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Teachings in Barcelona, Spain with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

photo by Romain Piro

“IT’S NOT EASY TO BE LIKE MILAREPA, TODAY”... LONGSAL ATI’I GONGPA NGOTROD RETREAT WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU BARCELONA OCTOBER 26-30, 2006

by Liz Granger

Once again the Spanish city of Barcelona, home to the painter Picasso and the setting for the unique works of the visionary architect Gaudi, became the venue for a five-day retreat with Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The city with its sandy palm-lined beaches and unique skyline combining dynamic modernism with the romantic traditional welcomed more than 750 participants from Spain and other parts of the world to participate in the Master’s Teaching Retreat from October 26-30.

As last year, the event was held at the spacious La Mar Bella sports complex on the well-groomed seaside boulevard. The venue offered ample space for seating the numerous participants comfortably with plenty left over to easily house no less than seven Vajra Dance Mandalas at the back of the hall. In a side hall, place had been made for an extensive display area where international Dzogchen

Community groups such as ASIA, the Shang Shung Institute, The Mirror and the various publishing houses were able to present a colorful array of initiatives, materials and publications by the Master.

This year the Teaching was entitled, “Longsal Ati’i Gongpa Ngotrod”, the Upadesha of Introduction to the State of Ati, which belongs to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s Longsal Cycle of teachings. The dreams through which this upadesha was discovered are linked to Vairocana, to Rinpoche’s Root Guru, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, and to his uncle, Khyentse Rinpoche Chökyi Wangchug.

During the first introductory teaching session Chögyal Namkhai Norbu spoke at length and in detail about his meeting with his Root Master and the significance of their relationship. He said that after meeting Changchub Dorje he finally understood the real sense of all the teachings he had received previously and the real value of the master and the teaching.

On the second day of teachings, Rinpoche explained the way in which Guru Yoga is the main practice in Dzogchen and the importance of the Master as the source of the teachings. He gave the example of Yeshe Tsogyal who, when Guru Padmasambhava manifested the Vajrakilaya mandala, prostrated before him, the source of the teaching, rather than the

mandala. In preparation for the Guru Yoga empowerment he gave at the end of the session, he emphasized that one should consider the master as a realized being in order to have a high level of realization.

During another teaching session the Master also gave a clear concise explanation of the Song of the Vajra which is so essential to Dzogchen practice, adding that it is a powerful mantra which can give a cause for liberation simply through hearing it. In fact, throughout the entire retreat Chögyal Namkhai Norbu combined essential instructions on the Four Contemplations of Semde and the fundamental aspects of khatag and lhundrub, more familiar to longer-standing students, with practical instructions and explanations on more basic practices for those who were newer to the teaching. He also gave many fascinating and, at times, humorous examples of historical figures and moments in Buddhist history as well as much practical advice. His instructions were, as ever, sharp, down-to-earth and direct.

In addition to the Master’s morning teaching sessions, there was a full range of activities offered from early morning until evening which included Yantra Yoga practice and explanations for beginners, Vajra Dance practice and a course of the Three Vajras Dance as well as explanations of some of the practices

all of which were led by older students. The two-hour teaching sessions were transmitted around the world by closed video and audio webcast by the hard-working webcast team.

The retreat was rich with special and unique moments. One of them was on the penultimate day of the retreat during the afternoon Ganapuja, when Pamo and Pawo Dancers stepped onto the Mandalas in the hall to perform the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. This was followed by a moving presentation by ASIA of their precious work in Tibet to preserve language and culture through distance sponsorship and education and health projects and finally by the lively ‘traditional’ lottery managed by Rinpoche and full of wonderful personal prizes from the Master himself.

The retreat was meticulously planned and organized by the Spanish Community whose hard work on every level enabled the many participants to enjoy the retreat to the fullest. It was the last in a series of retreats in Europe this summer/autumn before Rinpoche leaves on his teaching tour of South America and was crowded with Rinpoche’s European students eager to receive teachings before his departure. Once again, heartfelt thanks to the Master, for transmitting his most precious teaching to us with so much patience and compassion.

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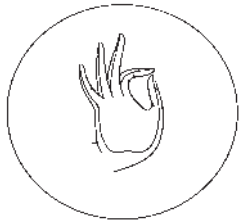
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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Good day everybody! This is the last day of this retreat, so I will continue to explain Guruyoga and the Namkhai Gyalpo teaching. In the Dzogchen teaching we refer to the base, the path and the fruit. Many explanations of Dzogchen are often explained with the principle of the path, therefore we say *dawa*, *gompa*, *chodpa* and *drebu*. *Dawa*, *gompa*, *chodpa* and *drebu* mean the point of view, application, attitude, and the consideration of the fruit. So today we will consider the aspect of the fruit.

DREBU - THE FRUIT

We apply methods and at the same time we obtain more concrete fruit in Sutra teaching and in many of the Lower Tantras. In that way we go ahead. For example, in the Sutra teaching we say *lamgna*, or the five paths. We start with *tsoglam*, which is the accumulation of merits. This has different levels. Then there is *jorlam*. *Jorlam* means a kind of application and also has different levels. Then there is *thonglam*, which means we have concrete knowledge and understanding. Then there is *gomlam*, which means the path of application and meditation. At the end there is *milob lam*, something similar to what in Mahamudra is called *gommed*, and has a more or less similar sense; but after that we go ahead to the first *bhumi*, the second *bhumi*, etc. There are a series of *bhumis*. So this is the system of Sutra applied with such realization. Sutric practitioners go ahead gradually, one by one.

In Tantrism, there are similar systems and although these systems are not completely similar, there are four Rigdzins, etc. There are many systems for gradually going ahead. When we go ahead in the Dzogchen way, particularly as it is explained in the Kunjyed Gyalpo Tantra, it is called Dzogpa Chenpo Sachigpa and means the unique *bhumi*. What does the unique *bhumi* mean? We are in a samsaric condition from the beginning and it means that we are ignorant and have not discovered and do not know what our real condition is. Therefore when we meet with teachers they introduce us with direct introduction. When we apply and follow, we *discover* directly what our real nature is. What we have discovered is already the fruit. There is no fruit before we discover our real nature. For that reason we say Dzogpa Chenpo Sachigpa or unique *bhumi*.

In a famous Dzogchen teaching it is said: *rig tang marig* - either you have the understanding or you do not. The state of Samantabhadra is that knowledge and understanding; without that knowledge one is very far from realization. Our problem is that we are ignorant of that knowledge. So we need the teachings, transmission, applications, firstly to discover the state and secondly to successfully integrate it. That is *drenbu* [fruit] in the Dzogchen teaching. For example, in general, the explanation particularly in the Mahayana Sutra, is that the fruit is the qualification of the state of enlightenment. How does it manifest? It is all related to the three kayas. In the Tantric style sometimes we explain the four or five kayas. There are many ways of explaining different states of enlightenment. In the Sutras it is



photo by Romain Piro

LONGSAL DZOGCHEN NAMKHAIGYALPO AUGUST 15, 2006

sometimes explained using two kayas, Rupakaya and Dharmakaya. Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya are the three kayas. We have three kayas instead of two because we then have the consideration of the pure and impure dimension. What manifests in the pure dimension is called Sambhogakaya.

NIRMANAKAYA

Nirmanakaya is the manifestation in the impure dimension; even the manifestation of the enlightened beings like Shakyamuni. Nirmanakaya means that we can see, touch and have contact on the physical level. I have already explained what is meant by karmic conditions. We have five or six senses and our senses have their corresponding organs. We are totally dependent on our organs of senses. For example, if I want to see something I must open my eyes. Otherwise I can't see anything! I am totally dependent upon my eyes and in the same way, on my ears, my tongue, etc. All of them are the functions of senses; when we open our eyes we see only samsaric visions because eyes have no potentiality or capacity to see the real nature.

SAMBHOGAKAYA

Sambhogakaya is the manifestation through essence or the nature of elements. What we see is karmic vision or the production of our potentiality of karma. For that reason they are explained as the three kayas.

RUPAKAYA

When we say two kayas, Rupakaya is the combination of Sambhogakaya and Nirmanakaya, as both kayas are the dimension of the form. It can be either the pure or impure dimension of form.

In Sutra teaching we sometimes use the invocations of Nagarjuna; we accumulate the two accumulations and then produce these two kayas. This is characteristic of the Sutra point of view. Two accumulations means the accumulation of merit and the accumulation of wisdom. The accumulation of wisdom means

that we are in a state of contemplation and are doing practice in a more elevated state. The accumulation of merit means that we perform many good actions and produce merit. In the Sutra it says in order to have Nirmanakaya or Rupakaya manifestations, we must accumulate these two accumulations [merit and wisdom]. In Tantrism, though, it is a little different. In Tantrism when we apply and enter into transformation, we are already accumulating both merit and wisdom.

The supreme accumulation and purification in the Dzogchen teaching is to be in a state of instant presence, in the state of Guruyoga. It doesn't mean that we don't care and don't accumulate merit as is done in Sutra style. Practitioners of Dzogchen are always aware. They know what the circumstances are and what benefit they can have for others. We always do our best. We know the root and the most important thing is to be in a state of contemplation, to be in a state of instant presence. So the supreme purification is just that.

How can you understand that? For example, we say that we have three primordial potentialities. In a lifetime we receive transmission. The teacher gives you the transmission; maybe like a kind of initiation. The initiation is to make you understand that you have that potentiality and can follow the teaching. Maybe you also apply the method and do practice, like with the famous Tibetan Book of the Dead. When you are dying you are in a state of the Bardo of Dharmata; the Bardo of Dharmata means it is not the ordinary Bardo. Your mind is already associated with the ordinary Bardo or Bardo of Existence through the consciousness of the senses. For that reason you also have your vision and your feeling of the Bardo of Existence. The Bardo of the Dharmata is after the Bardo of the Dead. The Bardo of Dead means that all your senses, your elements and everything is dissolving inwardly. That is the Bardo of the Moment of Death. The period after you are

dead until your mind wakes up is called the Bardo of Dharmata. If you have the knowledge of the teaching, experiences, and have done some practice in your lifetime, at that moment, your primordial potentiality is manifesting in its naked form. Sound, light and rays all manifest. You have received transmission in your lifetime, like Shitro, of the peaceful and wrathful manifestations. Now they are all there and manifesting. When you have all these manifestations you recognize your potentiality. You are the sound and light and rays and nothing else. When you have that knowledge and understanding at that moment, you can then have total realization of Sambhogakaya.

PURIFICATION AND REALIZATION OF SAMBHOGAKAYA

How can you have total realization at that moment without purifying all the karma that has been accumulated for many lifetimes? In a lifetime, for example, when we do the visualization and chant the mantra of Vajrasattva we can purify negative karma for one kalpa, for example. That is how powerful it is. Even if you did the practice and mantra of Vajrasattva hundreds and hundreds of times, and you still don't feel that you are purified or your clarity has developed very much, it doesn't mean that you are not purified or that it isn't working. We have so much accumulation of negative karma; we still need more powerful purification. For that reason, Buddha gave an example in the Sutra teaching. If someone is in a state of contemplation that means that you are in your real nature. So, for example, a small ant walks from the top of your nose to your head and that takes a very short time, maybe one or two seconds. As you know ants walk very quickly. Buddha was comparing this potentiality to the benefit of contemplation. Someone has been accumulating merits all his life. Merit means that you give benefit to others, help others, offer to the Buddha, pray to

the Buddha, etc. Buddha was saying that if someone accumulates merits all his life or is in a state of contemplation for having realization for a short time, that short time in contemplation is still much more important. You see how important it is that we are in a state of Guruyoga for purification. In the same way, when all our sound, light and rays dissolve and we recognize that, in that moment we unify in the state of the mother and son wisdom. Immediately, we can cancel all our negative karmas and achieve the manifestation of total realization of Sambhogakaya. So you see how important it is.

In principle in the Dzogchen teaching, we must understand that Dharmakaya, Sambhogakaya, Nirmanakaya, Rupakaya or Dharmakaya, whichever is explained or considered, is the fruit. In the real sense, that fruit is since the beginning perfected in our condition. It is not something that we develop or manifest from something we have constructed. For that reason we say it is important that we have that knowledge and we are in that state.

THREE WISDOMS/KAYAS IN OUR BASE

The kayas and the real condition in our base are the three primordial wisdoms: essence, nature and energy. The essence is emptiness, nature is clarity and energy is without interruption. The teacher introduces that to you and when you have that knowledge you know that we have all three primordial wisdoms in our base. This is called the three kayas, which we have already in our base. We need that kind of recognition.

THREE MAIN EXPERIENCES: SENSATION, CLARITY & EMPTINESS

We use all different kinds of methods when we on the path. All the methods are related with our three main experiences - sensation, clarity, and emptiness. These three experiences are related with our three gates of body, speech and mind. We apply the knowledge of that principle for having realization. When we apply knowledge in that way and go ahead, we have realization. Realization means that we manifest the qualifications that we have. In general we have many obstacles and particularly obstacles of our negative karma. That is related to our different kinds of emotions and our lack of understanding. All these obstacles become like very thick clouds in the sky. Our primordial potentiality and wisdom, all our qualifications of the self-liberated state, are just like the sun in the sky with infinite light and rays. We do not see it and we have no contact with that. When we are purified there are no clouds. We do not produce a new sun in the sky; the sun is already in the sky. The sun is shining and manifesting its light. The consideration of realization is something like that.

Now I want to go into what the Namkhai Gyalpo says about the fruit.

The state of Dharmakaya is perfected in its real nature since the beginning

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ning. The qualifications are called Sambhogakaya and are all the manifestations like the five wisdoms and twenty-five different kinds of wisdoms, etc.

The Nirmanakaya manifestation is part of our impure vision on the material level. The production of our karma is our body, speech and mind. All these are connected with our real nature of primordial potentiality. For that reason, there is the possibility to integrate in that state and that we say Nirmanakaya is also perfected in that state.

We are in that perfect state when we have that knowledge. That is saying E Ma Ho! E Ma Ho! It means fantastic! E Ma Ho! When we have entered in the knowledge, it becomes not only knowledge but also something concrete. This is the conclusion on the fruit of Namkhai Gyalpo and this is how it is explained.

When we consider the essence of the teaching of Namkhai Gyalpo it is something like that. We have learned just a little. Everything is relative with point of view, application, attitude and its consideration of fruit. When we have that knowledge it is complete for our path, our vehicle and what we really need.

This is the teaching of Namkhai Gyalpo.

Today is the last day of our retreat, so I want to give a little advice to people of how to apply that knowledge. Many people come to me after the retreat and say they do not know what to do, what practices to do.

GURUYOGA

Guruyoga is the best practice, if you remember! If you use different methods like Rushen or Semzin, any kind of practice and particularly practices related with contemplation, you always start with Guruyoga.

Samaya and commitments are maintained with Guruyoga, but you not only maintain samaya commitments related to Dzogchen teaching and transmission of the moment. Guruyoga helps people who are interested in the Dharma, in Buddhist teaching in general, and particularly in Vajrayana teaching, and have received many initiations and the many instructions related with those initiations and do not apply the practices. You may want to apply them but sometimes it is not so easy! In life we may meet twenty, thirty or even forty different kinds of teachers. From our teachers we can receive many kinds of teachings and particularly initiations. For example, once I received initiations of the whole collection of Tantric transmissions. It is connected with the Sakyapa tradition, which is called *gyud de kuntu*, Collection of All Tantras. They were not only the Tantras of Sakyapas, but were all kinds. Everyday for nine months, we received initiations. Sometimes within one day we received two or three initiations. Sometimes we needed to spend two or three days only for one initiation. Receiving an initiation is not only a kind of blessing. The teacher introduces to you the path; it is really an introduction. The teacher introduces you to the path so that you can enter in the dimension of transformation and apply it. Otherwise there is no reason for the teacher to introduce to you the path. So, you understand that there is always commitment. Of course, after we receive nine months of initiations how can we do all the practices? No one can do all those practices, not one person exists who can do them all. You consider the most important prac-

tice. For example, the Sakyapas feel that the most important practice is the Hevajra practice. They try to do that practice, but there are many other lineages and initiations. So, when you are not doing practice, it becomes a kind of obstacle, because you are not keeping your samaya or commitment.

UNIFY THE THREE VAJRAS OF ALL TEACHERS IN GURUYOGA

In the Dzogchen way we go more towards the root. The root means that we receive initiations from our teacher, not from deities. For example, if you received the initiation of the Kalachakra from the Dalai Lama, you have received it from the Dalai Lama, not from the Kalachakra. You do not have the capacity to meet and see the Kalachakra. You have live contact with the Dalai Lama, not with the Kalachakra. You have contact not only with the Dalai Lama, but many of you have contact also with many other teachers. For that reason, we unify the three vajras of all the teachers in Guruyoga.

For example, if you do Guruyoga in the Medium Thun, you do the visualization of Guru Padmasambhava. But the *thigle* of the three places of Guru Padmasambhava manifests as the three syllables of vajra. These three syllables of vajra represent the unification of all your teachers; all enlightened beings connected with your practice. In that way you do Guruyoga. Then you can also keep your samaya by keeping all the transmissions of what you have received. This is the Dzogchen system, not the Sakyapa, Kagyudpa, or Gelugpa tradition. You must understand that if you are interested in the Dzogchen teaching and want to follow it.

If you like to do Guruyoga with the white A and *thigle* and you have many things to do and not much time for formal practice like the Medium Thun, it is much easier to sound A and be in that state. You know that the three vajras of all your teachers are dissolving and presenting in that white A, because the white A is the symbol of the primordial state. You remember that this white A and *thigle* represent the symbol of the three primordial potentialities; all three primordial potentialities of all your teachers, enlightened beings, and you are just in that state. Isn't that wonderful! So you can do that in a very simple way. I am not saying that this is the Dzogchen way and you should do only that.

People say they only like the Dzogchen method and don't like doing the practice of the Medium Thun, for example, because it is more related to Tantrism. This idea is not correct because limitation is always the wrong way to go and is negative.

Many people who follow the Dzogchen teaching say that because Dzogchen means our real nature there, is nothing else we need to do in a particular way. Many people have said to me that since the Dzogchen teaching goes directly to the essence, why do we do a Ganapuja. That is like religion. They reject religion, but to reject religion is a limitation. Why don't you want to be free? Why do you want to be conditioned? Why don't you want to do a Ganapuja when there is the possibility to do so? Why not? You are free. It is not necessary to limit yourself. To feel free doesn't mean that you go after everything and then have confusion. Of course, you have your base and your knowledge. You learn and inte-

grate everything and there is no problem.

The most important thing to do in daily life is to try and do Guruyoga. The best way is when you wake up in the morning; you immediately try to remember Guruyoga. If you don't remember you can put a white A and *thigle* in your house. People like altars with many statues and offerings very much. I am not saying not to do that; you can do what you like. In general, it is not a very good idea because not everybody in our dimension is a practitioner. Maybe your friends and relatives are not practitioners. Showing that you are a Buddhist and have a temple is not so very nice for them. If you put a white A nicely somewhere, they can think that is an ornament in your room; for people who are not practitioners they can think it is Tibetan art. There will not be a problem. For you, though, it is very important because when you see this A, you remember Guruyoga! Particularly when you go to bed, you see this and think, "Oh! Guruyoga!" You do this practice of being in the state of Guruyoga. You remember and you do the practice of night. When you wake up maybe you can see this A from your bed and can remember, A, Guruyoga.

So the white A is important and in the Dzogchen Semde there is a special explanation. For that reason there are also Dzogchen practitioner's mirrors, small mirrors. Many people think that the mirror is a kind of protection. It can also be protection, but that is not the aim. The mirror makes you remember to be present. The white A also helps you to remember your state of Guruyoga. When you wake up, immediately you can sound A. By sounding A and doing visualization, your visualization becomes more alive. For that reason, we sound A. You should also work with your circumstances and remember in the Dzogchen teaching it is very important to work with circumstances. That means that many people who are married, have a husband or wife or a friend sleeping with them, when they wake up and immediately say A, their friend or husband or wife becomes nervous. That means that you are not paying respect. In this case, you don't sound A.

It is not always necessary to sound A. You can exhale deeply and automatically, like the sound of A. It helps very much to make your visualization alive. If you can't even do that, then don't sound anything, and only visualize the white A. You already know that with the white A and *thigle* and relaxing in that state, you can have the knowledge of instant presence and continue for some seconds or minutes. That is the best way to start your day.

At any moment you remember your Guruyoga, you can do that practice and have that presence. You don't have to worry about doing too many Guruyogas, or that it becomes too much! If you are in a state of Guruyoga forever, that is supreme. Even if you do not have that capacity, try to remember Guruyoga very often.

Transcribed by
Mae Chen and David Meyer
Edited by Naomi Zeitz



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The First Four Years of the Translators' Training and the Plans for the Future

A report by Elio Guarisco

In summer 2006 we concluded the fourth year of the Training for Translators at Merigar. Throughout these four years a considerable number of people (some more consistently than others) have participated with enthusiasm to the training. The texts used as the basis of familiarization with the understanding of the language ranged from modern writings such as *Birth, Living and Death* (written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu); the ancient Dzogchen Tantras (*Mejung* and *Kamyam*), to Tantric literary works such as Gyalwa Yangonpa's *Hidden Explanation of the Adamantine Body*.

These four years of training have provided some basis for the comprehension of the language and the principles of translation from Tibetan. Whether this basis will fully blossom into real knowledge and ability to translate depends exclusively on the individual efforts in reading, studying, and expanding one's knowledge of the words and the meanings conveyed in Tibetan texts. I hope that the more experienced participants in the Translator's Training will put into practice the knowledge they have acquired from the training for their own and others' benefit. To fulfill the aspirations of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, expressed in the passage quoted above, in the future I would like to continue to be of some help to those who wish to study Tibetan language in order to become proficient translators or in order to have direct first-hand access to the Tibetan literature.

We now need to shift the focus of the Translator's Training to new comers and beginners, in order to develop a new generation of translators. We hope therefore to hold a Translator's Training in 2007 for these beginners (including those who have participated in the last two sessions of the Training held in 2005-2006). The focus will be to study shorter and more accessible

texts that allow an easy grasp of Tibetan linguistic structure and meanings, as well as to read sources using the terminology that is widely used in teachings in our Dzogchen Community.

The basic requirements, as in the past, are: to know the Tibetan alphabet, to know how to read properly, and to have a general knowledge of written Tibetan language. As for the students who have already participated in the four years of Translator's Training, we would like to now direct them toward the concrete application of the knowledge they have acquired. To do this we ask those among them who wish to continue on this path, to chose—individually, and not as a group—, a text of their liking to translate. The choice will have then to be approved by the coordinator of the training. The coordinator will follow and help the each translator, once he or she has prepared a rough draft of the translation. This activity could be carried out at the same time of the 2007 training for beginners, or possibly at a later time. Details will be provided to the interested parties.

Since this new project will be entirely experimental, the Shang Shung Institute will not grant any financial support. In the event that a given translation proves to be of publishable quality, the publication will be done within the frame of the Shang Shung Institute itself, or as otherwise directed by the Institute. Those who wish to participate in this last project should contact me, Elio Guarisco, the coordinator, as well as the project manager Oliver Leick.

Who can participate in future Trainings?

Everybody who has a basic knowledge of Tibetan Language and Grammar and who can read Tibetan can participate. If you are interested please send your application and your short Curriculum Vitae to our Institute at <office@ssi-austria.at>.

Report on the Ka-ter Translation Project 2006

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters, As many of you already know, the Ka-ter Translation Project, launched by the Shang Shung Institute Austria in 2003 (and now managed by the International Shang Shung Institute), has two main focuses: the Training for Translators from Tibetan, and the Dzogchen Tantra Translation Project. So today we want to share with you what we have been up to in 2006, and also to give you important updates about future events related to these two very important projects.

1 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Words about the Translator's Training

On August 26th 2006, during the SMS Level 2 training at Merigar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu talked at length about the importance of translations and the training for translators. Here below we attach an excerpt of his speech, which stresses, among other things, the relevance of this project, as well as the right attitude for those who want to be involved in it:

"*Mejung* is a *Lung* of the Dzogchen Mind series. *Mejung* means "marvelous". Our translators have been learning how to translate this text by reading it with Elio, who is an expert translator from Tibetan. Also, he, Adriano and Jim are collaborating on the translation of the *Mejung*. At this stage the three of them have reviewed the translation, have inserted all the corrections, and so on. Later their work will be published as a book and so it will become available to readers.

There are many other people who are translating texts such as the *Kunjed Gyalpo* or other Tantras. They too publish their work, and then people say: "How nice is this

book!" But these readers do not know Tibetan at all. Really, even those translators themselves do not know very well Tibetan language. They understand only half of what they read and translate, and they just make up the other half. But at the end they produce a very nice looking text, and when this gets published everyone says: "Oh, what a nice book!"

This is very negative for the serious continuation of the Teachings. For this reason I very much approve and appreciate the way in which translator's training has been conducted, principally through Elio's work. In this way people can learn a little. But some come to learn with a very strong ego. They do not know that they are coming to learn, and they think: "I am going to work and translate the Dzogchen Tantras." But this is not an easy task. You see for example, Adriano, Elio and Jim Valby have to check, review, and clarify all the difficult points. This is important, otherwise it is difficult for anyone to execute and publish a perfect translation. It is very important that the people who are here to learn realize that they are learning, and not working. If they are really learning in this way, maybe later there will be some benefit."

2. The Future of the Training for Translators from Tibetan.

by Elio Guarisco

We concluded this past summer the fourth year of the Training for Translators at Merigar. Throughout these four years a considerable number of people (some more consistently than others) have participated with enthusiasm to the training. The texts used as the basis of familiarization with the understand-

ing of the language ranged from modern writings such as *Birth, Living and Death* (written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu); the ancient Dzogchen Tantras (*Mejung* and *Kamyam*), to Tantric literary works such as Gyalwa Yangonpa's *Hidden Explanation of the Adamantine Body*.

These four years of training have provided some basis for the comprehension of the language and the principles of translation from Tibetan. Whether this basis will fully blossom into real knowledge and ability to translate depends exclusively on the individual efforts in reading, studying, and expanding one's knowledge of the words and the meanings conveyed in Tibetan texts.

I hope that the more experienced participants in the Translator's Training will put into practice the knowledge they have acquired from the training for their own and others' benefit. To fulfill the aspirations of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, expressed in the passage quoted above, in the future I would like to continue to be of some help to those who wish to study Tibetan language in order to become proficient translators or in order to have direct first-hand access to the Tibetan literature. We now need to shift the focus of the Translator's Training to new comers and beginners, in order to develop a new generation of translators. We hope therefore to hold a Translator's Training in 2007 for these beginners (including those who have participated in the last two sessions of the Training held in 2005-2006). The focus will be to study shorter and more accessible texts that allow an easy grasp of Tibetan linguistic structure and meanings, as well as to read sources using the terminology that is widely

IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE TO ALL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY CENTERS

Regarding the project of resizing prices of the International Shang Shung Institute's products (this project will be also used by the Community to define all kind of economical aspects), we ask all Gars / Lings / Gakyils of the Dzogchen Community to download the form at the address below, fill it in and send it to us by post-mail or by fax in original. All instructions are available in the document.

This is an important initiative and we ask the collaboration of all! It's important to have feedback from all countries and from many cities inside each country to have the most precise data possible.

Here is the link to download the document:
<http://62.149.193.71:61000/lifecost-ISS.pdf>

For any problems or questions please write to:
info@istitutoshangshung.org

Thank you very much in advance for your help!

The manager of this project,
Luigi Ottaviani
Director of Shang Shung Institute Italy

Ka-ter Translation Project 2006 continued

used in teachings in our Dzogchen Community.

The basic requirements, as in the past, are: to know the Tibetan alphabet, to know how to read properly, and to have a general knowledge of written Tibetan language.

As for the students who have already participated in the four years of Translator's Training, we would like to now direct them toward the concrete application of the knowledge they have acquired. To do this we ask those among them who wish to continue on this path, to chose—individually, and not as a group—, a text of their liking to translate. The choice will have then to be approved by the coordinator of the training. The coordinator will follow and help the each translator, once he or she has prepared a rough

SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE RETIREMENT FUND INITIATIVE

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters, Greetings! We are writing you today to share with you the launch of a wonderful initiative of the International Shang Shung Institute. Many of you are already familiar with the names (and the faces) of Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco, and Jim Valby. Quite a few among us have benefited immensely from their patient teaching and training during the countless retreats they have led and participated in over the years all over the world. Even more have benefited, perhaps a bit less directly, from their work as translators and editors, and this is what we want to talk with you today. In fact, as the main translators of the Dzogchen Community, Adriano, Elio, and Jim have spent more than 25 years on translating Tibetan sources, and have selflessly invested nearly all their time to the very demanding task of researching, studying and collating extremely challenging texts, to fulfill our Master's wish to preserve and diffuse Dzogchen teachings. Not everybody is aware of the fact that becoming a qualified translator, especially of these very ancient and complex texts, is a full time and demanding job that requires a constant training of at least 10 to 15 years. In spite of all their efforts, however, Adriano, Elio and Jim have not received a regular payment for their work, and have been sup-

ported mostly through the generosity of our precious teacher and of some Vajra kin. This is the reason why Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, aware of this situation, asked the Shang Shung Institute to take over the responsibility of the translations. Thus, in 2004, the Ka-ter Translation Project was established, with the specific goal to ensure that the members of the Dzogchen Community can get the written Teachings in a very precise and correct translation, while at the same time providing our wonderful translators with the financial means to devote themselves to this incredibly important task (for more information on the Ka-ter Translation Project, please visit:

<http://www.ssi-austria.at/ssi-engl/ka-ter%20frame%20engl.htm>). With the help of generous donors from all over the world and with the support of the various Gars and Gakyils we can now guarantee a fixed regular income for our translators when they are at work on a specific project. However, we are at the present, unable to provide them with any security in terms of retirement funds. We do not mean to say that our translation "dream team" is getting too old to work, quite the contrary. Yet time passes for everyone: Adriano was born in 1958, Elio in 1954, and Jim in 1946. It is quite sure that once there will arrive the day where they want to retire, and so the Shang Shung Institute has come up with a retirement plan for our three translators. "All" we need now is to raise 150,000 Euro (50,000Euro for each person), to

continued on next page

ensure that our three translators will be able to receive about 480Euro a month, from the moment they turn sixty-eight years old onwards. So today, with this letter, we are asking you, as an individual member of the Dzogchen Community, as well as all Gars, Lings, and Gakyils, for your help and collaboration to help us realize this very important goal. Please remember that no donation is too small (or too large either!). And just to give you a small incentive we would like to let you know that anyone who gives a minimum donation of 444Euro(\$ 555) will receive the "Translators' Retirement donor's package", consisting of:

- "A Dream from the Display of the Moon in the Water", an unpublished teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, translated by Adriano Clemente. This booklet is a limited numbered edition of only 100 copies, printed exclusively for this project.
- A round silver pendant with the Longsal symbol. Size: 2,5 cm or about 1 inch
- The book "On Birth, Life and Death", the latest book of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Tibetan Medicine, translated by Elio Guarisco.
- The book "Two Dzogchen Texts" translated by Jim Valby.
- A cone-shaped crystal ball with an A inside (size 6 cm or 2,2 inches) in a beautiful blue box.
- Free shipping of the above material everywhere in the world.

Oliver Leick is the project manager for the Translators' Retirement fund initiative, and you can send your donation to the seat of the Shang Shung Institute in Austria, by submitting it online through our web safe site <https://ssl13.inode.at/ssi-austria.at/creditcardoffering.htm>

You can simply check the box "Translators' Retirement donor's package", and you also have the possibility of paying in monthly installments.

You also can send a money transfer to:

Name of the bank: Raiffeisenbank Ilz
Address: Hauptstr. 39, 8262 Ilz, Austria
Bank Code: 38151
Account number: 30387 in the name of Shang-Shung Institute Austria

Dear Vajra brothers and sisters,
Shang Shung Institute in America will also collect contributions to the Translator's Retirement Fund, which is explained in Oliver's message. Collections will be forwarded to SSI - Austria for the equal benefit of Adriano, Elio, and Jim. The "Translators Retirement donor's package" as detailed by Oliver, will be sent to anyone who gives a minimum donation of \$ 555.

Shang Shung Institute in America is a tax-exempt non-profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the full extent provided by law.

Please join us in supporting this important project!

Contributions can be made payable to:

Shang Shung Institute in America
PO Box 277
Conway, MA 01341

Best Wishes,
Will Shea, Treasurer
Shang Shung Institute in America

Shang Shung Institute USA Update

Dear Friends and Fellow Practitioners,
As fall moves into winter, new events are taking place in Conway, the seat of the Shang Shung Institute of America. We are expanding our staff, and are currently looking to find someone to help us grow and fulfill our mission to preserve Tibetan culture in the United States (see the ad posted here in The Mirror). We are very happy to have made strong steps towards a more constant collaboration and integration with Istituto Shang Shung in Italy, and the Shang Shung Institute of Austria, so that our local projects and initiatives can become global in terms of long-term effects and reach. We have thus launched together with the two other institutes initiatives as the fund-raising for the translators' fund, and we plan to have many more important activities launched soon, so stay tuned!

Exciting things are also happening at the Shang Shung School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine in Conway. The first class of students has just started its second year and is currently studying pulse diagnosis, the largest and deepest section of diagnosis in the ancient medical texts, which includes the "Seven Amazing Pulses" of divination and all of the pathological pulses.

We are currently accepting applications (www.shangshung.org) for the incoming class, the second to date, to embark on our four-year journey of the first-of-its-kind complete training in Traditional Tibetan Medicine in the West. We have also thought of those who may not be quite ready for a journey of such length, and below you will find information on the monthly series "Tibetan Medicine for Everyone". These talks will cover the main topics and ideas in Tibetan medicine, and will take place on the third Friday of every month at our Northampton healing center, where Tibetan medicine consultations and Kunye massage sessions are offered on a regular ongoing basis. Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, the director of the Shang Shung School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine, will be the main speaker of the series: her first lecture, *Life Stories of a Doctor from the Land of Snow*, was based on Dr. Wangmo's personal experience of practicing medicine in the mountains of Tibet. All are invited to join us for this ongoing series that will touch on very interesting topics.

For more information about our activities and events, please see our website <http://www.shangshung.org>

IMPORTANT LOTTERY INTRODUCTION

Dear Fellow Dzogchen Practitioners,

Iwould like to introduce the following three lotteries to everyone. There are two important projects of 2006- 2007 that we need money for, so I have prepared and would like to present three different international lotteries

Car Park:

One project is constructing a big car-parking place. For several years now while hosting big retreats, we have rented a place for parking cars and we pay a lot of money for it. Recently the owner of this land started to charge more and more money and we know very well this expense is not really a very good way to spend our money. Some years ago we bought a small piece of land near the Main House (Serikhang) of Merigar to transform into a big car-park place for Merigar. Until now we have not succeeded to build it because of the expense. We still hope to do some more big retreats at Merigar, so for that reason we have decided to build

the car park so it is ready for the next summer retreat. To build this car-park place we need at least 50,000-60,000Euro.

Protection of the Merigar Gonpa:

Another important project is for protecting the base of the Merigar Gonpa. The Merigar Gonpa is standing on a rock, and the rock is falling down year after year. We really need to protect the rock so the base of the Gonpa becomes stable. For this project we need at least 70,000-80,000Euro.

For these two urgent projects, I have personally prepared three kinds of Lotteries with my personal items. I am sure this will not be sufficient money to cover these projects, but it can be better than nothing. In this case, I am asking all people with more financial means to donate generously to these projects. Then it will become relatively easy to have such fortune and finally these merits will never end for you. I have prepared three kinds of lotteries: The higher one, the medium one and the lower one with five

elements.

The higher one has ten precious prizes like my golden Vajra crossed ring with diamond, etc. This lottery has 100 numbers and each number cost 100Euro.

The medium one is connected with three active elements. Each of these elements has five prizes, like a hand-made tsatsa of Jangchub Dorje, etc. There are 300 numbers and each number cost 50Euro.

The lower one is connected with five elements. Each of these elements has five prizes like a Chöd damaru, Vajra and Bell or Melong, all of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Here there are 500 numbers and each number cost 25Euro.

See the list of prizes available below.

You can get all these lottery numbers from Ms. Rita Bizzotto. Her email is: ritabiz@tiscali.it (see pg.

With my warm wishes to you all.
Tashi Delegs
from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

INTERNATIONAL LOTTERY PRIZES

INTERNATIONAL HIGH LOTTERY PRIZES:

There are five prizes for the high lottery prizes:

- 1) **A golden ring** of a crossed Vajra with diamonds made by a dear student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and was worn by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for more than five years or a small ring made by Theurang, the class of being of Dorje Legpa. The golden ring is for a man and the Theurang ring for a woman.
- 2) **A coral mala** with all its ornaments; Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used it during his retreat of Gomadevi.
- 3) **A jade cup** of long life nectar with long life pills.
- 4) **A crystal ball** Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used it for the support of Gomadevi during his retreat
- 5) **Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's melong** used for more than three years.

INTERNATIONAL MEDIUM LOTTERY PRIZES:

Three prizes for the first:

- 1/1) A big and very nice wooden carved Gomadevi by one of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's student Piero Bonacina.
- 1/2) A big painting thanka of Guru Padmasambhava with guardian Ekajati and Dorje Legpa in the dimension of Merigar included Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 1/3) A hand-made tsatsa of Jangchub Dorje.

- 2/1) A precious white A
- 2/2) A crystal star
- 2/3) A necklace of tiger's eyes

- 3/1) A mirror of Vajrasattva
- 3/2) A statue of Thantong Gyalpo
- 3/3) A golden painting of Odzer Chenma on wood
- 4/1) A silver brooch of two peacocks with cut-diamonds
- 4/2) A Navaho friendship ring
- 4/3) A coral necklace in Peruvian bag

- 5/1) A crystal mala prepared by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 5/2) A Chinese painting of a poem

- 5/3) A crystal lotus

INTERNATIONAL LOTTERY PRIZES OF THE FIVE ELEMENTS:

There are five prizes for the first:

- 1/1) Chöd damaru of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 1/2) Vajra and bell of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 1/3) Melong of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- 1/4) A crystal ball
- 1/5) A tagdrol and protection mantras in ivory container with the name of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

There are five prizes for the second:

- 2/1) A nice original thanka of Vajrapani
- 2/2) A big crystal rock
- 2/3) A beautiful statue of Buddha Sakyamuni
- 2/4) A golden painting of Vairocana on wood
- 2/5) A Mandarava carved on a big piece of amber

There are five prizes for the third:

- 3/1) A very nice crystal lotus
- 3/2) A Myiamar silver necklace and earrings in an artistic bag
- 3/3) A Tibetan big turquoise
- 3/4) A mala of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu made by Vulture-hill of Magadha tree's seeds
- 3/5) A crystal ball for practicing Gomadevi

There are five prizes for the fourth:

- 4/1) A pendant with Mary and her child
- 4/2) A very nice necklace of jade
- 4/3) An artistic perfumed lamp
- 4/4) A nice crystal brooch
- 4/5) A small crystal Vajra.

There are five prizes for the fifth:

- 5/1) A silver book marker with Longsal Symbol
- 5/2) A crystal mala for the practice of Vajrasattva
- 5/3) A small silver Vajra
- 5/4) A nice amber necklace
- 5/5) A silver ring with a Vajra and Avalokiteshvara mantra.

HOW TO BUY LOTTERY TICKETS

The drawing of the lottery will be when we are ready, hopefully during the Christmas Retreat at Tashigar South or in Margarita.

You can pay

by Paypal (www.paypal.com): paypal@dzogchencommunity.net – address: Loc. Merigar 58031 Arcidosso GR – Italy

by Bank Transfer: Banca Popolare dell'Etruria
account name: Comunità Dzogchen – IBAN Code: IT68 Y053 9072 1900 0000 0001 718 SWIFT/BIC Code: ARBAIT 33126

BY Money Order: account name: Comunità Dzogchen address: Loc. Merigar 58031 Arcidosso GR – Italy

specifying that the money goes for "the Gonpa an Car Parking"

If for some of you is easier you can also pay to Tsegylgar (always specify the reason)
For further information please contact: ritabiz@tiscali.it

INTERVIEW WITH HIS HOLINESS THE DALAI LAMA MCLEOD GANJ (Northern India)

Raimondo Bultrini

A few days ago the XIV Dalai Lama of Tibet publicly declared that his successor could possibly be chosen by a method of democratic election, similar to the way the conclave of cardinals elects the Pope – a sensational innovation in the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of rebirth, which is based on devotion to a master capable of overcoming the barrier between life and death to reincarnate as leader of his people.

In his residence in the mountains of Himachal Pradesh this highly esteemed spiritual leader, assigned the Nobel Peace Prize, has for the first time agreed to clarify doubts about the real meaning of this apparent historic inconsistency.



people could also have a say in the criteria of the selection of the Dalai Lama?

H.H. Dalai Lama: I think so. In former times the only foreigners we had close relationships with were the Mongols. In fact, IV Dalai Lama was a Mongol. But today certainly there are also people of the Northern Himalayas, of India, who are very close to the Dalai Lama, like millions of people in other parts of the world, so why not them too?

RB: Including Westerners?

H.H. Dalai Lama: Yes. You see, in the past the institution of the Dalai Lama directed both spiritual and temporal powers, but in the last six years we have already had elections to proclaim our governmental and parliamentary leaders in exile. That is why I have said for a long time that at present my position is one of semi-retirement. In the religious field too there have been the heads of the various schools for many centuries, such as Sakyas Trizin, Karmapa Rinpoche, or the heads of the Kamtsang Kagyu (Kam tshang; bka' bryud), the Drigung ('bri Gung) Rinpoche and Drugpa Kagyu, and the same among the Nyingma and Gelug. In the past these leaders had very little contact with each other but in the last forty years their contacts have been much more frequent and recently we have established an Advisory Committee of the various religious heads, which will naturally have a very important role in this context. So, I repeat, I have spoken of various possibilities, but it is no longer very much my business; they are the ones who will decide.

RB: Very few people, though, think that a master of your caliber could be substituted by an elected leader.

H.H. Dalai Lama: No? Think of the Pope: it's not just anybody who can be elected; it cannot be someone just found by chance in any group of candidates, it has to be someone from the College of high Cardinals. These cardinals have already acquired their qualifications through many years of training and practice. Therefore, also in our case, the choice would be made by truly qualified masters who can find an ideal candidate. That is why I think that things will eventually go the right way.

RB: Your predecessor and a series of divinations indicated many details of how and where the Dalai Lama would be reborn. Are you too in the same mental process today?

H.H. Dalai Lama: As you know, in general my favorite prayer is to be

able to serve others, and particularly Tibetans and our nation. My usefulness to the Buddhadharmas and to the people is uppermost in my thoughts, as it was in my previous incarnations. As for my next life – sometimes I have a feeling – how can I explain it – a sort of intuition. Yes, sometimes it happens, but I don't think it's the time to talk about it yet (laughs). At times I feel I could be manipulated. Sometimes I have the feeling I could be born in some place or other, but it's too soon to say and also not very useful.

RB: Not even to reveal whether it would be in the East or in the West?

H.H. Dalai Lama: (Laughs)

Recently, when I was in Mongolia, someone asked me if the next Dalai could be reborn there. I didn't reply. Certainly it is possible, but if I say something the Chinese are always immediately ready to take every word I say and manipulate it. As you know, I express myself freely, but the Chinese always think there is some political motivation behind what I say, so I prefer to keep quiet.

RB: Will Peking try to elect your successor?

H.H. Dalai Lama: Of course, for sure, but I repeat that the rebirth will not be in China in these conditions.

RB: What connects you mentally with your predecessors?

H.H. Dalai Lama: There are indications in my dreams and also at the level of feelings and, as I said, intuitions.

RB: Is there the possibility for those who intend to follow your path to reincarnate in a better world?

H.H. Dalai Lama: According to our tradition anyone can dedicate their virtues to Buddhahood, but if you wish to attain it you have to practice during your lifetime. It is very difficult to practice without a physical body. That is why you need to dedicate yourself, through your virtues, to the project of a good future life. We can say that there are millions of worlds in which there is the Buddhadharmas. When you dedicate your merits you can pray to find yourself in a world where the Buddhadharmas exists. It can happen in your practice that you find yourself able to identify and visit one of these planets without your physical body, and to say, 'This is the place I'd like to be reborn in and to increase my virtues, because it is a beautiful place. It is very possible.

RB: It is considered that the Pope is elected by virtue of the Holy Ghost. You are considered to be the incarnation of a god, in any case.

H.H. Dalai Lama: No. Let's take Buddha Shakyamuni, he himself said, 'I am Buddha', but at the same time he gave us the freedom to examine his words, to analyze them and not to follow them with blind faith. All the other Buddhas that manifested in the past said the same thing and so do the Dalai Lamas. I do not say you should take my words as the words of a god. This is the strength of the Buddhist tradition.

INTERVIEW WITH THE VENERABLE LHKADOR

by Raimondo Bultrini

The Venerable Lhakdor, director of the Tibetan Library of Works and Archives, is a Geshe, the highest grade attainable in the study of Dharma, the Buddhist doctrine that is lead in Tibet by the Dalai Lama. Lhakdor is relatively young for this diplomatic task, which has been personally entrusted to him by His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, XIV in the lineage of Dalai Lamas. For many years he was his personal translator of English and has traveled all over the world with him. There is nothing to say that he could not one day be among those destined to find the reincarnation of the Master. The Geshe knows the history and the meaning of the rituals and mystical preparations, as he tells in this narrative journey through ten centuries of rebirths of the sages of the Himalayas.

Venerable Lhakdor: The present Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, was born in the gya month of the Tibetan Wood Pig Year, corresponding to 6th July 1935. The person who discovered him was Reting Rinpoche, the Regent chosen by the committee of abbots and lamas after the death of the XIII Dalai Lama. The first thing he did was to go to Lake Lamo Latso, where Tibetans traditionally believe it is possible to foretell their own future, thanks to the powers of a divinity called Rimati. Reting stayed in meditation on the banks of the lake for many days until he saw a series of Tibetan letters on its surface. These were A, KA and MA, related to different places and circumstances, which later proved to be true. The clearest indication was (a vision like) a perfect photograph of the place where the rediscovery actually happened. Reting saw a three-storey monastery, the second story of which was turquoise, with a path going eastwards from it to the foot of a hill, on top of which was a low house with a light blue roof. The regent wrote down his visions on a sheet of paper and sealed it until it was time to make the real search, conducted by four different teams of lamas and monks, sent out in the four cardinal directions of the compass.

The previous incarnation who proclaimed the independence of Tibet died when he was fifty eight years old; leaving a testament that was worrying and incredibly prophetic. He wrote, 'One day the political system founded by the three Dharma kings will be only an empty name. The government officials will be deprived of their wealth and made slaves of their enemies and the people will be subjected to such suffering they will not be able to tell the difference between day and night'. Undoubtedly the coming of the Chinese corresponds with his prophesies.

RB: There remains the ineffable mystery of his many lives.

Venerable Lhakdor: The concept of reincarnation comes from Buddha himself. He spoke of the three 'bodies' of the Buddha: physical, spiritual and mental. A human emanation who has attained the real spiritual and mental 'body' can manifest in many other forms such as a bridge for those who cannot cross or bread for the hungry. But in India, where Buddha taught, there is no longer the concept of reincarnation as it is understood in Tibetan Buddhism, where, in the eleventh

century, before the beginning of the lineage of the Dalai Lama, the first Karmapa of the Kagyupa tradition reincarnated in a child of his choice, and a century later the Masters of the Nyingmapa, the most ancient school of Tibetan Buddhism, did the same, followed in the XV Century by the Gelugpa School with the Dalai Lama.

The correct process of research to discover a reincarnation is to find an intelligent and healthy individual who is able to reveal facts related to his previous lives and to recognise objects that belonged to him. According to several traditions the method is to leave, before dying, some indications of the place, the village or the family in which the lama will again take a body. But even if this doesn't happen, other reincarnated lamas, *tulkus*, are consulted and specific divinations are performed. The research is done according to the results of the divinations and the lama's advice on how to proceed. Finally, once a candidate has been identified, his intelligence is examined.

The XIII Dalai Lama had already expressed, through various signs, his preference for his next rebirth. During a visit to the area where he was to be reborn, he made an unusual comment on the beauty of the place, and also left a pair of shoes in the monastery near the house, a gesture that many considered very symbolic. When he died in 1993 he was transferred in meditation position onto his throne in the Potala palace in Lhasa and after some hours his head, which was perfectly upright, turned towards the wall in the eastern direction, where a strange mushroom appeared in the form of a star. However, in the history of the reincarnations of the Dalai Lama the signs accompanying the event are not always positive, like rainbows or the arrival of birds never seen before. For example, before the present Dalai Lama was born his father became seriously ill and only recovered after the birth; also dozens of his farm animals died for mysterious reasons.

RB: How does the selection of the child candidate proceed?

Venerable Lhakdor: The first selection concerns his capability. After having ascertained their characteristics, the names of the various candidates are put into balls of pastry and placed in a vase. Prayers to invoke the divinity precede the shaking of the vase until one of the balls literally jumps out. At this point special oracles are consulted, who have demonstrated their knowledge and power to enter into communication with the divinities.

RB: How would you describe the mind of a reincarnation?

Venerable Lhakdor: The more one goes towards the level of the subtle mind the more one is free from the physical body. At the time of death the body loses its component elements: fire, earth, air and so on, and at that moment the mind can separate itself from it. However, it is only through practice that you can obtain control over your mind. When an ordinary being realizes he no longer has a body he feels afraid, because his mind is connected with his body and he doesn't know how to live without it. The reason is that normally we are all dependent on our afflicting emotions and we are unable to maintain a state of mind that could take us to different places

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His Holiness Teaches at the Beacon Theatre

The Blade Wheel of Mind Transformation and Green Tara Empowerment

New York City

September 23–25, 2006

Hosted by Tibet House, US

“Now, O Yamantaka, raise the weapon of karma over his head - Spin the wheel three times fiercely over his head. Your legs of truth spread apart and eyes of method and wisdom wide open, with your fangs of four powers bared, strike the enemy.” Dharmaraksita, *The Wheel of Sharp Weapons*. (Mind Training: The Great Collection, Wisdom Publications, 2006)

His Holiness The Dalai Lama recently visited New York City to deliver a powerful three-day teaching called the *Blade Wheel of Mind Transformation* at the Beacon Theatre to a crowd of 3200 people.

The text His Holiness taught on, called *The Wheel Weapon Striking at the Vital Points of the Enemy*, (Tib. *blo-sbyong mtshon-cha 'khor-lo*), was composed by the great Dharmaraksita, a renowned 10th century Sumatran Buddhist teacher who wrote this important Mahayana text. Dharmaraksita was the teacher of Atisha, who was instrumental in establishing a second wave of Buddhism in Tibet. Dharmaraksita composed this text in a jungle where terrifying animals of prey roamed free. He then gave this teaching to Atisha, so Atisha could in turn help to “transform many sentient beings so difficult to tame”. This teaching belongs to the cycle of Dharmaraksita’s mind training.

The text consists of one hundred sixteen stanzas that are broken down into three segments. The first corresponds to our personal responsibility for our karma, the second to our karma’s root causes, and the third to the view beyond cause and effect.

Each morning for about an hour and a half, His Holiness spoke more personally about the nature of reality and how to integrate our understanding into the world and our daily lives. He spoke about how our self-grasping and self-cherishing undermines our capacity to help others and hinders our own realization. As always, with great wisdom masked by his ever present self-effacing humor, His Holiness transmitted profound wisdom in a manner that could be received by all present. After the initial presentation each day, he then taught and gave commentary on the text.

On the final day His Holiness gave an empowerment of Green Tara.

As always, it was a deeply moving privilege to attend and receive teachings from His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso.

Interview with Ven Lhakdor, continued from previous page

and dimensions, besides allowing us to take control of another mind. During what we Tibetans call the *bardo*, the intermediate state between this life and the next, the type of rebirth will depend on whether your actions have been positive or negative. If they were negative you could be reborn as an animal or a man who suffers, according to the different circumstances we ourselves have created, not only in our immediately previous life but also in all the others. A real lama who has practiced is not afraid of death, in fact he welcomes it.

RB: The Dalai Lama only spoke about intuitions with regard to his next life.

Venerable Lhakdor: A good practitioner doesn’t talk about things people cannot understand the meaning of, and he doesn’t publicize his capacities. In our tradition, in the past, obviously not all those who were recognized as reincarnations were capable of controlling their own minds. Often recognitions were made to satisfy the wishes of powerful or aristocratic families. For example, there is the story of a lama who recognized seventy eight *tulkus*, but very few of them were real ones. At times some children clearly show certain abilities, they know how to recite mantras and entire sacred texts without having ever been taught them by anyone. This has been documented by western scholars also. The present Dalai Lama immediately recognized the mala and the walking stick of the XIII from among various others. He also remembered exactly the face of the lama when he took him on his knee and the names of the other members of the search party. When he saw them go away the first time the little Dalai Lama, who was called Lhamo Dondub at that time, started to cry to go with them. In fact, he had been saying for a long time that he would have to go to Lhasa.



Born in Italy in 1956, Raimondo Bultrini is a senior journalist of the leading Italian newspaper *la Repubblica*, with over 32 years experience in journalism.

Bultrini spent the last 6 years traveling all over South and East Asia as correspondent for one of the bigger Italian editorial groups, *La Repubblica/L'Espresso*.

In 1986 he was first exposed to various oriental philosophies and he became director of the magazines *Merigar Letter* edited by the Italian *Dzogchen Community*, while he was working for *Paese Sera* newspaper.

From 1987 to 1988 he was traveling throughout China and Tibet for one year and he published a book “*In Tibet*” on his experience following *Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* in East Tibet and Mount Kailash. On his return to Italy he started to work for the Italian public TV Rai producing social, cultural and political documentaries around the world.

In 2000 he moved to Bangkok in Thailand. In 2001 he reported about the American/Afghanistan war from Peshawar and traveled in Afghanistan after the liberation from Taliban regime.

In 2004 he covered the tragedy of the Tsunami in South Thailand and Banda Aceh. Among personalities of Asia, Bultrini had several meetings with HH the Dalai Lama.

Raimondo is now living in Chiang Mai with his family, wife Orit and children Daniel and Ben.

book review

Dragon Thunder: My Life with Chogyam Trungpa

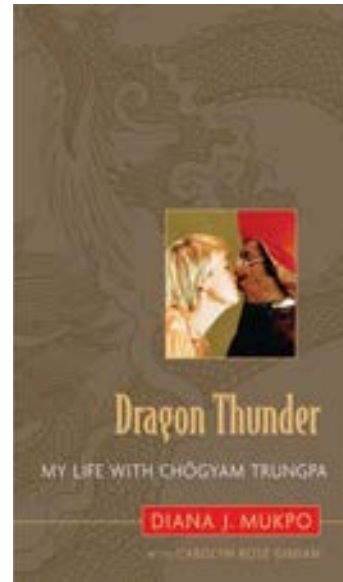
Diana J. Mukpo with Carolyn Rose Gimian
Shambhala Publications, 2006

Reading Diana Mukpo’s *Dragon Thunder My Life with Chogyam Trungpa*, transported me back to the years I spent in Boulder nearly twenty-five years ago. Chogyam Trungpa’s vision of enlightened society continues to inspire me in surprising ways. For someone whom I barely met, his presence in my life as a teacher has left me caught in the crocodile hold of his grip. There was no one like him and I doubt in these times we will experience anytime soon such a manifestation of wisdom unleashed on the western world—both wild and yet totally immersed in cultural civility as the first Tibetan to bear the message of the Buddhist teachings to the West. This particular Tibetan, whose family descends from the great warrior king, Gesar, broke the mould of conventional mind with aftershocks still being felt decades later. Perhaps if his manifestation had lived up to the stereotypes expected of a spiritual teacher, there would be less of a story to tell. Whether other readers will find the book as captivating as I did, I’m not sure. But if anyone is seriously interested in the life and work of Chogyam Trungpa, it’s a must read evoking the incandescent and ‘crazy wisdom’ world that emanated from Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

Publisher’s Weekly sums up the book:

“That crazy wisdom manifested itself in a highly unconventional life that (Diana) Mukpo shared for virtually all of her husband’s time in the West until his untimely death in 1987. Rinpoche drank prodigiously and had numerous lovers. He was also greatly gifted as an imaginative interpreter of Tibetan Buddhism, with its many esoteric practices, to the West. The couple was unconventional from the get-go. An upper-class Briton educated at an exclusive girls’ school, Mukpo was just 16 when she married the Tibetan lama, who she recalls couldn’t remember her name when he broke the news of their marriage to a friend. Such anecdotes form a series of revealing private snapshots of the influential Buddhist teacher. Mukpo makes sense out of his craziness and also builds a good case for his brilliance. She is better at domesticity than discipleship, however, so the value of this book is to open household doors and tell a page-turning family story by which the controversial guru can be better understood.”

Reading Diana Mukpo’s book was as astonishing as seeing a glimpse of a photo of Trungpa Rinpoche recently on National Public Television as part of Bill Moyer’s featured interview with Pema Chodron, a senior disciple, in his series “Faith and Reason.” It’s hard to believe that this Tibetan master should ever enter the living rooms of mainstream America. But maybe not surprising, as once Trungpa Rinpoche was said to comment that if he could win over his unforgiving mother-in-law (for stealing her daughter away at age 16), he could conquer the world. And to find out just how he won his recalcitrant



mother-in-law’s affection is one of the more light-hearted stories in *Dragon Thunder*.

Lady Diana, as she is known in the Shambhala community, writes with an ingenuous candor and equanimity when discussing even the most painful aspects of her life. And there are plenty of heartbreaks: her first born son, Taggie, a tulku recognized by the 16th Karmapa, would eventually be diagnosed with autism; a nomadic lifestyle disruptive to creating a home base; Trungpa’s drinking and many girl friends; the Vajra Regent’s scandalous behavior; financial difficulties; and Trungpa’s final days when she pleaded with him to take care of his health to his words that, “It’s too late.” She’s not above relating instances of hurt or mean spiritedness directed against her by jealous disciples or her own failings at key moments. I have no problem referring to Diana Mukpo as Lady Diana. She deserves the elevated nomenclature of royalty to have survived a most unconventional life with grace and grit. But then Diana nee Pybus is no ordinary woman. In the Shambhala lineage, she holds the title *Druk Sakyong Wangmo*, as appointed by her husband, the late Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche.

Throughout the narrative of her girlhood, teen years, the riveting story of her courtship and years of motherhood, her unaffected presence shines through, even if lacking in some details, but still telling all. It’s also an unusual document in that it recounts that even amid domestic turmoil, it is possible to live within the realm of discipline and radiance. Generally, in the lives of great masters in the Tibetan tradition, little credence is given to the consort’s point of view. Diana Mukpo changes this forever. Reading through the book one begins to appreciate that Chogyam Trungpa chose the right partner for bringing forth his vision of Shambhala. What I especially appreciated about Lady Diana’s narrative in *Dragon Thunder* is that it includes both outer details of her day to day life with Trungpa Rinpoche as well as a glimpse into her own inner life—her dreams, her ambitions in the world of dressage and for a normal family life.

A couple of months ago, I ran into a friend of mine from thirty years ago at my local supermarket. There among the greens, we had a long catch up as my friend’s teenage son had recently been in a serious auto accident in which he suffered many injuries. At some point, I asked her if her son knew about her own {very} wild youth, a trait her son

seems to share. She said, “Goodness no.” She was just a regular mom and wanted to keep it that way. Unlike my friend and most of my generation, Lady Diana leaves no stone unturned in the spirit of authenticity that illuminates her life’s narrative.

The first and only time I met Chogyam Trungpa, taking my hand he peered closely into my face saying “Welcome.” As I got up to leave he would not let go of my hand that had the most amazing combination of ironclad and softness to it. Hence the crocodile hold I previously mentioned at the beginning of this review! True to his word, he has never let me go, nor I him. To enter his world was to enter the family of Mukpo. Lady Diana’s book is a further

extension of the Mukpo family, who like any other family has its trials and tribulations, dysfunction and bonds of loving acceptance and yet, the largess to open themselves to public scrutiny while including others in their destiny—a whole lot of others.

While at times, the book seems to be an apology for Trungpa Rinpoche’s unconventional methods, it accurately chronicles those countercultural years perhaps some of us would like to forget or sweep under the rug—with its many scandals and bon vivant lifestyle. Yet, it also offers a remarkable view into his inner journey in bringing the dharma to the West from the person who knew him best. Her recounting of Trungpa’s last days deeply pierced me with a sadness that lingered for days but the legacy he left behind continues to shine two decades later. Sharing her story with world is an act of generosity. The hand of Carolyn Gimian, the primary editor for most works by Chogyam Trungpa is clearly present throughout *Dragon Thunder*, lending the publication an excellent literary consistency filled with heartbreak, humor, and above all else—dignity.

“Altogether we are happy to die,” Trungpa Rinpoche wrote in his spiritual will, “We take our joy along with us. It is unusually romantic to die:

Born a monk,
Died a king—
Such thunderstorm does not stop.
We will be haunting you, along with the *dralas*.
Jolly good luck!”

Review by Jacqueline Gens
Brattleboro, Vermont



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEWS

merigar west

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GR Italy
Tel: 39 0564 966837
Fax: 39 0564 968110
Email: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
Website: www.dzogchen.it



photo by Liane Graf

SMS First Level Practice Retreat

by Caroline Pirovano

From 6th to 8th October Jim Valby led a First Level SMS practice and explanation retreat at Merigar. It was great: instructive, entertaining, practical, illuminating and very down to earth. It also felt very 'connecting', at least it did to me, as one of about 20 participants.

The three daily two-hour-sessions were always framed by one of the practices of the SMS First Level practice booklet and within this frame Jim would illustrate various points. His explanations were structured but felt spontaneous and free flowing as he was speaking, it seemed, following his inspiration. Sometimes he would alternate explanation and practice, having us chant a few lines or doing silent concentration, while focusing on a particular experience. Sometimes he spoke about Sutra or Tantra methods and how we can apply them inside the context of Dzogchen without being conditioned by their respective views. Then we would apply in practice - or try to - what he had just highlighted. Sketching the different views and practice methods from the perspective of Dzogchen he encouraged us to go directly for the essence and not to get lost in endless details and particulars. Refreshingly unusual - for me - also his varied use of timing for visualisation and transformation practice.

Jim insisted that every time we believe ourselves to be steeped in Samsara and hope for Nirvana or reject some emotion and believe it necessary to transform it into a wisdom quality, we actually "reject the master's transmission" that "everything is already the wisdom of enlightenment".

He also spent some time describing and dismantling various concepts and ideas that are often associated with Rigpa or instant presence. Some of them were dear to me, for example I had always been quietly sure that instant presence goes together with non-duality; and while Jim disassembled wrong views and mistaken beliefs over the course of these three days, I felt my muscles tense in a physical representation of my mental effort to hold on to what so far had constituted what I believed true. In the end not much remained to hold on to... "Taking refuge in the master's oral and symbolical transmission", "recognizing the raw presence without any reference frame", and recognizing it again.

I feel deeply grateful to Jim and all the other Vajra fellows, including Alessandra and her seemingly effortless and precise translation, who help us understand better and further, patiently explaining again and again. And, of course, our gratitude goes to Rinpoche, without whom none of all this would ever happen.

Shang Shung Institute Ku Nye November 2006 - April 2007

Rome, Italy
with Michele Corrado

The international institute of Tibetan studies has organized, in collaboration with the Dzogchen Community of Rome, course in Ku Nye, Tibetan Massage.

The course consists of 9 weekends:

December 2-3, 2006
January 20-21, 2007
February 24-25, 2007
March 24-25, 2007
April 14-15, 2007
April 21-22, 2006

Venue:

ZHENPHENLING, VIA GIOVANNI
MIANI 5, 00154 ROME

Registration by November 25.
For information and registration contact:
Giovanni Ribotta : 335-7175582
CENTRO ZHENPHENLING
Email: posta@zhenphenling.it
www.zhenphenling.it

Istituto Shang Shung
Tel:0564-966940 (da Lunedì' a Venerdì'
dalle 8.30-13.00 e dalle 15.00-18.30)
Località Merigar
58031 Arcidosso (GR)
Italia

Email:info@istitutoshangshung.org
Email:courses@istitutoshangshung.org

Michele Corrado
Tel:075-5913299 Mobil:339-1084991
michelecorrado@tiscali.it

MERIGAR CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2006-2007

2007 Annual Seminar: Guide to the study and practice of the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha

The Seminar will be led by Costantino Albini and Fabio Maria Risolo and is intended for those practitioners who wish to study and practise the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha.

The aim of the Seminar is to furnish a complete view of the complex articulation of the Base of the SMS and to study the main aspects and the practices in depth.

Great importance will be given to the teaching aspect in order to facilitate understanding and practice of the Base; for this reason dialogue-collaboration will be encouraged and active participation through study and practice will be required of the participants during the yearly course. The seminar will encourage moments of exchange, question and answer sessions, comparing experiences, etc.

The Seminar is divided into seven meetings: six weekends (Saturday and Sunday) and a seven day retreat in August. Fabio and Costantino will take turns with the sessions.

The Seminar is meant for those who wish to devote themselves to the study and practice of the Base (but not necessarily taking the exam); therefore it will require a constant participation in the seminars in order to have a comprehensive vision of the Base. Nevertheless, at the same time, each individual seminar will be considered as a complete "module" that develops an aspect of the Base. Thus even those who do not wish to follow the entire course may attend.

February 24-25, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS
with Costantino Albini

Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapters I and II (up to and including 3.2.6.)

April 21- 22, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS
with Fabio Risolo

Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapter II (from 3.2.7. to the end)

June 16-17, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS
with Costantino Albini

Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapters III and IV (up to and including 5.5.)

July 21-22, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS
with Fabio Risolo

Topic: *the Precious Vase*, Chapter IV (from 6. to the end)

August 13-19, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS

Combined with sessions of Yantra Yoga and Dance of the Vajra
with Costantino Albini, Fabio Risolo and Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance teachers

Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapters V and VI

September 15-16, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS
with Fabio Risolo

Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapter VII

October 20-21, 2007

Explanation and practice of the Base of the SMS
with Costantino Albini

Topic: *The Precious Vase*, Chapters VIII and IX



advanced vajra dance merigar september 2006

NEW YELLOW GAKYIL MEMBER AT MERIGAR

As of October 12, 2006, Mrs. Luna Lattarulo is a new member of the Yellow Gakyil of Merigar.

ERRATA

In the last issue of The Mirror, #81, in the article on page 3, incorrect information was given about the origin of the webcasts. The webcasts were started upon an initiative from the Yellow International Gakyil on January 1, 2000 after a millennium conference call with Namgyalgar. After that event, eleven webcasts were organized under the responsibility of the Shang Shung Institute USA, with Loek Jehce as a technical supervisor.



COURSES GIVEN BY THE MAIN YANTRA YOGA & VAJRA DANCE TEACHERS NOVEMBER 2006 - JANUARY 2007

Laura Evangelisti
December 1-3 Paris, France
Level 1 Yantra Yoga course
Contact: ade_toni@hotmail.com

January 3-7, 2007
Advanced Yantra Yoga
Merigar
Contact: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it

Adriana Dal Borgo
November 11-15 Berlin, Germany
Supervising the beginners course of Dance of the Song of the Vajra (Part 1) given by Karin Heinemann
Red gakyil contact: Natalia Gerschevskaya: natalia@bdax.de

November 17-19 Rome, Italy
Advanced course of Dance of the Song of the Vajra and the practice of Komadevi and Jhana Dhakini
Gakyil contact: posta@zhenphenling.it; www.zhenphenling.it

December 27- January 2, 2007 Merigar, Italy
Beginners course of Dance of the Song of the Vajra (Part 2)
Blue gakyil contact: Marzia Spinelli, Lucia Antonelli, Rita Renzi:
gakyil-blu@dzogchen.it

europa

Training Course of the Dance of the Three Vajras Alps de Haute-Provence, France December 8-10, 2006 with Stoffelina Verdonk

The Dzogchen-Group of Sisteron - 04 (France - South - Alps de Haute-Provence) would like to invite you for a training course of the Dance of the Three Vajras with the irregular entries and exits for **ADVANCED STUDENTS** (for those who practice already the Dance of the Three Vajras)

Friday: 6-8.30pm - Saturday and Sunday: 10am to 6pm approximately.
The training course will take place in Sisteron (120 kms (74,5 miles) in the north of Marseilles - Méditerranée).
The price is 105 euros for 3 days - usual discount for the Members:
Ordinary, 30 %; Reduced, 50%; Support and Givers, 100 %.

For more information or to register please contact: Catherine Duez at catherineduez@club-internet.fr or by phone 0033 04 92 61 18 21 or 0033 06 14 39 80 48 Indicate Pamo or Pawo and your membership information of the Dzogchen Community.

NEW GAKYIL NAPLES, ITALY

Blue Gakyil, Maria Napoleone - maria-napoleone@email.it
Yellow Gakyil, Lucia Di Tommaso - luciadit@libero.it
Red Gakyil, Salvatore Di Carluccio - salvatorecarluccio@libero.it

SANTI MAHA SANGHA BASE LEVEL AND YANTRA YOGA FOR ADVANCED IN LITHUANIA DECEMBER 23 - JANUARY 1, 2006 - 2007 WITH IGOR BERKHIN AND VIKTOR KRACKOVSKI

The Lithuanian Dzogchen community is happy to announce a Christmas-New Year retreat with Igor Berkhin and Viktor Krackovski. The retreat will be dedicated to SMS base level and Yantra Yoga for advanced students.

We are planning the following dates: December 23rd - January 1st. Of course, New Year we will celebrate all together at the retreat place. The retreat will take place somewhere in the Lithuanian countryside.

We cannot provide many details yet about costs and accommodation, but we want to inform you about our schedule, so you can plan in advance if you want to come. Details will follow.

The retreat will be held in the Russian language.

In order to organize suitable place (especially to have enough space for Yantra Yoga), we kindly ask you to register your participation at lithuania@dzogchen.ru indicating your name, last name and membership number.

Thank you and all the best!

Algis / Lithuania



Vajra Dance Retreat

with Prima Mai at Merigar,
September 27 - October 1, 2006

by Liz Granger

About 20 people attended a five day advanced course at Merigar for deepening their knowledge of two of the Vajra Dances transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: the Dance of the Three Vajras and the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas. The course was intended to investigate in greater detail the arm movements, the mudras, the precise foot points and positions as well as the timing of the Dances. Prima Mai went thoroughly into all these points

during the lengthy and intense morning teaching sessions and also kindly shared some of her experiences and insights into these unique *terma* of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Her explanations on the movements were clear and meticulous while her more profound clarification on the significance of the mudras and the essential meaning of the Dances gave participants a fresh and more penetrating understanding of the practice.

The dancers were a mixed group of various nationalities, ages and expertise but gradually as they worked together during the morning teaching sessions and the afternoon practice ones, a coordinated joyful group emerged on the Mandala by the final day of the retreat.

Dzogchen Community Practice Retreat Schedule, France December 2006 - March 2007

DECEMBER

Dec 4-10:
Dejamling, Retreat of Vajra Dance and Bagchen
Contact: helene.bureau@wanadoo.fr

Dec 8-10:
Sisteron: Advance Course of the Dance of the Three Vajras.
Contact: catherineduez@club-internet.fr

Dec 26-Jan 1:
Dejamling, Retreat of Mandarava & Chudlen practice with Nina Robinson
Contact: beatrix.orbaiceta@free.fr

Dec 31-Jan 1:
Dejamling's Christmas feast!

JANUARY

Jan 2-4:
Dejamling, retreat of Chöd and Namkha
Contact: zeljka.j@wanadoo.fr

Jan 5-7:
Dejamling, Retreat of the practice of the base Santi Maha Sangha (open to all).
Semdzins, Lojong, Rushen
Contact: zeljka.j@wanadoo.fr

Jan 26-28:
Lyon, Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra
Contact: Marie-Dominique.Guid@adm.univ-lyon1.fr

lyon1.fr

FEBRUARY

Feb 18:
Dejamling LOSAR

Feb 19-21:
Dejamling, practice of Mandarava and Vajra Dance

Feb 20:
Dejamling Lungta

MARCH

Mar 2-4:
Dejamling, explanation of the worldwide transmission of Guruyoga
Contact: jf.ayme@tiscali.fr

Mar 3:
Dejamling, worldwide transmission Guruyoga of Garab Dorje, 4am
Contact: jf.ayme@tiscali.fr

CONTACTS FOR FRANCE

Côte d'azur, Hélène Lafage, hmsmf@hotmail.com
Dejamling, Jean-François Ayme, jf.ayme@tiscali.it
Grand Ouest (Mont de Marsan), Zeljka,
zeljka.j@wanadoo.fr

Paris, Laurent Pourreau, cadette@club-internet.fr
Provence, Christine Perriguet,
ccperriguet@aol.com

Rhône-Alpes, Ermano Legana, e.lagana@voila.fr
Roussillon, Hélène Bureau,
helene.bureau@wanadoo.fr

Dancing into the Infinite The Vajra Dance course in Molise, Italy

by the Molise Gakyil

The little local community of Molise (in south Italy), consisting of ten practitioners, was formed in the last three years and for the first time came together to organize a retreat on the explanation and practice of the Vajra Dance. The study sessions, followed with attention and dedication, took place in a large luminous gym, between two enormous mirrors that repeated the Mandala and the dancers into the infinite.

The course of the Dance of the Three Vajras, led by the local aspiring instructor, Enzo Terzano, was held in Guglionesi, from September 15-17, under the supervision of Adriana Dal Borgo.

Adriano and Enzo worked patiently day after day as the Dance gradually took form, outside and inside us. At the end of the retreat we performed the Dance of the Three Vajras in a complete way, to the great joy of us all.

We are now starting the construction of an Earth Mandala, with a large center so that Dance practice can become a weekly appointment in our daily lives and help to develop our contemplation practice and purification of body, voice and mind.



W H E R E T H E T S U N A M I

by Riccardo Ducci, D



House destroyed on the banks of the Panadura



Beneficiaries next to the rebuilt houses



The plight of the evacuees

ASIA's interest and enthusiasm for the populations of Asia and in particular for Buddhist culture have meant that, after the dramatic event of the Tsunami, it has become a reference point for those who have always followed and sustained its initiative in favor of the people and culture of Asia and those who wished to help the populations struck by the catastrophe.

ASIA's intervention in Sri Lanka arose from a request on the part of the Sri Lankan community in Italy following the Tsunami disaster. Representatives of this active community contacted ASIA in order to have their collaboration for transportation and widespread distribution of the essential necessities that the community itself had collected in Italy. In fact, the Sri Lankan community in Italy quickly rallied to collect various materials and money that were then transported to Sri Lanka and distributed with the organizational support of ASIA in the area of Beruwala, in the District of Kalutara.

After this first intervention, ASIA decided to contribute to the process of reconstruction in view of the short-term post-emergency activities that had been identified, realized and addressed to those with immediate and urgent needs who had been struck by the Tsunami, but with a long-term view to triggering or facilitating the mechanisms of sustainable self-development. It is, in fact, traditional for ASIA not to limit its actions to fast emergency interventions, but to follow up with a series of coordinated actions and a common strategy based on local needs. Today Sri Lanka has become a country in which ASIA is known and appreciated for the work it has carried out. In its turn, finding itself far from the rigid climate of the Himalayan regions in which it is used to work, ASIA has learned to love this important country and its people with whom it shares many values and sentiments.

More than a year has passed since ASIA started its first post-emergency project and today we are able weigh up the first provisory results that have been reached.

GOING BACK HOME

In July 2006 we inaugurated the new village of Weregama, an hour south of Colombo: 130 homes which have permitted a population of more than 600 people, mostly children and elderly people, to leave the tents or shelters (the shacks made of wood or sheet iron) in the camps for Tsunami victims and to move to their new homes, complete with bathroom facilities, a system of natural ventilation and a new external space for cultivating vegetable gardens to be used for providing for the family.

The challenge was taken up shortly after the Tsunami tragedy. We collaborated

closely with the ONG UCODEP and with the UN agency UN-Habitat, working at the same time on the same project. The project was co-financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by many local Italian groups including the Region of Lazio, the Town of Viterbo and the Region of Tuscany.

THE NEW PROJECTS AND THE CONFLICT WITH THE TAMIL

The good work carried out by ASIA in the territory and with the donors has permitted new projects to be started this year, this time in the east of the country, in the District of Batticaloa. For many years now, a violent civil war has been taking place in the north-east of Sri Lanka, in which the forces of the Government of Sri Lanka are pitted against the rebel forces or the LTTE, or co-called Tamil tigers. Batticaloa is one of the towns that has been most affected by the conflict and it is there that we are carrying out, along with the FAO, a project for social-economic development in 3 fishing villages, while with the World Food Program (WFP) we are building new kitchen and bathroom facilities in the primary schools in Batticaloa.

In spite of the conflict and the everyday difficulties, the projects are going ahead, thanks to the continued work of ASIA's international staff, assisted by local staff that has been working with us for many months.

THE FISHERMEN OF THE SOUTH

Recently we have started a new project together with the Region of Lazio aimed at developing the skills of the fishermen of the south coast of the country that was severely hit by the Tsunami. The intervention foresees the reconstruction of the community centers and structures for the fishing cooperatives in the 3 towns of Panadura, Galle and Matara and the organization of professional training courses for members of the community.

CONTINUING IN SRI LANKA

In the light of this experience, today ASIA is able to formulate a more precise strategy in order to continue its intervention in this country. Parallel to the work of managing and realizing the projects in course, ASIA is working to deepen awareness of two enormous problems affecting the country and on which it is always difficult to attract the attention of the international community, more concentrated of "home" affairs.

THE PLIGHT OF THE EVACUEES

One of these problems is the situation of the evacuees, the so-called IDPs (Internal Displaced Persons) families forced to flee and abandon their homes. Conflicts or natural calamities, have been the cause of these situations. Unfortunately, in Sri Lanka these two factors have combined in a terrible situation. First of all the civil war in Sri Lanka lasted more than 20 years and has had devastating consequences for the civilians, and which has separated ethnic groups. Then the Tsunami which swept away the coastal areas of the whole country, killing more than 40,000 people. Over a long period of time and throughout the country, about the presence of settlements of refugees, the economic lives of families are interrupted and tensions. ASIA's objective in the north-east is both for improving the living conditions: temporary shelters, room facilities, temporary shelters, etc.) and for supporting these families to permit their return to their homes.

COMBATting CHILD PROSTITUTION

Another aspect on which ASIA is currently working is child prostitution that involves thousands of children of Southeast Asia.

In Sri Lanka recent statistics reveal that children are involved in the phenomenon of child prostitution, increasing and today Sri Lanka is among the countries affected by what can only be considered as the most serious. Their clients are mostly "tourists", both from Europe and Asia. These areas are those in which the phenomenon of child prostitution. Paradoxically, the Tsunami tragedy has had devastating consequences of the Tsunami on child prostitution, particularly in the areas with a high concentration. In fact, the first victims of the Tsunami were the children killed by the wave immediately, or a few days behind it; those who survived were the most exposed to trauma from seeing members of their own families. Then the children, and particularly those who were the most exposed to exploitation. Left o



Speech by ASIA's Director, Andrea Dell'Angelo at the inauguration of Weragama village



Queues and refugee camps



AND THE REFUGEE CAMPS

in which tens of thousands of internal (Displaced People), or people and entire homes and lands because of the consecutive living for more than 20 years. Factors have meant an increase in this term in the north-east of the country which has more than 60,000 victims, in particular in the groups and destroyed entire villages, houses along two-thirds of the coast of 1,000 people.

out the country, this situation has brought refugee camps where the social and economic and which are a source of new conflicts near future is to try to develop interventions inside the camps (education, bath) and for proposing definite solutions to their place of origin.

UTION

ntly working is the phenomena of child children and young people in the whole

at about approximately 38,00 – 40,00 of prostitution, but the trend is rapidly g the countries in the world most affected the most hideous crime against children. h foreigners and locals, and the tourist on of child prostitution is widespread. aggravated the situation. One of the most i has been a great increase in child prostitution high influx of tourists.

were the children. Many of them were afterwards by the epidemics that came children most exposed to psychological own family, friends and neighbors dying. e who were orphans after the wave, are on their own or without a sufficient net-

work of protection, they risk finishing up in the ring of child prostitution, illegal adoption, organ trafficking or forced labor.

In many cases, even though the family is still alive, the Tsunami brought with it the destruction of their livelihood and a great number of Sri Lankan families found themselves completely lacking a livelihood from one day to the next. For this reason they became easy prey for organized criminals who “buy” children for the markets of sexual tourism.

ASIA has recently presented a project proposal to activate a network of protection for children who are victims of forced prostitution, by means of activating an integrated system of services (accommodation, psycho-social support, mobile unit, individual project of socio-family reintegration, national telephone helpline, campaign to make people aware of the problem) which will permit them, finally, to give the children a new opportunity in life.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

The experience of these months in Sri Lanka has put emphasis on some sectors in which it is important to work in the future because they are priorities for the whole Asian area in which ASIA operates. Most of all considering the work and the role of ASIA in Tibet, it is possible to develop a synergy between these two regions – that of the Himalayan region and that of Southeast Asia.

The environmental question is a global warning and its consequences have made themselves felt mainly in this region of the continent that is very densely populated and has quite inadequate conditions to control and protect that are barely tackled by the local administrations.

In Sri Lanka, ASIA has already confronted the question of waste management and sustainable energy by means of presenting a project with the Region of Lazio to the European Union. We feel it is important to repeat and broaden this specific experience and knowledge of this sector, which is also useful mainly for facing the same environmental problems that are affecting Tibet.

We think to do the same type of address on the question of children and the defense and protection of their rights. The theme is controversial in the whole of south-east Asia, and even in the regions of central Asia where it would be opportune to do in-depth study into the characteristics of this phenomena (different to that in Sri Lanka) in order to program interventions on the prevention of AIDS. Regarding this, at the beginning of 2006, a project on prevention and information on AIDS in Mongolia was presented to the European Union.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a lot of work ahead of us and we always seem to be at the beginning of our path. The complexity and beauty of the places in which ASIA operates and the continuous meeting with ancient and distant cultures continually brings us new challenges and objectives which are stimulating for our work but which require constant renewal of energies and skills.

This short article was written in order to let you know where ASIA is going today and how important it is to reinforce our connection with all those who share our mission, who have followed us for years and who wish to continue participating to sustain our initiatives.



To contact Asia adozioni@asia-onlus.org or www.asia-onlus.org ASIA Onlus - Via San Martino della Battaglia, 31 00185 Rome, Italy Tel: 0039-0644340034, fax 0039-06702620



merigar east



A Retreat in a Juniper Grove
Santi Maha Sangha & Yantra Yoga in Crimea
September 24, 2006 – October 8, 2006

by Andrei Besedin

When an activity becomes a tradition, after some time often it starts losing its original meaning. But some activities instead make more and more sense. It has become a tradition to have a combination retreat on SMS Base Level and Yantra Yoga in Crimea. This time, about 120 people, mostly from Ukraine and Russia, but also from Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and Germany, gathered for the teaching and practice retreat led by Igor Berkhin and Viktor Krachkovsky.

The topic of the retreat was "The view and the meditation of Dzogchen. Obtaining and developing experiences of practice with the methods of base level of Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga."

Our teachers placed special emphasis on the seventh lojong practice and throughout all two weeks we studied the correct breathing and slowly introduced ourselves to this practice.

Generally, we had three thuns of SMS and one thun of Yantra a day, but besides that, people interested in Vajra Dance could practice in the early morning and late evening. The soft music of the dance, though it was not loud, seemed to fill the whole place — the Laspi bay, which might be a most picturesque place in Crimea, a juniper wood at the seaside under a mountain range.

The overall surrounding for the retreat helped us to relax and loosen all the tensions, which we usually accumulate in our daily life. The sun was shining, the Black Sea was warm enough to enjoy swimming, so that only an occasional chilly breeze in the evening reminded that it's already October.

In the middle of the retreat we received a message from Rinpoche that Merigar East would be located in Romania, not in Crimea. This was really a moment for everyone to verify — can we really work with circumstances or get stuck with our ideas? In the past year, many people have actively made efforts to search for different locations for the Gar, to do fundraising or to help in other manner to make this idea real. Many people hoped for the Gar, where people from Eastern Europe could come without having to cope with visa problems or higher cost of living. But the circumstances changed, so we try to work accordingly. So it was really a useful point to check our practice, and to learn step-by-step to unify the experiences and the understanding in our daily life.

With such approach, in any circumstances we can find relaxation and enjoyment, integrating it with the practice. So for sure this retreat was a real enjoyment — and hopefully a real integration — for all who participated.

tsegyalgar east

DCA Tsegyalgar East
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Conway, MA 01341 USA
Tel: 413 369 4153
Fax & Bookstore 413 369 4473
Email: secretary@tsegyalgar.org
Website: www.tsegyalgar.org

New Programs Tsegyalgar East

OUTREACH & ONGOING SATURDAY MORNING EXPLANATIONS

After the Many Flavors of the Dharma in Northampton (see this page), the public was invited to an Open House at the schoolhouse in Conway on October 21 and seven new people came. We created a new on going Saturday morning session for newcomers to explain the *thun* and explanations of the transmission and practices. Jim Valby started it off on October 28th and we will continue with explanations by older students.

MANDARAVA CHRISTMAS PRACTICE RETREAT DECEMBER 26, 2006 - JAN 1, 2007

In conjunction with the Christmas Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu webcast from Argentina, Tsegyalgar East will have a Mandarava practice retreat and coordinate with the rest of North America. For more information: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

IN ISRAEL, FOR THE FIRST TIME

December 2006
Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat
with Sasha Poubants

The Ati group of Israel is very happy to announce that we are about to have our first SMS base training course. Sasha Poubants will lead the course in December 2006 and give two full weekends of SMS:

Dec. 7 - 9 in Jerusalem
Dec. 14 - 16 at Kibbutz Tuval in Northern Israel
You are all most welcome to join us.

Warm greetings!
Gisele Gordon

If you need any information please contact me.
Mobile phone: 1-972-52-8964786, Email: ggordon@zahav.net.il

Many Flavors of the Dharma Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts

by Paula Barry

On a crisp autumn day, penultimate day of September, with the leaves beginning to reach the peak of their annual display of brilliant color here in the Pioneer Valley, some of the members of the Dzogchen Community of Tsegyalgar East met at Smith College in Northampton to add the unique flavor of the Dzogchen teachings to an annual event called The Many Flavors of the Dharma.

The flavors in this unique Dharma soup were many. There were Zen Buddhists, Theravadas, Vipassanas, Insight mediators, Shambalaists, the Order of Disorder, Yoga practitioners of many kinds, as well as poets and performance artists, all adding their particular spice to the unique blend of sensory and intellectual experience—a veritable smorgasbord of offerings of spiritual paths.

The Dzogchen Community at Tsegyalgar East hosted two tables of information. One offered information on the activities of the Shang-Shung Institute and their program for the Study of Tibetan Medicine, information about the activities about ASIA was also provided there. Another table offered books and information about the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the activities at Tsegyalgar in Conway that are the embodiment of these teachings.

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo gave a talk about the unique tradition of Tibetan Medicine. Then accompanied by explanations of their origins and lineages many members of Tsegyalgar demonstrated the Dance of the 6 Spaces of Samantabhadra, and the Lungsang or Eight Movements to Purify the Prana. An introduction to the Dzogchen Path and the teachings of the lineage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as they relate to the Three Gates of Body, Voice and Mind and Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen was presented to interested listeners. We at Tsegyalgar intend to have an 'open house' in Conway at the end of October (when the foliage is at the peak of its splendor) for those interested to partake in more of the many facets of these precious Dzogchen teachings.

It was really very wonderful to be taking our place in the many-flavored world of Dharma paths and offering our 'free samples' to all who might have a cause to enter the path of Ati Yoga and one day attain Liberation for all beings.

New York City Schedule

Khundrolling
151 W. 30th St., #403, NYC
Tel: 212-564 1024
Email: nycdzogchen@aol.com

December 1 & 2, 2006 Dream Yoga
With Michael Katz

Regular events
Mon: Contemplation practice 7-9pm
Wed: Vajra Dance 6-8pm
Thursday: Yantra Yoga 7-9pm



photo by L. Matthews

The New York Dzogchen Community was delighted to host an inspiring weekend of the Dance of the Three Vajras with Anastasia McGhee, authorized to teach the Vajra Dance by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. From Friday October 13th, through to Sunday October 15th, Anastasia taught a group of a dozen or more the inspiring Vajra Dance. Kundrolling's one year anniversary party took place on the Saturday evening of the dance weekend and clearly the time spent on the dance mandala gave our celebrations a special energy, clarity and Community spirit.



RETREAT AND PILGRIMAGE SITE AT KHANDROLING
TARGET DATE JULY 7, 2011 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE THE VAJRA DANCE

The Gakyil of Tsegyalgar East recently announced plans to realize Rinpoche's vision of building a retreat center on the sacred land at Khandroling in Buckland, Massachusetts. In keeping with Rinpoche's wishes, our goal is to complete the project by July 7, 2011, the 25th anniversary of his first dream of the Vajra Dance.

When he visited the land in May of 2005 to dedicate the world's first Universal Mandala, Rinpoche offered specific instructions for how to develop and care for the treasure that is Khandroling. First, he requested that a Vajra Hall be built over the Universal Mandala, which is currently exposed to the elements for much of the year, and sealed under tarps to protect it during the winter months. He said that people will begin pilgrimages to the sacred points of Vajra Dance around the world, and that Khandroling will always be the primary one since the Vajra Dance was first revealed to him in dreams there. For that reason, he said, we must build a Guest House to accommodate those who come, and renovate the old barn near the farmhouse for community use as well.

Rinpoche also asked us to begin clearing away the scraggly pines and hemlocks from the land, leaving only the hardwoods. In addition to the existing structures (Rinpoche's cabin, the Guardian cabin, the pond cabin and bath house) the retreat center will also include six personal retreat cabins and a dark retreat cabin. We will also reopen an old logging road in order to improve access to the land and minimize the impact on our neighbors.

We estimate that the entire project will cost roughly 1.5 million dollars to complete. We have already received seed money in the form of a generous bequest from our vajra sister, Georgette Kelly, who was an organizer of the first retreat held at Khandroling in 1989. We are also very pleased to have member Jill Riley, an architect who studied Buddhist architecture in Tibet and Nepal as a Fulbright Fellow, as our Project Manager. Jill has generously offered her time and expertise as an in-kind donation, which has allowed us to move ahead with the project. Since announcing the project, a number of members have also stepped forward to offer financial assistance.

Our goal is to complete a general plan detailing the design, schedule and cost within the next three months, at which time we will also launch a major fund-raising effort. Meanwhile, we are happy to accept early donations. If you would like to make a donation to the project, checks can be sent to:

Dzogchen Community in America
P.O.Box 277
Conway, MA 01341
USA

Donations can also be made directly on the Tsegyalgar website at <www.tsegyalgar.org>. You may also contact the Tsegyalgar East office at <secretary@tsegyalgar.org> or call 413-369-4153 to make a donation by credit card.

We also welcome collaboration on this project, as it will take an inspired and dedicated group effort to manifest Rinpoche's vision for Khandroling. If you would like to offer your skills or energy, please contact us at <gakyil@tsegyalgar.org>.

Shang Shung Institute USA – staff opening

The Shang Shung Institute in America is looking for an administrative assistant to support its office expansion as a non-profit operating in the area of Tibetan culture preservation. We are looking for an independent, self-motivated person committed to build a strong future for the Shang Shung Institute and the Traditional Tibetan Medicine program.

Qualifications:

- Administrative background as office manager with experience in general office operation, proficiency in word, excel, file maker pro [or other equivalent database];
- Ability to work with web and graphic applications welcomed;
- Ability to work both independently and interact with the Shang Shung USA

Board of Directors;

- Excellent communication skills, facility in multi-tasking and communication with a diverse population.

Tasks will include, but may not be limited to:

1. Revision, consolidation and update of the Shang Shung office databases [with application to be determined];
2. Implement an annual marketing plan in a timely manner coordinating the design and production of publications (brochures, posters, flyers, on-line announcements, & newsletter); direct mailings to local, regional and national venues promoting SSI programs and mission; design and placement of ads; writing and sending press releases;
3. Revision, development and consolidation of office procedures and protocols finalized to the maintenance of the Institute's records and documents, as well as the donors and SSI members database, including any of the related correspondence;
4. Processing and filling of the orders from the SSI online store keeping the pertinent documentation on file;
5. Participation in the recruitment of students for the 4-year Tibetan Medicine course: sending out information to prospective students answering inquiries, processing applications and maintaining the pertinent records on file;
6. Attending and keeping track of all board meeting minutes and distribution of formal board communications and in general being the point person for Students, faculty, and BOD.
7. Special Projects: as requested.

To apply please email your cover letter and resume at paola@shangshung.org or fax it at 413-369-4473.

Position will be filled as soon as a qualified candidate is found. In your cover letter please refer to your date of availability and your pertinent skills. Also please include the contact information of references that can attest to your professional skills and experience. Applicants must provide their own lodging and be able to work legally in the United States.

Shang Shung Institute In America
PO Box 277
18 Schoolhouse Road
Conway, MA 01341
Telephone: 413-369-4928, Fax: 413-369-4473, <http://www.shangshung.org>

Chicago

CHICAGO DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES December 2006 - March 2007

December 8 - 10

Vajra Dance: Dance of the Song of the Vajra, Part III

Taught by Anastasia McGhee

Contact: Tanya Andguladze at andghadze@comcast.net

February 16 - 18

End of Year/Losar Retreat

Lead by George Blaha and Lynn Sutherland

Contact: Lynn Sutherland at lynn.sutherland@yahoo.com

February 23 - 25

Santi Maha Sangha Base Retreat

Taught by Jim Valby

Contact: Lynn Sutherland at lynn.sutherland@yahoo.com

March 2 at 9 pm

Worldwide Transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the Anniversary of Garab Dorje.

Contact: Lynn Sutherland at lynn.sutherland@yahoo.com

TBA

Vajra Dance: Dance of the Song of the Vajra, Part IV and V

Taught by Anastasia McGhee

Contact: Tanya Andguladze at andghuladze@comcast.net

TBA

Yantra Yoga: The Preliminaries

Taught by Lynn Sutherland

Contact: Tanya Andguladze at andghuladze@comcast.net

The New Mexico Dzogchen Community has elected a New Gakyil:

Blue Gakyil - Josefa Candelaria
Red Gakyil - Janet Mason and Becky Page
Yellow Gakyil - Susie Marlow

tsegyalgar west

*Tsegyalgar West
Baja Mexico
Dzogchen Community West Coast
755 Euclid Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94708
Email: cabass@prodigy.net.mx
carolfields@aol.com
Website: www.bahasangha.org*

SANTI MAHA SANGHA RETREAT TSEGYALGAR WEST IN BAJA SUR, MEXICO DECEMBER 15, 2006 TO JANUARY 8, 2007

Jim Valby will teach the **Santi Maha Sangha Base Level** covering Sutra, Tantra, and Dzogchen. Two sessions daily.

Anastasia McGhee will teach the **Dance of the Three Vajras** (regular version) at the beginning of the retreat.

Bodhi Krause will teach the **Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra** after Christmas.

Lynn Sutherland will teach **Yantra Yoga**, including the Yantra Preliminaries, the First and Second Series of the Main Practice, (pranayamas and yantras), and the Vajra Wave.

CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU WEBCAST DECEMBER 26, 2006 TO JANUARY 1, 2007

There will be the webcast of Rinpoche's retreat Longsal Ati'i Gongpa Ngotro, the Upadesha of The Introduction to the State of Ati. It is a restricted webcast so participants must have received transmission from the Master to attend.

POST RETREAT WORKSHOP: SELF-HEALING AND WELL-BEING JANUARY 10-14

Song Park

Drawn from the wisdom of Chinese medicine, Chi Gong, and Martial Arts.

COST:

All-inclusive cost (retreat, campsite, food, and airport transportation) is \$350US/Week, \$60US/Day

Dzogchen community membership discounts apply.

(40% sustaining, 20% regular, 5% introductory)

Pre-Registration and Inquiries contact: tomaasm@yahoo.com



passages

BORN:

On September 3, 2006 Emmett Jules Flynn was born to Arthur and Jennifer Flynn in Ventura, California.

JARDIN DE LOS NARANJOS (TSEGYALGAR WEST) BUSINESS PLAN FOR FALL 2006 – END OF 2008

VISION

Nurturing the spirit and body in nature, Jardin de Los Naranjos Retreat Center in beautiful Baja California Sur, Mexico, offers current and future generations of spiritual practitioners, health seekers, ecology students, and everyday refugees from busy lives, opportunities to encounter and become familiar with the spiritual teachings and practices of the Tibetan Dzogchen tradition taught by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu; regain and strengthen health and energy with advanced Chinese, Tibetan and Indian yogas and health treatments; relax and rest; explore Baja Sur and experience its living tropical dry lands and rich maritime ecosystems; and take advantage of a wide range of inspiring, hands-on workshops.

MISSION

Body, Mind, Energy, Environment Integration—helping you discover that you are the eyes of the world!!!

OBJECTIVES & PLAN

Obtain anonymous donor contribution of \$50,000 annually, matched by Community donations (including casita subscriptions & endowment) Facility and casita rentals bring in \$45,000 in revenue annually by 2008. Keep salary expenses below maximum of \$25,000 annually and continue zero debt.

Establish 2 to 3 paid, residential, supervisory staff positions Provide orientation and conflict resolution training for all staff and volunteers

Designate a person or several persons responsible for ongoing publicity and outreach for the Baja Gar, including creation of new website, outreach to magazines and newspapers, notices within the Community, and local events.

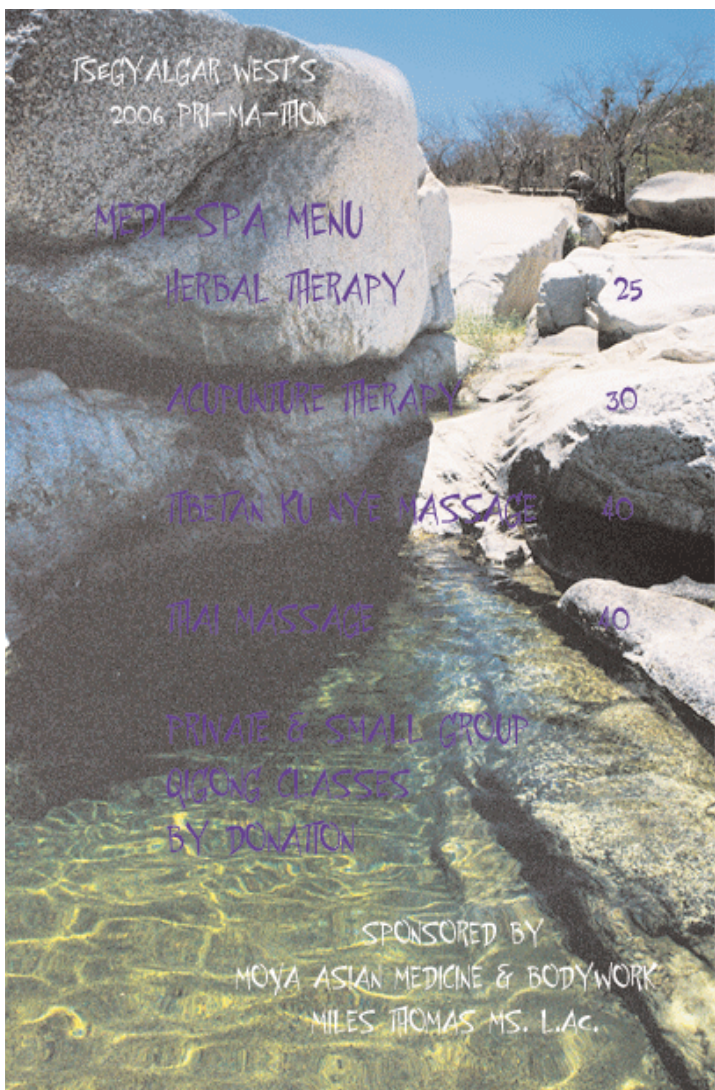
Complete 12 casitas with toilets and furnishings, put roofs on all 19, and get cistern operable.

Survey perimeter, mark GPS sites, mend fences, and install gates and signs.

Conduct major Dzogchen retreat accompanied by supplementary health programs from mid-December, 2006 – mid-January, 2007 as well as offer additional retreats and webcast retreats and transmissions.

Host supervised student volunteers to prepare trail guides, improve water system and fences, plan and initiate compost system, landscape and plant as needed.

Complete court case successfully against squatter.



**Tashigar South
Comunidad Dzogchen
Tashigar**

**Calle pública S/N
Tanti 5155
Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina
Tel & Fax:
0054- 3541-498 356
Email:
tashigarsur@gmail.com**

**Tashigar North
Finca Tashigar
Prolongación de la Calle
Bolivar**

**Valle de Pedro González.
Isla de Margarita
Tel: 00 58 295 415 5800
Email:
tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru
Web site: www.dzogchen-
venezuela.org**

New Gakyil of Chile

Blue - Lorena Hume, lorenahume@yahoo.com
Yellow - Francisca Fuentes, mfuentej@puc.cl
Red - Konstantin Korotkov, konkor2001@yahoo.com

namgyalgar & the pacific rim

**Being Active Sangha
at Namgyalgar
Santi Maha Sangha
in Daily Life**

On a mountain top in one small room, just big enough. A vista of sacred mountain lake and ocean. Exactly the right place for a year of study and practice. Two helpful teachers, a lama monk for grace and example, and a Sangha offering the strength of collective practice, a challenging context for integration. A boringly simple routine – shopping, cooking and eating, laundering and cleaning – provides the simplicity and elegance that keeps the study and practice going steadily. Beauty, tranquility, measureless time, exactly what I needed. I cannot speak of the fruit of all of this accurately, except to say things seem easier. My behavior is calmer, cleaner, clearer and more loving. I hope my understanding and actualization have also improved. I value my time at Namgyalgar more than any other Dharma practice I have ever done. My life feels very different.

Angela Sands, March 2006

Early in 2005 I was offered an SMS scholarship. I saw this as a great gift and wonderful opportunity to deepen and intensify my understanding and practice in a place devoted to the precious teachings of our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. I was also invited to use my time as an opportunity to contribute to the development of the Gar and the Sangha, in accordance with Rinpoche's wish, and was honored to be the first to take up the SMS scholarship. Preparing for the move from my home and change in living situation, I sensed that the basis of the year's activity would be developing practice in order to sustain continuously the Dzogchen state: the attitude of maintaining Bodhicitta, motivation and application; self-responsibility; collaboration and contribution to the Gar's activities; and the wellbeing of the community. This was the inner focus for the outward preparations.

The Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar offered some financial support, an excellent physical and Dharma environment, a local



Rinpoche's house at Namgyalgar

Sangha, and the assistance of teachers. I very much wanted and needed a time away to focus on studying and practice, to sharpen my understanding and gain precision in my practice. How wonderful that felt! Exactly the right opportunity at the right time! I was more than happy to make every effort to meet the expectations to maintain a high level of commitment, practice and study; to develop a Dzogchen attitude of both view and behavior; to work to the limits of my capacity, collaborating actively with the local Sangha and engaging in Karma Yoga, collective practices and the everyday business of being there. It seemed best to approach my time there as a retreat, integrating, so I was not very concerned with weekends or breaks and attempted to set up a routine without a lot of specified "down" time. As I relaxed and entered into a natural flow, a mixture of activities sustained my energy without strain, time off, or distractions. Through this, I established a workable daily routine. For me, an important aim was to develop an integrated practice routine that I could then take back with me to my normal living situation. This routine included two hours of practice early in the morning, another *thun* in the afternoon or evening, about three hours of karma yoga, usually transcribing, or assisting in setting up the library, and some two to three hours of study. The domestic activities fell in around this and the resultant variety of activities and movement was quite self-sustaining, so that I did not tire easily. When I needed a change I visited a friend and listened to music, and I went to the movies a few times... A good balance and easily sustained without

strain or coercion.

Now, some months later I am again reflecting on this period as I write. I recommend this year on an SMS scholarship to anyone who needs a boost on the path, a way of refreshing and renewing study and practice, whether a young starting practitioner or a jaded older student. Potential magic. Not easy, because there are substantial challenges, but magical.

Let's begin with the physical setting. Imagine on a quiet slope of mountain, a Gar of simple elegance, a retreat cabin and above it all, Rinpoche's house, Gawaling, where I had a room.

The simple retreat cabin where I did many personal retreats is one of the rich resources offered; a little cabin of unassuming fiberboard with a small verandah. Open a glass paned door into a jewel of a room, lined with warm honey coloured wood and golden yellow walls, square paned windows. It could be Hansel and Gretel's cottage but it's a retreat cabin. Everything you need exactly where it needs to be! The bed is firm and wide enough to turn in comfortably; a little wood heater easily keeps you cozy and toasty in winter; an ensuite of correct proportions with a great shower; a wall of simple kitchen appliances and cupboards; above the bed a wall of honey-eyed wood hung with thankas; at the foot of the bed an extended shelf and desk. Solar lights and a gas frig work well, and kind persons bring wood for the heater. Yes, this is the retreat cabin on Namgyalgar.

Here there is nothing to do but practice, study, listen to recordings of Rinpoche, listen to the sound of quiet and the birds, cook and eat

continued on next page

*continued from previous page*

simple small meals. No talk, no words, no sound except mantra and birds, no people. Just exactly the place to practice and 'observe yourself', that monkey mind, the movement from contemplation to distraction, the curious inner waves of concentration and tumult, thought and emotions rising from nowhere going nowhere, judging, thinking, clarity, emptiness, contentment. However you go in you come out refreshed, grateful and content. Perfect.

The accommodation at Rinpoche's house is only a little different. I found my room very pleasant, comfortable and workable. The same beauty of outlook and serenity prevails. Rabgyi, one of the monks Rinpoche invited to come to Namgyalgar to study, and Catherine, our Gekö, shared the house with me. The space was just adequate, powered by solar energy, water limited by what we collected when it rained, a good wood heater; and so we learned to live with awareness of ourselves and the environment. Of course we did our best to live harmoniously and collaboratively. That is our practice! And I worked with myself when I observed my reactions to others and when my negativities were trig-

gered. Rabgyi, of all the people I have met, became a model to me of generosity, equilibrium, kindness and effortless grace; his conduct was impeccable. Working and living in a small Sangha, with two other people on Namgyalgar, and a local Sangha of about ten people helped tune my conduct.

There were good supports too in the teachers Rinpoche has appointed, both of whom live quite close. Elise Stutchbury and Angie Gilbert made themselves available generously. When you are here you too will learn a lot from them. Their advice on practices, support during and before personal retreats, their understanding and skilful explanations of the SMS course were invaluable.

The local Sangha attends Ganapujas and collective practices regularly so that one feels very much part of a community of practitioners, the Dzogchen Community. Karma Yoga weekends and retreats attract a gathering from Canberra, Sydney, Melbourne and elsewhere. Gakyil meetings happen regularly, either by conference call or in person. The Gar is big enough to be quite challenging to care for, however maintenance activities progress quietly: tree planting, weeding, road making, wood chopping. The dark

retreat cabin, an exquisitely beautiful space, was ready just after I left. Sometime I will return to Namgyalgar, and develop my practice more and to do a dark retreat.

For now, I appreciate the way practice and study is embedded into my daily life. I continue doing transcriptions, and now also assist on the SMS Scholarship committee, determined that others should benefit as I have done, and that Namgyalgar is strengthened and enlivened by a small Sangha continuing to live and practice there.

The setting is great, the opportunity unsurpassable, the support and resources excellent. It is all there now – offering all that is needed for a year's steady study and practice, for those practitioners who really want to engage with the precious Santi Maha Sangha. Think about it! Once in this lifetime, take a break from your usual activities and come here for a year's study and practice. You won't regret it!

You can contribute to and benefit from this wonderful program, even if the possibility of participating in the program here at Namgyalgar does not present itself to you right away, or even in this lifetime! Donations and continuing financial support for the SMS Scholarship

Namgyalgar Programs for 2006 – 2007 & Gakyil News

Namgyalgar retreat program 2006 - 2007

The Blue Gakyil has been developing a retreat program for the forthcoming year. Highlights include the following retreats at Namgyalgar:

December 26 – January 1
Closed webcast – Upadesha of Introduction to State of Ati
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Purification of 6 Lokas, and Short, Medium and Ganapuja Thuns related to Refuge, Bodhicitta, Guruyoga
with Cheh Goh

Study Groups for SMS Base and Level 1

Yantra Yoga
with Emily Coleing

January 2 – January 8
Dance of the Song of the Vajra Practice
with Lynne Geary

April 6 – April 15
SMS Base and Level 1
with Jim Valby

September 29 – October 7
Meditation and Contemplation
by Costantino Albini

The Campers' Kitchen

The Campers' Kitchen project is nearly ready to go – apart from one crucial aspect. We need (quite a lot) more money! Madeleine Fogarty is the Yellow Gakyil member co-coordinating fundraising, so if you want to donate, or have any fundraising ideas (or even more importantly, the energy to pursue them), please contact her: madeleinef@iprimus.com.au, or on (61 3) 9388 9144.

Power to the Gar

As anyone who has been to the Gar lately would know, the power system needs to be upgraded. The Gakyil has now chosen a contractor for the project, and is in the process of raising the necessary funds (the overall cost will be about \$35,000, some of which we have already). Money from the maintenance raffle is being put towards the power project, so please buy tickets! Just as importantly, if you are able to help by selling raffle tickets, please contact Madeleine.



Retreat cabin at Namgyalgar

Namgyalgar, Dzogchen Community in Australia

PO Box 214 Central Tilba
NSW 2546

Tel/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668

Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au

Website: www.dzogchen.org.au

p a s s a g e s



BORN:

Beautiful boy Surya Dewa Phipps was born on July 15, 2006 into the loving family of Melbourne practitioners Suzana Dewa and Peter Phipps, his brother Gabriel, and his sisters Sylvia and Arya.



help support asia
asiacalendar 2007



The first school that ASIA Onlus built in Tibet was the Dongche Primary and Middle School in Qinhai Province in 1993. The inhabitants of the village has greatly wished to have a school and participated keenly in its construction. Today the school has more than 500 Tibetan students.

This positive experience led to the construction of Schools in Shala, Thanggan, Tarzè, Golok and other places, in rural areas populated by nomads where the distances on the plateau and the lack of means of communication and infrastructure make it practically impossible for children living in these remote areas to have access to education. The rate of enrolment at schools of compulsory education is still very low and there are a great number of older boys and girls who do not know how to read and write. Furthermore, because of the lack of education, nomadic families have fewer and fewer possibilities of participating in the process of economic development which is taking place in China and are becoming poorer and more marginalised.

With the aim of preserving the ancient spiritual heritage of Tibet, ASIA has rebuilt Buddhist study and practice colleges that were destroyed during the cultural revolution. These colleges have always played an extremely important role not only as religious institutions but also as centres of culture and education for young people.

The experience of creating these schools and colleges has shown that, in spite of the difficulties, the Tibetans want to become organised in order to defend and perpetuate their patrimony of knowledge.

Interventions such as those proposed by ASIA are able to stimulate the nomadic community to become active in order to guarantee an education for their children. Both schools and colleges, built using bio-climatic technology, will continue to allow many young Tibetans to study with regularity and with profit in a friendly environment which respects Tibetan culture and traditions.

Donations starting from 8 euro accepted.

Contact: adozioni@asia-onlus.org, or by post to Via San Martino Della Battaglia, 31 – 00185 Rome, Italy)

Over 13 years ASIA has built numerous schools and Buddhist colleges in the most remote and inhospitable areas of Tibet.

The 2007 Calendar is dedicated to the children and the nomadic community that are benefited by it.

Payment can be made by:

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ABI: 01030 – CAB: 72160

Post Office account

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Interview with Laura Evangelisti Kiev, Ukraine on April 7th, 2006

Andrei Besedin: Laura, how did you become a Yantra Yoga teacher?

Laura Evangelisti: I met Rinpoche in 1980 and in 1983 we had a retreat in Merigar where Rinpoche went through the complete book of Yantra with his commentary for many days. He was reading the text and the people who already knew Yantra Yoga were in front of him and doing the exercises. Rinpoche was guiding and correcting them. We went through the entire book, which was at that time only in Tibetan.

After the retreat he asked, "Who would be interested to teach Yantra? Oh, then we can do an exam!" I was one among the interested people. Anyway, it was quite a simple exam; not very complicated. I passed, he gave me a diploma and said: "Now you can do more official courses, like in the city, and you have this diploma as a kind of authorization."

At that time I was living near Merigar and one day Rinpoche called me and said, "There are two women in Arcidosso, a town near Merigar, and they came to me and asked for advice, they had some problem, depression and like that, so I advised them to learn Yantra, so could you go to their place and teach them?" I said that I would try, I had never taught Yantra before, but I would try. That's how I started to teach Yantra. I went to the women's house twice a week and taught them very basic Yantra because they did not know anything about it. After this, I started to teach Yantra at Merigar because I lived there and there were practitioners who wanted to practice.

I started teaching at Merigar and in 1985 I started to give courses in a little town near Merigar to local people who were not from the Community. I did that regularly on a weekly basis for a few years. In the meantime, I also taught at Merigar to practitioners. In 1985 they started the translation of the famous book on Yantra Yoga. I remember the year because it was the time when my second daughter, Yesan, was born. In the beginning four people divided the book into four parts and each translated one part. That was the first translation; years passed.

The translation was a rough one and needed to be put together and edited, etc. So Adriano Clemente took on this job and because we were living together at the time and I was practicing Yantra, I helped him with the book. I slowly started to go into more detail and compare the text with the practice, and a few times Adriano, Fabio and I met with Rinpoche to correct the translation. Rinpoche probably saw that I was very interested and very precise.

At the end of 1994 he wrote a letter to all the Gakyils and said that he had decided to appoint two responsible teachers for Yantra Yoga and two for Vajra Dance. So the two he appointed for Yantra Yoga were Fabio and myself. I was a little surprised. "Oh, wow! That's a big responsibility!", I thought.

Fabio was already teaching publicly and in 1995 we became the official International Yantra Yoga teachers. Rinpoche wrote a very precise indication of how to proceed to become a Yantra Yoga teacher, so he asked Fabio and I to do the teacher's training courses for all the teachers to be supervised. We started to do that and we are continuing it.

AB: Why has the Yantra Yoga book not been published yet?

LE: To make such a book is not easy and is a very big work. First of all, the original translation was in Italian. We also thought it would be very good if the book was published by a publishing house with a more widespread network and we had a proposition from Snow Lion Publications. Therefore, we decided to publish it with Snow Lion and the book needed to be translated from Italian into English, because at that time Adriano Clemente was not translating into English, and then the book was given to Andy Lukianovich to translate from Italian into English and that took more time. After, we had to review it again and that took more time. Then, we needed drawings and photos and that also took a lot of time. We started the project of drawings about eight years ago and made photos of all the yantras and the variations. Bruno Irmici made all the drawings and that took a lot of time; first to make all the photos, then to put them in order, one by one, and then to send them to Bruno – all this took years. So the book had many obstacles.

After five years the work was finished and we collected everything: the text, the drawing and the photos, and gave it to Snow Lion for editing. Now we have decided to have Dan Zegunis of Shang Shung Institute, Italy, do the final graphics and that is where we are at present.

AB: Is it being finished at last?

LE: Every time we think it's finished, or we have reached the last review, we go through and find something incorrect, and that keeps going on and on. Now it's at a very good point. I don't want to say it's completely finished, because we have already said that so many times, but we are now at a very good point. Last May I brought the final version to Rinpoche, with all the drawings and pictures, and he said he liked and we did a very good job. He was satisfied. Now we can really finish it.

I must also say that the book took such a long time because Adriano is busy with so many books and working very hard. Sometimes he



would be concentrating on the Yantra book and be called away by some very urgent work and have to put it off until next time. Things just go slowly sometimes. Now we are very satisfied with the book, so hopefully we will have it soon in English published by Snow Lion and later in other languages, so it will be available for practitioners.

AB: So many differences and corrections appeared day to day; does the corrected text of Yantra Yoga now differ greatly from the original of the old

days?

LE: The Yantra Yoga book comes from the original text by Vairocana, which is very short and condensed, but there is also Rinpoche's commentary on it. Sometimes we found, for instance, things that didn't correspond between the root text and the commentary, so Rinpoche asked us to correct it. This was primarily regarding the initial and final phases of the movements; we had to do some corrections. Tibetan is not an easy language and, of course, to describe a movement when you translate, if you change the order of one word, that changes the details of the movement. Of course, Adriano did his best, but sometimes we had to go over the movement again and again in detail, going deeper into the text to find out what might be the correct way. Anyway this is in regard to the details; the main practice is as it was since the beginning. The main thing is that we are trying to correct the details slowly because otherwise it will go in a different way, like one teacher teaches in one way and another in another way, so we try to coordinate all this.

AB: So many people don't have the physical capacity to do many yantras. What is the best way to develop them? Can hatha yoga help?

LE: The best way is to practice. Of course, if you do hatha yoga it can be helpful to be able to do the yantra after. Most of all it is the matter of practice, because if you do things regularly, then your body really changes and slowly you are able to do things that you thought you couldn't do, so it is most of all a matter of practice.

AB: Which is a best way to build our Yantra Yoga practice? Do we need to go through the retreats again and again for corrections?

LE: Well, no. The best way to build your Yantra Yoga practice is to practice as regularly as possible and to develop your understanding, because only with personal practice you understand and develop. Only attending courses is not enough. It is useful to attend courses now and then, maybe once a year, in

order to be corrected. Going to retreats is not indispensable. Maybe it is better to attend a regular class, going once a week or twice a week. That is very useful; the teacher can really see your problem and correct or help you. Regular classes are much more useful than condensed retreats because with regular practice you really develop. Of course, your own practice is the most important.

AB: Who can lead such classes?

LE: The general process of becoming a Yantra Yoga teacher is like this: a practitioner who is interested in teaching Yantra Yoga can go to teacher trainings with Fabio Andrico and me, maybe not only once, but several times. After that, if there is a group of practitioners in his town, he can lead the group. Of course, this person should first inform us about that. Later, if we see that this person has enough experience, we can arrange a supervision course like this one in Kiev. If the person passes the supervision, we can present him to Rinpoche and he/she has to pass an exam in front of Rinpoche. Only after receiving a diploma from Rinpoche, he or she is authorized to teach and give courses, not before that. If there is a group of practitioners in the city and they want to practice once a week and there is one who knows better among this group of practitioners, one who maybe wishes to become a teacher, then of course this person can lead the practice. That doesn't mean he or she is a teacher, just a more experienced student, training to become a teacher. That's the way it should be. Anyway, this person must inform the Gakyil of the activity, and of course should not get any money out of it. Of course, if you need to pay for a room you collect some money for that purpose.

AB: Why do the retreats on variations happen so rarely? Are they kept secret?

LE: Oh, no, they are not kept secret. I did a variations course in Margarita and also one at Merigar in the summer. The thing is that very few people are able to do the variations. You can see that even with these second level yantras we are doing now, 80% people are not prepared for them. That is a difficulty. There are several people very dedicated and also very fit that can probably do them, but most of the people usually cannot. Even Fabio and I cannot do many of the variations, but at least we can teach and show, so that young people can start practicing and so we may have the complete Yantra Yoga practice. That is why I thought to teach the fifth group, the variations, and seven lotuses - to finish it before we get too old. Already we are quite old! (laughing) So that is the thing I want to do in the near future.

Interview by Andrei Besedin

The Bedbug Lineage: Memories of a Buddhist Retreat

by Gerald Reilly
Gerald_Reilly@Bloomfield.edu

They called us *big-man ling*. All three of us were living in the cell closest to the monk's central dormitory, and we were big, bearded, unmistakably Western. The Tibetan monks loved us for our size. How could they not love such big, sweaty, overfed Westerners? There was Dag from Sweden who was six-foot six inches tall, Mike from Berkeley, California (or "Beserkeley" as he liked to pronounce it with yet another giant-sized laugh) who was six-foot-four and not a pound less than two-hundred and twenty pounds, and myself, the smallest of the group from New York City who stood an even six-feet and weighed just over two hundred pounds—at least before my retreat in India.

We were seekers after enlightenment. It was the summer 1987, in the middle of the hot season, and we were at Sakya College in Rajpur,

India, about to receive the *Lamdre* (*Taking the Result as the Path*) the central teachings of the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism, descended uninterruptedly to the present day from Virupa, the great *mahasiddha* who lived in sixth-century India.

All three of us laughed loudly and boisterously at our tribulations at the retreat, and the Tibetans loved our humor and cheerfulness. We laughed about the Tibetan cook, for example, a layman without religious inclinations, preparing our food in a loincloth towel (without underpants) but soon there were absurd tears to be shed too. The poor man's wife had recently died, and deep into the retreat, he appeared inconsolable in the kitchen hours after dinner and cleanup, bemoaning his loss and throwing pots and pans at angry ghosts.

We laughed about the latrines, just four of them pretending to serve the needs of approximately three hundred monks and visitors. Our two

latrines had been strategically located alongside a cow field. On a typical morning, thousands of flies buzzed between the cows and the latrines, and the simplest act of waste management was necessarily an act of high humiliation, a losing and mind-numbing battle to keep buzzing flies from entering the very orifices that were being emptied out. And the blessed bedbugs! How could one not laugh at the bedbugs, even if the laughter began to grow a little strained with the relentlessness of their assaults. Our mattresses and room were infested with them. At night, if one of us leaned up and flicked on the switch for the overhead bulb, the wall would shine to life with the scurry of insects instinctively fleeing from our beds and flesh and climbing to safety up the wall, out of reach from our vengeance. But of course, we hadn't the slightest intention of being vengeful: we were bodhisattvas, every night practicing our love for the blood-sucking insects. We

watched them flee and marveled at the precise angles of attack and the dark scabs lining the uncovered parts of our flesh. We tried to pretend it was not interfering with our sleep. By mid-retreat, I had given away my mattress to a friendly monk whose tough reddish skin wasn't so appetizing to the insects. I fled our tiny room and slept the remainder of the teachings on the roof. The three of us laughed and meditated and laughed some more. What is funnier than Westerners journeying thousands of miles to receive impossible teachings and endure unrelenting humiliations? Many monks, intrigued by our size and our beards, joined our laughter. And the variety of monastic types was as varied as our backgrounds and appearances. We met a monk who wanted to see movies in Dehra Dun at least as much as he wanted to take part in yet another puja, another monk planning on hiking back to Tibet to visit his aging mother, a third monk eager to discuss hand-

guns and lethal weapons that might provide fitting protection for the great teachers.

The scene was filled with outright craziness too. I arrived to find an acquaintance from New York City leaving the retreat in the midst of a nervous breakdown. She had been so traumatized by the preparatory teachings on the hell realms that she had begun to actively hallucinate that her residential cell was located somewhere in the lower worlds. Another Western visitor grew even more unhinged. One night in the middle of the tantric empowerments, this Spanish-born woman broke down. It was a rare night of drizzling rain. We were near the end of the dry season and the monsoons were coming late that season, although from the monastery roof, we could see the storm clouds of dark rainy season accumulating to the South. By midnight, as the light rain fell, word slowly circulated that

continued on next page

special practice calendar

november 2006 - february 2007

9th Month, 30th day
Mon. 20th Nov. 2006

DARK MOON This is a good day to do *Namcho Shitroi Naljor*, the Yoga of the Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations, in the morning. It is also an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Long or Medium Thun, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

10th Month, 10th day
Thu. 30th Nov. 2006

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava, the day on which he arrived in central Tibet. It is considered that on this day, at the end of the 8th century, King Songtsen Gampo, the ancient king of Dharma, vanished dissolving into a statue of Avalokiteshvara. Therefore it is good to do the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava with the Long-life mantra and a Ganapuja. Otherwise you can do the Long-life practice "Universal Wisdom Union". If it is possible, the best moment to do the Guruyoga is early in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the Ganapuja later in the afternoon.
10th Month 11th day Fri. 1st Dec. 2006

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati.

10th Month, 15th day Mon. 4th Dec. 2006

FULL MOON This day is considered to be the day to honor the Lord Buddha in general, and it is one of the best days to do the Long-life Practice with the Dakini Mandarava

in particular. Generally the best moment to do this kind of practice is between 7 and 8 in the morning but if you don't have this possibility, then do it in the afternoon or later in the evening when you are free. It is also a good day to do a Ganapuja.

10th Month, 25th day
Fri. 15th Dec. 2006

Today is a Dakini day and the anniversary of Tsongkhapa (1357-1491), who made a synthesis of the previous schools and founded the Gelugpa School. It is a very beneficial day for reinforcing the energy of the universe so try to perform a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters. If there are no other practitioners nearby you can do the Medium Thun on your own, transforming into the Dakini Simhamuka and reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.

10th Month, 30th day
Wed. 20th Dec. 2006

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

11th Month, 7th day
Wed. 27th Dec. 2006

This month, the 8th day is missing. This is a special day for doing the practice of Ekajati so try to do a Long Thun, collectively or alone, reciting the heart mantra as many times as possible.



11th Month, 10th day
Fri. 29th Dec. 2006

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

11th Month, 15th day
Wed. 3rd Jan. 2007

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

11th Month, 25th day
Sat. 13th Jan. 2007

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

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

11th Month, 30th day
Fri. 19th Jan. 2007

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

12th Month, 10th day
Sun. 28th Jan. 2007

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

12th Month, 11th day
Mon. 28th Jan. 2007

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

12th Month, 15th day
Fri. 2nd Feb. 2007

FULL MOON This is in general a day for honoring the Lord Buddha, and in particular an ideal day for the Long-life practice of Guru Amitayus, "Union of Primordial Essences". If possible try to do a

collective Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters in the evening.

12th Month, 18th day
Mon. 5th Feb. 2007

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

12th Month, 25th day
Mon. 12th Feb. 2007

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

12th Month, 30th day
Sat. 17th Feb. 2007

Today is the last day of the Fire Dog year. It is a special day for purification practices so try to do "Purification of the Six Lokas" as much as possible. You should also try to do a Ganapuja with your Vajra brothers and sisters.

TIBETAN NEW YEAR - FIRE BOAR

Bedbug lineage continued from previous page

the Spanish visitor was standing naked in the center of the courtyard, looking up towards Sakya Trizin's quarters. She appeared completely psychotic. She was brought back to her room and a while later would appear again, naked, staring with mysterious devotion at the lighted windows of our teacher's temporary residence.

On the following day, meetings were held and finally the woman was driven to New Delhi so she could recover away from the scene of her madness. There was nobody to leave her with. The Spanish Embassy refused responsibility. In truth, as with the other woman from New York, she quickly regained equilibrium apart from the retreat setting. Weeks later, just before the end of the teachings, she returned to pay respects to His Holiness. This time, she kept her clothes on.

I have not even mentioned karma. During one of the breaks in the teachings, I accompanied a fellow Westerner up the mountain to Missouri to enjoy a few hours of coolness and fine a hamburger. It was a homesick urge that I could gladly share, but not on this day: I had no desire to eat the hamburger or whatever spurious meat was offered under its name. I studied my friend's face as he devoured his food. In his face, I saw what attachment was, intermingled with his expression of pleasure. He drank two ice-cold lhasi (yogurt) drinks. He ate the entire hamburger. I didn't

feel superior because I couldn't muster the courage or the madness to eat the Indian mystery meat or to test the Indian ice. Bite after bite sated his mysterious yet understandable craving for meat. And later that night and the next two days, when my friend was racked with nausea and fever and the wildest discomfort, I said numerous *vajrasattva* mantras for him, although at the time the one-hundred-syllable prayer didn't seem to offer anyone much solace.

In fact, I was haunted by the thought of death throughout my entire visit to India. In New York City, I had departed with the news that the great Dezhung Rinpoche, the founder of our center, had just passed away in Nepal. A wonderful and extensive biography of his life by David Jackson has lately been published. And in 1987, at the time of his death, I had not even met him!

Arriving in India, I realized that nobody had heard the sad news. I tried to tell one Tibetan teacher, but his difficulty understanding my English left me a little shaken at the prospect of such an announcement. It was just as hard with the Westerners. In fact, the woman in charge of the retreat arrangements openly dismissed the trustworthiness of any such news coming from the mouth of a neophyte like myself. I nearly began to question my own sanity. And later I had the completely disorienting experience of conversing with Sakya Trizin, patriarch

of the Sakya lineage, and verifying the loss of this famed master who had been his own teacher. His Holiness took the news without any visible emotion. Instead, he focused on me, the brand-new student, reminding me that even this sad news could deepen my understanding of the impermanence of the phenomenal world.

So what to make of it? For me, the extreme conditions and the madness and the remarkable Indian setting worked well in settling my impressions. There were undeniable physical costs to be paid by the other visitors: two nervous breakdowns, an outbreak of giardia, an ongoing variety of other intestinal maladies. Here were obstacles, arising as necessarily as the obstacles in the lineage accounts.

Certainly I wasn't ready for the vastness of the teachings. Nothing was simple or one-dimensional. We weren't shown a single inner-heat (*tummo*) exercise: there were fifteen of them. Countless yogas and practices, empowerments and commitments were showered on my unskilled and unsteady shoulders. In fact, after Lamdre, nobody just returns to western life. Alone, sleeping on the roof, I had begun dreaming of my wife in New York City long before the teachings were finished. And for several years after my summer in India, it felt as if the teacher had trailed us back home to New York. Fond memories of the evening stroll to the Rajpur chai

stall, past monkeys that mocked our solemn, monastic demeanors were replaced by equally striking images of ancient lamas chanting Tibetan mantras as they walked into East Village galleries for teachings, past street junkies on a darkened, New York City street.

Surely this remains the age of radical and often surreal intersections between east and west. Nowadays, for this new age without borders, the secret tantric instructions arrive by airmail. Lineage teachings, like the ones Sakya Trizin delivered in his accomplished but accented English, are recorded on videotape, not to mention a circle of private tape recorders. *This world is illusion*, the teaching proclaims, and I am slowly becoming adept at recognizing that truth. As if in instant affirmation, a Hollywood actor, famed for action movies, materializes in Tibetan-style garments while on a different red carpet, a recognized *tulku* raises money to finance his latest movie. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo meet Marshal McLuhan! And the Lamdre transmission continues.

A final fleeting, telltale memory. After the teachings, I traveled by express bus from Dehra Dun to New Delhi with a New York-based lama, sharing several hours of exhilarating talk about Lamdre and the dharma. We checked in together in a swank hotel in New Delhi, and suddenly my lama friend realized he was missing his wallet and passport and plane tickets.

By taxi we returned to the central bus terminal in New Delhi, past army barricades that were set up at various highways and avenues. Tensions in the Kashmir had spread to the rest of the sub-continent, and a curfew had been set for the city. It was past midnight. We were looking for the missing passport and ticket that would allow the lama to return to America. We inspected hundreds of empty buses in the darkness, and we couldn't find any trace of our bus, let alone the missing papers. Talk about complete enlightenment in this very lifetime! A final time we solemnly circumambulated the bus graveyard before giving up: two Buddhists at midnight in New Delhi, a frail monk in maroon robes and a bearded American, searching for a passport or a visa or even a ticket home.

Gerry Reilly is a new student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, receiving transmission in March 2006. He lives with his wife and two children in Northern New Jersey where he teaches writing at Bloomfield College. His story "Nixon under the Bodhi Tree" was the title story of a collection of Buddhist fiction published by Wisdom Publications.

b o d h i

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INFORMATION FOR PEOPLE WHO INTEND TO COME TO MERIGAR FOR RETREATS OR TO FOLLOW COURSES

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

Christina von Geispitzheim
Email: acomodationservice@libero.it
Tel: 0039 0564 957542
Mobile phone: 0039 339 1370739

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

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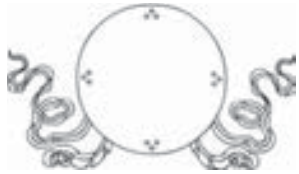


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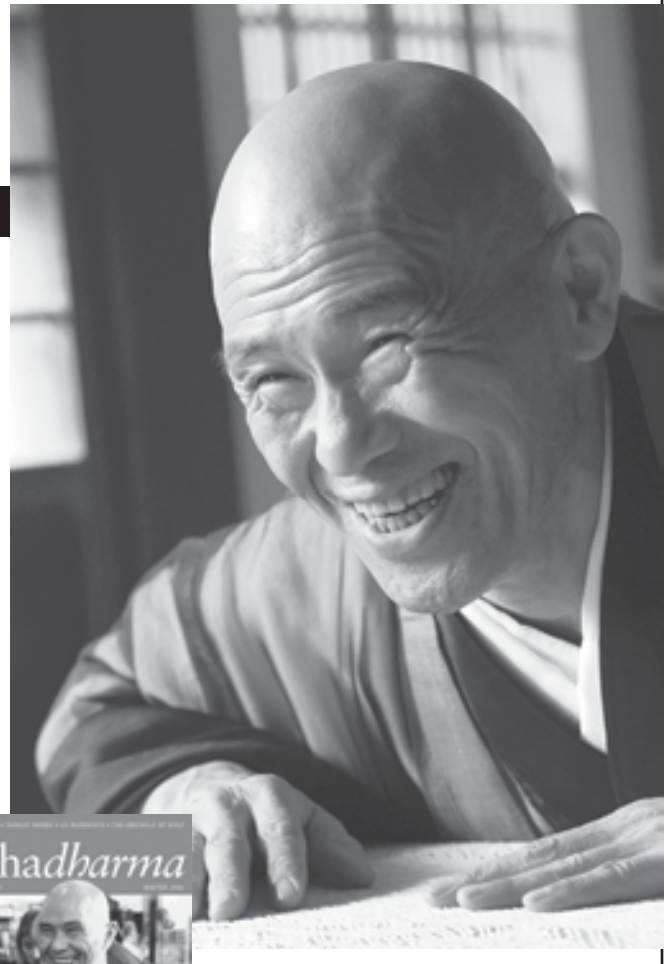
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HOW I MET CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

by Flavia Tomassini

Years ago I was a teacher, living in Rome. My marriage was in trouble – my husband and I didn't get on very well, even though we had a wonderful son - and it seemed I had come to a critical point in my life. I had been smoking and drinking for years but at that point I realized that my life was at stake if I didn't manage to stop drinking and smoking my usual 20 – 30 cigarettes a day, so I decided to consult a Gestalt psychotherapist called Barrie Simmons. As soon as I saw him, I was struck by his lively penetrating eyes and the shining melong that stood out on his large pink shirt and covered an equally large strong chest. When he saw me, Barrie told me straight away, "Your problem isn't alcohol". His reply really surprised me until, with the passing of time, I started to understand how right he was. Even today, years after stopping drinking and smoking, just the sight of wine and cigarettes makes me feel sick. I started having sessions of individual therapy, and after several months I asked him if I could move on to group therapy. This was to be a very important experience because you come into contact with other people in an authentic way, and if it isn't authentic you know that you are pretending or play-acting. In one of these so-called 'marathon' ses-

sions, which lasted a number of days (this session was actually 10 days on a beautiful farm near the Taro River in Emilia Romagna), I had my "first revelation".

It happened at the end of a day of work on our "minds in difficulty". I saw Barrie and another two participants (equally large, bearded and robust) hide away in a small room at the farmhouse. Soon after I started to hear sounds and songs coming from the room which I found beautiful and fascinating ... A few evenings later I asked one of the other people at the therapy session if they knew anything about the sounds I had heard and this person told me in quite an ironic and conceited way that they were "Tibetan songs".

At school I had heard of Tibet as the "roof of the world" and on television I had seen a handsome monk in important brocade robes during an official ceremony. They had called him the head of Tibet, the Dalai Lama, and his smile; his hat and his bearing had struck me. For the rest I confess that I was totally ignorant about Tibet at the time, its appalling tragedy, its historical importance and its culture.

One evening, still attracted to those fantastic sounds, in spite of the fact that we were not allowed to go into the little room, I decided that I just



had to go in there. I ran to the door, flung it open and literally threw myself onto the chest of one of the people who was playing the cymbals and bell. He was completely unperturbed and went on playing and singing. I remained there the whole time with my ear stuck on the huge chest of this person who was sounding internally and externally that which at the time was called the Rite of the Guardians - today, the Long Thun. For me it was like rediscovering sounds that I had always known but had not heard again until that moment. It was, for me, the beginning of the Great Discovery. I was spellbound as I listened and watched the three singers while a feeling of peace and joy took hold of me. The door was gently closed again and we remained there, the four of us, until the end of the Rite.

When it was over I asked Barrie to explain things to me but he didn't say anything there and then but one of the other three started to talk to me about Tibet and the Guru. So I decided that I would absolutely have to meet him.

In the meantime, after holding several retreats in various parts of Italy, the Guru had decided to hold another one in Tuscany, not far from the monastery of Pomaia, at the villa of an American lady,

Joyce, who had invited him. I understood that the "sine qua non" conditions of Rinpoche were that all disciples could participate in the retreat if they wanted to, but Barrie felt that my participation was still premature. When I insisted, he introduced me to his wife, Nancy, who was organizing in Rome. Nancy was very kind and gave me the necessary information and around Christmas 1978 I drove onto the Aurelia highway in the direction of Livorno.

I remember that the morning I arrived at the villa, as soon as I saw the front door I felt my heart leap up to my mouth. I went into a large kitchen and straight away noticed Barrie, who indicated with a slight movement of his hand, a large group of people who were standing, crowded around the table. For the

most part they were young people, with smiling dreamy faces, male and female, with long hair and wearing colorful heavy wool jackets. They all seemed beautiful to me and I thought they looked "like angels".

I moved closer to the group, pushed my way in between a couple of them and there He was, the Teacher of my life - that was the way Chögyal Namkhai Norbu appeared at my first meeting with him. "Here is the person I have been searching for up to now," I thought to myself. "That is why there has been so much hardship and suffering until now." For me, that first retreat with the Master was, and still is, fundamentally rich with memories, sensations, certainties, great strength and beauty, unforgettable and beyond words.

And from that moment on, I started to follow the new sacred therapy of continually discovering and re-educating my mind, and not only, since there is also a body and energy that flows through it. And from that time up to this moment, not withstanding my poor personal results, I bless the circumstances, the day and the moment in which I met our Master, the Dharma King.

My meeting also helped the circumstances with Barrie, who I remember with gratitude and affection.

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