

# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

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## Schedule Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 2005 - 2006



### 2005

#### PERU

Feb.18 - 20 Peru retreat

#### MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

March 4 - 6 Retreat  
March 9 - 10 Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Exam  
March 11 - 15 Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Training

#### MEXICO CITY

March 25 - 28 Mexico City Easter retreat

#### BAJA CALIFORNIA, MEXICO

April 1 - 4 Baja California, Mexico Retreat

#### USA

April 13 -17 Los Angeles Retreat  
April 27 - May 1 New York City Retreat  
May 6 - 8 Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts Retreat  
May 11 - 12 Santi Maha Sangha II Level Exam, Tsegyalgar  
May 13 - 17 Santi Maha Sangha III Level Training, Tsegyalgar

#### RUSSIA

June 3 - 5 Kunsangar, a course of Moxabustion (Limited to persons who know Medicine)  
June 8 -12 Moscow retreat

#### ITALY

July 1 - 5 Merigar, Italy Retreat 1  
July15 -Aug. 5 My personal retreat, Merigar  
July 22 -24 Moxabustion course for people who are familiar with medicine (Shang-Shung Institute)  
Aug. 10 -16 Merigar Retreat 2

#### SPAIN

Oct. 5 - 9 Spain Retreat

#### BRAZIL

Oct. 14 - 18 Brazilian Retreat

#### MARGARITA ISLAND, VENEZUELA

Nov. 4 - 8 Longsal Teaching Retreat  
Nov. 25 - 29 Santi Maha Sangha Base and 1st Level Teachers Trainings, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga 1st and 2nd Teachers' Trainings  
Dec. 2 - 8 Tshedrup (Long life) teaching  
Dec. 26 - Jan. 1 Tashigar Norte retreat



Tashigar South Gonpa

K.KOPPENSTEINER-EISENEGGER

## Gomadevi Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Tashigar South, Argentina

Dec 26, 2004 – Jan 1, 2005

by Karin Koppensteiner-Eisenegger

Remote Tashigar South had never before hosted such a big retreat. The different buildings of the South American Gar lie hidden in a kind of bowl of rocks in the Argentinean mountains. The Gonpa of Tashigar, in the midst of strong rocks, is situated under wonderful trees. El Durazno, which means peach, is the little neighboring village and Tanti the nearest town. The Gonpa with the thatched roof, in the traditional Argentine style of Quincho, was filled with students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from all over the world when the Gomadevi Retreat started in the afternoon on December 26, 2004.

It was to become one of the most beautiful retreats I have participated in the last twenty years. On the first day of the retreat, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu explained about his terma of the Longsal Teachings of the female master Gomadevi and its connection with the Dance of the Vajra. Iconographically, Gomadevi is depicted with the syllable of the Longsal Teachings in a radiant thigle in her left hand, while her right hand is opened in the gesture of supreme giving. Rinpoche explained the lineage of her teachings, which come from Guru Garab Dorje to his direct disciple, King Indrabuthi of Oddiyana, who then transmitted

the knowledge to his daughter, Princess Gomadevi. Also Guru Padmasambhava, together with his consort Mandarava, had direct contact with the teachings of Gomadevi through visions.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave us a very ample and clear explanation of the true sense of the teachings of Gomadevi, teaching also the four Principles of the Dzogchen teachings, which are also the main samayas of the Dzogchen Semde.

During the first day, Rinpoche explained to his students the true sense of initiation because he was to give the initiation into the teachings of Gomadevi over the next days.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the initiation of Gomadevi to all interested students. In the following days, each day a small group of students received initiation from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu until everybody was able to attend the teachings. Every initiation took the whole morning.

In the meantime, groups of students who had already been initiated studied the practice of Gomadevi with Adriana dal Borgo on the terrace of the big house. It was the same place where lunch and dinner were served. This terrace was to become a happy outdoor school during the retreat. We were also sitting there on benches in the afternoons when Costantino

Albini, who had arrived from Rome, taught in his kind and humble manner about the Chöd. Just a little bit further down into the land lies a very pretty little house, also situated between rocks. It is the Master's house, where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his wife Rosa enjoy privacy and refreshing baths in the blue swimming pool under the eucalyptus trees. Even while we were practicing on the terrace of the big house, we could feel a joyful presence of the Teacher.

In the mornings before teachings and initiations, groups practiced the Dance of the Three Vajras at the outdoor mandala, while the Yantra Yogis were already practicing in the Gonpa, assisted by the Yantra Yoga teacher, Marisa Alonso.

In the evening we had a practice program in the Gonpa, starting with Yantra Yoga at five, followed by the collective thun of the Gomadevi practice. Later, a thun of the Dance took place on the two mandalas of the Gonpa, followed by a Chöd practice at nine in the evening.

For Argentineans, dinnertime is around 10 pm. Some of us spent long and hot summer evenings at the little "Tashi Bar" situated romantically between rocks. There, on a little natural platform, one could sit with about twenty others, have dinner, chai or beer, and chat with people one

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An Essential Chronicle of the History of the Vajra Dance, Final Part, pg 4

North American Retreats 2005 with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, pgs 5 & 6



How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu pg 20





In *Vajrayana* practice we speak about our *samaya* or commitment. That is something very important to distinguish. If someone is only following *sutra* teaching, they think that they receive and follow a vow and the rule of the vow and that they must apply it in the correct way. This a *sutra* way of seeing. The principle of *Vajrayana* is *samaya*. Do you know what *samaya* means? *Samaya* is when we receive essential teachings from the teacher and we connect our real nature, between teacher and student, student and student. That connection of transmission lasts forever until we have total realization, not like a *sutra* vow. You take a *sutra* vow until you die; when you die, there is no more vow because a vow is something related to our physical body.

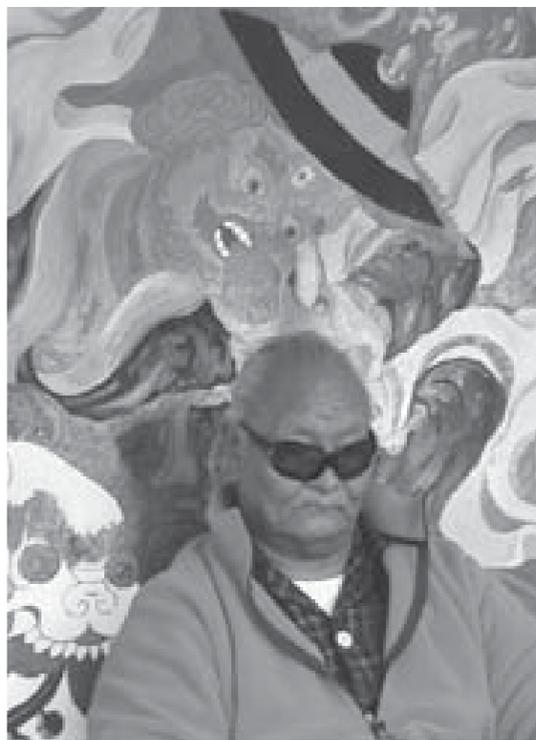
For example, you take a vow not to hurt or kill people. How do people kill others? Maybe you have some potential magic power and you do something magic and kill someone. But most of the time, we kill people with our hands: we shoot a gun, we beat with a stick, and we throw stones. All of these are related to our physical body. But when your body arrives at the cemetery, that vow doesn't work any more. For that reason, your vow is already lost; it does not exist.

But the connection of *samaya* is not only related with mind but with the nature of mind. For example, we receive initiation and at that moment we enter into the three *Vajras* of the teacher and ourselves: we are in the same state. All the students are in that state at the same time so we are related in that way – that is called *Vajra* brothers and sisters. In general people only know how to use the term 'Vajra brothers and sisters' like a nice title. But it doesn't work that way. That is not the meaning. It means that we have a strong connection that is more than any other connection we can have during our ordinary lives.

#### Relative connections

For example, if people are married, we consider that to be a strong connection, but it is a relative connection and most of the time that type of connection does not last for long. When you have many strong emotions and passions, then it works because at that moment you are blinded by your emotions. Then it seems everything is perfect and even though husband and wife may beat each other, it seems very nice. But then after a year, they start to feel a little heavy and after two or three years they cannot stand each other any more. Many people say that they don't feel like they did before. But of course, now is now and before is before. Time is always passing. You are getting older but you don't realize it. You always feel like 16 year olds who are falling in love!

So you must understand that we have that kind of experience when we are blinded by our emotions. That is impermanence. Then people change and after two or three years people say that they have to separate. After the separation they are not satisfied and after a few weeks they find some-



Rinpoche on the Veranda at Tashigar South

F ANDRICO

“INTEGRATING MEANS THAT THE TEACHING YOU HAVE LEARNED BECOMES YOUR EXISTENCE.”

### An introductory talk by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Tashigar del Norte, Isla di Margarita  
Wednesday, November 10, 2004

one else and again they fall in love, thinking that now everything is really fine. Of course it is fine because it is new, but after a few months and a few years they discover that they want to separate again. In some countries people separate 4 or 5 times during their lifetimes and they enjoy doing things that way. But that is called illusion. You can go ahead until you die but you cannot have any benefit from it.

If you have a connection with a person even relatively and without any spiritual connection, you must understand that there are two people and that two people have two dimensions. You may want to be together in this life saying that you love each other. But if you really love each other it means you collaborate and pay respect to each other because two people cannot be part of one dimension.

At the beginning when you fall in love, everything is fine. I remember some of my students falling in love. At the beginning when we would eat together they would sit on one chair even though we would put chairs for both of them. Sometimes they would even break it! They would feel that this is reality. But it is not reality – it is illusion! If you are a practitioner, it is better that you know that and if you really love each other you create a base for paying respect and collaborating with each other. Today you may be two young people, but remember that one day you will be two old people living in a garden some place, paying respect and collaborating with each other. So if you go ahead in that way, even in the relative condition, then you won't have any problems.

#### Keeping *samaya* pure

And then when we have teaching,

practice etc., many practitioners, both husband and wife, participate together. In this way they also create a *Vajra* relationship. That *Vajra* relationship cannot be separated. Even if you want to separate it, you can't and if you try, it will only create problems for your own commitment or *samaya*. Instead of doing something positive for having realization, you create a lot of negative conditions. So it is very important to pay respect to each other.

I am not saying that you should be husband and wife and always be together; that is your business, not mine. But if you have a *Vajra* relationship, you must pay respect to each other. If you can't do that, at least you must be aware that you have this *Vajra* relationship. If you are not aware of that, then it is not good for you to receive teaching such as *Vajrayana* because realization of *Vajrayana* teaching is very much related with *samaya*.

We must keep our *samaya* purified and pure. For that reason we should do a *Ganapuja* at least three or four times every month. The principle of the *Ganapuja* is that we purify in front of the three roots – *Guru*, *Deva* and *Dakini* and particularly with Guardians such as Ekajati. You know that the owner and the governor of the transmission of the Dzogchen teaching is Ekajati. All other guardians like Rahula and Dorje Legpa and many others are followers of Ekajati and they observe and protect the transmission. So when the teacher transmits the teaching to a student, Ekajati and the Guardians take note of that very well.

You see that Ekajati has one eye; one eye is much better than millions of eyes. It is the eye of wisdom. It is not dependent on anything and is able to discover

everything with presence. So when we receive teaching, we can keep our *samaya*, our commitment, in a perfect way even if we don't do any *pujas* or make any offerings to the Guardians. Guardians like Ekajati always protect practitioners.

But if we do something wrong – you know what it means when we do something wrong – for example if we do not pay respect to the people with whom we have a *Vajra* relationship, we are already creating problems. So, of course, then the Guardians discover this and we can receive many negativities and punishments from them, instead of them protecting us. So you see this is something very important for us to know. And we should try to do our best.

#### *Samaya* and the Three Gates

Also when we speak about *samaya* or commitment, particularly in *Anuyoga*, we talk about the three gates or three *Vajras*. That means that *samaya* is related with body, speech and mind. When we study in a more traditional way then we divide these into five, and subdivide into another five and they become more. But we must understand that the principle is related with the three gates or *Vajras*. We cannot go very much into following the traditional path and analysis because it doesn't correspond to the real condition. But we should go into the essence, and then it is very simple for us to understand what the meaning of the three gates is.

#### *Samaya* of the Body

We talk about the state of the *Vajra* of the body, or in our ordinary condition we say body: *samaya* related to the body. If you do not pay respect to the *samaya* of the body, it means you are creating problems for the body of your *Vajra* brothers and sisters. So you are already creating problems of *samaya*.

First of all, we think and speak about teacher and student. Many people have the idea that they should keep *samaya* with the teacher. For example, in some texts on *samaya* it is considered negative not to give respect and to do harmful things to the body of the teacher. We can understand that this is something concrete but it is also related to our *Vajra* brothers and sisters. If you create some problems with the body, that is not positive at all.

I'll give an example when we consider this in a more traditional way. There is a text called 'Lama Ngachupa' (*bla ma lnga bcu pa*), that is about fifty points on how to pay respect to the teacher. This is something more traditional and I am not saying that you should do that but you can understand how we consider and learn everything. In this case, it says, for example, that when you receive teaching, you should cover your head in front of the teacher. Not doing this means not paying respect related to the physical body. Also when you sit in front of the teacher and you lie down – many Westerners do this – or you stretch out your feet in front of the teacher, (sometimes people have smelly feet) that is not a way to

pay respect to the teacher. If you can't sit on the floor for a long time, why do you sit right in front of the teacher? You can sit at the back and stretch out your legs, then there is no problem. These are more traditional things and I am not saying that they are so important.

Also when you are walking you should never walk on the right side of your teacher because this is considered to be non-respectful. And when you walk with the teacher, you should not walk on his shadow. You see, all these things are small things and are related a more traditional attitude and are not so very important. But even if they are not important, how they are considered and how they are analyzed is something you should learn. But the most important thing is really not creating problems for the body of the teacher with bad intention or even joking.

I'll give you a very precise example from my experience. I have been a kind of teacher for many years. At the beginning we were in Naples in south Italy and I had already given many Dzogchen teachings. Once I went to a place and bought a little piece of land and we went there to work. Many of you may remember Eugenio who was a singer. He was always playing and joking. And he was with me and we were working there digging the earth and cleaning. There was a very long saw and he took it and pretended that he wanted to cut me. I thought that it wasn't a very good way of playing because I am the teacher and he is a student. He shouldn't have done that even if he was joking. But I didn't say anything. In my mind I thought I was sorry about it and it wasn't good. And in the evening that same day he cut his tendon. While he was cutting something, he cut his foot. I knew that that was the consequence of his joking. Even if one is joking, one needs to pay respect to the teacher. So in the same way students must not do this kind of joking between themselves. They must always pay respect to each other's dimensions. So this is something related to the physical body.

#### Respecting the dimension of Voice

Then after that we have Voice. Voice – we talk, we joke and we say so many things. And we must be present about this. Sometimes we say some very bad things and that is not good. If we do something like joking that is not very heavy. Even if we do something wrong, we can always purify. But sometimes we have a bad intention and talk about people, accuse them and criticize them and even though that person is a *Vajra* brother or sister, one forgets that *Vajra* relationship and this is very, very negative. This is related with our Voice.

If we have done something wrong, then when we do a *Ganapuja* we remember and we purify. We can make many mistakes – that is normal. We are living in dualistic vision and we can always make mistakes. But if we are indifferent, that is negative.

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We purify and change that idea. Even if we do not talk or communicate with someone, we can still have tensions. But when we purify, we become aware, we become mindful and we know that that is something wrong. Now we feel we are in a pure dimension. So in this case, we communicate and don't keep that kind of tension. This is more related to our Voice. It is very simple. We don't need analysis but we are governed by our awareness.

#### The dimension of mind

So then you know what we mean by mind. The mind is always creating problems, judging and thinking. There is nobody who does not have these kinds of tensions. We are always creating different kinds of tensions. Tensions do not make us feel happy; we always suffer and also create suffering for others. We know that we can change our tensions related to mind; we can abandon them and cultivate good intentions. This is also a very important practice in *Mahayana sutra* and in *Dzogchen* it is even more important because in *Dzogchen* there is no teaching of rules saying that you should or shouldn't do something. We have to take responsibility for ourselves. Taking responsibility means we should be aware. So then we work in that way. That is something very important in *Dzogchen* teaching.

#### Integrating in Guruyoga

We believe that we are *Dzogchen* practitioners. But this is not really the main point because we receive so many different titles of teachings. But what we receive, we integrate. If we have integrated the practice of *Guruyoga* in a perfect way, we don't need anything else. It is sufficient for having total realization and also for overcoming all problems and negativities in *samsara*. Of course, if we have the capacity and we are also interested in integrating everything that we have learnt in our dimension, then we can always follow and learn more and more. That is very positive. So for that reason, I always ask people, please learn *Guruyoga* well and integrate in the state of *Guruyoga*.

Then many people ask me how they should integrate because people always need a kind of method – a way to sit, a way to think, a way to do, and if they learn like this then they are satisfied. If I explain something more essential it seems that something is missing and they still search for something. It is not that something is missing but that they do not understand well what integrating means.

Integrating means that the teaching that you have learnt becomes your existence: your existence is what the teacher has taught. There is no separation. This means that they have integrated. So you see, if you are really integrated in the knowledge of the teaching then you can have fewer problems and you have no problem saying that you have no time to practice. You can always do practice.

#### Samsara is unreal

One of the most important practices you can do is being aware, being present, and then integrating your body, speech and mind

in that state. Also when you are present, it shows its signs in a concrete way: you don't feel that life is heavy.

You see, some people always feel that they have so many problems and tensions. Some people even keep the tensions of many years ago. Then they add some more tensions and keep a kind of anger inside themselves. That is very bad. You must free that. Freeing that means that you really know how the situation is.

We are living in *samsara*. Buddha said that *samsara* is unreal. He said that nothing real exists. Even in the *sutra* teaching it says that the path, wisdom, realization, nothing is real. Intellectually we know these things, but in a practical way we do not know. So if we do not know in a practical way, it does not help our intellectual understanding.

#### Diminishing tensions

For that reason in the *Dzogchen Semde* we have a kind of practice, a very powerful practice. It is not a practice where you are chanting mantra or doing visualization of deities but something very simple. For example, you wake up one morning and decide you should do that practice. So you immediately think, "Oh I'm dreaming that I'm waking up". In the real sense you have woken up at that moment. Then you get up and get dressed and you think, "I'm dreaming I'm getting dressed. Now I'm dreaming I'm having a coffee - I'm dreaming I'm washing - I'm dreaming I'm going to the office - I'm dreaming I'm meeting people". You always remember that you are dreaming until the evening. Then you dream that you are going to sleep and you do a practice of *Guruyoga* and you fall asleep. If you succeed in having that presence continually and are not distracted, you do this practice for 2 or 3 days and observe yourself, how your tensions diminish. You can really notice because our problem is our tensions. We don't notice them. We always keep so many tensions. Sometimes there is no reason or importance, but we always consider them to be important and develop that tension.

You see when some people are discussing - it could be about something useless such as barley or some kind of cereal - someone might say that this cereal is very good for liver. Then another person says that it is not good for liver but good for something else because he read some book. And another person says that he studied these things for many years and he knows. Then their egos come out and people think that what he or she is saying is perfect. And they continue this discussion for hours. Sometimes they even start to fight. That is an example. There is no reason, no importance, but it becomes important because our ego is strong. Nobody thinks that they don't know, that they don't have any knowledge. Everybody thinks that they know very well and are experts in this and that. This is a manifestation of ego and is associated with our tensions. We accumulate these kinds of tensions for years and years. Of course when we never liberate them, when we never observe

ourselves, they become stronger and stronger and we become very nervous. Even if we talk with people we become polemic and that is a manifestation of tensions. We need to liberate our tensions if we are *Dzogchen* practitioners otherwise there is not much benefit from our practice. In order to liberate them, first of all we should not think that others are the guilty ones and that I am innocent. If there are some problems, you are also the guilty one, otherwise you are not there and are not connected with that. If you are connected (with a problem) you cannot be totally innocent.

But it doesn't matter whether you are innocent or not. It is important that you free your tensions. You cannot free the tensions of others. If you say to others, "Oh, you have problems, you are not observing yourself, you are egoistic", then these people will not be happy.

I am a teacher. I am teaching you. I am trying to make you understand. I am not saying that I am innocent and that I don't have any tensions. Maybe sometimes I also have tensions. But even if I do, I do not go after tensions like ordinary people. I notice which kind of tensions I have and I also have the capacity to liberate them so that there is no problem. This is what I am teaching you so everybody should really learn and do that.

#### Starting with number 1

From the beginning from when we started to speak about the Four Mindfulnesses up to the *Dzogchen* teaching, we spoke about being aware in any circumstance. What does it really mean and how should we work with that? If we really (know how to) work with that, then we can have a kind of evolution.

Then we speak about the peace of the world. Many people like to speak about this kind of thing and say that it is a very nice topic. We can talk about making peace – it is a nice word - but how, in which way? That is the point.

For example, if there are two people with tensions between them, if they want to free themselves and be good friends, how can they resolve the situation? Not by accusing each other of being the guilty one or by having another person decide who is guilty and who is innocent. It is not so easy. Both of them have egos.

But if we observe ourselves then we can discover which kind of limitations we have. First of all we must free ourselves; it doesn't matter if other people are free or not. Even if we talk about society, society is made up of many people, including myself. I am one of the people making up society. I can think that I am number one in this society, because it starts with me. If I think in this way, then I am number one. Then there is number 2, number 3, 4 etc., just like numbers. If we think about numbers, we can have millions and millions. But numbers start from one, then 2, 3, 4, 10, 100etc. If there is no number one then number two doesn't exist. So that is an example of society.

If we change, modify, free our tensions, one person will already be free from these types of prob-

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## LETTER FROM THE MIRROR TO THE INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY

As you all know, The Mirror has had financial difficulties since its inception. Printed publications and the mailing of the newspapers are very costly. The Mirror is primarily an internal publication for the *Dzogchen* Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The Mirror is a vital and important vehicle for communication within our Community and also for maintaining a written archive of Rinpoche, the Teachings and our Community's activities. We have all come to look to and rely on The Mirror for so much of our information and contact with our vast international Community.

Here is a letter from Rinpoche from Mirror issue 33, Sept.1995, regarding how the Community should participate with The Mirror, and it was also published in *The Dzogchen Community, Principles and Guidelines for Practitioners and Gakyil Members* (pages 121-122). It is now 2005 and not much has changed since that time, so we need to once again remind the international Community that The Mirror will no longer exist without its support:

*It is my firm belief that our newspaper, The Mirror, is of vital importance for our Community's future. Yet, although it serves the Dzogchen Community worldwide, The Mirror has not so far received the financial support it needs and deserves from the Community around the world. It is not fair that The Mirror should continue to receive financial support only from the Gar that is responsible for its production. This puts too great a burden on one local community. The Community as a whole really must make a more genuinely collective effort to support the newspaper that is our principal means of communication, and which in each issue contains a transcription of my teachings, practice dates, and news and articles of interest to all our members.*

*The Gakyils of the Dzogchen Community around the world should all feel responsible for the continuing publication of The Mirror, which benefits the whole Community, enabling practitioners in all various countries to keep in touch with one another, and they should commit themselves to make regular contributions to the cost of producing The Mirror according to their capacity. Each Yellow Gakyil should try to make a provision in its annual budget to offer some support for The Mirror, which should be sent at regular intervals, no matter how small the contributions may be. Please do your best to fulfill this request.*

*With the whole hearted support of the Dzogchen Community worldwide, The Mirror can increasingly reflect our Community to itself and in addition will be able to further our aspirations that the Dzogchen Teaching may arise and spread in all realms.*

*With my very best wishes,  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu*

We have tried our best to reduce costs, increase circulation and solicit advertising and continue to, but it seems that our efforts have left us virtually in the same place as we started: with a yearly deficit. It also has been difficult to collect and track all the various revenue sources without a centralized location for that activity.

Tsegyalgar, the *Dzogchen* Community of North America in Conway, has been generously subsidizing The Mirror's deficit for ten years. It is no longer possible for Tsegyalgar to do so because of its own lack of resources. If we do not find some solution, The Mirror will finally end. We are looking into changes for printing, making the format and number of pages smaller, lowering mailing costs, centralizing the financial end and becoming more modern and efficient in the method of tracking our income and expenses.

We know that The Mirror needs help in management. Some weak points we have addressed are the lack of a central location for all subscription revenue and the variety of systems and places revenue is collected and sent to us in Tsegyalgar, as well as not well kept records of inventory and sales.

We would like to proceed with tightening up our management methods of record keeping, invoicing and the collection of funds, as well as centrally locating our income reception to one location in Tsegyalgar, so that in some manner all subscription money will be sent directly to The Mirror at Tsegyalgar, everything will be paid out from there, records kept well and invoices sent at regular 2 month intervals to Communities which collect the income and send it to us. We also need to find ways to increase income through subscriptions, contributions and advertising. The International Community needs to be aware that we cannot continue any longer taking our entire deficit assistance from one Community only and that the problem, as Rinpoche so clearly states in his letter, belongs to the entire international Community.

According to Rinpoche's letter, he says that the Gakyils of the *Dzogchen* Communities around the world "should commit themselves to make regular contributions to the cost of producing The Mirror according to their capacity". Each Yellow Gakyil should try and make a provision in its annual budget to offer some support to The Mirror.

We hope that beginning new tighter management activities will correspond to Yeshi and Luigi's proposals for helping us enter the modern age and make our Community activities like The Mirror financially viable.

This is the news from The Mirror desk and we look forward to any ideas, suggestions, financial collaboration, or any other input from the International *Dzogchen* Community.

Thank you for your time,  
Naomi Zeitz for The Mirror

mirror@tsegyalgar.org

## AN ESSENTIAL CHRONICLE OF THE HISTORY OF THE VAJRA DANCE

by Prima Mai, June 2004  
Part II (Final Part)

Somehow, we then started to ask some questions and to follow his every footstep on the Mandala, not yet really understanding why and where, only that it was related to the Song of the Vajra. In the afternoons, Rinpoche continued to study the steps and movements of the Vajra Dance for



Prima Mai dancing at Merigar

himself, accompanied by many of us students, who were sitting around the Mandala, trying to copy and remember some steps. From time to time, Rinpoche would then start to give explanations of where and how to place our feet on the Mandala.

When the retreat was over, Rinpoche continued to come in the mornings, when only a few of us were present. We would follow him and, sometimes, he would ask one of us to repeat or do some steps, observing, correcting and checking whether it corresponded with his text. I went every day, dancing for hours and hours, trying to memorize everything I had seen and Rinpoche had taught. This was a practice I had seen and longed for deeply without knowing it, until I saw the Mandala for the first time. Working with Rinpoche in those days was very interesting for me, being very new to the teachings and to the Dzogchen Community.

In the course of the following months, up until the end of November (including some interruptions), we were able to learn the Three Vajra Dance and as far as "kelanam" in the Song of the Vajra Dance. In December, Rinpoche left to give retreats in Serbia and in Argentina, where – during the Christmas retreat in Tashigar South - Rinpoche gave teachings on the Song of the Vajra, a commentary that was transcribed and published for the first time in 1992 by Station Hill Press, as the book "The Song of the Vajra".

In Tashigar South, the third Mandala was painted and Rinpoche gave teachings on the Three Vajra Dance and the first part of the Song of the Vajra Dance. Before the retreat, Rinpoche, Purusha and many other helpers worked for hours - often until late at night - to prepare the wooden base for the Mandala, which was situated below the Community house of the Gar. One can see some footage of this event and many other instances of Rinpoche danc-

ing and teaching on the Vajra Dance, in the video "Teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on the Vajra Dance from 1991 - 1999".

Vajra Dance 1991

In January 1991, Rinpoche returned to Italy. A cabin was built for his personal retreats, followed later by another personal retreat cabin and two dark retreat cabins, all situated in the forest below the Gonpa. Here, Rinpoche conducted a personal retreat for another year, where he continued to have dreams related to the development of the Vajra Dance.

The little forest was in a wild state and had been more or less left to itself up until that time. This was the start of renewed karma yoga practice in that part of Merigar – performed together with Rinpoche - that has continued up until this day.

1991 was the tenth anniversary of Merigar and was celebrated in an event that included many activities, which took place on a nice summer's day. Rinpoche was invited to attend a Vajra Dance that we - six female and six male practitioners - performed as far as "Kelanam", all dressed according to our own idea in white clothes. One can see this event in the Shang-Shung Institute video "Ten Years at Merigar".

We practiced the Vajra Dance a lot, but without Rinpoche being present the group diminished a bit. Most of us had to get back to work and family life. Rinpoche had already prepared the first diagrams, still in use today in a small book published by Shang Shung Edizioni, and I received them in photocopy form. I started to learn the next steps by following the drawings and tried my best more or less as far as "Masminsagulitayapa".

Late that summer, I met up with Laura Evangelisti in the upper rooms of the Zerkhang, where the Merigar Geköes now lives. We talked about the next, still unknown steps, and made a plan to ask Rinpoche whether he thought we were ready to learn more. So, one day, I asked Rinpoche something along those lines: that I had studied ahead from the diagrams, whether it was OK to do this and whether perhaps I had done something wrong.

As Rinpoche had probably already planned, we then started the next cycle of many afternoons learning the second part of the Vajra Dance. Again the Capannone was filled with many practitioners studying for hours and hours, sometimes until late into the night, together with Rinpoche. It was truly a magical, joyful and, in all respects, intensive time for all of us.

A sensation as if all senses and parts of the physical body are switched on simultaneously, feeling at the same time as if one is sitting in a complete, happy, empty, nothing room of no borders, describes a little of how I felt physically, energetically and mentally after hours and hours of repeating and repeating the Vajra Dance.

Working with Rinpoche was also and still is for me personally, a continuous practice on a kind of persistent self-importance: on the

degree to which I take seriously and give importance to what I think and like and dislike, and how much this is responsible for what I feel and act out upon. The emotions are able to instantly disperse whatever idea of presence I might think I have developed. They can be so unpredictable: like a butterfly in the wind, or like a storm cloud obscuring a care-free, happy, shining sun. I can be trapped into believing that there is definitely much to defend in the illusory world of thought.

The Vajra Dance can act as a mirror, in which one can do nothing else but notice what is reflected. When, for example, one is distracted, one might simply lose orientation on the Mandala and might then have the sensation of flushing red or of suddenly feeling hot, followed by various emotions and mental judgments. All this is related to our condition in our three states of body, speech and mind. There can also be moments of returning into the state of at least ordinary presence, as well as opportunities, perhaps, to enter briefly into the state of Rigpa. The wise know that there is nothing to know, and to think one knows that means one is not wise.

As soon as I thought I had finished learning the female part, I tried my best to learn the male part, having asked Rinpoche whether this could be a beneficial and appropriate thing to do. Even learning only one gender, one has to co-ordinate continuously the left and right, solar and lunar, female and male sides of one's existence in all three aspects of body, speech and mind. The Vajra Dance affects all of these: it can be highly confusing, in both delightful and depressing ways, when starting to learn this practice, especially when doing it a lot. The individual may find there are many accumulated loads of unknown matter - karmic traces - to unblock. The accumulation of them, of course, must have been accompanied by lots of different kinds of sensations and emotions. In the same way, when one enters a path of liberation, one can be confronted with similar experiences.

There are many methods of working in this way, some of the highest being those found in the Upadesha teachings, in which one applies one's capacity of integrating into the state of contemplation. In order to integrate into the knowledge of the state of contemplation, transmission is indispensable. Without this knowledge or this introduction - transmission of the primordial state - and a basic capacity of being able to discover one's real condition and to integrate into the state of contemplation, it makes no sense to learn the Vajra Dance. Rinpoche has said that, without a base in the knowledge of contemplation, there is no benefit or function in doing the Vajra Dance and that it would be more beneficial to learn some sort of folk dance instead. It would be like trying to grow a field of plants without having planted the seeds.

Still, it is possible as a non-Dzogchen practitioner to attend the Liberation of Six Lokas Dance. This is because this makes use of the powerful mantra of the Six Pure Dimensions of Samanthabhadra 'A A HA SHA SA MA. Making contact with this mantra generates the cause of

continued on page 17



Alex Polak (top) and Patricia Feldman modeling Vajra Dance Costumes in Margarita

## Update on the Vajra Dance Costume

Four years have passed since January 2000 when I asked Rinpoche if some special dress existed for the Vajra Dance, feeling that a certain harmony was needed by also wearing proper clothes on the Mandala. I was with Adriana dal Borgo at Gadeling and was wearing a simple white linen dress. Rinpoche's first reaction was: "Your dress is elegant and it can be used for the Vajra Dance." Rinpoche also mentioned the original dresses, but it was only after one year that he actually gave the original text to Adriano Clemente for translation, the text in which he precisely described and drew the original dresses that he had seen in his dreams.

In October 2004, during the Kalachakra retreat at Tashigar North, Prima Mai, Adriana and myself finally presented the two first Pamo and Pawo sets of clothes to Rinpoche and the Community. Rinpoche was very happy about it.

Someone asked him about the meaning of the symbol which is placed on the front of the shirt and on the back of the jacket. Rinpoche said that this symbol is the one that is connected to the main Longsal Teaching and means there is a continuation, which can always go in every direction. This means that is possible to live in life without too many limits, like air moving everywhere without limits.

Rinpoche also said that the dresses have to be used with care, for special occasions and for a complete Thun of Practice if you know the Dance well, not just for training.

We have done our best to organize the difficult production of these special sets of clothes. It has not been easy because it is a very elaborate pattern. Twenty-five sets have been made to start with, for practitioners all over the world, from New Caledonia to Venezuela and so on. It may be that a first Mandala of practitioners wearing the Vajra Dance clothes will manifest at Khandroling next May for the inauguration of the first Universal Mandala. We hope so!

Unfortunately, until now, the cost of the Vajra Dance clothes has been expensive. This has been due to high costs of production. However, they are very valuable and of beautiful quality. I will try to find new solutions for the future and I also hope to reproduce that famous white linen dress...

If anyone has contact with clothing manufacturers and would like to collaborate, please contact me at [vddress@yahoo.com](mailto:vddress@yahoo.com).

May all be auspicious.

Federica Mastropaolo

DZOGCHEN RETREATS IN NORTH AMERICA WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU  
SPRING 2005  
MEXICO CITY, BAJA MEXICO, LOS ANGELES,  
NEW YORK CITY AND CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS

May 10, 2005  
DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE MANDALA OF  
THE UNIVERSE  
KHANDROLING, CONWAY, MASSACHUSETTS

details page 8

**MEXICO CITY  
MARCH 2005**

**Tuesday, March 22nd, 2005**

19:00 – 21:00 hours.

**Public Talk**

Club de Industriales conference room to  
be determined

Address: Hotel JW Marriott

Andrés Bello No. 29 Col.Polanco Mexico D.,F.

Cost \$150.00 pesos

Payment:

Thursday through Sunday, March 24th- 27th 2005

Retreat in Valle de Bravo, Edo. De México

Place: "Lago y Tierra" Center

Address: [www.LagoyTierra.org.mx](http://www.LagoyTierra.org.mx)

**Cost of Retreat:** \$150.00 USD

Accommodations including 3 meals per day: \$1,153.00 pesos

In the Center there is limited space available for camping with a  
daily cost of \$3.00 dollars and 3 meals per day for \$205.00 pesos or  
payment of each meal separately notifying us previously which  
meals you would like.

Payment: Deposit in BANK HSBC Carolyn Bass Norwood #  
4012390043 suc. 3006 Lomas Palmas CLABE #  
021180040123900438

The "Lago y Tierra" Center's housing includes rooms for 10 people  
with 3 showers and 2 toilets per room. The 3 meals are included.

Hotels in the Valle de Bravo area, in case you prefer alternate hous-  
ing: Hotel Rodavento-reservations 011 52 (55) 5292 5032  
[www.rodavento.com](http://www.rodavento.com)

The reservations for alternate hotels have to be done directly with  
them.

\*For the people NOT staying in the "Lago y Tierra" Center, the 3  
meals will be available at the Center paying each meal separately  
and notifying us previously which meals you request.

\*There will be transportation service available from Mexico City  
to Valle de Bravo only if there are 40 people minimum that need it,  
so it is important for you to let us know in advance.

\*There is bus service to Valle de Bravo from the "Observatorio"  
bus station.

\*We would be very grateful if there are people interested in mak-  
ing a donation for full or partial scholarships. If interested, please  
contact us.

For more information please contact:

[namkhainorbu\\_mex@yahoo.com](mailto:namkhainorbu_mex@yahoo.com)

[cbass@prodigy.net.mx](mailto:cbass@prodigy.net.mx)

[monica\\_patino@hotmail.com](mailto:monica_patino@hotmail.com)

[http://es.geocities.com/aramon\\_es/mexico.htm](http://es.geocities.com/aramon_es/mexico.htm)

**LOS ANGELES,  
CALIFORNIA**

**April 13 - 17, 2005**

Khyung Chen Dingwa (Soaring  
Eagle) Retreat

Dzogchen Semde Teaching

Topanga Community House  
1440 N Topanga Cyn Blvd  
Topanga CA 90290-4274

Visit <http://www.tashi.org> for more  
information.

**NYC DZOGCHEN SEMDE  
RETREAT**

**APRIL 27 – MAY 1, 2005**

St Varten's Armenian Cathedral  
Hall L

**Public Talk**, Wednesday April 27  
7 – 9 PM

Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance  
Introductory instruction will be offered  
during the retreat.

Registration: [www.tsegyalgar.org](http://www.tsegyalgar.org)  
INFO: 212 252 6818

Yantra Yoga  
May 1 – 5 Advanced Yantra NYC  
Cost TBA

Registration: [www.tsegyalgar.org](http://www.tsegyalgar.org)  
INFO: 413 369 4153

**TSEGYALGAR WEST, BAJA,  
MEXICO RETREAT**

***Dzogchen Rigpai Kujyug* (Song of Total Presence) Instructions and  
Other Dzogchen Teachings.**

**April 1 - 4, 2005**

**The 2005 Baja (Tsegyalgar West) Retreat** with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will take place on the Baja Gar  
land, Jardin de los Naranjos. This retreat is an excellent opportunity to make a profound connection with  
Rinpoche, visit the Gar property, learn about Community residential opportunities and activities in Baja  
California Sur, Mexico, and enjoy a beautiful, natural land and sea environment. This retreat is open to the  
public.

**The subject of this teaching will be *Dzogchen Rigpai Kujyug* (Song of Total Presence) Instructions and  
Other Dzogchen Teachings and is known as the Six Vajra Verses and is the root text of the Dzogchen  
Semde series of teachings.**

**Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance** instruction will be offered during the retreat.

**Cost:** The cost of the retreat will be \$175, with an early registration discount price of \$125 for those who  
register and pay by February 15, 2005. Your membership in the Dzogchen Community will earn you a  
discount on early or regular registration. You can pay the retreat fees at the retreat itself, but the early reg-  
istration discount will not apply unless you are not a U.S. resident and have sent in your registration form,  
which you can do by email, by February 15th.

**Dzogchen Community West Coast  
755 Euclid Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94708 USA**

You can wire your payment as follows:

Wells Fargo Bank, 1800 Solano Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94707, USA

Account name: Dzogchen Community West Coast Winter Gar Account, Account number: 0178831467

Routing Number 511400393, Swift code: WFBUS6S

Fed Wire Transit: 121000248 (IF YOU WIRE FUNDS, PLEASE LET US KNOW WHO YOU ARE,  
HOW MUCH YOU ARE SENDING AND WHAT THE FUNDS ARE FOR.)

Retreat contact: [carolmfields@aol.com](mailto:carolmfields@aol.com) (Carol Fields) More details on the following page 6

## Baja Retreat Detailed Information

Please check how to become a member of Tsegyalgar West/Baja Gar on our web site: <[www.bajasangha.org](http://www.bajasangha.org)>. Membership in the Dzogchen Community is affordable and a valuable sign of commitment to the practice.

**Lodging:** We recommend that you stay at Hotel Buena Vista where we have previously had two retreats, and where there is a great beach, pool, and restaurant. The hotel has arranged special rates for us. Each retreat day there will be van transportation from the hotel to the retreat shuttles and back. The hotel contact information is as follows: [hortencia@hotelbuenavista.com](mailto:hortencia@hotelbuenavista.com), 1-800-752-3555, [www.hotelbuenavista.com](http://www.hotelbuenavista.com).

**Other lodging and camping options** will shortly be available to those who register and those who request them, and will be posted on the website. San Jose del Cabo is much closer to the land than Buenavista, and has many inexpensive places to stay, but it is a city environment, and it may be necessary to rent a car to drive to the retreat parking area. Currently, we are making taxi arrangements so that groups can be taken from San Jose to and from the retreat, if sufficient people need that service.

**Camping:** Camping is extremely limited on the property to no more than 20 tents in a designated area, which will require walking in a short distance to the camp site. Campers are requested to bring their own food and to follow the camping guidelines. The cost of camping will be \$20 per night, and cars will need to be left in a designated, supervised, parking lot off the property. Camping will be designated on a first-come, first-serve basis--please make any camping request as soon as possible. (We hope to make more than 20 tent sites available, but there is no guarantee.)

**Information on beachside camping** at nearby locations in Baja will be available on our website shortly, and additional lodging and camping information will be distributed to those who register.

**Transportation:** The Los Cabos International Airport in Baja California Sur is the closest airport to the retreat. Another alternative is the airport in La Paz. You can also drive down the Baja peninsula from California (see our web site, [www.bajasangha.org](http://www.bajasangha.org) for a description of this worthwhile trip) and you can take several different ferries from mainland Mexico.

Once you are in Baja, you can rent a car at the airport, or, if you are staying at Hotel Buena Vista, you can arrange for their airport shuttle to pick you up. If you are staying at Hotel Buena Vista, you will not need to rent a car. If you decide to rent your own car, sharing the car rental is more economical.

Retreatants' cars will be parked at the bottom of the hill on the Naranjos Road, and vans will take everyone up the hill and back down each day. We must minimize car traffic on the road going up to and on to the Gar property.

If you are camping at the Gar and do not plan to rent a car, you can arrange to be picked up at the airport by retreat staff.

**Meals:** Lunch will be available for approximately \$5 each day of the retreat at the Gar, but other meals are the responsibility of each individual. Snacks and beverages will be available at the Cafe Tropicana on the property.

**Retreat information:** When you register, you will receive additional information on the retreat, including directions, places to stay and camp, and what to bring. At the retreat itself, you will also receive a retreat packet.

**Retreat schedule:** TBA

**Translation:** Rinpoche va a enseñar en ingles y habra traduccion en espanol. Rinpoche will be teaching in English and there will be translation into Spanish.

**Activities:** There will be guided walks on the land in the afternoons to go swimming at the arroyo pools, and also to see the remarkable diversity of plant life, the striking topography, and to identify birds and other animals. Plan to bring good warm-weather shoes that offer foot protection and traction, water bottle, hat and sunscreen. More challenging hikes and horseback riding may also be offered with local guides.

Because the Sea of Cortez and its islands form the most bio-diverse body of water on the planet, it is possible to go snorkeling, scuba diving, kayaking, whale watching, bird watching, and generally savor a rich marine environment. We will post on the web site a list of possible activities for before, after, or during the retreat.

**Payment:** The cost of the retreat is \$125 before February 15th and \$175 after February 15th. Send your check or money order, also your retreat form below, and also a separate membership check if you are joining to the following address (make out all checks to the Dzogchen Community West Coast Winter Gar Fund):

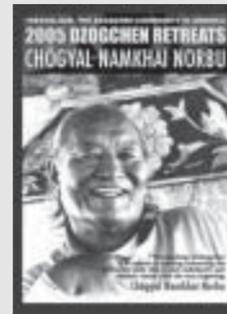
**Dzogchen Community West Coast**  
755 Euclid Ave.  
Berkeley, CA 94708  
USA

You can wire your payment as follows: Wells Fargo Bank, 1800 Solano Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94707, USA  
Account name: Dzogchen Community West Coast Winter Gar Account  
Account number: 0178831467  
Routing Number 511400393  
Swift code: WFBIUS6S  
Fed Wire Transit: 121000248

IF YOU WIRE FUNDS, PLEASE LET US KNOW WHO YOU ARE, HOW MUCH YOU ARE SENDING, AND WHAT THE FUNDS ARE FOR.

Retreat contact: [carolmfields@aol.com](mailto:carolmfields@aol.com) (Carol Fields)

## tsegyalgar retreats 2005



**MAY 6-8 TSEGYALGAR DZOGCHEN RETREAT**

**MAY 11-12 SANTI MAHA SANGHA LEVEL II EXAM**

**MAY 13-17 SANTI MAHA SANGHA LEVEL III TRAINING**

**Tsegyalgar, The Dzogchen Community in America**  
P.O. Box 277, Conway, MA 01341  
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473  
Email: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)

Register online: <http://www.tsegyalgar.org>



### VAJRA DANCE AT TSEGYALGAR

**MAY 10, 2005**  
**DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE MANDALA OF THE UNIVERSE**

The Gakyil of Tsegyalgar is honored to announce the **DEDICATION CEREMONY OF THE MANDALA OF THE UNIVERSE** on the sacred land of Khandroling and invites all practitioners and members of the Dzogchen Community around the world to join us in celebrating this auspicious occasion with our precious Master on May 10th, 2005.

**The Mandala of the Universe in Khandroling** was completed in September 2004, through the tremendous generosity of donors and volunteers who spent many weeks in the summer collaborating on the building and painting of it.

**Come collaborate** with us in performing the ceremony, including the offerings of Serkyem and Sangchö and the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra. (Dancers will be in full Vajra Dance costume)

**Following the Dedication Ceremony** will be two courses of Vajra Dance:

**May 11-13:** Vajra Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas taught by Bodhi Krause under the supervision of Prima Mai and Adriana dal Borgo  
Fee: \$120

**May 16-21:** Vajra Dance Teachers Training - Level 1 taught by Prima Mai and Adriana dal Borgo  
To take this course, one should already know both the Pamo and Pawo parts of the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas and the Dance of the Three Vajras.  
Fee: \$300

**There are now Earth Mandalas** in many places around the world, in dozens of countries where Rinpoche has established the Dzogchen Community. Besides being of benefit to the dancer, dancing on the Earth Mandala expresses compassion for all beings on Earth, each country having its precise location on the Mandala. At this time, there are no Solar Mandalas on Earth, and the Mandala of the Universe at Khandroling is the only one on the planet.

**"Khandro"** is the Tibetan word for Dakini. Khandroling, the place where the Vajra Dance first appeared on Earth, is recognized as sacred land, belonging to all members of the Dzogchen Community worldwide.

Come and experience for yourselves.  
*The Tsegyalgar Gakyil*

ISTITUTO SHANG SHUNG  
2005 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**KUNYE TIBETAN MASSAGE**

**25-27 FEBRUARY: NAPLES, ITALY**

Second part of Ku Nye *First Level*. Cost: 720 euro for the entire course that began November 2004.

**1-10 APRIL: MERIGAR**

Intensive course of Ku Nye *Second Level*. Cost: 600 euro including all teaching materials.

**15-17 APRIL: NAPLES, ITALY**

Third part of Ku Nye *First Level* course.

**14-15 MAY: MERIGAR**

Exam for the final diploma of Ku Nye. Cost: 50 euro.

**20-22 MAY: NAPLES, ITALY**

Fourth and final part of the Ku Nye *First Level* course. Cost: 720 euro for the entire course that began in November 2004.

**3-18 JUNE: GERMANY**

Continuation of the Ku Nye courses held the previous year.

**15-21 JULY: MERIGAR**

Second part of the Ku Nye *First Level Instructors'* course which started in 2004. Cost: 500 euro.

**22-24 JULY: MERIGAR**

Course on moxa given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The course is intended for those who have followed the courses of medicine and Ku Nye organised by the Institute as well as those who already know the fundamental principles of Tibetan medicine. Cost: 150 euro.

**17-22 SEPTEMBER: MERIGAR**

*Ku Nye revision course* open to all students who have attended at least the first two levels. The aim of the course is to clarify doubts, discuss cases, practise together under the supervision of the teacher and deepen one's knowledge. All students of courses organised by the Institute outside Italy are invited to participate in order to share their experiences. Cost: 350 euro.

**1- 28 OCTOBER: KUNSANGAR, RUSSIA**

Continuation of the Ku Nye courses held the previous year.

**1-15 NOVEMBER: ENGLAND**

Continuation of the Ku Nye courses held the previous year.

**17-26 NOVEMBER: KARMALING, FRANCE**

Intensive course of Ku Nye *Second Level*.

**2-11 DECEMBER: POMAIA, ITALY**

Intensive course of Ku Nye *First Level*.

**16 DEC.-31 JANUARY: AUSTRALIA**

Continuation of the Ku Nye courses held the previous year.

**FOUR YEAR COURSE OF TRADITIONAL TIBETAN MEDICINE**

**1-10 MAY: MERIGAR**

First part of the second year course of *Traditional Tibetan Medicine*. Cost: 1500 euro for the entire course including teaching materials (textbook and MP3).

**3-12 SEPTEMBER: MERIGAR**

Second part of the second year course of *Traditional Tibetan Medicine*.

**MANTRA HEALING**

**19-20 MARCH: ROME, ITALY**

First part of Mantra Healing course. Cost: 120 euro.

**23-24 APRIL: ROME, ITALY**

Second part of Mantra Healing course. Cost: 120 euro.

**AUGUST: WEST COAST, USA** (sometime between 1-15 Aug.)

A four day course of Mantra Healing. (Use West Coast email contact for specific dates)

**27-30 NOVEMBER: KARMALING, FRANCE**

Mantra Healing course.

**DREAMS AND TIBETAN MEDICINE**

**5-6 MARCH: ROME, ITALY**

Course of First Level Dreams and Medicine. Cost: 120 euro.

**28-29 MAY: ROME, ITALY**

Second course of Dreams and Medicine. Cost: 120 euro.

**JUNE: GERMANY**

a four days and one night 's course before or after the Ku Nye second Level course

**AUGUST: WEST COAST, USA** (sometime between 1-15 Aug.)

A four day & one night course. (Use West Coast email contact for specific dates)

**TIBETAN LANGUAGE**

**18-31 AUGUST: MERIGAR**

Course of spoken and written Tibetan with Elio Guarisco. The first week will be for beginners and the second will be for those who are more advanced. Cost: 500 euro.

**INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:**

For general information on the courses please contact the Istituto Shang Shung at:

[ssinst@tiscali.it](mailto:ssinst@tiscali.it) or contact ELISA COPELLO: [elisa-cop@libero.it](mailto:elisa-cop@libero.it)

FOR COURSES ORGANISED IN VARIOUS PLACES, PLEASE CONTACT:

- ROME: [zhenphenling@tiscali.it](mailto:zhenphenling@tiscali.it) 06.57.300.346 / 328. 735.10.7  
Anna Marie Clos: tel. 06-5885142, email: [arura@libero.it](mailto:arura@libero.it)
- GERMANY: Svetlana Riecke, email: [dzogcheninfo@aol.com](mailto:dzogcheninfo@aol.com)
- MERIGAR: Istituto Shang Shung office : tel.0564-966941, email: [ssinst@tiscali.it](mailto:ssinst@tiscali.it)
- KARMA LING, FRANCE: tel. 0033-0479257800;  
email: [info@karmaling.org](mailto:info@karmaling.org) , [lhundroup@rimay.net](mailto:lhundroup@rimay.net)
- ENGLAND: Peter White, [pwhite@i12.com](mailto:pwhite@i12.com)
- NAPLES: Fabio Risolo: [fabio.risolo@libero.it](mailto:fabio.risolo@libero.it)
- POMAIA: [spc@iltk.it](mailto:spc@iltk.it)
- KUNSANGAR, RUSSIA: [kunsang@dzogchen.ru](mailto:kunsang@dzogchen.ru)
- AUSTRALIA: [namgyalg@acr.net.au](mailto:namgyalg@acr.net.au)
- WEST COAST, USA: [vajrapamo@aol.com](mailto:vajrapamo@aol.com)

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE AUSTRIA  
KA-TER TRANSLATION PROJECT  
UPDATE

Recently I have received a mail from the Office of the Dalai Lama, in which His Holiness sends his blessings for our new Translation Project. Here is the letter:

January 15, 2005

Dear Mr. Oliver Leick,

*His Holiness is pleased to learn about the Ka-ter Translation Project which is an initiative aimed at spreading and deepening knowledge of Tibetan culture and to ensure its survival. This is what we Tibetans have been trying to do ever since we have been in exile. His Holiness sends you His blessings and wishes your project success.*

*Best wishes,*

*Tenzin Geyche Tethong*

As you know, in July of 2004 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu entrusted the Shang Shung Institute Austria with the organization and funding of the Ka-ter Translation Project. Its aims are to make available all the various and extraordinary Dzogchen-Tantras in a correct translation into western languages, to contribute to the preservation of the complete Tantras of Changchub Dorje, and to train future Translators in the Tibetan Translator Training. Hopefully this year there will be published the first result of the Training in 2003, the latest book of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu about Tibetan Medicine.

*For more information about the Ka-ter Translation Project please visit our website: [www.ssi-austria.at](http://www.ssi-austria.at).*

In December 2004 I have sent out an information-brochure about the Ka-ter Translation Project and many people have sent their donations. I really want to deeply thank all the donors who have donated the total amount of 9775,29 Euro in the year 2004. Also in 2005 we already have received some donations.

As the expenses for all the translation-work and for the scholarships are still much higher than we receive through donations, I would like to invite you to become part of this exciting activity and to contribute with your donation to our work.

Here is the list of the donors for 2004:

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
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Thank you very much for your support,  
Very best wishes,

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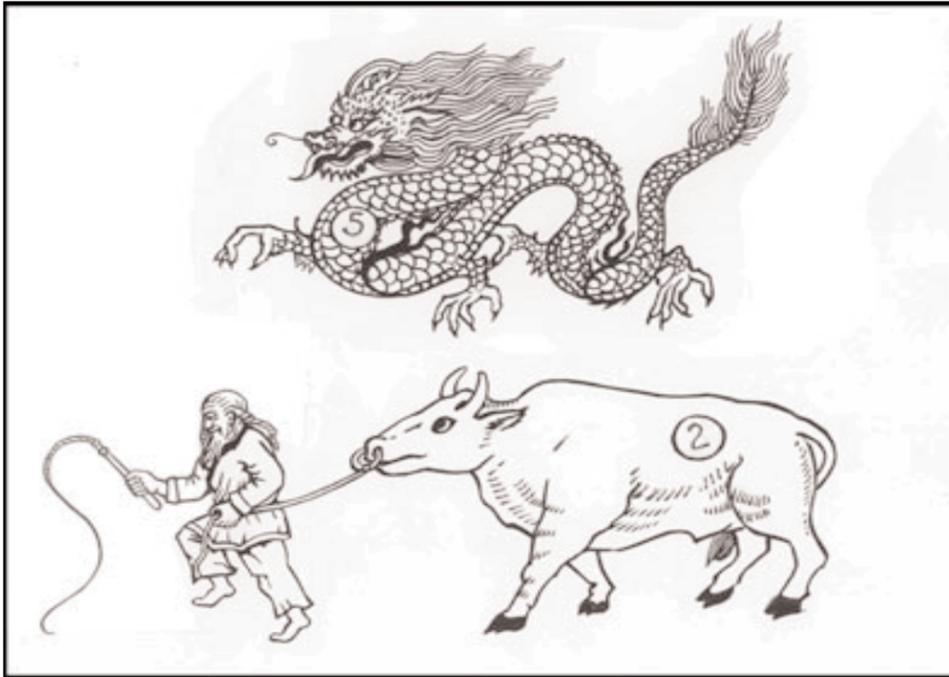
In the first level, 70 percent of class time is devoted to theory and 30 percent to practical applications. In the second level, 70 percent of class time is devoted to practice and 30 percent to theory. In the third level, 50 percent of class time is devoted to theory and another 50 percent to practice.

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## THE OX PROGNOSTIC FOR THE MALE WOOD BIRD YEAR 2005

by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo



### THE OX

For the coming year the color of the ox is white, indicating that generally agriculture will suffer, especially during the phase of the ripening of the crops due to frost, hail and thunderstorms. The head of the ox is green, indicating that in the spring, and particularly in the first month of spring, in the summer, autumn and winter, there will be strong winds throughout the land. The horns, the ears and the tail of the ox are yellow, which indicates that various nations will experience prosperity. The belly of the ox is blue, indicating that mountain fields will receive a lot of rain, particularly in summer and autumn and the middle month of each of the four seasons. The four legs of the ox are yellow, which indicates that the valleys and the plains will yield good crops. The mouth and the lips of the ox are red, indicating that the southern and the northern regions will receive a lot of rain, but in spring, and in particular in the first month of each of the four seasons, these regions will experience drought. The tail of the ox is swinging to the right, which indicates that the year will not be so good for cattle, but humans will experience prosperity. The mouth of the ox is closed, which indicates that the year will bring some problems and difficulties to children and young people.

### THE SHEPHERD

The clothes of the shepherd are green indicating that this year the economics of countries and individual businesses will be medium. The shepherd's belt is red, which indicates that we will not receive much harm or be attacked by thieves. The shepherd is not wearing his shoes, which indicates that the year will be a happy and prosperous one. The shepherd's left braid is placed behind his left ear, while the right braid is placed in front of his right ear, indicating that crops in general will not be excellent but medium. The shepherd holds the whip touching the ground, which indicates that all countries will be prosperous. The shepherd is moving ahead of the ox in a hurry, indicating that diseases will not affect cattle and that crops will ripen before their time in the fields.

### NUMBERS

The oxen this year are said to be two in number, indicating that the power of the earth in general will not be great. The dragons in the sky this year are five indicating that the crops will be good and the rain sufficient. The first month of the New Year will be the month of the male wood mouse, which indicates that the weather will generally be hot and that certain types of crops such as rice and wheat will be scarce in certain regions. One should be careful about agriculture in the fourth month, as there could be damage. The loads of provisions for this year are three and the people to whom these provisions are destined are nine, indicating that there will be more request than production. From the beginning of spring up to the end of autumn there will be six days missing in the lunar calendar and this indicates that heat will be generally normal and so will crops. Translated from Tibetan by Elio Guarisco

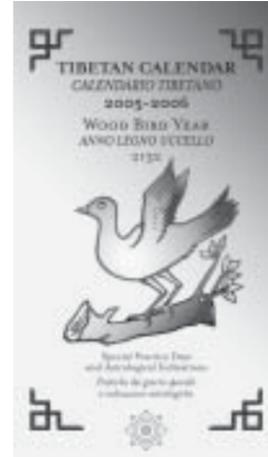
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## Tibetan Calendar of Special Practice Days and Astrological Indications

The Tibetan Calendar of Special Practice Days and Astrological Indications is a pocket size calendar produced by Shang Shung Editions. Starting with Losar, or the first day of the first month of the new Wood Bird Year (February 9, 2005), the calendar gives the correspondences with the Western dates up to the end of the second Tibetan month of the following year. Practitioners of the international Dzogchen

Community will be able to find all the practice days for the Dzogchen Community listed as well as the "Buddha" days and the anniversaries of important Masters. The calendar also contains the global timetable for the anniversaries of Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava and Adzom Drugpa when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gives the transmission of Guruyoga everywhere at the same time. This means that you can find your local time for starting the practice wherever you are.

Consulting the calendar, one can find the symbols for the days that are particular to the Buddha, Padmasambhava, the Dakini and Ekajati. The full moons and new moons for each month are indicated as well as lunar and solar eclipses



with their times.

For those who wish to consult the astrological aspects of the day in order to decide whether a particular day may be auspicious for an activity or a practice, the calendar indicates the day of the week and its astrological element, the constellation of the day and its element, the *mewa*, the major combination of the day and other indications such as positive and negative days for Naga practice, particular combinations and negative days in general.

The important combination of the two elements that represent the day of the week and the constellation of the day is called the 'minor combination'. The interpretation of this 'minor combination' or 'Tröschung' is given at the front of the calendar so that when it is possible, a fortuitous day may be chosen for a particular activity or a negative one avoided. When the calendar is used together with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's "Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar" (Shang Shung Edizioni 1991) a full and detailed interpretation of each day can be made.

The final pages of the calendar give the individual astrological aspects for the year referring to the life element, the body element (health), the capacity element, the fortune element and the element of protection. These aspects are indicated by combinations of one, two or three black and white dots together with some brief notes on interpreting the aspects.

This Tibetan Calendar is presented in both Italian and English with a clear explanation of the symbols and indications for each day. There is also ample space for each day so that it can be used as a diary at the same time. An essential reference text for every practitioner, the "Tibetan Calendar 2005-2006 Wood Bird Year" can be obtained from Shang Shung Edizioni at Merigar, GR 58031 Arcidosso, Italy, e-mail: [shangshunged@tiscali.it](mailto:shangshunged@tiscali.it)

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"Think about what you do from the early morning until the evening, what is your possibility? Everybody works, in the daytime we go to our job in the office or in a shop. So when do you do your practice? In this case you have to deal with your practice in relation to time. We must integrate the teaching in our daytime." Advice on The Practice in Daily Life, taken from Oral Teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar, August 2003, Kunsangar, June 2001, Merigar, 2001, Hawaii, 1999.

207E \$17.00

*The Practice of Self-Liberation of the Causes of Six Lokas (from the Longsal Cycle)*

This book contains the root-text of the terma, a short commentary to the root-text written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the transcription of the oral teachings given at Merigar in August, 2003. Useful drawings of the positions for the practice are included.

If you would like to place an order you can email or call in to me the following information:

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# Special Practice Calendar for Three Months Wood Bird Year 2005-2006

## GLOBAL TIMETABLE

### ANNIVERSARY OF GARAB DORJE

1<sup>st</sup> Tibetan month – 15<sup>th</sup> day  
Celebration at 8AM Oddiyana time.

#### Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2005

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

#### Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

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

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 1<sup>st</sup> day

##### Wed. 9<sup>th</sup> February 2005

The new Tibetan year begins. It is good to do a Long life practice as early as possible in the morning and a Ganapuja during the day. Prayer flags can be authenticated during the Ganapuja. On the morning of the third day of the New Year you can do the rite of the Sang and hang up the prayer flags.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 4<sup>th</sup> day

##### Sat. 12<sup>th</sup> February 2005

The fourth day of the first month is a special day for doing the Long life practice of the Dakini Mandarava. It is also a very special day for doing the practice of Ekajati so today try to do the Long life practice "Cycle of Life's Vajra" in the morning and the Long Thun in the evening. If you don't have this possibility, you can try to do the Long life practice included in the Medium or Long Thun, with the rite of Ekajati, reciting the heart *mantra* of Ekajati as much as possible.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 8<sup>th</sup> day

##### Wed. 16<sup>th</sup> February 2005

This is an important day for doing the practice of Ekajati; so try to do the Long Thun either collectively or personally. If you don't have that possibility then try to do the Medium Thun and in either case recite the heart *mantra* of Ekajati as many times as possible.

1<sup>st</sup> Month, 10<sup>th</sup> day Fri. 18<sup>th</sup> February 2005

This is the day on which Padmasambhava was ordained by Ananta, or, according to Jigmed Lingpa (*Jigs med gLing pa*), the day on which he left the kingdom of Oddiyana to go to the cemetery at Maghadha called Citavana.

You can do a Ganapuja in the usual way or if you do not have the possibility you can try to do the Long life practice linked to the Guruyoga of Guru Rinpoche (Universal Wisdom Union) either collectively or alone. Otherwise you can do a Medium Thun (*Thundrin*) with an intense practice of the Guruyoga of Padmasambhava.

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 15<sup>th</sup> day

##### Wed. 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2005

FULL MOON. The anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Garab Dorje as well as that of the founder of Bön, the great Master Shenrab Miwoche, falls on the day of the first full moon of the Tibetan year. It is also a special day of Buddha Shakyamuni when he manifested several miracles and the anniversary of the Master Marpa. Thus it is an especially important day for both Buddhist and Bönpo practitioners, in particular those who practice the Dzogchen teachings.

On this day, therefore, when it is 8AM in Oddiyana, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the anniversary of Garab Dorje. In this way the transmission will be live because the transmission has no distance. Rinpoche will transmit and throughout the world people who do the practice at the same moment will be in the transmission and will thus receive the transmission. This practice should be done at the appointed time together with your Vajra brothers and sisters or, if that is not possible, alone. (In Italy, this practice will be done at 4 am.) SEE GLOBAL TIMETABLE

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 25<sup>th</sup> day

##### Sat. 5<sup>th</sup> March 2005

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

#### 1<sup>st</sup> Month, 30<sup>th</sup> day

##### Thu. 10<sup>th</sup> March 2005

NEW MOON. This day is suitable for purification practice so try to do purification with the *Namchos Shitroi Naljyor*, the practice of the peaceful and wrathful manifestations, either collectively or alone, as well as a collective Ganapuja.

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 6<sup>th</sup> day

##### Wed. 16<sup>th</sup> March 2005

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

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 10<sup>th</sup> day

##### Sun. 20<sup>th</sup> March 2005

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

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 12<sup>th</sup> day

##### Tue. 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005

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

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 15<sup>th</sup> day

##### Fri. 25<sup>th</sup> March 2005

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

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 20<sup>th</sup> day March 2005

#### Wed. 30<sup>th</sup>

Today is the anniversary of the great Dzogchen Master Do Gyaltzen Yeshe Dorje (born 1800), a disciple of the first Dodrubchen Rinpoche and a master of Nyagla Padma Dundul. It is therefore a good day to do *A Gar Lamai Naljyor*, the Guruyoga with the White A.



#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 25<sup>th</sup> day

##### Mon. 4<sup>th</sup> April 2005

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

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> Month, 30<sup>th</sup> day

##### Fri. 8<sup>th</sup> April 2005

NEW MOON. On this day, which is the anniversary of the great *terton* Loter Wangpo, try to do the *A Gar Lamai Naljyor*, Guruyoga of the White A with the Master Garab Dorje either collectively or alone, with a Ganapuja if possible.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Month, 4<sup>th</sup> day

##### Tue. 12<sup>th</sup> April 2005

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

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Month, 10<sup>th</sup> day

##### Tue. 19<sup>th</sup> April 2005

This is a special day of Guru Padmasambhava. Those who have received transmission should do a Guruyoga with Padmasambhava with the Long life *mantra* and a Ganapuja as we usually do, otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Universal Wisdom Union". If it is possible, the best time to do the Guruyoga and Long life practice is in the morning between 7 and 8. You can do the Ganapuja later in the afternoon.

Usually the best way to do the Ganapuja and the Guruyoga is collectively, with your Vajra brothers and sisters, but if this is not possible you can always do this practice alone when you have time. The important thing is to try to communicate with all practitioners linked to the same transmission so that you can develop the potentiality of the transmission that you have received and through it your understanding and capacity to integrate your daily life in the state of contemplation.

Those who have not received the transmission of the Thun practice can learn it from other practitioners and then receive the transmission when there is the opportunity. Otherwise on this day those who have not received transmission of the Thun practice can do a purification practice with breathing and Yantra Yoga exercises and movements or practices linked to controlling the *prana*.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> month, 15<sup>th</sup> day

##### Sun. 24<sup>th</sup> April 2005

FULL MOON. This is one of the best days for Long life practices and in particular for the practice of the "Union of Primordial Essences". It is best to do it early in the morning between 7 and 8am if you can but if this isn't possible you can do it in the afternoon or even in the evening when you are not busy.

Today is also the anniversary of the *Kalachakra*, the day when Buddha Shakyamuni first gave the teaching of *Kalachakra* so it is good to do a Ganapuja or Long Thun in the evening either collectively or alone.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Month, 25<sup>th</sup> day Tue. 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2005

Today is a Dakini day. It is also the anniversary of the Fifth Dalai Lama, a great *terton* and practitioner of Dzogchen so it is a very beneficial day to reinforce the function of our energy and create a more vital contact with the energy of the universe. If you have the possibility, it is good to do a Guruyoga of the White A in the morning and in the evening a Ganapuja with an intensive practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart *mantra* as many times as possible. Otherwise you can do the Medium Thun with the practice of Ekajati, repeating the heart *mantra* as much as possible. The best time for this practice is around 8 in the evening.

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> Month, 30<sup>th</sup> day

##### Sun. 8<sup>th</sup> May 2005

NEW MOON. Today is the anniversary of Sangyas Lingpa (1340-1396) a great *terton* and Dzogchen master. You can do a Guruyoga of the White A from the cycle of teachings Universal Clarity with a Ganapuja. It is also a good day to do the Purification of the Six Lokas.

## WORLD WIDE TRANSMISSION

FEBRUARY 22 & 23  
2005

Newcomers who want to participate in the worldwide transmission must be truly interested in the Teachings transmitted by our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, and practiced in our worldwide Dzogchen Community. Participants in this Transmission should try to receive Teachings from Rinpoche in the future. After having received the Transmission, they should also try to train and collaborate with the Sangha of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Here is a summary of how the Live-Video-Empowerment works:

1. To receive the World Wide Transmission, new students need to participate with an experience student who will host both the preliminary explanation as well as the actual practice. A long-time student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, well in advance of the event, should give the explanations.
2. Hosts of Empowerments with the videotape should be members of the International Dzogchen Community.
3. For new and interested persons, it is important to have seen the explanation by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche that is also on the videotape, in advance. They should also have the possibility to clarify any doubts about the practice on the videotape with some serious, dedicated older students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche before the Empowerment.
4. Exactly at the given time (see timetable) at your place, you start the Transmission Video at the starting point of the part of the Anniversary of Garab Dorje. At that moment - worldwide - students and newcomers start to practice this session of the Thun together, which ends with the dedication of merits.

We wish you all a successful practice. Please contact your local Community for details.

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lems in our big society. People can learn that and it can be developed by 2, 3, 4 people etc., then peace will really exist. If I become aware, it means that I know how to pay respect to others' dimensions.

**Paying respect**

You see in our society, the problem is not paying respect to each other. If there is a big nation, then it always put small nations under it. When there is a big nation then there are many different ethnic groups that are part of it. In the real sense, different ethnic groups have their own language and culture; they have their own dimension. So if you pay respect to that then there is also a possibility to have peace and collaboration. If you do not really pay respect then, of course, there will be problems.

For example, even the small ants here in Margarita, when you don't pay respect to them, they crawl on your feet and bite. They don't have a strong energy but they can bite! In the same way, if you do not pay respect even to very weak people, then they try to do everything against you.

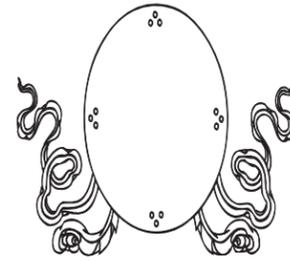
So if we need peace in the world, we need a kind of evolution. If there is no evolution, peace cannot exist. Evolution can come about if more and more people are really aware. I believe in that very much. I give the example of myself.

I was in India in 1959 and the beginning of the 60s and then I arrived in Italy with a very small suitcase, without any idea of teaching or having students or people interested in the Dzogchen teaching. I only had the idea of going there and working with a professor for some years. Then later I discovered that some people were interested in the teaching. I worked with them and one of the first retreats we did was in Subiaco near Rome. There are many people here who were present at that retreat, we had something like 30 people. So this was the starting point for me to give a little *Dzogchen* teaching. And since that time, then gradually I have been teaching and people are learning more. Of course, even though people have not become *Mahasiddhas*, they have knowledge of *Dzogchen* teaching and how we observe ourselves, etc. and they are developing more and more. For example today they are many thousands of people following my teaching. So

continued on page 17

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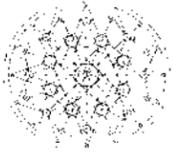
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INTERNATIONAL  
COMMUNITY NEWS

merigar

europ e

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**Merigar Winter Program 2005**

**Wed February 23**

Anniversary of Garab Dorje  
Worldwide transmission day  
4.00 Garab Dorje guru yoga  
Three times a year Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gives transmission of knowledge of Guruyoga by direct transmission. This transmission is given to all those who are able to be in the primordial state in the same moment with the Master. Therefore it is essential to respect the time of the transmission precisely (4 am in Italy corresponding to 8 am in Oddiyana) and to have followed the explanation of this practice at one of the Gars or the Lings.

**Sat. and Sun. February 26 - 27**

Chöd practice retreat  
The retreat starts on Saturday at 10.00

**Fri. to Sun. March 4 - 6**

Dance of the Song of the Vajra course for the first two groups (up to Bhetasana...)  
with Prima Mai  
The course starts on Friday at 16.00  
Cost: 105 euro with discounts for members

**Sat. and Sun. March 12 - 13**

Course on "Emotions and the capacity to listen"  
With Sicilia d'Arista  
The course starts on Saturday at 9.30  
Cost: 50 euro with discounts for members

**Fri to Mon. March 25 - 28**

Explanation and practice retreat  
With Costantino Albini  
The retreat starts on Friday at 10.00  
Cost. 100 euro with discounts for members

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The office is open from Monday to Friday from 10 am to 1 pm.

Saturday from 9.30 am - 1 pm and 2.30 pm - 5 pm. Thursday closed.

**ENROLLMENT**

If you wish to enroll for a course, seminar or retreat, please contact the office by phone to book a place. An initial payment of 25 euro should be sent by postal order at least 10 days before the start of the course specifying the name of the course which is being paid for. It should be addressed to:

Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen - Merigar  
58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy

If courses do not reach the minimum number of participants, they will be cancelled. To take part in the activities of the Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen you need to be a member. A first installment of 15 euro for the Ordinary Member's card will be required before taking part. A first installment alone does not entitle you to discounts for members.



Bubble dome cover for Mandala at Kunselling

**Developments at Kunselling**

by Alex Studholme

Not all members of the Community may be fully aware of recent developments on a small Atlantic island, renowned the world over for its fine beaches, sunny climes and the warm smiles of its native inhabitants. I refer, of course, to the British Isles, where Kunselling, the remote Welsh farmhouse bought by the UK community in 1997, is finally flourishing as a working retreat center. Since Rinpoche's last visit here in 1998, much has changed.

The place still has a very comfortable, homely feel to it - a log fire ablaze in the main sitting room in the winter months - but the recent conversion of the dilapidated barn and outhouses has created a much larger space for individual and group retreats of all kinds. The barn is now a light, airy hall, and the outhouses now four snug cabins with their own kitchen and three bathrooms, forming two sides of an open courtyard containing a purpose-built Dance Mandala.

The final cabin in the row is a dark retreat facility - with fan ventilation, food hatch, eating space and separate bathroom - which has been tested and proven to work very well. The final outstanding feature of Kunselling is the plastic inflatable bubble, which covers the Dance Mandala in the event of rain, contrasting a little surreally with the rustic setting and the flock of sheep grazing in the field next door.

Apart from many weekend gatherings, last year we were delighted to welcome Stoffelina Verdonk (and son Iring) twice for instruction on the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. Dr Jim Valby returned for a second Santi Maha Sangha retreat and left us in charge of his Vairocana thanka - a most auspicious sign. Dr Nida Chengatsang led a well-attended course on Kun Nye massage, following a course on mantra healing in London. Via the Internet, a group followed Rinpoche's Mandarava teachings in July - a great success - and another party organized a week of Tara practice before Christmas.

John Renshaw, our own Yantra Yoga teacher, has run two beginners' courses at Kunselling, which attracted some new people from all over Britain and from the vicinity itself. Similarly, a healing voice workshop, lead by Jill Purce as a benefit for the Dzogchen Community, brought in a few more locals. The next few months promise more Vajra Dance with Cindy Faulkner and Prima Mai, an exhibition of Buddhist art put on as part of a nationwide festival and a creative writing seminar with Des Barry.

For this part of South Wales has long associated with "alternative" ways of thinking and Tibetan Buddhism in particular. Apart from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, over the years various other lamas - recently Mingyur Dorje Rinpoche - have taught in private houses and village halls nearby, and continue to show interest in establishing bases here. In 1977, in another farmhouse not far from Kunselling, His Holiness the XVIIth Karmapa performed the ceremony of the Black Hat.

It is also one of the most unspoiled and naturally beautiful regions of our overcrowded island. From the terrace outside the kitchen, there are panoramic views of the valley below the house and across to the Black Mountains. The Brecon Beacons, a group of hills offering some of the best walking in the country, can be glimpsed in the distance on a clear day. Above all, as many overseas visitors remark, the countryside around here is stunningly green.

Thanks go to the Gakyil and all the many other Community members whose vision, perseverance and hard work have made this all possible, and in particular to those who weathered the financial storm of 2003. For further inquiries about travelling to Kunselling, please email Catriona Mundle at catriona.mundle@blueyonder.co.uk.

**KUNSELLING EVENTS, UK:**

JAN. 1<sup>st</sup> - JUNE 31<sup>st</sup> 2005

**18th-20th February:**

Explanation of Garab Dorje Practice at Kunselling with Des Barry. This event starts on Friday evening. *Please book with Catriona Mundle (tel: 0117 924 7163)*

**23<sup>rd</sup> February:**

Transmission Day of Garab Dorje in London *Please contact Maciek Sikora (tel: 0777 339 3009) for further details*

**5<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> March:**

Yantra Yoga at Kunselling with John Renshaw This course is open to beginners and new people *Further details and booking with Thomas Beaver (tel: 020 7379 4554)*

**25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup> March:**

Easter Open Weekend (practice to be decided) *Further details and booking with Catriona Mundle (tel: 0117 924 7163)*

**Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April:**

Guidance on Dark Retreat at Kunselling: One day explanation of Dark Retreat preparation and practice with Amely Becker. *Please book with Catriona Mundle (tel: 0117 924 7163)*

**29<sup>th</sup> April - 3<sup>rd</sup> May:**

Dance of the Six Lokas with Prima Mai & Cindy Faulkner Held at Kunselling - this course is open to beginners and new people. *Please contact Rowan Wylie (tel: 01223473528) for details and booking.*

**28-29<sup>th</sup> May:**

UK COMMUNITY AGM AT KUNSELLING - Sunday 2pm All members are warmly invited to attend the meeting on Sunday preceded by a Day of Dance on Saturday. *Please book with Catriona Mundle (tel: 0117 924 7163)*

**11-12<sup>th</sup> June:**

Buddhist Performance Arts & Exhibition organized in collaboration with the National NBO Art Festival Promotion. *For further details contact Julia Lawless (tel: 0207 722 2539)*

**18-19<sup>th</sup> June:**

Creative Writing Workshop with Des Barry organized in collaboration with the National NBO Art Festival Promotion. *Please book with Catriona Mundle (tel: 0117 924 7163)*

For all bookings from outside the UK, please email Catriona Mundle (bookings [catriona.mundle@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:catriona.mundle@blueyonder.co.uk) or [Rowan Wylie](mailto:RowanWylie@hot-mail.com) (events & karma yoga coordinator): [rowanwylie@hotmail.com](mailto:rowanwylie@hotmail.com)

(Note: the Kunselling Information and Events Diary 2005 (Wood Bird Year) will be ready early in the Tibetan New Year with further details of the above events plus others)

*Passages*

**Married**

On the 9th of November, 2004, Viktoria Nikolowa and Sebastian Kozlowski got married in Reszel, Poland.



**Born:**

A baby girl was born to Alar Kukk and Marika Pärn on January 20th, 2005 in Estonia.

## TWO GAKYILS IN AUSTRIA

The Vienna-based Austrian Gakyil (note that there are 2 Gakyils for Austria) for 2005 is

BLUE Ursula Kogler  
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The web site of the Austrian community is <http://www.dzogchen.at/>.

Best wishes to everybody!  
Petra Seibert  
(Representative of the Austrian Dzogchen Community with the Austrian Buddhist Religious Society).

## VAJRA DANCE IN FRANCE MARCH 26 – 31, 2005

DEJAMLING (South France, near Montpellier)

1st part of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra  
with STOFFELINA VERDONK & PRIMA MAI (*supervision*)

Cost of the course (without meals or accommodation):

Registration before the 19th of February - 200 euros  
Registration after the 19th of February - 230 euros

Current discounts for the Community members are applied.

For registration & all additional information please contact:

Nadia Poureau  
Tel: + 33 1 47 49 07 16  
Email: [cadette@club-internet.fr](mailto:cadette@club-internet.fr)

## EASTER SANTI MAHA SANGHA BASE LEVEL RETREAT WITH IGOR BERKHIN IN PALDENLING, POLAND MARCH 24 – APRIL 3, 2005

Dzogchen Community in Poland invites everyone interested to a retreat of the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha, which will take place in Paldenling, Poland, from March 24th till April 3rd 2005. The fee is 70 EUR. For more information and booking please contact Artur Skura at [arturs@people.pl](mailto:arturs@people.pl).

## VAJRA DANCE IN VENICE

First Part, Beginners  
with Adriana dal Borgo  
Easter March 25 - 30

The second part will be the next weekends.  
For any other information please contact: Giuliana Giromella  
0422331241 or 3401473878

## Tsegyalgar, Dzogchen Community in America,

18 Schoolhouse Road, Conway, MA 01341  
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473  
Email: [secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)  
Web site: [www.tsegyalgar.org](http://www.tsegyalgar.org)

Tsegyalgar is pleased to announce a course of

## The Vajra Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas

with Anastasia McGhee  
February 18th – 20th

All are invited to attend, Transmission from the Master is not necessary to learn this practice. It is enough to have the intention of meeting the Master, and dedicating the practice to the benefit of all sentient beings.

Cost: \$150 or \$50/day  
Limited Dorm Space is available at \$10/night for members and \$25/night for non-members.  
Place: Dzogchen Community in America at Tsegyalgar The Schoolhouse, Conway, Massachusetts  
For information and to register, please call or email:  
Ed Hayes, Secretary, 413-369-4153  
[secretary@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgar.org)

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

## TRAVELING TIPS FOR THE APRIL RETREAT AT JARDIN DE LOS NARANJOS, BAJA

by Neil Murray

The closest airport to the Gar is Los Cabos International Airport (SJD) that is north of the small city of San Jose del Cabo off Highway # 1, the main paved highway that traverses the length of the Baja peninsula. International flights usually route through Mexico City. From the US, America West Airlines is the most direct, flying from many cities to Las Vegas or Phoenix, and then directly



Neil's tent on the beach in Baja

N.MURRAY

to Cabo, at good rates. From California, Aero Mexico is very good, for price and service.

You can exchange money at the airport, but banks will give you a better rate. Some restaurants and stores will give a good rate, but in the expensive tourist areas (Los Cabos), the rate is worse, but most places take US bills, but NOT coins.

If you are planning to drive from the US, or travel around, an excellent fold out topographic map (\$ 5.95) or detailed topographic map journal book (\$ 24.95) of Baja is available from Baja Almanac Publishers, Inc. (with free shipping) at: [www.baja-almanac.com](http://www.baja-almanac.com)

They are not easy to find in Baja, so it is best to get one or both before traveling down (I got both, and they are extremely useful).

The main road hazard is individual and herds of goats, sheep and cows in the road. There are also rock-slides off the steep roadside hills. Avoid driving at night if possible, but if you must drive at night, be very aware that a large Ganado (steer) could walk up a steep roadside path right into your path with almost no visual warning.

I would advise that groups of people traveling together arrange beforehand to rent a Jeep or medium size car at the airport when they arrive. There are many road hazards, so if your personal insurance or credit card does not provide full coverage for liability and damage to vehicle, take the full insurance coverage, \$0 deductible, unlimited mileage option. Although expensive, it will provide the least hassle if an incident occurs. Rocks hitting the windshield are very common, and a \$ 300 charge for a chip would ruin your trip. It cost me \$ 280. - to rent a Dodge Neon with full coverage and unlimited mileage for 5 days.

When picking up the car, check very carefully to make sure all the hubcaps and floor carpets are there, spare tire and jack present, and notate anything missing, as well as all dings, dents, chipped paint, chipped or cracked windshield, anything they could potentially charge you for, as lately, the car rental companies have been taking advantage of their customers to make any extra income possible (as reported in the Baja English newspaper). Walk around the car carefully with the check out sheet and attendant, and INSIST on notating even the smallest damage on the sheet. Also, when you reserve the car, make sure that the total price includes all the insurance and taxes, and get the final TOTAL tally in US dollars, as well as the booking person's name. Clean the car well before returning it so that you do not incur a cleaning charge. Rates can vary widely, so shop around. I found Payless, Thrifty and Budget (all at the airport) to have the best rates.

There are state sponsored maintenance trucks, called "Green Angels", that patrol Route 1 regularly to assist motorists with problems. They generally are spaced about an hour apart, and provide free service, but charge for parts used in a repair.

The road to the Gar is in good shape now, and a small compact Chevy will make it in, but a Jeep or SUV is a more ideal vehicle for Baja, especially to explore the beach areas.

You may take the bus from the highway (under the bridge over Highway 1 are bus stops on both sides about 1/2 kilometer walk from the airport) to the dirt road at kilometer 54, but it is another 10+ kilometers up the dirt road to the Gar. It is possible to hitchhike up the dirt road, but traffic is light. If that is your only option, then bring at least a liter bottle of water. The bus to take is Aquila (usually blue and white) that says "La Paz", although a more local one will go by the road to the Gar. Sit up front and watch for the kilometer marks painted on the road. The dirt road in to the Gar is right after KM 54 heading north, and as it is not a usual bus stop, the driver needs warning in advance. There is a spot to pull over a few hundred feet before the road, so try to catch the KM mark before 54 (it might be 48, or 50) and let the driver know you want to pull over near KM 54.

On the Gar road, drive slowly, with lights on. Beep before a curve you cannot see around, as some very large trucks use the road, and there is not room enough for two vehicles on most curves. The Gar gate is steel, with horizontal flat pieces, and hopefully will be well marked by the time of the retreat.

Dress: the weather should be balmy in April. I found a light fleece vest very good for the cool nights in January. Dressing in light layers works well. Running shoes are enough, sandals for the beach. It is best to travel light. The weather will be very good in April. I was just down for 3-1/2 weeks and insects were absolutely no problem, but I am not sure if it is different on the land, away from ocean breezes with a stream running through the Gar. A light sleeping bag and tent are best.

Swimming: Undertow is common and there are many areas that are not safe for swimming. One of the best places is the beach at Spa Buena Vista, where Rinpoche has stayed (and previous retreats were held), as

*continued on next page*

well as at Point Arena not far from La Ribera, south of Buena Vista. I recommend light goggles ("Seal" brand), as even at the Buena Vista beach, there are small rock reefs with many colorful fish and bat rays. Also, wind surfer boots are good for rockier beaches and times when there are other bottom hazards. <http://www.the-house.com/mm010zzmauimagic.html>

**Jellyfish:** There are times when jellyfish will be common—I swam into a large group. It looked like brown foam on the water, but once under I could see the tentacles through my goggles. I got stung a little; it just itched for an hour. Another good reason for the wind surfer boots. **Sharks:** The most common is the Hammerhead. I did not hear anything about them being a problem—remember that sharks typically feed at dawn and dusk, and are attracted to contrasting colors, and of course blood and activity in the water.

**Engaging the Locals:** I found the locals to be friendly and helpful. The resentment that exists in other tourist areas does not seem to be a problem in Baja. The locals seem to enjoy talking if you genuinely engage them, and it seems that English is spoken more in Baja than it might be on the mainland of Mexico. Tourists are crucial to the Baja economy, and the gringos who have relocated to Baja have contributed to the local society in many positive ways.

**Tipping:** There is much poverty in Baja, and low wages. Many children are out by the street selling candy, etc. to help their family get by, so help them out. Tip generously and it will be appreciated. Typically, if you get the full service at a Pemex (gas) station, tip 10 pesos (\$1). Don't forget the kids at the supermarket that bag the groceries and help you carry them to the car.

**Police:** The police are pretty good, so just be courteous to them and they will be helpful. If you incur a fine, for a traffic violation for example, go to the station to pay it, do not pay the officer directly—insist on that.

**Cell Phones:** There is mostly good coverage in Baja, and because of the nature of great, uninhabited distances between towns, and then a cell phone is desirable, for safety reason. Check with your carrier for roaming information before you leave.

**Computer & Internet:** There are many Internet cafes at low rates, typically \$1-2 an hour for high speed. Route 1 is wired with fiber optics, but on the Gar land, there is no electricity, or Internet access. It is a dead spot for cell phones also. If intensive notebook computer use is desirable, bring a solar panel recharging unit, or spare batteries that you can charge at a cafe later.

**Cameras and film:** If using a film camera, pack the film in your carry on bag, or it will be ruined by the x-ray machines used to scan checked luggage. I could only find Kodak Gold 100,200 and 400 ISO print film anywhere, at about \$5-6 a roll. If you shoot slide film, professional film, or something other than Kodak Gold, bring it with you. I shoot only professional slide film, and Baja with its spectacular scenery, wildlife and oceans justifies using the best film and camera.

**Beach Camping:** The beaches are ALL public property, with almost no restrictions on camping. There are many (mostly Canadians) that bring their monster trailer campers, with full generators and TV dishes, and spend the winters on many beaches in Baja. Point Arena near La Ribera is an excellent camping spot, with beautiful sand beach and much driftwood for campfires. Wear gloves to pick up wood, etc., as scorpions and spiders typically will be hiding underneath. If camping by Jeep, you could probably make it out onto the point, but if going by car, park before the beach and pack your stuff to your campsite (it is not too far). If you have a car air compressor, you can reduce your tire pressure for extra traction (as low as 5 PSI according to experienced beach campers I met), and then return it to normal when going back on the highway.

**Gloves and remedies for scorpions and snakes:** Use gloves to move firewood, to prevent scorpion and spider bites. I take a snakebite kit, but have not seen any rattlers yet. If you make noise when hiking, they take off. Shake out camping gear and bags for the final packing, so you don't bring a desert pet home.

**Phone Card:** The pay phones in Baja do not use coins. You have to buy a Ladatel TELMEX card, which are widely available for \$5, \$10, other amounts, etc. When dialing, you may have to try different combinations for long distance, like 001#, or 01# to get it right - keep trying, eventually you will figure it out.

Bring incense; you can buy candles in glass and stick matches all over (it's a Catholic country).

Bring prescription drugs in original bottles to avoid hassles with US and Mexican customs. If someone wants to bring a very good first aid kit for the Gar, that would be great. Ice packs seem to NOT be available, as I checked everywhere. Even the largest drug store in the capitol was not nearly as well stocked as my small town one - bring what you really need.

Cuban cigars are less at the duty free shops in the airport on the way out.

I am sure there are things I will remember after I send this off, so please feel free to write me at:

If you have any other questions about traveling to Baja contact me at [neilmurray@yahoo.com](mailto:neilmurray@yahoo.com).

## WORLD WIDE TRANSMISSION AT DONDRUB LING, BERKELEY CALIFORNIA FEBRUARY 22, 2005

Everyone is invited to attend the World Wide Transmission of the Guruyoga of Garab Dorje. This will take place at Dondrub Ling in Berkeley, CA. on Tuesday, February 22, 2005. We ask that participants arrive NO

LATER than 630pm in order to be seated and centered by the 700pm start time.

It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that those wish to acquaint themselves with this practice attend one or both of our pre-Transmission trainings. The trainings are to assist you in learning the practice so that when we do the practice with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (via video) we can more effectively enter the state of Guruyoga and thereby have more result from the transmission.

The pre-Transmission trainings are:

1. Saturday February 19 100pm-300pm
2. Tuesday February 22 500pm-600pm

The Saturday February 19 training will be more in depth and there will be more time for questions and answers so it is best if new people take advantage of this training.

## EIGHT MOVEMENTS OF YANTRA YOGA DONDRUB LING BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

There will be a practice of The Eight Movements of Yantra Yoga for those who have completed a course in the Eight Movements. This can either be the course recently completed (JAN 14-16) or any other Eight Movement course that has been offered previously. This practice is NOT for beginners.

This six-week practice costs \$40.00 donation and will be offered on:

*Saturday February 19, 2005 430pm-600pm*  
*Saturday February 26, 2005 500pm-630pm* *Saturday March 12, 2005 430pm-600pm*

PLEASE NOTE:: There is no practice on Saturday March 5 and that the practice time on Saturday February 26, 2005 is at 500pm instead of 430pm.

Questions/Contact Oni Mc Kinstry at 510-717-7141 or email at [oniyo-gini@yahoo.com](mailto:oniyo-gini@yahoo.com).

## Who, What, When, Where and Why?

*A short story about the recent Santi Maha Sangha retreat at the Baja Winter Gar*

In mid-December 2004, a group of us caravanned down 1200 miles to the southern tip of Baja Sur to have a retreat on the Gar land there. We were Jey Clark, certified to teach Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga, who led the retreat, his son, Logan, 16, visiting from Colorado, Natalie Gougeon, from Mount Shasta in Northern California, Nary Mitchell, current president of the DCWC Gakyil, my daughter, India, 13, and myself, Tana Lehr. In San Diego we joined with Jacob, 20, who had bought a truck in collaboration with the Baja Gakyil and drove it across the US from Maryland. He was on his way to join the other 'pioneers' on the Gar land after having spent the previous 3 months on Margarita Island.

So with 3 trucks, our bright yellow in the lead, because we'd driven this before and because you could see us for miles. We headed out for the boarder after gracious hospitality from Joel, another pioneer who was home for a few weeks before moving to Baja. We camped the first night on a beach next to a huge parking lot used by locals and surfers for all night parties. Not much sleep but the dawn was a gorgeous pink splash across the sky.

The drive through Baja is absolutely beautiful- miles and miles of surprisingly green desert with hawks and vultures soaring overhead, mountain

ranges are layered purple ridges in the distance and marvelous forms around every bend as you drive the serpentine curves thru the passes and discover the rich blue sea just on the other side.

The next night was in a quiet (!) motel in Guerrero Negro, just over the border into Baja Sur. You gotta have a shower sometimes!

The third night was the highlight on the trip down. We rendezvous at Bahia Concepcion, a breathtakingly beautiful huge bay on the Sea of Cortez. We had cold cervezas with lime, an afternoon of peaceful exploration and a campfire - all with no one else in sight. It was delightful.

We got down to Buena Vista in the southern part of Baja Sur the fourth day, where we stayed for a few days before going up into the Sierra de la Laguna mountains to the Winter Gar. Nary and I had been there several times over the last 18 months and there were many changes now that Community members had been living there for several months.

The pioneers are Rosey from Oregon, Augustin from Mexico City, Amare, who has been living in Margarita with his family for a year and will go back soon and Jacob and Joel. They have been learning Yantra Yoga from Amare and working hard in preparation for the upcoming April 1- 4, 2005 retreat with our precious master.

The first evening of the Santi Maha Sangha retreat was the 26th, a full moon night. We gathered in the place where we had done the Dance of the Song of the Vajra with Rinpoche when he first visited the new

## Vajra Dance in New Mexico March 4-6, 2005 with Anastasia McGhee

The Dzogchen Community of New Mexico is pleased to be hosting

**An Introduction to Vajra Dance (the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas)** with Anastasia McGhee,

Both of these are beginning courses, for which one is not required to have already received transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, but practitioners who would like to review or to refine their practice are also welcome to attend.

Beginning Friday in the late afternoon or early evening and ending Sunday afternoon at Synergia Ranch, about 20 minutes' drive south of Santa Fe (see <http://www.synergianranch.com/> for directions)

COST: \$90-\$140 sliding scale  
CONTACT: Julia Deisler  
[jmdeisler@aol.com](mailto:jmdeisler@aol.com)

To reserve a space in either course, send a check or money order for \$50 (or full amount) (with a notation as to which course you plan to attend) made out to DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF NEW MEXICO and send it to

DCNM c/o Julia Deisler  
PO Box 1838  
Santa Fe, NM 87504 USA

Gar land in April 2004. It was a full moon that night as well. We sat close around the fire while Jey gave a thorough introduction to the Ganapuja and then we raised our voices together as the moon rose up above the mountain ridge.

Each day we began with a session of Yantra yoga, then breakfast and then we gathered for Jey presentations on *The Precious Vase*. These were very inspiring and lively as we engaged with the material and felt quite inspired. Never have I studied in a 'classroom' as beautiful or practiced in a place so strongly resonating.

When cool in the mornings we met by the fire and in the warm, sunny afternoons we met under the fig trees, which had been our Gonpa in April. This is where Rinpoche came upon first arriving at the Gar, he led us in sang practice and in the evening a Ganapuja. Rinpoche said the trees and rocks there are in love; the ficus trees - very like the Bodhi tree under which the Buddha found enlightenment - wrap themselves all around the giant granite boulders, in a very long embrace.

Nary, India, Logan and I had to leave the retreat early to drive north, as there was work and school for us as the New Year began. We said a grateful farewell and look forward to returning for the April 2005 retreat with Rinpoche on the Gar land.

*Long life to our precious teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche!*

*With all best wishes to my Vajra sisters and brothers!*  
Tana Lehr



### A Novice's Experience with Yantra Yoga

by Kathleen MacDougall

Entering Dondrub Ling Friday evening for the preliminary lecture in Oni McKinstry's introductory course in Yantra Yoga, I wasn't anxious, even though I was twenty minutes late. Only talk tonight, I figured; surely the serious workout wouldn't begin until the next morning. Wrong. By the time I arrived, Oni had completed her overview of the Yantra practice and was already working the dozen workshop participants with warm-up exercises, followed by a careful explanation and practice of vase breathing.

So far, so good. I knew the limitations of my physical condition—shortened hamstrings, tight hips that all the props of Iyengar-style hatha yoga had never cracked open, unexplainable flexibility on the right side counterbalanced by rigidity on the left, flabby abs that barely propelled me upright, and shoulders crunched and contracted. Such a painfully won awareness would permit me to move up to my limits but not beyond.

I returned to the center Saturday morning fresh and eager, no worse for the unexpected workout on the previous evening. But before we could learn the formal, preliminary warm-up sequence, there were more warm-ups, included several suggested by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, followed by review and practice of nine-round breathing. Somewhere midway through the morning session, I began to notice a shift into stillness, nudged by Oni's quiet suggestion that I pay attention to the pace of the group's breathing. Slow down. Keep your eyes open. Notice when others move. Quite interesting.

By the Saturday afternoon session, I was ready to work harder. And so were the others in the room, each to their capacity, which included fumbling with miscrossed limbs, surreptitiously deploying elbows and other props to get ourselves upright, collapsing backward instead of rolling forward. The laughter let us know that limitation was common to us all. And who was noticing, anyway. We left that evening with the admonition to treat ourselves to a hot bath and an early bed.

I feared I would be stiff and sore on Sunday morning, yet I awoke feeling supple (enough) and energized. Delightful. I guessed that something about the breathing practice during the first four movements had worked well, somehow balancing and smoothing out my concerted effort to get the postural sequences right. And so I relaxed into the two Sunday sessions, knowing that I wouldn't get it all right, this day, but trusting that sufficient breath would soothe the way . . . or be the way. There was an indication that my fellow student practitioners were settling into a quiet, calm place, too. No one leapt to their feet immediately and dashed for the bathroom when Oni announced a break. Instead, throughout the day, we would keep to our practice circle for a time, lying quietly or gently chatting with our neighbor.

I returned to the Dzogchen Community West Coast center the following Wednesday afternoon, to join experienced Yantra Yoga practitioners in their weekly session. No, certainly I didn't remember all Eight Movements clearly. But never mind. What came clear was that this was a practice, to be engaged in quietly, calmly, and with a fine ease. And great gratitude.



C. Steinberg

**Tashigar South**  
**Rosa Altamirano – Secretary**  
**Comunidad Dzogchen**  
**Tashigar**  
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**Prolongación de la Calle Bolívar**  
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**Margarita**  
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**tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru**  
**Web site: www.dzogchen-**  
**venezuela.org**

### A Journey to Cataratas del Iguazu with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Iguazu National Park, Province of Misiones One of the Eight Wonders of the World January, 2005

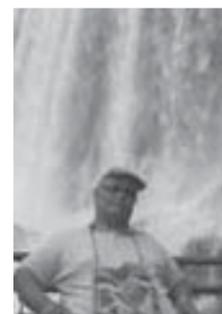
by Fabio Andrico



It all started with a whim, an old idea, and a new direct flight from Cordoba now available. We went to Iguazu, the world famous waterfalls. Some by plane and some on a very comfortable, overnight bus.

It is not as I had imagined, even though I had seen it in a movie. It is more, better, wider, wilder, and simply beautiful. What you cannot really feel watching a movie is the SOUND, the force, the power, the sheer, mighty strength of the movement. The water falling, so strong, and the sound, so overwhelming. The feel of the wind, the spray of the water on your face, your body.....your camera.....

The wind and the sound and the rainbow; a dimension of the power of water with Rinpoche. These waterfalls are truly, in Rinpoche's own words, marvelous. The place is a meeting point of three nations. Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay. There is a very big, nice, well-organized park and we were lucky with the weather! We abandoned the guided tour and went on our own, which proved to be more relaxed and better. Rinpoche, Rosa and a small group of us watched with wonder at these many waterfalls of all sizes and strengths manifesting everywhere. Only three days, but we all really enjoyed it.



PHOTOS BY LUCIA BOSCHETTO



After the Gomadevi Retreat, a course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra started a Tashigar. From January 4, 2005 onwards Nelida Saporiti from Buenos Aires, supervised by Adriana dal Borgo, was teaching 26 students on two Mandalas in the Tashigar Gonpa.

# namgyalgar & pacific rim

## Namgyalgar Dzogchen Community in Australia

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Web site: [www.dzogchen.org.au](http://www.dzogchen.org.au)

## NAMGYALGAR GAKYIL NEWS

from Joanna Tyshing

### TIBETAN MEDICINE COURSES

Tibetan Medicine courses with Dr. Nida Chenagsang in Australia and Singapore have thus far been quite successful. Mantra Healing courses held in Singapore, Cairns and at Namgyalgar were well attended. A Dream Analysis course was held in Cairns and another will be held in Melbourne, Australia in late January. Twenty-three people are currently undertaking a Ku Nye Level One course and five students have completed Ku Nye Level Three.

### THE SUMMER

The summer retreat period at Namgyalgar has been a time of abundant energy with many people attending the Green Tara and Rushen retreats. Several young families with some eleven children between them enjoyed a relaxing time at Namgyalgar reconnecting with local Vajra kin, the Gonpa, the land and nearby beaches. Lynne Geary mostly led the most of the Thuns, which alternated with visits to the beach and communal cooking, so that both parents and children were satisfied with their holiday time at the Gar. Angie Gilbert kindly instructed the children on how to do a Ganapuja and led some Chöd practices in the evenings. Jean Mackintosh taught the Vajra Dance giving lessons to the children who were very keen to learn.

Elise Stutchbury and Yantra Yoga sessions were given by Emily Coleing led the Rushen retreat. Currently a small group of practitioners are undertaking an SMS L 1 retreat with Elise at the Gar. During 2004 both Elise and Angie have led Santi Maha Sangha retreats elsewhere in Australia including Sydney, Brisbane, Cairns and Melbourne. Emily Coleing and Matthew Long have conducted courses in Yantra Yoga in some cities in Australia, as well as in Noumea, New Caledonia. Likewise, Lynne Geary and Jean Mackintosh have both led Vajra Dance courses.

### THE GAKYIL

The Blue Gakyil is developing ways to advertise and reach more people and has prepared guidelines, in liaison with the Santi Maha Sangha teachers, to offer information nights and conduct World Wide Transmission Days. Jan Taylor has been working with the secretary over the last three years to develop a policy and procedures manual to assist the Gakyil, as a responsible governing body, to have continuity. The manual will be very helpful for new Gakyil members and also for assisting regional groups throughout Australia and the Asia-Pacific, as well as others holding positions of responsibility.

The Namgyalgar Gakyil is changing shape with some members departing and new ones coming on board. Helen Castle has assumed the position of Treasurer - many thanks to Peter Phipps (outgoing Treasurer) for his time and effort dedicated to the role. Paul Mortensen, Kamallesh Raennon and Jan Taylor will leave the Gakyil in the near future. Welcome to Catherine Williams who has joined Blue.

### THE DARK RETREAT & GEKÖE'S CABIN

The Dark Retreat Cabin under construction at Namgyalgar is progressing and it is hoped the building will be completed and ready for use by mid-year. The first retreat cabin "Tsamkhang I" is available for personal retreat, excluding the time of the Mandarava retreat with Nina Robinson over Easter.

Following a fire assessment of the proposed site for the Geköe's Cabin, plans to begin construction have been suspended until the Shire Council approves a suitable site. The Gakyil is calling for ideas on how to fundraise for this important building project.

### STONEWALLS AND A LOTUS LILY POND

Namgyalgar Geköe, Bob Gardner has built some stonewalls and a lotus lily pond beside the Gonpa as well as undertaking most of the general maintenance of the Gar. His tireless work over the last seven months has resulted in the Gar looking much loved and welcoming to visitors.

### THE NAMGYALGAR BUSINESS COMMITTEE

The Namgyalgar Business Committee's Bookshop business plan has been put on hold until the plans of Yeshe Namkhai's company's restructuring of the International Dzogchen Community are in place.

mirror on line

[www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com)

com

## NAMGYALGAR

## MANDARAVA RETREAT

with Nina Robinson

March 25th to April 2nd 2005

Further information is available from

The Secretary  
Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar  
PO Box 14  
Central Tilba  
NSW 2546  
Australia

Tel / Fax: 02.4473 7668

Email: [namgyalg@acr.net.au](mailto:namgyalg@acr.net.au)

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE / GAKYIL OF DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF SINGAPORE

### 1) MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE:

President - Edmund Tai Kwok Wah  
Email: [edmundkwai@yahoo.com.sg](mailto:edmundkwai@yahoo.com.sg)  
Tel: (65)64811308, (65)96373010 ]

Vice President - Michael Foo See Jin  
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Email: [frogwong@singnet.com.sg](mailto:frogwong@singnet.com.sg)  
Tel: (65)93672288 ]

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*The above information is valid till July 2006.*



entering the path of liberation this lifetime or in a lifetime to come. The Song of the Vajra Dance and the Three Vajra Dance, though, need transmission. They present too much of the essence of the Dzogchen teachings.

Yeshe Namkhai helped a great deal in producing one of the first music for the Three Vajra Dance and the Song of the Vajra Dance. I remember the sounds creating the HUMs in the Three Vajra Dance as being particularly powerful and vibrational. On this base, around 1994, on his return from traveling in Japan, Tibet, India and Nepal, Rinpoche met with Matteo Silva from Amiata Records, who had a professional recording studio near Seggiano and who offered to create the next series of music to use for all three Vajra Dances. The Shang- Shung Institute distributed the subsequent recording in 1995.

Building on that base, in 1997/98, Matteo recorded a chorus singing the Songs of the Vajra. Our choir of four male and four female voices met for rehearsals many times, since most participants were not professional singers. Rinpoche's voice was recorded separately in 1999 and integrated later, the final version eventually being published in 2000. There are probably also many interesting memories to be retrieved in connection with these projects.

Back to late summer 1991. It was a time of coming and going of practitioners from many places around the globe into and out of the Merigar Mandala. It actually became a period of spending time together daily, dancing and dancing for hours and hours until late into the evening. Since the Mandala was painted on a carpet, it meant that socks were worn through in record time and fashion. I repaired my pair of quite thick, leather shoes several times, until it became hopeless. To practice for many hours became a challenge to our knees as well, especially for Rinpoche, who already had signs of the arthritis that would become more painful in the following years and in his travels. This might mean, therefore, that Rinpoche would probably not continue the Vajra Dance. But, then, Rinpoche is the Vajra Dance. Once Rinpoche said with a twinkle in his eyes, after I had shown him the desperate state of our socks and shoes, that when one has consumed twenty-one pairs of Vajra Dance shoes, one will be realized. Rinpoche would practice with us or sit at his table, often provoking distraction in us student dancers, who occasionally, to everyone's laughter, would

instantly lose the hard gained presence of being in integration and of being very, very present. At other times, Rinpoche would talk about his experiences of receiving these practices through his dreams.

These were hours spent not simply studying the steps of the Vajra Dance. During these precious weeks, Rinpoche's enlightened presence transmitted the essence of this practice, the State of the Vajra (Vajra = Potentiality, representing our real nature) through the three main points: point of view, application or meditation, and attitude. The commentary by Rinpoche on these points in chapter ten of the book "The Song of the Vajra", for example, was helpful for me to understand better what this means with respect to the Dzogchen teachings and with respect to the experiences generated through the Vajra Dance: the integration into the state of contemplation.

At that time, I was quite new to the Dzogchen Community. Even so, I believe that thanks to the many relative benefits of the Vajra Dance, a new quality of awareness and collaboration was born between practitioners and the different Dzogchen Communities starting to spread further around the globe.

It is not always easy to follow this practice. If one has no Mandala nearby (or time!) on which to practice continuously, one can easily forget the steps. It is a bit frustrating when this happens, a factor that may understandably contribute to choosing other practices to dedicate oneself to. Also, during the practice of the Vajra Dance, one might discover something about one's condition and choose to work with that aspect of oneself with other methods that have been transmitted. As with everything, one probably has to discover these things for oneself. When starting to learn the Vajra Dance myself, I remember, after a more or less sufficient study on the physical Mandala, dancing in any place or private circumstance. Particularly I remember having practiced the Vajra Dance once allover and over on a deserted beach in the South of Spain by night. It works well if one can visualize the Mandala and has the steps memorized. It helps to establish an even better memory of the steps and get a real feel of the arms. Also one's living room or garden could work well, as long the neighbors don't watch and might wonder too much about their own safety around such a strange neighbor...

this is my experience: there is a possibility of people developing. Developing people doesn't mean developing the quantity of people who are following my teaching. I am not interested in how many students there are. But I am interested if some of these students really understand what I am really communicating because that can be useful for the future, for maintaining the teaching and for sentient beings, particularly human beings, for having less tensions and being more aware. So then I really believe that there is a possibility for developing and having a kind of evolution.

#### Our real condition

People who are following Dzogchen teaching must understand these things, not just think that we are a kind of center for Dharma teaching. Some people say that we are a Buddhist center. I don't care if we are Buddhist or not. I don't care if we are a Dharma center or not. For me what is important is that people really learn and understand what the real sense of the Dzogchen teaching is because it helps you, yourselves. And it also helps very much for other people.

You already know what Dzogchen means – it means our real condition. Dzogchen is not the name of a teaching. It is not the name of the centre or a tradition. Dzogchen is our real condition. Even though each one of us has this real condition, we are ignorant of that. We need to discover that condition and for that reason we need Dzogchen teaching taught by enlightened teachers who have full knowledge of that. Teachers like Garab Dorje, and his students and his lineage. For centuries and centuries they developed that teaching. Since the beginning Dzogchen teachers have been interested in transmitting and developing that knowledge, not in building big monasteries or residences, power or positions, etc., otherwise these teachers would have succeeded in building something over the centuries. We discover that most Dzogchen practitioners, like yogis and Mahasiddhas, live in the mountains, in the countryside or in the town without showing any particular signs because Dzogchen teaching can integrate in the way the situation is.

#### Integrating in the situation

You know that I am a Dzogchen practitioner. How do you find me? Just like a teacher or not? Many people don't think that I am a teacher. Once when we were doing a retreat in north Italy there was a restaurant under the retreat place. The owner was a French lady and our people went there every day to eat. Then the owner got interested and one day she wanted to invite the teacher. She was also curious and wanted to know which kind of teacher they had so I said that I would go there.

One day we went to the restaurant. I went with Barrie and Nancy Simmons and there were 3 or 4 other people. When we arrived - Barrie Simmons is a very big man and on that day he was wearing some long white clothes just like an Indian while I was dressed normally in blue jeans or something like that - and went into the restaurant, the owner came over and said to Barrie, "Oh teacher. Welcome.

Please sit here". Barrie was a little shy. He said, "I am not the teacher. This is the teacher", and he introduced me. The owner was a little surprised. That is an example.

It is not something wrong because my principle is integrating. How people live, how they dress, I do things that way. For that reason, some students are not satisfied because they see many elegant teachers when they go to India and Nepal. And when they come to Europe someone says that there is a Dzogchen teacher and they hear that Dzogchen is an important teaching and they want to go to see the teacher. When they get here they look at me in a strange way. I understand immediately that they are a little surprised. That is an example.

#### 6th Dalai Lama

In the Dzogchen teaching, from the beginning, all Dzogchen practitioners, all Mahasiddhas have always been integrated into the situation. For example, a very elegant Dzogchen practitioner with a high position was the 5th Dalai Lama, who had a very high level spiritual and political position. But that was not a Dzogchen position; it was the Dalai Lama's position. He had to be that way in order to be the Dalai Lama, otherwise (he would have been) like the 6th Dalai Lama who had many problems.

In ancient time you couldn't see the Dalai Lama easily. Today he goes everywhere and has contact with everybody but in ancient times, the Tibetans would say – Oh the Dalai Lama lives in the Potala Palace. Most people never saw him, only a few noble families. So then, at that period, the 6th Dalai Lama didn't feel very well (about this situation). He was also a Dzogchen practitioner. And so he dressed like an ordinary person and then in the nighttime he would escape from the Palace and go into the city of Lhasa. There he would go to the wine shop and drink and sing. He had a lot of girlfriends. Gradually these things were discovered and many monks and high-ranking officials were not satisfied. In the end, they asked the Chinese Emperor to invite him there and they took him to China.

In the official history, when they took him through Amdo, it says that he passed away. But in the secret history, it means they let him go free, secretly. Then he gradually went to Amdo, Mongolia and many other places and finally arrived in India, Nepal and Russia. There is his secret biography. That secret biography was forbidden in Tibet in ancient times because if the 6th Dalai Lama was still alive for a long time there couldn't have been a 7th Dalai Lama. In any case, the 7th Dalai Lama was a wonderful Dalai Lama but very Gelugpa. He studied very well and wrote many commentaries. The 6th Dalai Lama also had many songs that were very much related to knowledge of Dzogchen. You see that is an example. Sometimes things are not so easy.

#### Importance of Guruyoga

Then in the Dzogchen teaching we say we must be aware and know how the situation is and work with circumstances. For example, if you are the Dalai Lama you have your position,

your specific condition, and of course you should know that this is your circumstance.

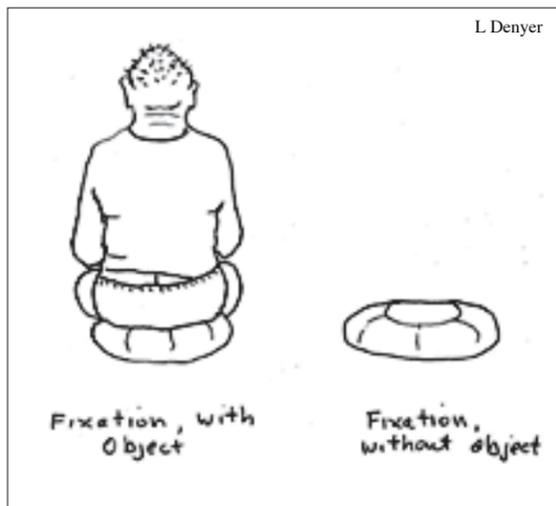
In general we have so many different kinds of conditions - some people work in shops, others in factories or in schools. If we become Dzogchen practitioners it doesn't mean we should change our job or situation. We can integrate everything. But the main point is that we should know how we could integrate in that state. Integrating doesn't mean that we should do mainly some formal practices. That is related to our condition. Of course when there are Dzogchen practitioners together we do collective practice. But when there are no other practitioners, then it depends on you how you do your practice. The main practice is Guruyoga - you integrate in that state and you are in that state. You can always integrate everything. These things are very important in respect to any kind of practice you learn, seemed very important, but if you consider everything important, then how can you do practice? Can you manage to do all these practices? No. So what do you do? You integrate them all in Guruyoga.

I always ask people to try to do Guruyoga as their main practice. If you want to do something more, then you can. For example, I myself always do Guruyoga as my main practice. After that I also do practices like Tara and Mandarava. I not only do Tara practice for myself but also for the protection of our Dzogchen Community people and all interested people. A lot of people ask me to do some prayers for them because they have so many problems. And so I try to do my best. Every day I receive two or three requests like this. I always say OK but how can I do it? In this case I mainly do Tara practice and ask for help for all the people who need it. I believe there are some benefits.

I do Mandarava practice because it is a very important practice for my life. I am still alive thanks to the practice of Mandarava otherwise I would have become part of history many years ago. I still hope to live a little longer until I can no longer walk well. When I cannot walk any more and there are too many problems then there is no need. But now I have many things to finish: Santi Maha Sangha, the Dzogchen Community and teaching etc.

So that is an example of how I do practice. I do not do the Thun practice every day. There are many practices like Kalachakra, Gomadevi etc. I cannot do them all. But sometimes I give those teachings because behind them, there are very interesting instructions which are very useful for everybody. So for that reason I am also giving different teachings that I have received. Also for continuing this transmission. Then, when there are ten people, each person has different intentions and desires. Of course when people understand, they mainly do the practice of Guruyoga, but they can also do something else. For that reason I give many different kinds of teachings.

Transcription and editing  
by Liz Granger



Who knows when an idea is born, or how Dharma Dog came to the village of Halesia and the caves of Maratika. I only know that the scruffy, noble little mutt was constantly at the heels of monks circumambulating Avalokiteshvara Hill, and was respectfully present at all auspicious events. I am told he was with Lama Ngawang Chopel Gyatso when he founded Chimey Takten Choling Monastery at the mouth of the upper cave; he was still there when I arrived years after Lama Gyatso's death.

The Kathang Zanglingma, one of the biographies of Padmasambhava, describes the original event, which made the Maratika caves into a sacred place for Buddhists.

The Padmasambhava opens the mandala of the Buddha Amitayus, and after three months he receives the vision of this Buddha. Amitayus then places vases filled with nectar upon the heads of Padmasambhava and his consort [Mandarava], and as he pours some of it into their mouths, both obtain the Siddhi of power over life."

Most ideas rise and fall as unending waves without leaving traces of their origin or clues of their destination. However I was drawn to Maratika along discernible currents, and didn't simply manifest, as may have been the case with Dharma Dog. My Maratika Pilgrimage didn't start with meeting our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, but that is where with enormous gratitude I will begin.

The early morning strains of "OM HRI BAM JANA DHAKINI MANDARAVA AYU SIDDI JA HUM" merged with night dreams and took residence in my heart long before I knew why I had been led to Namgyalgar in those early days of burlap bathrooms, and amalgams of grub and grog. And while the picture of Rinpoche meditating in the cave of the Eight Means of Attainment at Maratika was compelling to me as a spelunker - I was riveted beyond my common understanding. How many lifetimes did I travel to receive such blessings? Who knows when an idea is born?

As life offers seemingly serendipitous opportunities, within a month of meeting Rinpoche I arrived for the first time in Kathmandu on the eve of Buddha Jayanti. The city was blazing with candles, brass bands, prayer flags, oil lamps and the scent of humility. It was May 3rd, 1996, the same day my son Seth was born 19 years earlier.

Stunned by culture shock, I found my way to *Swayambhunath Stupa* (built 2000 years ago) atop a hillock of one thousand steps. A crush of people illuminated by flickering butter lamps brought offerings of incense, flowers and rice. The whirl of prayer wheels spinning rhythmically under floating hands seemed to hum "tsey brum, tsey brum, tsey brum." As the sun set and full moon rose over *Swayambhunath*, the air congealed in a holy haze painted with pigment of ochre-red saris. Monkeys descended holy Banyan and Pipal trees to watch as I joined the sea of glowing devo-

tees ascending and descending the ancient undulating steps held



in place surely by the fervor of their devotion. An auspicious beginning, but who knows when an idea is born.

It took another 3 years before I made my first pilgrimage to Halesi and the holy caves of Maratika. In March of 1999 I hired a guide, rented a down jacket, and packed the Long Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini into my backpack. The Long Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini is a Mind Treasure (*gongter*) and Pure Vision (*tagrang*) discovered in 1984 by our beloved teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in a process, which began at Tharling Gonpa in the Nepal region of Solu Khumbu and was completed with the Mind Treasure at Maratika.

As luck and destiny conspired, the Chief Lama of Chimey Takten Choling Monastery at Maratika, Lama Karma Wangchhu, was on my airplane. Our friendship began amidst laughter, curiosity, and shared bits of dried fruit as we stopped to rest on *chautaras* in the shade of *Banyan* and *Pipal* trees during a 2-day trek from the Lamidanda airstrip to Maratika.

Arriving his monastery, Lama Karma offered me a room where I slept and practiced while listening to the sacred utterances of words as they were meant to be spoken. At night my mind was filled with ringing bells and the rhythmic drumming of a damaru coming from next-door where a Lama was on a six-month retreat. My days began at 5 AM with the sounds of huge drums and blaring trumpets, and were fulfilled exploring the sacred caves, listening to the wind-sounds of a thousand prayer flags, and practicing the Long Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava in the "assembly hall of a hundred thousand dakinis" overlooking a huge red-blossomed Simal tree on the east side of Avalokiteshvara Hill.

Lama Ngawang Chopel Gyatso, founder of Chimey Takten Monastery at Maratika, says: "Om soti. This supreme holy place is similar to Ogin and Khachö Buddha fields. The shape of this mountain resembles a heap of lotuses. Above, the lamas of the Eight Means of Attainment are arranged like a mass of clouds. In the middle dwells an assembly of rainbow-like deities. Below, the ocean of oath-bound protectors roars like thunder. In front, the offering goddesses perform their dance.

The entrance of this place resembles a half moon and faces towards the east, while the path leading to it comes from the south. A large number of trees grow in that place, the birds sing melodiously and there are many sweetly scented flowers. In front is a self-created lake, and at the distance of an arrow shoot is the self-created, secret cave of the Guru. ...the middle is a self-created prayer to the Guru written in the symbolic script of the dakinis. Inside the cave, above seven steps, is the self-created life vase used by Amitayus for bestowing the empowerment of immortality. There is no doubt that all the prayers addressed to it will be fulfilled."

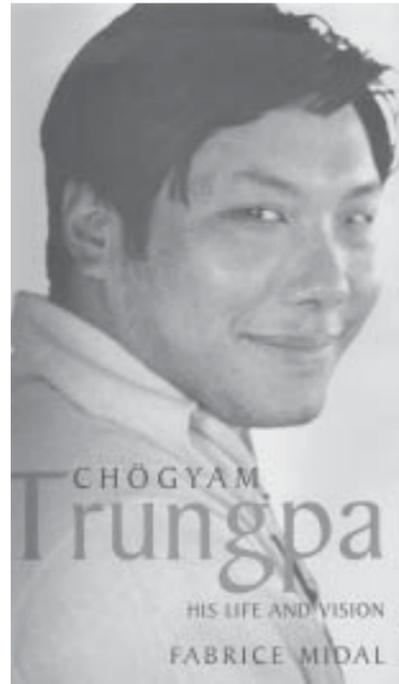
During my second pilgrimage to Maratika, I concentrated on gathering information, taking photographs, helping Lama Karma edit the guidebook, learning more about the challenges of running a small, remote monastery in a predominantly Hindu village. The daily fare, flour dumplings in yak grease gravy, tried my palate and underscored the monastery's need for support. Dharma Dog had an endless appetite for the dish! Since 2001, SPHere (our small non-profit supporting sustainable development programs in Nepal) has supported a teacher of Tibetan at Chimey Takten Choling Monastery. In 2001 and 2003, Lama Karma came to the US and taught in Maine, Virginia and New Mexico helping to raise money for his monastery at Maratika.

I am drawn back again and again to the holy caves of Maratika; visions of the Long Life Vase fill me with vitality; the "box of good fortunes" (*g. yang gi gau*) offers me hope and optimism...these and other natural formations or sacred geology within the caves inhabit my imagination. It is said that every Buddhist must make a pilgrimage to Maratika at least once in their lifetime, thereby extending their natural life by 7 years. While I don't know if this 7-year notion is literal or figurative, or when the idea of Maratika was born in my mind; I don't know when Dharma dog first came to Maratika, or if he had ever left; I do know that I have been touched in immeasurable ways by the blessings of this most sacred place.

During 2005, in collaboration with Lama Karma, we are offering Maratika Pilgrimages to small groups of practitioners. As Chief Abbot of Chimey Takten Choling Monastery, Lama Karma will accompany your pilgrimage providing daily teachings, humor and wisdom. Learn more about Maratika at [www.maratika.com](http://www.maratika.com); contact me at [peacen0w@earthlink.net](mailto:peacen0w@earthlink.net) for pilgrimage dates, itinerary, costs, etc. Our pilgrimage website will be up and running soon. A percentage of pilgrimage profits will go to Tsegalgar, the main Dzogchen Gar in America, and Chimey Takten Choling Monastery at Maratika, Nepal.

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*The Biography of Trungpa Rinpoche*  
by Fabrice Midal  
Published by Shambhala Publications, Inc. 2004



Fabrice Midal never met Trungpa Rinpoche in person. However, he is a member of the Trungpa organization, Dharmadhatu. His biography of Chögyam Trungpa was first written in French and then translated into English. The fact that the biographer was not a direct disciple of that teacher is felt throughout the book, both to its advantage and disadvantage.

What can certainly be said is that the book represents an excellent and important attempt to present Chögyam Trungpa's life; the life of a master who has deeply effected a generation of Westerners, bringing them closer to inner core of the Buddhist teaching.

The biography center around the years spent by Trungpa in the United States, but at times retells events of his early life in Tibet in a beautiful and touching way.

The biographer touches on all the aspects of Trungpa's personality, views and activities: describing in details his multifaceted personality: artist, poet, photographer, tether player, flower arranger, etc., and spiritual teacher. The repeated passages describing Trungpa's teaching method are interesting and fascinating and reminded me of the great Krishnamurti's style. A passage on Trungpa's advice to his students concerning teaching says: "Often he explained the importance of expressing what is true for us at that moment of speaking, and not just repeating what we already know to be true. It is not just enough to parrot lessons."

Although the core of Trungpa's teaching was very much that of the school he was educated in in Tibet and his approach was definitely a gradual one. Trungpa was unique in that he plunged into the nature of his

times and understood, first of all, what his American students wanted and needed: to return to a more normal, grounded and healthy way of living. To do this, Trungpa 'borrowed' disciplines from other traditions and countries such as archery, calligraphy, Ikebana flower arrangements from Japan, etc.

In his initial years, mingling with the hippies and plunging into their world, Trungpa interacted deeply with his Western students and Western society. The result of this was an incredible metamorphosis of his personality, views and actions.

Trungpa started to work tirelessly to create what he thought would be 'a model', both Buddhist and lay, that would change the course of the life of his students and eventually of society. For that reason, he initiated activities such as Mudra theatrical performance; the Maitri's room for therapy and; Naropa

Institute, an accredited Institute established to integrate the teaching with normal education and life. Lastly, Trungpa started what is believed to have come from his pure vision, the Shambhala, a lay approach to one's one natural state.

Slowly, from an unconventional environment free of formalities, out of the need to maintain the organization he created, Trungpa fell prey to the heavy formalities, both in his personal life and in the occasion of public teachings, formalities, that even though integrated, were based largely on traditional Tibetan culture. This Tibetan culture is the same culture that the biographer claims Trungpa was the only Tibetan lama to have distanced himself from to a great extent. The biographer, however, takes pain to explain how these formalities were another method Trungpa used to train his students. After the introduction of the formalities, Trungpa, seemingly in a mood of disillusionment, moved to Nova Scotia, Canada, and relocated the structure of his organization there. Soon after, Trungpa suffered a heart attack from which he never quite recovered and to which he succumbed few months later. As is the life of every sentient being, and to remind us of the last certainty of life, i.e., death, the glamour of Trungpa's life ended in a low-key tone.

What remains of that marvelous teacher are clouds filled with the beneficial nectar of his insight and compassion, and his legacy carried on by his sons and students. For this, we are grateful to the effort of Fabrice Midal, who provided us such a comprehensive insight on the life of a great being.

by Elio Guarisco

#### Errata

Hans-Georg Meschede transcribed the teaching by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in issue 71 of The Mirror, not Jakob Winkler.

#### Omission

Elio Guarisco translated the article about Losar by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo in issue 71 of The Mirror.

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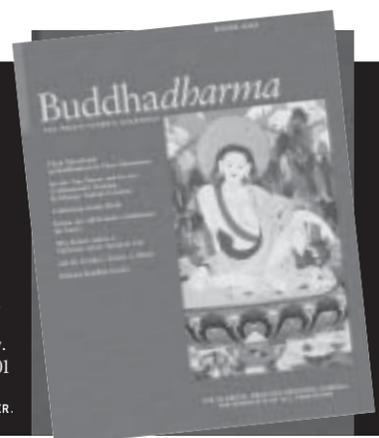
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# HOW I MET CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

## AN INTERVIEW with PAOLO BRUNATTO

By Louise Landes -Levi for The Mirror

*This interview was conducted via email, between New York City and Rome, in mid-December 2004 just after Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Lhalung Sangdag retreat, The Terma Teachings of Heka Lingpa on Margarita Island, Venezuela. Paolo Brunatto, an Italian film director and early disciple of the Master, videoed the retreat.*

**Louise:** Good evening Paolo. You have been with the Master for many years. I heard that you and Poupée (Paolo's wife) were the first to meet him in Italy.

**Paolo:** I am not sure that Poupée and I were the first members of the Dzogchen Community to meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. I can only say that when we returned from a long trip in India and Nepal and arrived in Rome in January 1968, we were filled with longing to see some Tibetans. We had already met Tibetan lamas and monks some months before in Sarnath, India and also in the Kathmandu Valley. They had impressed us deeply, but only on an emotional level. At that time, we knew nothing about Dharma and were not interested in the Teaching. Our interests were more hedonistic and artistic. A friend told me that a Tibetan was living in Rome. I called him on the telephone and invited him for a tea.

**Louise:** Had you heard that a great master was living in Italy?

**Paolo:** In truth, when we met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in January of 1968, and we didn't understand that he was a Master of the Teaching and we did not even know the word Dzogchen. We spent an hour together with him. Rinpoche spoke for quite some time about the roots of Tibetan culture. I remember how nice it was. Then we left again for Formentera, London and Copenhagen. We were "on the road". We were traveling in Europe. I showed my underground film that was made during

Pozzuoli to meet the Master. We wanted to ask him for certain clarifications on the Ngondro Drugpa Karju which we had begun to practice: The Four Awarenesses, Prostrations, Vajrasattva, etc. We found ourselves in front of Rinpoche and discovered that he was the same person we had met in Rome, years before.

**Louise:** Were you at Rinpoche's first retreat, the legendary one where he taught for three months? Will you describe that to

that one day he was explaining the significance of Phat (in relation to Chöd). We all sat with him at a circular table, which was made with a crystal plank. Rinpoche sounded "Phat", very powerfully, and the crystal plank broke in two. It was a memorable retreat. The Master taught directly and informally from early in the morning until late at night.

**Louise:** I was in Italy last summer and opened the Manifesto (an intellectually and politically incisive Italian newspaper) and

was thrilled to see a full-page article about you. What is your role in Italian Cinema? Why are you receiving so much attention now? What is your view of experimental art?

**Paolo:** I have been working as a director of television and experimental cinema my entire life. Today

some people are taking notice of this - better late than never. I believe strongly in the artistic avant guard. I see it as an approach that is beyond limits and that projects itself toward the future.

**Louise:** How have you worked to integrate your practice and your role as filmmaker? Has the practice helped you in specific ways as an artist? Can you describe them to us?



Rinpoche, Paolo and Poupée

our journey overland from Rome to Kathmandu. It was entitled "Come Sweet Death"; by death I meant the death of the ego. A few years later, in 1973, we returned to India and took refuge with Apo Rinpoche in Manali. In India, some dharma students, including Mario Maglietti (an old student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu who died in) told us that a great Tibetan Master, Namkhai Norbu, was living in Italy. Thus, when we re-entered Italy, we went to

us please?

**Paolo:** Poupée and I went to the retreat in Subiaco in 1976. Rinpoche did teach for about three months that summer, but not three times a day. Rinpoche taught the entire day and also in the evenings after diner. Rinpoche transmitted with great generosity and compassion many Dzogchen Upadesha Teachings, as well as the first Thun, and the Chöd. He also gave many instructions on Yantra Yoga. I remember

## asia usa update

Dear Dzogchen Community Members,

Season's greetings!

There have been some interesting events and developments in 2004 for the Association for International Solidarity in Asia (A.S.I.A.), founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. In cooperation with Andrea Dell'Angelo and the ASIA staff in Rome, we applied to USAID for a grant. This was an important step for us, even though we didn't get the grant, because it thrust the organization into other realms in terms of fundraising activity, inspiring legal structuring as an international organization, and fine-tuning our operations.

This fall, we were contacted by the Tides Foundation, through which a \$500 grant was made to us. Further communication with the foundation has yielded a request from them for several specific project proposals to pass on to other likely donors. This could prove to be a very valuable relationship for ASIA.

The board of ASIA-USA is actively searching for a fulltime fundraising manager to do grant writing, research, develop contacts, develop fundraising plans, and develop informational packets for prospective donors. ASIA-USA now has its own website, which will be up on the Internet before the end of January. Please visit us at [www.asia-usa.org](http://www.asia-usa.org) for continual updates on ASIA.

Due to the international and economic situation in the world, most of the financial support available for ASIA in the past from NGO's is no longer available

and ASIA is facing a financial crisis. We are all working to change strategy so we can overcome such a difficult period by focusing more on private fundraising. We welcome, especially in America, all possible support and contact.

The board of directors of ASIA-USA would like to wish you Happy Holidays and a Happy and Prosperous New Year! You may order a beautiful wall calendar, dedicated in 2005 to the children of Tibet, from us. You can read inside the front cover of the calendar about how hundreds of children have benefited from Asia's work in Tibet. Most of these children come from the poorest sector of the population, and would not otherwise have access to health or education services.

Please consider making a donation to ASIA at this time. ASIA-USA is incorporated as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. All donations made to ASIA are tax deductible under the allowance of the law.

Our E.I.N.# is 04-3432159. Please make your check payable to "ASIA" and mail it to: ASIA, Post Office Box 124, Conway, MA 01341, USA

Again, we wish you and your families a very happy holiday season and a happy and prosperous New Year! Losar La Trashé Delek!

With warm regards,

Andrea Maria Nasca, Secretary/Treasurer

## Gomadevi Retreat continued from page 1

might not have seen for years.

Following the original tradition of the Tibetan "Gar", a summer camp made up of numerous tents, a whole campsite developed just beside the Gonpa. Small and big tents belonging to practitioners from nearly all continents had been placed between bushes and underneath trees for the time of the retreat. Children played or had accidents; grown ups did "show practicing" or just chatted in the shadows of the trees, everybody getting more and more fond of the local Mate\* tradition.

The seven days of retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu consisted mainly of the first day of introduction to Gomadevi and the State of Knowledge of Dzogchen. Then there were four days of Gomadevi initiation. At that time we mainly worked in groups, learning the melodies and mudras for the Gomadevi practice, first from Adriana, then also from other practitioners who already had been practicing Gomadevi for a while.

New Year's day, after a long party the night before, was the last day of teachings. On the last

**Paolo:** The teaching of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is concerned with integration. It has been of inestimable service to me in all aspects of my life. I owe everything to this simple and sublime teaching and I consider my condition as a practitioner to be a very mediocre one.

**Louise:** I have seen you and Poupée together at teachings for more than two full decades. Can you tell us the secret of this longevity and what it is like to live with another practitioner for this extended period of time?

**Paolo:** Even if our marriage has had some moments of crisis, the blessing of Rinpoche and his precious Teaching has created an understanding, for us, of the sacred nature of the couple.

**Louise:** Can you describe to us the changes in the relationship you have had with the Master, since you met him nearly forty years ago and now?

**Paolo:** As I have said, the first time we met Rinpoche we didn't even know that he was a Master. In the course of the years, his presence as an Ati Yoga Master grew within us. Today I can say that it is the principle purpose of my life - and I think this is also true for Poupée - even though, as I have said, I am a mediocre practitioner, very mediocre.

*Translated from Italian by LLL (sic. The conversational style of Paolo Brunatto was at once devotional, intimate and elegant. I found it very difficult to translate this remarkable tone into English.)*