination, chose that profession for her (Tibetan parents chose their children's occupation – matched to the child's character.) Dr. Phuntsog attended Lhasa University School of Tibetan Medicine and graduated in 1988, serving a two-year residency after completing a five-year program. She went on to serve as doctor in Eastern Tibet, helped to develop A.S.I.A., a non-profit serving the educational and medical needs of Tibetan people, and created hospitals and training centers.

Today Dr. Phuntsog resides in Conway, Ma and travels to Tibet and Russia every year to provide healing and teaching.

I learned more about Tibetan Healing in reading the book: Traditional Tibetan med-

» continued on the following page

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

right: **Cvetko (center) with his father and mother.**
next page: **Cvetko and Zeljka at the Jñanadakini Drubchen in 2007.**

Cvetko Jovanovic

My mother and I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu together, when I was only four years old, so it would be difficult, almost impossible to separate our stories.

My mother, Zeljka Jovanovic, also known as *Desirée* and *Yeshe Paldron*, was born and grew up in Belgrade, in ex-Yugoslavia, and because she grew up without her mother, she was a particular child. She was practically raised by servants because my grandfather was rich. From the age of twelve she started having clear and very strange visions that she couldn't understand at the time, but that were as an omen of what was to come.

She studied philosophy and was acknowledged as one of the most gifted students of her generation. At the time of her studies there were very few books published about Buddhism under the Communist regime of ex-Yugoslavia. She was searching for something, without knowing what it was and at the end of her studies she realized that she couldn't find answers in philosophy and that Western sciences. Just before giving her final exams she decided to go to Africa and traveled alone all the way up the Nile, through all the countries until Tanzania. Of course, she didn't find what she was looking for. Upon return, she joined a group of friends who were going by bus to India. At that time it meant going through Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

As soon as she arrived in India she was immediately brought to Lama Zöpa and Lama Yeshe's place. She remained with these incredible Gelugpa teachers for a couple of years where she was trained in Hinayana, Mahayana, Kriyatantra and Yogatantra. Unfortunately at that time, Lama Zöpa and Lama Yeshe were following the cult of the gyalpo spirit so she started to have signs of that and thought that she should leave. Lama Zöpa sent her away and told her to go to the Lake of Padmasambhava. Of course, she immediately thought of the lake of Tso Pema.

Somehow instead of going to Tso Pema, she went to Nepal and ended up in Parphing, where there is a sacred lake of Guru Padmasambhava called Yanglesho. There she met Lama Ralo, a tantric teacher who had spent twelve years in the Asura cave doing *Vajrakilaya*. He was a very special teacher and one of the closest students of Chatral Rinpoche. Lama Ralo was my mother's teacher for another couple of years during which she did a lot of Dorje Phurba practice. In that time period she also met Chatral Rinpoche, probably the greatest living Dzogchen master.

She became a close student of Chatral Rinpoche and spent many years following both him and Lama Ralo. During that time, she met my father who is from a very poor part of east Bhutan called Dechen Ling. When he was about twelve years old he was sent to a monastery to study and had the great fortune of having Trinley Norbu as his school teacher. My father followed him for about twelve years and became his *Shabchi* or personal assistant. He learned calligraphy, painting, making mandalas, tormas, rituals, everything. Then he met Dudjom Rinpoche and became his personal assistant for another twelve years. One of the series of his *termas*, "*sum bum*", is almost entirely written by my father's hand.

When my mother and father met they were still quite young, and even so my mother was a Yogini and my father a Yogi. When she discovered she was pregnant with me she was desperate because she had the idea that her life as a tantric practitioner was finished. In the end she went to see Chatral Rinpoche who listened to her, laughed and said: "Yogis like you and me make children." Then he continued: "If you really insist, I'll take the child once it is born and make *tulku*."

I was born on the fourth of January 1983 near Kathmandu, in a small clinic, so it was a very peaceful birth. But as I had remained almost full eleven months in her womb, she was very worried when I was born and the first thing she did was to count my fingers and toes. Of course, once I was born my mother decided to keep me and, because for her I was like a flower blossom in winter time, she named me Cvetko, which literally means

» **Book Review** *continued from previous page*

icine includes healing with such common herbs as cardamom, nutmeg, garlic and pepper as well as fruits such as pomegranate. Dr. Phuntsog says that commercialism of the more rare plants has become an issue. In the past, Tibetan Medicine Doctors would conserve the plants to make sure there was a supply. Today, the herbs are picked carelessly to feed commercial interests without regard for conservation and are running out.

I learned that Tibetan doctors are trained in Buddhist philosophy and practices. Tibetan doctors are trained to have a warm heart, be humble and be honest. Dr. Phuntsog says: "It is important to try to be helpful, even if you cannot help other beings. Do not harm them and always have good intentions."

At the end of her chapter, Dr. Phuntsog comments on her mission. She is dedicated to preserving Tibetan Medicine because it has a lot to offer the world. Her aim is to teach it to Western students in as pure a way as possible to preserve the ancient traditions. She believes that Tibetan Medicine can benefit all beings.

As a Western Psychologist, I am now intrigued to learn more – especially how Tibetan Medicine practices can help with Western culture's main mental health afflictions – depression and anxiety. I hope to have a further conversation with Dr. Phuntsog about this topic. Meanwhile, I highly recommend both the book and a visit to Dr. Phuntsog. ◎

"Flower" or "Florian", as "cvet" means flower in Serbo-Croatian. I like using this name because my mother gave it to me at birth.

Some months after my birth, Chatral Rinpoche met my father and gave him my name written in pink ink on white paper. A very beautiful name – Jigdrel Tutob Wangchuk Dorje. I still have this piece of paper but I never use the name because it is just too nice. Then I have another name that was given to me by Lama Ralo – Kunsang Rigdzin. This is the name I use when I go to the East.

When my maternal grandfather died my mother had to go back to Belgrade to take care of the situation and after that, we all went to France because Dudjom Rinpoche, my father's teacher, was there. In Paris I got quite ill and we decided to go to Italy, to Tuscany, to meet an interesting, non-traditional teacher of Dzogchen who lived and taught in the West. This teacher was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The evening we met Rinpoche there was a nice dinner at the Yellow House on the veranda. We arrived at night after a long trip and entered this place. There was a long table with Rinpoche sitting in the middle and all the older practitioners around him, eating, drinking, singing, laughing. My mother said that as we entered it looked like the painting of "The Last Supper", by Leonardo da Vinci and that she immediately knew that the charismatic Tibetan dressed as a lay person in the middle was one of her teachers.

My mother finally met a teacher whose teaching she could practice in normal life, having children and living in the West. She became Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's student and followed his teachings until her untimely death. She was one of the twenty-five practitioners studying for the fourth level of Santi Maha Sangha, translated about twenty of Rinpoche's books, did many personal retreats and tried to integrate practice with her daily life, raising three children alone.

I grew up in Belgrade in a place where I was the only Asian looking boy, so my childhood was not always easy. I was always different. Until the age of twelve I was a perfect child, reading four or five books a week, studying piano and Aikido. I had no time for myself – I was always busy. In spite of the heavy situation because of the war in Yugoslavia, which lasted about ten years, until we left, I had an uninterrupted education and culturally Belgrade was a very interesting place. As our house became the centre of the Serbian Dzogchen Community, it was always full of interesting people and there were always practices done at our home. All of this was just normal, not something special or particular since my mother was completely involved in the teachings. I never had the idea that there is something else.

In 1998 we went to south-west France and our lives changed completely. My mother ended up alone in a foreign country, so suddenly from being an important social person she became a nobody and we lived in ghettos in France. My mother's life became quite heavy and really depressing and probably because of all these changes in 2002 she discovered that she had a terminal illness, a type of leukemia.

While things were becoming very strange and heavy for my mother, I blossomed because I was in a place where I was no longer considered to be a strange Oriental looking boy and I immediately felt much more free. I suddenly had many friends, started to go out, played basketball and became a good player in the regional team.

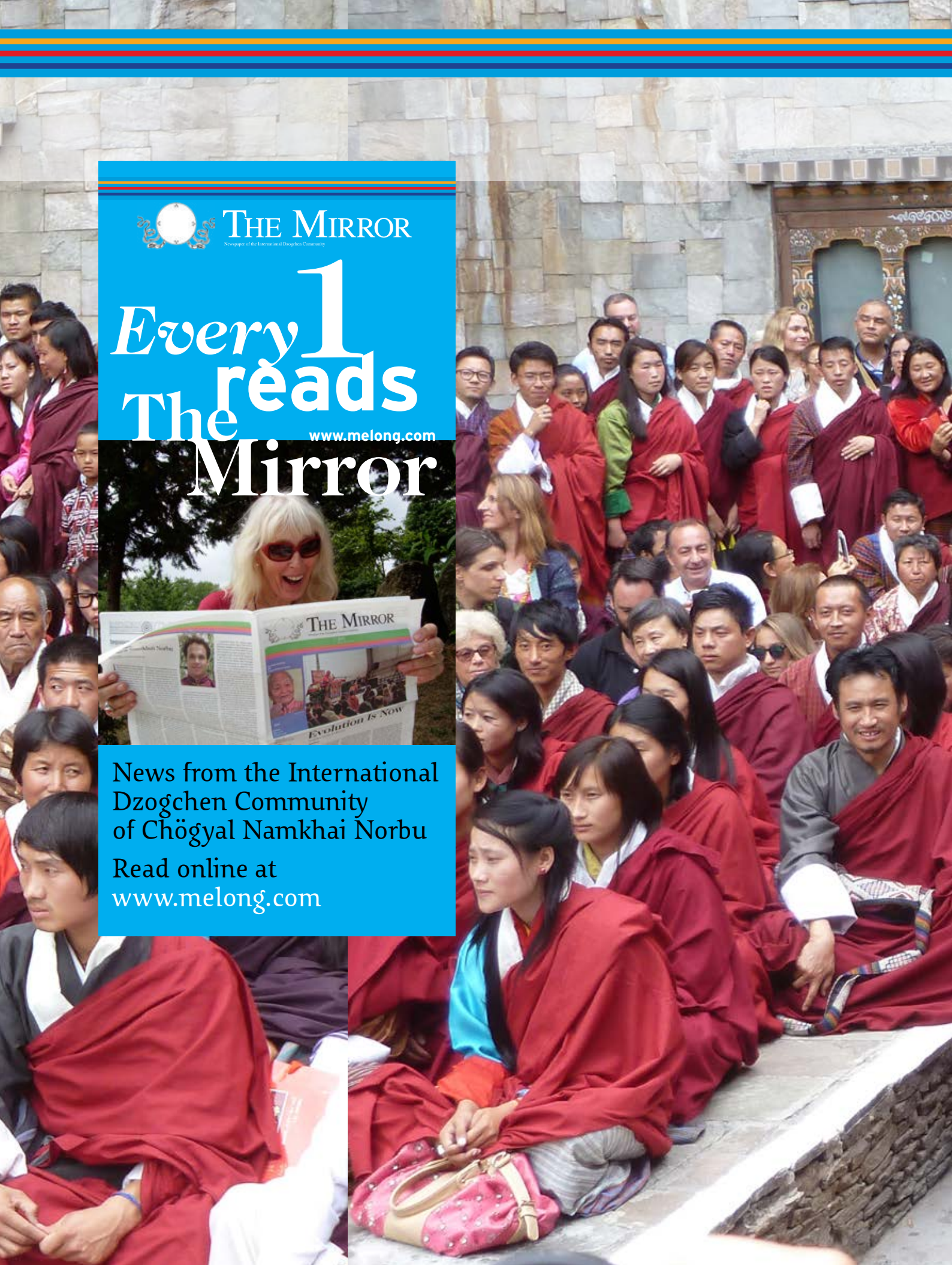
Gradually I stopped going to Merigar. The last time was when I was about fifteen. Then for about six years I was in France, trying to have an ordinary life, the life of an average adolescent living in the West because without even knowing it, I had been living in a totally abnormal situation, growing up as a totally different kind of being, and sometimes it was really heavy for me not to be like the others. So in France I had a kind of a normal life, even though we were very poor.

When I was twenty, after a very heavy love story, I spent some time with punks taking LSD and different kinds of drugs. At a certain point I had a total collapse and stopped eating, taking drugs, smoking and almost perished. After that that I felt like I wanted to go to Merigar, that Merigar is my home. So with the blessing of my mother I packed up and came to Merigar. It was autumn and Rinpoche was there doing a personal retreat. There was Czech Medved leading an intensive Chöd practice retreat at that time and I followed it and received important instructions from him and practiced seriously.

The last day of the retreat Rinpoche came for the Ganapuja. With my thoughts I asked him to help me destroy my ego. As I was thinking that, he looked at me very seriously. I had organized to meet him in the afternoon the next day, just to say "hello" and "I am back." But when I woke up in the morning I had a very strong experience of not having an ego. I felt microscopically small, like a grain of sand, but that grain of sand was not pretty, it was a piece of excrement, so I cried like a river from the early morning. At 4 pm I went to Rinpoche's house, in the same state – totally lost – and instead of just saying "hello", I just started to tell him everything. He told me that I should remember the words of the Buddha, that everything is an illusion. Then he looked at me very sharply and asked me if I remembered the first time we met. I was a bit in shock and I said that I didn't, that I was too small to remember.

After this meeting with Rinpoche I started to dream again, after nine years of not remembering any dreams, and I gradually became a practitioner. After spending a couple of months in Merigar, I went to London to work. While I was trying to have a normal life in a big city I did a lot of Sinhamukha and started learning Chöd. After two years of working in a four-star hotel I went back to France. Then in 2007 I participated in the Jñanadakini Drubchen on Isla Margarita. It was the first teaching I really wanted to attend and was very important for me. There were hundreds of people who wanted to see Rinpoche every day, but one day he asked Naomi for me and, when I went to see him, he was very kind, holding my hand and asking about my health and life. I told him that I don't take drugs or smoke anymore but that now I like eating and drinking very much, he laughed joyfully and said: "that's OK!"

After that I did many personal retreats, listened to many teachings and did my best in being a "serious" practitioner. Now I'm just trying to make myself useful for the Community and I try to integrate my life with practice. For many years I tried to be a Yogi, practicing many hours every day, but now I just want to be a normal person and have a normal life. ◎


THE MIRROR
Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community
Every 1 reads
The Mirror
www.melong.com
THE MIRROR
Evolution Is Now
News from the International
Dzogchen Community
of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Read online at
www.melong.com