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Baja Land

A. MCGHEE

Baja Beyul, A Visit to the Hidden Place with Rinpoche Baja California, Mexico April, 2004

by John Bidleman

April is a forgiving month in Baja Sur. The winds are breeze-like and the sun can often play hide and seek giving one the impression that this often harsh environment that runs from kalpa ending hurricanes to oven like summers has suddenly found yet another personality. This April was no different as Rinpoche sat under the fig tree with twenty or so of his students and smiled gently. I asked, "Rinpoche, does this land have a name yet?" he answered, "Maybe it doesn't need a name."

Rinpoche then began to reveal the nature of a Beyul. A hidden place where practitioners could retreat in secret. "Like Padma Kod in South Tibet", he emailed me later, "it means a kind of earthly paradise with peaceful and lucky landscapes." The San Miguel property already has a name (someone reminded me): "Rancho San Miguel de la Naranjas". And of course it had a name before that and even earlier perhaps, the indigenous people

who populated the area, leaving their testament painted on rocks, had a name for this beautiful valley which John Olmstead, noted ecologist described as a "Hurricane Desert".

But the nature of the San Miguelito area is what it is, regardless of what humans call it. The fact that this is a special place is obvious, but was emphasized to all as Rinpoche walked over huge boulders tirelessly and at times gleefully, winding his way upwards far beyond anyone's imagination of where he would go. Nary, Andres and Scott helped me clear some brush for Rinpoche but it all seemed unnecessary, as he glided around us on his way to the water. Surprising even the most optimistic of us, he finally found a pool that suited him and began to swim. But not before he found some signs. "There are letters in this rock." He pointed. "You see below here, 'SA' on this rock."

Rinpoche's ability and indeed the ease with which he navigated the arroyo at the West end of the property did many people's heart

good and emphasized his resiliency. Once in the pool he looked around for Fabio "Where is Fabio?". "He has a kind of problem with this water?" he laughed. After a few jibes and satisfied that Fabio had enjoyed a swim in the cold water, we walked back slowly, not from fatigue but rather a slow inspection of the area.

Near the road there is an immense flat white rock where the Master stood and gazed. Finally, Rinpoche turned and said, "We will have a retreat here, small retreat." Indeed he remarked on the landscape and especially rocks and rock formations many times that day.

In a few minutes we were all congregated and I turned the vehicle around for Rinpoche. Walking back I spoke with Scott Schroeder about the cabin on the far west-end of the property. We imagined at some time taking Rinpoche there, but reasoned there was no time what with a tiring retreat and his flight being the next day. But Rinpoche had other plans. "We will go and see it now."

No one had been down that long tortuous road since the last hurricane and it was a "bad road", even before several hurricanes, one of which was worse than anyone could remember for fifty years. "Rinpoche, please allow me to check out the road first and then I'll come back for you." Without hesitation, "Why make two trips?"

In a few seconds we were all heading west on Naranjas Road looking for a turn-off no one in the vehicle had ever been on. Rinpoche looked intently at the granite ridges and rocks as we made our way down the valley. He remarked several times at the similarity to Derge (East Tibet) in some respects. Suddenly we saw another dirt road that was far worse than the one we're on. I turned to look at Rinpoche. "This is on our property?" he asked. "Yes," I said. "Ok, we will go and see."

The road was incredibly bad. Bouncing like soccer balls we made our way beyond the level portion of the road to a rather bumpy looking, doubtful stretch

of road. "Rinpoche I don't like to bounce you around like this, do you want to go on?" He nodded, "Oh this is good for digestion!" Everyone laughed as we lurched ahead. Naranjas Road washes out every few years, but has government contracted roadwork due to the small number of ranches dotting the road. On the other hand, this road is strictly Dzogchen Community maintained.

As we rounded a corner I stopped the car and froze. We had just driven for twenty minutes with no possibility of a turnaround anywhere and now we faced an extremely steep incline with two narrow ridges barely wide enough for tires. I was raised in rural areas where roads were frightful and I am filled with glee at the prospect of mud. But driving Rinpoche is different. He had just walked far beyond anyone's expectations and if we get stuck he would have to walk much, much farther. He turned to look in the back seat and then at me. "Rinpoche, do you want to proceed?" He smiled. "In Tibet...this is a good road." I

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2004-2005
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The Third Noble Truth
The Truth of Cessation

We can understand that there is cause and effect. What should we do? If we accumulate negative causes we have infinite samsara and infinite suffering is produced. In this case we must stop and change this. This is the essence of the third Noble Truth. Buddha said, "Now you should distinguish what the cause is and try to stop it." This is the Noble Truth of cessation. How can we stop causes? There are many different methods and possibilities because of the different conditions of individuals. Some people have more capacity, others less. When someone understands, they should try to apply the method that is best for them.



Rinpoche at Margarita

N ZEITZ

The Fourth Noble Truth
The Path

Hinayana and Mahayana

Buddha started to talk about what ordinary people can do to stop the cause of suffering and taught the fourth Noble Truth of the Path. He presented this like the Hinayana teaching. The principle of Hinayana is mainly receiving vows. There are different levels of vows, but you take a vow and keep it even if it costs you your life. In this way you can control all negative actions because you do not commit any. That is the way to stop negative actions.

We have the three aspects of body, speech and mind. How do we control all negativities? We take a vow which may stop us from doing certain physical things with our body, for example, not killing another being or not stealing. There are many actions to abstain from related to our voice, such as not lying, not insulting others, etc. In general, we talk about the 'ten virtues' which are related to body, speech and mind. Then there is abstaining from activities particularly linked to the mind, such as negative thoughts about others. If your intention is not good and you think badly of others, you may not do anything bad for other people, but you accumulate negativity. So it is much more beneficial if you think positively instead of negatively. This is the characteristic of Buddha's teaching. Later on Buddha taught and developed Mahayana Sutra.

What is the difference between Mahayana Sutra and Hinayana? Many people say that Mahayana has greater compassion and Hinayana has less. I don't think that is really true, because when Hinayana Arhats had realization and developed their clarity, they knew very well that infinite beings suffer in samsara. How can we say that they have no compassion? That is not the point. The point really is our way of thinking. This is the difference.

In Hinayana, when you receive a vow, you consider it to be your path and you follow it even at the cost of your life. You do not commit any action that is contrary to this rule, this law. This is the Hinayana system.

THE BUDDHADHARMA
TWO NOBLE TRUTHS - PART II
(WEB CAST TEACHING)
NAMGYALGAR, APRIL 20, 2003

Mahayana is more open. In the same way, the name of applying the teaching in Hinayana and Mahayana is different: in Hinayana it is called 'domba' (*sdom pa*) which means a "vow" for controlling our body, speech and mind. In Mahayana it is 'labpa' (*bslab pa*) which means "training". It is called "training" because in Mahayana it is understood that the most important point is related to our intention. If we really have a good intention and it is necessary, we can help others even if our actions do not correspond with a vow but go beyond it. This is Mahayana and it does not have anything really like a Vinaya or set of rules. They may use the Vinaya of the Hinayana, but governed with the intention of the Mahayana.

Mahayana is more open. There is a famous story of a man who was traveling to an island to get some jewels. At some point an evil man wanted to kill everybody in the group, but this captain, who was a kind of Bodhisattva, discovered the evil intention of that man and killed him. Afterwards he became worried because he had taken a vow not to kill and he thought, "Oh, I've committed a very negative action." Later he went to the Buddha to confess and Buddha said, "You did well." This is example in Mahayana. So Mahayana is more open, that is the only difference, and for that reason uses the term "training".

Both of these paths belong to the Sutra teaching, the Sutra tradition. Some of you may not know what "Sutra" means in Sanskrit. It means a "conclusion of an event", any kind of event with Buddha. One day, for example, Buddha was going to Rajghir on the invitation of the king who had asked him to explain a teaching in a specific way. Buddha gave that teaching and when he finished, all his students, the king and the local people, were very satisfied. The teaching of that day was called "the Sutra of Rajghir-the reply to the King". That is an example. In a practical way, what it means is that Buddha physical-

ly taught and people listened and had contact with him. They did not need to be realized in order to have that contact. It was normal just like the situation now. For example, when you go to see a teacher, you can see him, you can listen to him, and you can receive a teaching. That is the physical level. Similarly, at that period Buddha taught in that way. This is called "Nirmanakaya", or the material level, and the teaching of Nirmanakaya.

Sutra
The Path of Renunciation

The characteristic of this teaching is called "the path of renunciation". What does "renunciation" mean? It means renouncing. For example, when you receive a vow in order to become a monk or a nun, then you think, "Ah, I've renounced the ordinary samsaric condition," and you feel a little different. You feel that something has changed. In general, people have that attitude. Some people say, "I've received a vow of refuge," others say, "I took refuge from this lama, that lama, etc. Now I am a Buddhist." They feel that they have changed something. "Yesterday I wasn't a Buddhist even though I read some Buddhist books and was interested. But today I received a vow. Now I am a Buddhist." They may also say, "I have a Dharma name or Buddhist name. Yesterday my name was George, but today I am no longer George so please don't call me by that name. You can call me 'Dorje'". They feel that they have changed.

This also happens with my students. Many of them, particularly new students, ask me to give them a Dharma name. When I ask them, "Don't you have a name?" they say, "Yes, I do." "What is your name?" They say, "My name is George." "Okay, that's your Dharma name!" In the real sense there is no need to change anything. What is important is your understanding. Changing is very relative.

In the Sutra teaching that kind of attitude is strongly developed.

This is a characteristic of Sutra teaching and the path of renunciation. Some teachers also use the term "the path of renunciation" and "renunciation" when they speak about Tantric teaching as well as Dzogchen teaching. But it has nothing to do with Tantrism and Dzogchen. "Renunciation" means "renouncing something". You try to renounce your emotions considering them to be something negative, a bit like taking off dirty clothes. If you've got a hole in your sweater, what do you do? You get rid of it and get a new one. That means you are "renouncing" your dress.

But when you follow Tantric teaching you do not "renounce" anything because Tantrism is called "Vajrayana": "Vajra" means "our real nature". "Nature" - there is nothing to change. How it is, we develop that knowledge. That is Vajrayana. So the path of renunciation is not Tantrism or Dzogchen.

Tantric teaching

When we consider Tantric teaching, Guru Padmasambhava gave an example: in Tantric teaching, transformation is just like the nature of gold. In general, we regard gold as something very precious and even though it is hidden deep within the earth, its light shines outside. When people know there is gold somewhere they dig and dig until they discover it and bring it out of the earth. Then gold has its value. When you have a piece of gold, what do you do? It depends on circumstances. You could make a very nice statue of Buddha and put it on an altar and offer incense and flowers. When people go there, they feel a nice atmosphere. Then sometimes the situation changes. There might be something like a Cultural Revolution when people don't want a statue of Buddha but they want the gold and they change the form. Maybe they make something else with it. Someone like Saddam Hussein might make guns of gold. Or someone might want to make something useful like a cup of gold for example, or an ashtray, a golden ashtray. When you have many important guests you can use this golden ashtray and it's very elegant. It's elegant but no longer a statue of Buddha; no-one goes there to offer flowers or candles or to pay respect. An ashtray is for putting dirty things in, so there are cigarette butts and other rubbish that people throw there. So you see the situation has completely changed the function, but the nature of the gold has not changed at all. That golden Buddha is now an ashtray. You can also change the ashtray back into Buddha. Now it is a statue of Buddha, but its nature has not changed. This is the principle of transformation.

The Path of Transformation

The teaching of Tantrism is called "the path of transformation", not the path of renunciation". Also a Tantric teacher is not like the teacher of Sutra. Sutra was taught by Buddha Shakyamuni physically, but the path of transformation was taught or transmitted by

manifestations of enlightened beings; by manifestations of the primordial potentiality of enlightened beings. The principle of primordial potentiality is sound, light and rays. Through these three the essence of the elements manifests. The essence of the elements is the five colors. These five colors manifest dimensions like a mandala. The manifestation of the real nature of an individual is an enlightened being. Personified deities communicate in a different way (from oral transmission). Most communications in Tantric teachings are Sambhogakaya manifestations. The manifestation itself is the transmission. It transmits that knowledge through its clarity. It is not an oral teaching.

The physical Buddha always gave oral teachings. Buddha explained orally and students listened. Transmission through manifestation is not the same as oral transmission. Sometimes there is the possibility to manifest some words orally. That is possible because they always manifest some figure, but the words are not the main point.

We cannot have contact with the Sambhogakaya. Some people say that they have seen enlightened beings, but this is not so easy. The manifestation of enlightened beings is always Sambhogakaya. In order to have contact with the Sambhogakaya you must have that kind of realization or capacity. It is not very easy to see a symbol.

On the tenth day of the Tibetan lunar calendar which we call the "day of Guru Padmasambhava", we do a Ganapuja. When we do the Ganapuja, we chant the "Seven verses of invocation to Padmasambhava". We consider the invocation to be very important because Guru Padmasambhava promised to be present for those people who have faith and devotion, particularly on the tenth day. This is a kind of promise of Guru Padmasambhava. So on the tenth day when we chant the "Seven verses", we imagine Guru Padmasambhava is present. Guru Padmasambhava must be present because he is a Great Transference manifestation, not something like an ordinary Dharmakaya realized being. But we are not able to see him physically present. We do not see him because we do not have that capacity. In order to have that kind of capacity we must be a kind of Mahasiddha. Mahasiddhas have developed that capacity and for this reason have received many teachings of Anuttaratanttra manifestations directly from the Sambhogakaya. They also have infinite compassion. They understand that these teachings are very important for having realization more quickly.

So in order for them to introduce ordinary people who do not have the capacity to have contact with the Sambhogakaya, they brought these teachings that introduce through oral teaching using symbols. For example, in order to show what the manifestation of a Mandala looks like, they construct a Mandala. To show what a

continued on next page

manifestation of a deity looks like, there are paintings or thankas.

Then there is introduction. You remember when you receive an initiation you receive these things. Initiation means an introduction to this dimension. You consider your dimension to be just like this Mandala. There is a manifestation who transmits and there are those who receive the transmission. And then you enter into this visualisation and the teacher empowers you with mantras etc., giving you the possibility to apply that method. Applying that method you can have that realisation. This is called "initiation".

For that reason it is very important in Tantrism that when you receive initiation, any kind of initiation, you should understand what is going on and what you should do. Otherwise it only

stage is the development stage, which means you gradually transform your impure vision into pure vision. Your dimension, your self-manifestation, all your functions such as the five senses and the five aggregations everything that manifests is transformed into the five Dhyana Buddhas, the five Dakinis, the five wisdoms, etc. But you know that the root is the same, that there are not two different roots, pure vision and impure vision.

For that reason, the symbol of Tantric teaching or Vajrayana is the "Vajra". It is not a real Vajra, only a symbolic Vajra. The real Vajra is our potentiality, our real nature. But in order to discover that and get into that state, we also need the symbol of the Vajra. You know what a Vajra looks like. At the center of the Vajra there is a kind of ball. On the top there are five points and also on

If we accumulate negative causes we have infinite samsara and infinite suffering is produced. In this case we must stop and change this. This is the essence of the third Noble Truth.

becomes a kind of a blessing.

Then what should you do after you have received initiation? It is not enough to say, "Oh, I received this initiation." Why have you received initiation from the teacher? The teacher has presented the path you are following: transformation, how to enter into transformation, and how to apply that transformation. After receiving initiation, your commitment should be to do that practice, applying that transformation. That way you can have realization. Otherwise there is not much sense in receiving an initiation. Sometimes there may be a little benefit because of chanting many mantras and it may help a little to diminish our negativity or obstacles. But this is very far what we mean by "realization".

Vajrayana

So that means now you can apply the transformation. When you apply it, it is indispensable to remember that there are two stages in Anuttaratantra. The first

the lower part. Why are there five upper and five lower points? The lower points represent the five aggregations, the five emotions, etc., our samsaric, impure vision. The five upper points represent what we transform them into, manifestations like the five Dhyani Buddhas, the five wisdoms, etc., pure vision. These are two different aspects but what is most important is the center. There is a kind of ball and this is our real Vajra nature. From that center two aspects can manifest. Why do we have two aspects? We have two aspects because we either have knowledge or are ignorant of it. When we have knowledge, then we have the manifestation of pure vision. When we are ignorant of that we are conditioned by dualistic or samsaric vision. So this is called "impure vision". So impure vision means purifying and transforming into pure vision. This is the Vajrayana system.

*Transcribed by Georg Meschede
Edited by Liz Granger & Jim Valby*

Margarita Live Web Cast Now Available in MP3

Those of you who were not able to listen to the Margarita live Web cast event on August 18, 2004, can now listen to an archived on-demand audio stream.

The mp3 sound track (13.7 MB) has a good sound quality and contains both Rinpoche's voice and the voice of the Spanish translator (this in contrast to the actual live Webcast that consisted of the sound of Rinpoche's voice alone). It was recorded directly from the signal of the sound system and it was originally sampled at 44,100 kHz and 64 kbps. I had to resample the stream to 11,025 kHz and 16 kbps in order to reduce the file size to acceptable proportions for Internet streaming (using LAME vs. 3.93 on Mac OS X). Although the actual sound of the live webcast (with RealAudio using telephone signal) was quite good, the overall sound quality of this mp3 compressed track is still on a higher level.

The mp3-file is now available from the following sites:

<http://www.xs4all.nl/~loekjehe/webcast/>

<http://members.ams.chello.nl/a.jehee/>

If you listen to this webcast archived stream, please use the donation button to generously offer a (small or bigger) financial contribution towards the webcasts, as an individual or as a group.

*Thank you.
Kind regards,
Loek Jehee*

Schedule Chögyal Namkhai Norbu 2004 - 2005

2004

Margarita Island, Venezuela

July 17 - Aug. 1 Mandarava Chülden retreat
Sept. 3 - 12 Longsal Retreat
Oct. 18 - 29 Kalachakra Retreat of Anuyoga
Nov. 9 - 21 Complete teachings & practices of Lhalung Sangdag
Dec. 5 - 8 Tshedrub (Long life) teaching and practice

Chile

Dec. 19 - 21 Chile Retreat

Argentina

Dec. 26 - Jan. 2 Tashigar South retreat of Gomadevi, Argentina

2005

Feb. 9 Tibetan Losar, Mandarava practice, Argentina

Peru

Feb. 18 - 20 Peru retreat

Margarita Island, Venezuela

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 - 10 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
July 15 - Aug. 5 My personal retreat, Merigar
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 Tshedrub (Long life) teaching
Dec. 26 - Jan. 1 Tashigar Norte retreat

ADVICE FROM CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

FUNCTION OF THE GEKÖES AND GAKYIL
MARGARITA GAKYIL & GEKÖES SELECTION
MARCH 26, 2004

I think in general when we say Geköes; the responsibility of the Geköes is this place [Tashigar North]. For example, there are many people coming to the Gar to find information or to help, to do something, and the contact with them is the responsibility of the Geköes. The Geköes should also look around at everything, be aware of what is going on, and everything that happens in the Gar.

Of course, the Geköes should not be the boss of the Gar and neither should anyone else; neither should the Gakyil, the Aloe Vera Company, etc. There are many people responsible: the Geköes, Gakyil, Board of Directors, those building houses, etc. All of them must respect each other by collaborating. No one is the boss of someone else, and as long as no one has that idea there will be no problem, no competition. When people are given some authority, such as the Gakyil, the Geköes, etc, they tend to take a position and immediately want to do something that way – this is completely contrary.

The Gakyil, Geköes, and all people in authority are doing a kind of service – if you have that idea then there is never any problem and everything goes well. Particularly, the Geköes must be very patient; this is one of the qualities of a Geköes. If someone has no patience they really cannot

be a Geköes.

Communication between and within the different groups, not only during retreats but also in general, is important. Regarding the capacity to organize something like a big retreat, it is not so easy for only one person look around or to have a task, so other people can be asked to collaborate. The Gakyil and people with particular capacities can collaborate and, for example, a sub-committee can be formed to organize something particular to be done.

Many people, when they are on the Gakyil, do not have good time management. Time is very important and precious. If something needs to be done, or a Gakyil meeting is required, then allowing several days to pass can cause the opportunity to be lost.

It is also very important for the Geköes to listen to the Gakyil, to not do anything without being in contact and knowing what the program should be. The Geköes must be informed about everything that the Gakyil decides to do because the Geköes is on the land here every day, whereas the Gakyil cannot meet daily.

Sometimes when there are important and urgent things to be done and it seems that the Geköes should take this responsibility the Gakyil does not agree and wants to maintain its authority. If you are going this way, nothing can be done. Also, when there are urgent

things for the Geköes to respond to immediately, without contacting or meeting with the Gakyil, after taking the necessary action the Gakyil should be informed immediately by the Geköes. In such a case, the Gakyil should not criticize the Geköes for taking the initiative, because if there are time constraints it is not always possible to wait. I have learned about the work of Geköes and Gakyil and how such problems can be taken care of by seeing how they sometimes arise at Merigar.

Then, in the Gakyil sometime they say, "Oh, we are Red", or "We are Blue", "We are Yellow" – and they don't collaborate, they don't inform each other. In the Gakyil everybody must be responsible for everything. Particularly they must not do anything egotistically – many people have that defect, that problem.

If we communicate and collaborate, everything will go very smoothly. Not only with the Gakyil, but also in any kind of activity we should respect each other and collaborate. I think these things are very important; if you are on the Gakyil you should remember them and then everything can be done in a perfect way. That is what I think.

*Recorded and transcribed by
Dick Drury
Edited by Naomi Zeitz*

Easter Retreat at Margarita Island

The Principle of the View beyond Conceptual Mind
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

by Kathy Cullen

The April Retreat in Margarita Island was one in which Rinpoche taught, for the first time, a most profound and important text from his Longsal terma cycle that concisely lays down the Dzogchen view, *Tawa Lode Chenpoi Gongpa*. It is one of two texts within this cycle thus far that pertains to view. The other longer work, contained in Volume 4 (the blue book) of the published Longsal

Teachings, was taught for the first time in Margarita two years ago, and again in Baja at the beginning of April. It covers the main points of the view. This shorter work taught here in April, more briefly and precisely, explains all of phenomenon. We were all very fortunate to hear this. At the end of the teaching, the text was offered to Tibetologists for translation, so it will at some point be available for all. It was also a retreat in which a number of

Venezuelan people attended, older and new students alike. Rinpoche, as always, went over all aspects of Dharma and practice in daily life, as well as giving direct transmission and necessary transmissions for Community practices. It was good to be with everyone in the retreat, in the pueblo, and on the beach. And the last day, as we left the Gonpa, there was a bright rainbow round the sun, as seems to often be the case. It is always so very beautiful.

Longsal Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

May 13 - 18, 2004

Tashigar Norte, Margarita Island, Venezuela

by Rosemary Friend

About 140 people filtered into Tashigar Norte for the May Longsal retreat. I think we were all astounded to receive even more beautiful and profound teachings than ever. It is as if we are edging closer to the source of an enormous beautiful light blue crystal and viewing and experiencing all of our potentiality from a different window of this most exquisitely faceted jewel. The second and third days of the retreat were dedicated to the teaching of *Chodpa Ronyom Chenpoi Mennag* - our attitude of how we integrate in daily life. It is about our attitude that is beyond limitation, same flavor - where there is nothing to change, where we are applying with our circumstance just

as it is. Rinpoche described how often we apply with emotion and attachment and there is no benefit. For people who have the capacity to self liberate thought and emotion, he reminded us of how to integrate and gave us the beautiful metaphors of sun evaporating dew drops, snowflakes into the ocean and waves continuously manifesting. For those without this kind of capacity to self liberate, then it is useful to go one by one with the different emotions. Rinpoche described specific methods of how to develop our attitude with the five emotions of anger, attachment, ignorance, pride and jealousy. The mirror of Vajrasattva, *Dorje Sempe Melong*, filled our next day as we sat together just

inside the construction chaos of the extension work for the Gonpa. This extraordinary teaching is part of direct introduction and is very important for knowledge of instant presence. New and old students were introduced to the state with the practice of Yeshe Zangthel after which many aspects of the view, particularly energy, were clarified. We are so appreciative to receive more of the continuous flow of our Master's heart teachings and welcome you all to join us here when and if you are able. Our wish is that as our precious Master continues to transmit his essential knowledge, that his life stream continues in good health and for many years and that we do justice to his immeasurable gifts.



Mothers and daughters at Gomadevi Retreat (author of this article with her daughter 1st person standing on the left)

N ZEITZ

The Seduction of Clarity

Gomadevi Retreat with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
March 15 - 21, 2004

by Angelica Pottkaemper

Surprise! Surprise!

It was late afternoon on the 11th of March of the Wood Monkey Year. I was coming by national airline Aeropostal from Caracas and the plane was heading towards Porlamar airport. Still about two thousand feet high up in the air, I spied through the plane window and saw under me a big shimmering green butterfly - Margarita Island had emerged out of the blue ocean. How could it be so green? So wonderful!

From the experience of my previous four visits, I had expected the usual grayish, brownish, dusty, insect shaped island. It had always made me feel disappointed. I did not admit this, because a voice inside me demanded me to keep up pure vision and to feel happy being part of Tashigar Norte which happens to be located on this special Caribbean Island.

This time, instead, I looked down on this beautiful green butterfly and felt rewarding satisfaction for my previous disillusionions. "Nomination for paradise?", asked the voice. "Wait a moment!" said some other voice. Meanwhile I paid a silent homage to the water element that had obviously contributed to this marvelous display of nature.

I took all this as an auspicious sign, that the retreat would turn out to be about beauty, that leads to bliss, or to paradise, since the paintings of the Gomadevi I had seen so far were overwhelmingly beautiful and expressed a celestial joy.

I had asked around of some friends in Germany if they knew what the teachings were about, although my voice reminded me not "to go after titles" as Rinpoche tells us always, but nobody had a clue about it.

The beautiful green butterfly and the ugly dusty brownish insect however, played their role as the initial stolperstone over which I stumbled...

This stolperstone kept me trapped, as I perceived eleven days later. In fact this trap was one of my favorite strategic locations from which I ruled my little world. It was the fortress of all these kinds of voices:

I like this - but I don't like that!
This is nice - that is ugly!
This is elegant - that is clumsy!
This is fun - that is boring!
This is fortunate - that is bad luck!
This is intelligent - that is stupid!
This is altruistic - that is egoistic!
This is sacred - that is mundane!
This is nirvana - that is samsara!

So eleven days later - after the retreat - I realized that the teachings were directly targeting my fortress and cutting through the eternal battle between "this" and "that", between the nice green butterfly and the ugly brownish insect.

The retreat was about sense perceptions and how we relate to them.

My "heruka" (decisive experience) about all this happened in the water element - obviously my connection to this element was supposed to be special.

Rinpoche was swimming with us in the bay of Zaragosa beach. Its water temperature was of challenging character - some of us had put on scuba diving outfits. Through some trick of my karma I had not thought of providing myself with such a warming device close to the equator, as more thoughtful people had done. So I ventured out into the water without protection from its iciness, deeply hoping I would have some benefit from it, which my karma had wisely prepared.

I knew that Gomadevi was the symbol for clarity, that she was the wisdom dakini and the manifestation of the self perfected state. We had received a wonderful practice from Rinpoche. Although the complexity of the visualization put me in a kind of foggy realm, at least I imagined the immense beauty of all these vast mandalas filled with dakinis. This beauty was beyond just being beautiful, it touched a different dimension and offered a hint of bliss. So somehow my initial guess that the teachings were about beauty was not completely without ground.

But still I was tapping around vaguely about the essence of the teachings. I knew, I needed an experience to make the teachings very personal, make them enter my heart. The practice was supposed to have this effect, but my capacity for visualization lacked efficiency. Mostly I was too obsessed to visualize correctly, so my mind was tense instead of relaxed.

Meanwhile I was paddling in the relentlessly cold ocean. It reminded me of the film "Titanic". I saw the last scenes of the film, when some survivors of

the catastrophe were hopelessly drifting in the glacier cold water on some wooden beams from the shipwreck, before most of them drowned. Lost in these film imageries, suddenly, a sentence that Rinpoche said on the very first day of the retreat, flew through my mind, like an arrow: "Relax: no thinking any more!"

Immediately I knew that was my sentence. These words and their meaning were like my personal helicopter that could lift me out of being trapped in my fortress having the battle going on between the nice green butterfly and the ugly insect. Excited I swam closer to Rinpoche. Being close, just that moment, I heard him asking:

"What is stench? And what is perfume?" I could hardly believe my ears. Rinpoche was talking about my trap - my stone age-old trap.

Amazing! Amazing!

I looked up into the vast sky over the ocean... weren't there some dakinis showing up? Yes, I saw them blinking their eyes at me and waving with mirrors, instruments, and feathers, showing all their characteristics - one had - believe it or not - Belgian chocolate in her hand! They were the dakinis of sense perceptions, symbols of non dual sense perceptions.

Stench or perfume? Green butterfly or dusty insect? No more question. No thinking. No interpretation. No reifying. Just as it is.

I felt the cold water and tried to relax completely into it. I tried to get into the coldness of the cold. I tried not to name what was happening to me, but wanted to integrate into the essence of my perceptions of cold. Not thinking about it, the coldness lost its being only cold. It was cold and also not cold. Rinpoche was very close and all the dakinis.

Now I want to leave my trap fortress and fly with my helicopter to the luminous palace of Gomadevi. Her clarity, which is her beauty, has utterly seduced me... I smell the scent of freedom.

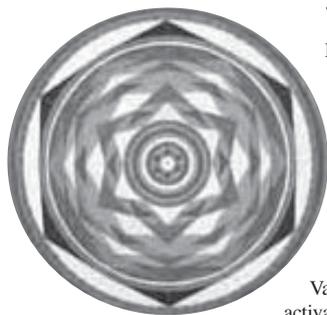
May our Master live long!

May everybody find their personal helicopter!

How happy! How Happy!

INTERNATIONAL VAJRA DANCE PRACTICE DAY

July 7th 2004



Dear All,

We are happy to announce that our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, has indicated July 7th, 2004 as a good day to do an international practice day of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. On that day, we can activate all the Mandalas in the world, doing one or more Thuns of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, according to our circumstances, generating the light of this precious Teaching for the benefit of all sentient beings.

May our Master have long life and may all of his Teaching be immensely beneficial for all.

Instructors of the Dance of the Vajra

Easter Tara Retreat
with Yuchen Namkhai &
Costantino Albini
Merigar 2004



Yuchen Namkhai

L.GRAF



Costantino Albini

L.GRAF

An Unforgettable Retreat

by Paolo Brunatto

I had the great fortune to be able to follow the Green Tara Retreat conducted by Yuchen Namkhai and Costantino Albini held at Merigar over the Easter period. It is difficult to explain with my inadequate words what intense feelings I had practicing Green Tara with Yuchen Namkhai. I had the sensation that the omnipresent compassion of Tara was manifesting through the sublime calm and gentleness of Yuchen Namkhai.

Even the visualizations - not my strong point - were easier and seemed clearer to me. During the retreat the weather was cold and rainy at Merigar and the sky was always cloudy and dark. But when we went into the Gonpa and started to practice together with Yuchen, everything changed and brightened up and a wave of peace and harmony carried us to the quiet awareness that the Great Mother, Tara, is our state of consciousness or, as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu says, "The state of Tara is Dzogchen".

Yuchen Namkhai kept almost exclusively to leading the practice and spoke only a little. But her few words, pure and full of a relaxed spirituality, were a great source of inspiration to us. They were the words of a true practitioner who has developed a silent devotion towards Tara and thus towards the Master over the years.

Then there were the explanations and advice on the practice of Tara offered by Costantino Albini. As always his explanations were limpid, precise, expressed with great modesty and rooted in a rigorous devotion to the Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The Easter Retreat at Merigar

by Mandarava Bricaire

With the arrival of Easter this year, first and foremost we celebrated the Green Tara practice retreat led by Yuchen Namkhai and Costantino Albini. We were all aware that we were about to participate in the first retreat given by Yuchen at Merigar and were all very excited, although few of us realized what a great effect it would have on us.

During the first hours of the retreat Costantino gave some explanations about the practice, but most of all he presented Green Tara to us in a simple and clear way just as if we didn't really know who she was. Thanks to his explanation we came to know her, first of all, as the mother of all beings. In this very simple way we started to learn about the importance of the practice.

With this thought in mind, Yuchen went over the mudras, the melodies and meaning of the practice step by step. Together Costantino and Yuchen also explained all the other meanings of the practice for example; the reason Tara is green and not another color. The reason is that, since she is the mother of all, Tara has the same compassion and love that a mother has towards her own children and therefore she manifests immediately and is ready to help right away. Hence she is as fast as the wind, like the air element, which is green in color.

With this thought foremost in our minds we passed the retreat in peace, but with enthusiasm, to see Yuchen and Costantino teaching together in such a simple yet powerful way. All those present, including the organizers, were very moved and the retreat had a pleasant and quiet atmosphere. This Tara retreat was also particularly useful and very effective. Some days the weather was good, other days it was cloudy, but it rained only on the final day of the retreat as if to thank and greet Yuchen, Costantino and all the numerous participants!

His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama
Miami, Florida, September 2004

September 19th - 21st, 2004

A Public Talk on:

World Peace through Inner Peace & a Two-Day Buddhist Teaching

Teachings on the Instructions on the Garland of Views
(The only written teachings by Padmasambhava)

Long Life Empowerment of the Combined Practice of Amitayus and Hayagriva

Long Life Practice
The Glory of Immortality
written by Dubthob Chaksampa

Prayers for His Holiness the Dalai Lama's Long Life

The Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama requested that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Dzogchen Community do practice for the long life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Each Community needs to inform Tashi Lama at tashilama10@hotmail.com the number of prayers accumulated.

Here are the dates and suggested practices:*

July 27th

Seven Verses and Siddhi, as many as possible;

July 2nd

Kongba of Dharma Palas; (Naggon), as many as possible;

July 6th

Longlife practice with Guru Padmasambhava, as many as possible;

July 21st

Mani and prayer of Tara, as many as possible;

November 4th

Mani and Prayer of Tara, as many as possible.

Dec. 1st -25th

*Om Mani is the Avalokiteshvara mantra found in the book of Sang-god; Tara mantra is the mantra Om tare tuttare ture svaha; Seven verses is Seven Line Prayer of Padmasambhava in our Thun book; Siddhi is the mantra of Padmasambhava found in the book of Sang-quod.

Master Biography

DOMBHI HERUKA
THE YOGI WHO RODE ON TIGERS

This short account of Dombhi Heruka's life has been translated from 'The Lives of the Eighty-Four Mahasiddhas'. The instructions that follow are taken from the collected works of Drakpa Gyaltsen, one of the five Sakya Patriarchs. Both translations are by Elio Guarisco.

Virupa initiated a pious king of the region of Magadha into the Tantra. He kept secret both his practice as well as his attainments. One day, a group of low-caste musicians came to his court to dance and sing. The leader of the musicians had a twelve year old daughter, beautiful and attractive, she possessed all the signs of being a "lotus girl" (padmini).

The king asked the father to give him his daughter. The musician replied that they were of an inferior caste and that it was unsuitable for the king to keep his daughter.

The king was imperative in his request, paid the father a price equivalent to the weight of the daughter in gold and took her with him. She remained at the court without anybody knowing that she was the secret consort of the king. After twelve years, people came to know the truth and started to criticize the king for his relationship with a woman of a lower caste. The king decided to abdicate in favor of his son. He went to live in a forest with his consort, where he remained in contemplation for twelve years. After sometime misfortune befell the kingdom to the point that the ministers decided to call the king back. They sent a delegation into

the forest and found the king absorbed in contemplation at the foot of a tree. The members of the delegation also noticed that his consort was drawing water in a



pond from a depth of fifteen meters while standing on a lotus leaf, without sinking.

The king and his consort came out of the forest riding on a tiger using a poisonous snake as a whip. The subjects pleaded with the king to return to power, but he said that since he was an outcast, only his death could wash that concept away from them. He asked them to burn him and his consort on a fire and said that he would govern once he was reborn.

The people prepared a huge pyre of sandalwood and set the two inside. The fire blazed for seven days and at the end in the place of the fire there was a lotus flower and on the top the king and his consort alive and in the form of Hevajra.

Dombhipa spoke to his ministers and said, "Rather than a worldly

kingdom, I prefer to govern the space of knowledge of the absolute" and left. Among the teachings he left is the following instruction.

The Four Part Instruction on the Great Bliss of the Teaching

Three are the essences, four the commitments, three the deviations and four the ways of setting the mind.

The three essences are: effortless-ness, non-modification and the knowledge that all one's perceptions are as one's mind.

The four commitments are: not to abandon the emotions since they are one's mind; not to apply remedies because the mind is non-dual; not to meditate on the real condition because the mind cannot be defined; not to seek a result since the very realization of [the nature of] mind is itself Buddha.

The three deviations are: the deviation of hoping for enlightenment, the deviation of fearing a conditioned existence and, the deviation of grasping at phenomenal vision.

The four ways of setting the mind are: like a limpid and unsullied pond, leave the mind in relaxed presence, without modifying anything; like a bird that leaves no trace in the sky, leave the mind without any support; like the sun that is not obstructed by clouds, leave the six consciousnesses relaxed on their objects without stopping them; like a river whose flow is continuous, at all times and in all circumstances remain undistracted.



Study Tours Organized by Shang- Shung Institute, Austria

One important task of the Shang- Shung Institute is to organize study tours to Asia. We are very pleased to announce our first tour to Bhutan, in collaboration with *ANDREA-TOURS*.

Important note: for summer 2005 we are planning a tour to Mount Kailsah

Bhtuan Into the Land of the Thunder Dragon September 17 –October 3, 2004



General information

The small kingdom BHUTAN is situated in the Eastern Himalaya and known to its inhabitants (600.000) as *Druk yül*, the "Land of the Thunder Dragon". It has preserved one of the most complex cultural identities of the world, where on the basis of Tantric Mahayana Buddhism, the official state religion, a policy of economic self-reliance is practiced, 'National growth of happiness' (NGO). The landscapes are of enchanting beauty and great diversity, there is sufficient land and rich natural resources for a small population. Facing the glowing snow peaks at the borders of Tibet long mountain ranges are covered with dense forests in 4000m and the characteristic terraced fields in the valleys descend into the jungles of the South. This provides the backdrop to a way of life that combines deep spirituality with the challenges of the modern world.

We have arranged for visits to the great fortresses of Bhutan (Dzong) and have obtained special permission to enter the closed temples compounds. The fabulous mask dances in Gangteng Monastery and Bumthang, inspired by the visions of the great 'Treasure-Finder' Tertön Pema Lingpa (1450-1521), are the highlights of this expedition into a magic world. The last days we spend in a Vedic Village Resort at the outskirts of Kolkata. Situated at the border of a beautiful lake, the spa specialises in Ayurvedic treatments and offers a completely different insight into the 'City of Joy'

Price

3195 Euro.- per person

Minimum participants: 10 people

Single suppl.: 238 Euro.-

This price includes: International flights with Royal

Jordania: Vienna/Amman/Kolkata/Amman/Vienna including all taxes. In case of individual arrival at Kolkata please deduct 596 Euro.- from the tour prize. Flights with Drukair Kolkata/Paro/Kolkata incl. all taxes, all transfers, entrance-fees, accomodation in hotels (3-stars and 4-stars) with full board in Bhutan, half board in Vedic Village and bed & breakfast in Kolkata and qualified tour guidance

Not included: Visa fees for India (50 Euro.) and for Bhutan (20. Euro - to be paid in cash at the airport in Paro), extra options for city tour in Kolkata, Spa and Ayurvedic treatments at the Vedic Village resort, tips and personal expenses.

Tour-Guide

Dr. Loseries-Leick lives in Graz in Austria. She studied Tibetology, Art History and Anthropology in Paris, Shantiniketan (India) and Vienna. She has lived and studied in India (Bengal) for 10 years and during this time she also received instructions on Buddhist philosophy from Indian and Tibetan masters. As Dr. Loseries-Leick speaks fluently Tibetan, Bengali and Hindi which facilitates an easy and close contact with local people.

Contact address for further infoamtion regadring this study-tour:

ANDREA-TOURS

Dr. Andrea Loseries-Leick

Franckstraße 31, A-8010 Graz

Tel./Fax +43 316 32 16 29, mobile: +43 676 6032 961

Email: andrea.loseries@aon.at

Web: www.andreatours.at

Registration

In order to take part in this tour you have to fill out and sign the Registration-Sheet. You also have to make an immediate pre-payment of 350 Euro -, the rest must be paid until 1st August 2004.

Please send you registration-sheet either by post or by fax to:

Shang Shung Institute Austria

Gschmaier 139, A-8265 Großsteinbach

Tel.: +43 3386 83218, mobile: +43 676 3221365

Fax: +43 3386 83219

E-mail: office@ssi-austria.at

Bankdetails

Name of the bank: Raiffeisenbank Ilz

Bankcode: 38151

Accountnumber: 30387 in the name of Shang Shung

Institute

BIC: RZSTAT2G151

IBAN: AT193815100000030387

When you transfer the money within the EU please use the BIC (Bank Identification Code) and the IBAN (International Bank Account Number). In that way the costs of the bank transfer are the same as a bank transfer within your country.

Message from Shang Shung Institute USA, Web Casts

It was so nice to hear that in most cases the web cast was a great success and that, once again, the Sangha at the four corners of the planet has been united, gathering around multiple speakers delivering in our houses, Gompas and who knows where else, the sacred wisdom of our Teacher. This incredible additional gift that Rinpoche's is offering to us is of unprecedented spiritual and historical significance. We know that these events happen through the efforts and dedication of a number of persons who, through their hard work, transform ideas and good intentions into realities. We certainly wish to express them our thanks and gratitude for making such events happening for the benefit of all of us. However, it is good to remind the Sangha that these events do have an actual cost that is covered up front by the Shang-Shung Institute in America - that conceived and promoted the web casts project since the beginning - counting on the generosity of the Sangha's voluntary donations to contribute to the expense.

Unfortunately, this does not seem to be happening and the most recent web casts have resulted in less than modest contributions, leaving to the Institute the entire financial responsibility of the web casts

that are operated at a loss.

I think it would be nice if that "sense of union" that we experience in enjoying the event would also find its reflection in an equivalent collective effort in the financial effort for its actual realization. I would, therefore, invite all Sangha members to consider the possibility of a small donation - a donation of any amount, for no donation "is a small donation" - to express their gratitude and satisfaction for the event also in more practical terms. My request is not only to individuals who have listened to the web cast on their own, but also to groups that have been listening collectively and where a simple "collection bowl" in the middle of the room and a few words could suffice to attract some form of donation.

Donations can be done on line at the link:

http://shangshung.org/cgi-bin/merchant2/merchant.mv?Screen=CTGY&Store_Code=S
SS&Category_Code=D or simply by mailing a check made in the name of: SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE IN AMERICA to:

Shang-Shung Institute In America

PO Box 277

18 Schoolhouse Road

Conway, MA 01341

USA

Thank you, Andrea Sertoli



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with Translators

Second Translation Training at Margarita Island, Venezuela May 2004

by *Elio Guarisco*

The Second Translation Training organized by the Shang-Shung Institute of Austria started at Margarita Island on May 20th, 2004. The training is divided in two parts: the first that is currently under way from May 20 to June 10 and the second from June 24 to July 15. It is being held at an ideal place, a three minutes drive from the Gar. The place has all the necessary conditions for this kind of work: a beautifully built house that provides respite from the heat surrounded by fruit trees and flowering trees. The front of the house has a large porch and a spacious hall where people can work quietly.

It is situated at the innermost extremity of the cup-like mandala area of Pedro Gonzales, which Rinpoche chose as the seat of the northern South American Gar. Everybody is happy and enjoying this particular setting.

About ten participants, including Jim Valby are attending the training. Adriano Clemente participated enthusiastically during the first two days of the training.

The text being used as the basis for the first part of the training was suggested by Rinpoche him-

self: a Tantra of the Dzogchen Semde, called the Wondrous Bodhicitta. The text is difficult to understand, but at the same time it is a wonderful and mind blowing piece of Dzogchen teaching. All participants are totally enthusiastic just looking at this text.

The second part of the Training will probably continue for few days on the same text and then shift to a more accessible piece of literature: a Kongtrul masterpiece in verses outlining the main points of the Kyerim and Dzogrim stage of practice in the Anuttaratantra system. This work is particularly beautiful and seems to have been written by Kongtrul as a summary of his personal experience of the practice of the two stages of the Tantra. Full of personal advice on practice, often the text extends to enlightening comments and parallels to the Dzogchen system of practice.

It is such a wonderful opportunity to participate such a beautiful setting, appearing like a sudden and temporary flash of lightning in the sky. The Translation Training is the boundless gift of Rinpoche's kindness, hard to repay, and sustained by Shang-Shung Institute of Austria to whoever wants to delve into the ocean of meaning of the Dzogchen Tantras and be an instrument for the comprehension and the preservation of the teaching of natural perfection.

The Shang-Shung Institute is happy to announce the release of the new video of the Vajra Dance, demonstrated by Prima Mai. It contains all the Vajra Dances currently practiced in our Community:

The Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra
The Vajra Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas
The Vajra Dance of the Three Vajras
The Vajra Dance of the Three Vajras - Irregular form

for both Pamo and Pawo.

This new video shows important updates to the Vajra Dance resulting from many in-depth study sessions conducted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in August 2002 and 2003 on the Mandala in Merigar, with our two Vajra Dance main Teachers, Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo.

The new video is available in DVD disc format. VHS cassettes can be supplied on request, but we would recommend the DVD since this format offers many advantages besides the better video quality, i.e. a menu from which one can select the Dance one wants to watch and slow/fast motion that can be used with ease.

The price is 30 Euros including mailing expenses to anywhere in the world. A 15 % discount will be applied on orders for 5 or more units. Community Gars can contact us to receive special terms for local resale.

You can place your orders online through the SSI Archives web site. For more information or any assistance please write to dzogchen.sys@tiscali.it.

Tashi Delegs,
The SSI Video Department Staff

SSI Italy Program 2004

INTENSIVE ASTROLOGY COURSE

July 18th-August 1st

Intensive course of Tibetan astrology with Doctor Phuntsog Wangmo, resident doctor at the Shang-Shung Institute in the USA. The course primarily deals with the two main systems diffused in this very ancient discipline: zodiac astrology and the astrology of the five elements. At the end of the seminar the student will be able to calculate an astrological chart and understand the fundamental principles of Tibetan astrology

Participation Fees: 750 Euros

Timetable: h.10-13, h.15-18

SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE OFFERS SPANISH COURSE

For those who have already visited Margarita Island or who intend to go, the Shang Shung Institute in Italy is offering a week's intensive course of Spanish. Vera Svanferla who lived in Mexico for twenty years and uses the most up to date teaching methods will give lessons. The course will be held from the 28th August till the 3rd of September and how to continue will depend on the needs and possibilities of the participants. The aim of the course will be to enable students to move in the area of Margarita Island with some ease of communication.

The course will be held after the Tibetan language course at the Institute at Merigar and will consist of 6 hours of lessons a day.

Participation fees: 250 Euro

Contact:

Secretary

Shang-Shung Institute, Merigar

Tel: (39) 0564966941,

Email: ssinst@tiscali.it

CALENDAR OF TEACHING ACTIVITIES 2003-2004

DEPARTMENT OF MEDICINE

SHANG -SHUNG INSTITUTE, ITALY

MERIGAR: June 30-July 6

First intensive training course for instructors of KU NYE first level focussed on developing theory in the morning and gaining some clinical practice in the afternoon under the supervision of Dr. Nida. Only students chosen by the teacher and the directors of the Institute will be admitted to the course. The training program will be presented during the course

Cost: 500 Euro

RUSSIA – KUNSANGAR: July 8-August 4

Intensive course of KU NYE & Mantra Healing.

ROME: September 11-12

Fifth part of the course of KU NYE first level

MERIGAR: September 18-24

Second part of the intensive FIRST YEAR COURSE OF TRADITIONAL TIBETAN MEDICINE

A four-year program.

MERIGAR: September 25-29

Five day intensive course of DREAMS & MEDICINE

Cost: 250 Euro

OCTOBER

GERMANY: October 1-10

Intensive course of KU NYE FIRST LEVEL

BOLOGNA, ITALY: October 15

Lecture on Tibetan medicine and massage

Libreria Ibis of Cesare Pilati

ROME: October 16-17

Sixth and final weekend of the course of KU NYE first level

FLORENCE: October 23-24

Birth and pregnancy according to traditional Tibetan medicine

Cost: 120 Euro

Venue: Lycopodium Studi medici

Tel. 055483463

ENGLAND: October 27-31

Intensive course of MANTRA HEALING

ENGLAND: November 2-11

Intensive course of KU NYE FIRST LEVEL

ROME: November 13-14

First part of KU NYE second level

The course will start with a theoretical/practical exam of admission.

Cost: 750 Euro for the entire course of six weekends including all teaching material

NAPLES: November 26-28

First part of KU NYE first level

Cost: 720 Euro for the entire course including teaching material

DECEMBER 2004 – FEBRUARY 17, 2005:

TOUR in AUSTRALIA with Dr. Nida

Course of WRITTEN & SPOKEN TIBETAN

taught by Elio Guarisco

MERIGAR:

August 13-27, 2004

The Shang Shung Institute is organizing a course of spoken and literary Tibetan. The course is open to all those who wish to learn the Tibetan language, both scholars and non-scholars. The course will provide the basis for being able to express oneself in Tibetan or read ancient and modern texts in the language.

The course will take place in the new reading room of the library at Merigar and will be given by Elio Guarisco who will be flanked by other Tibetan assistants.

This initiative by the Shang Shung Institute is the first step in an ambitious program of study of the Tibetan language which will continue for several years and which aims to create specialists in the language as well as Tibetologists.

Cost: 500 Euro

Information and reservations:

Milan:

Elisa Copello tel. 0233607505, email: elisa_cop@libero.it, mob.: 3387027207

Rome: Anna Marie Clos: tel. 065885142, email: arura@libero.it

Austria & Germany: Oliver Leick: email: oliver.leick@utanet.at

Merigar: the secretary of the Shang Shung Institute: tel.0564966941, email: ssinst@tiscali.it

Karma Ling: tel. 00330479257800; email: info@karmaling.org, lhundroup@rimay.net

England: Peter White, pwhite@i12.com

Naples: Fabio Risolo, fabio.risolo@libero.it

Shang-Shung Institute Italy Courses for Training Ku Nye instructors

From the moment the Department of Medicine started organizing seminars of traditional Tibetan Massage, the interest for Ku Nye courses has been constantly growing. As a result, a school was set up with a precise structure, manuals, videos, intermediate and final examinations and whatever necessary to train professionals able to practice Ku Nye independently. Courses started originally at Merigar, in Milan and Rome, but with increasing demands coming from Austria, Australia and Russia, the Shang Shung Institute has also set up courses in France, Germany, Great Britain and in other Italian towns like Naples.

Due to these numerous commitments, at the moment the Institute cannot accept other invitations for Doctor Nida to teach elsewhere because his schedule is really full. As a result, it is quite urgent to form a team of qualified instructors able to:

- Give courses where needed
- Act as supervisors following students in their practice, providing suitable suggestions and checking their work.

For this reason the Shang Shung Institute has decided to organize the first training course for Ku Nye instructors from June 30th to July 6th at Merigar according to the following guidelines:

Courses for instructors are aimed at:

- Training individuals to be able to give Ku Nye courses in accordance with what has been learned during three years of study

- Giving an opportunity to those who do not wish to teach to deepen their knowledge and improve their individual work in the field of Ku Nye

- Spreading knowledge of this ancient therapeutic art throughout Italy and abroad by creating

assistants for Dr. Nida Chenagtsang in order to

- Meet the continually growing demands for Ku Nye instruction around the world
- Offering a concrete opportunity of work to those who are chosen as instructors after attending the training courses and passing the exam.

Organization and Structure of Courses given by Instructors:

Both first and second level courses will last for seven days each.

Instructors will not give third level courses since the complexity of the topic requires a great deal of experience. Third level courses will only be given by Dr. Nida Chenagtsang.

In the future, courses given by instructors will be organized by the Shang Shung Institute, which will provide teaching material, office work, organization and all the know-how that has developed during many years experience in organizing courses. Moreover, the Institute guarantees that the authenticity of the teachings will be maintained.

Just as with instructors of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance, those individuals who are chosen as Ku Nye instructors will hold their first course under the supervision of a representative of the Institute.

Preferential criteria to consider in selecting future instructors

Fluency and clarity in presenting different topics of the course to students

Knowledge of at least one foreign language.

In-depth practical and theoretical knowledge of Ku Nye.

Keeping to the topic being taught without mixing it with other disciplines.

Contact:

Secretary

Shang-Shung Institute, Merigar

Tel: (39) 0564966941,

Email: ssinst@tiscali.it

Shang- Shung Institute

USA

Tibetan Medicine Course Tsegyalgar

August 20-Sept 3, 2004

The Foundation Course in Tibetan Medicine, Year 1, taught by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo at Tsegyalgar, Conway, MA, (USA) has been rescheduled to August 20th to September 3rd. Two three-hour classes will be taught daily.

National Certification Commission for Acupuncture and Oriental Medicine Continuing Education credits are available. Tuition is \$800. Dorm accommodations are available for \$15 per night.

Course Outline

Level 1 The Physical Condition and its Pathological Alteration

1st Part

1. History of Tibetan Medicine.

1.1.Origins of Tibetan medicine

1.2 Translation of medical treatises of other countries

1.2 The first school of medicine in Tibet

1.3 The introduction of new elements into Tibetan medicine

1.4 The schools of Jang and Zur: the two traditions in the development of Tibetan medicine

1.5 The medical profession in Ancient Tibet

2. The theory of the four elements and the three humours.

2.1 The four elements

2.2 The three humours

2.3 The wind

2.4 The bile

2.5 The phlegm

3. The metaphoric trees of the Fundamental Treatise

3.1 The root of physiology and pathology

3.2 The root of the diagnosis

3.3 The root of the methods of treatments

4. General physiology

4.1 Embryology

4.2 Physiology and pathology

4.3 Physiological characteristics

5. Blood vessels and channels

5.1 The channels in the embryology

5.2 The channels of existence

5.3 The interconnecting channels

5.4 The channels of the lifespan principle

5.5 The channels in the esoteric tradition

6 The wind and the thigle

6.1 The wind

6.2 The thigle or quintessence of reproductive fluids

7. Metaphors and measurements of the human body

7.1. Metaphors of the vulnerable points

7.2 Description of the vulnerable points

schedule continued on next page

D Z O G C H E N C O M M U N I T Y
V I D E O J O U R N A L

The Dzogchen Community Video Journal covers the travels and teachings of our Master and the rich life of our worldwide Dzogchen community in the form of a video. For those practitioners who cannot travel much, it will be an opportunity to feel more in touch with the community and see developments in the various Gars. For others who were present at the retreat venues filmed, the Journal will be a wonderful reminder of some of the moments they spent there. In time, these Video Journals will form a unique collection that will be a pleasure to have in your library and watch again and again.

A part of the Journal is on the Dzogchen teachings given by our Master, but there are informal talks as well (which will be subtitled in English if in another language), special features, interviews, contributions, travels, clips from courses and seminars, etc. according to circumstances. Each issue also contains some videos from the past, taken from the SSI Archives.

Available in VHS format (PAL only) or DVD and published quarterly, the Video Journal is offered by subscription to all members of the Dzogchen Community. An annual subscription (or four issues) is 100 euros inclusive of air mail expenses to anywhere in the world.

Subscriptions can be made by contacting the secretary at SSI Italy: ssinst@tiscali.it or by credit card payment through our secure SSI web site at: ssi.dzogchen.ru. For more information, write to: dzogchen.aj@tiscali.it.



**A Flying Start
Four-Year Intensive
Traditional Tibetan Medicine Course
with Dr Nida Chenagsang
Shang-Shung Institute, Arcidosso, Italy
May 9 – 16, 2004**

by Maria Locsei

May saw the first installment of teachings for Dr. Nida's four-year Traditional Tibetan Medicine course. There were 14 keen and eager students from all over the world gathered at Merigar for 8 days. We were not disappointed. In Dr. Nida's typical eloquent, humorous yet understated style, he opened our eyes to the incredibly rich and diverse world of Traditional Tibetan Medicine.

We gathered in the bright, lofty reading-room at Merigar, surrounded by hundreds of books in glass cabinets and intricate paintings of stylized trees with colourful leaves on the walls. These trees were to become our intimate companions and trusted guides on the path to learning and memorizing the Four Tantras – the academic basis of Traditional Tibetan Medicine (TTM). The trees - with their roots, trunks, branches and leaves – form a visual guide to the divisions and chapters of the written medical texts and their commentaries. Traditionally, students learn to draw these trees by memory, and in so doing, become familiar with the academic content thus summarised.

Our minds were filled to overflowing with the history and origins of Tibetan medicine – the rich braid of culture and natural science woven from four major sources: Bön, Buddhism, Observation of Non-human natural phenomena, and Observation of Human life-cycles. It soon became clear that TTM is the distillation of an ancient naturalistic science, a far cry from the simple folk medicine or herbal lore that has been portrayed to the outside world by the uninitiated. We learned about the most famous of the Tibetan physicians: their breakthroughs, contributions, and legacies that are to be found in texts and thankas. We marveled at reproductions of the most intricate thankas - paintings of the human anatomy and vast collections of herbal lore. It was impressed upon us that the most remarkable and insightful physicians were not just good diagnosticians, but also very highly accomplished spiritual practitioners.

We also learned about the ancient Bön tradition, that this was not simply an animistic or shamanistic tradition; but how the Bön practitioners were the first meditators, thus giving



COURTESY OF S RIECKE

rise to a rich spiritual tradition. In addition, Bon gave rise to the Twelve Branches of Science - two of these branches comprised Medicine and Astrology. Subsequently, physicians specialized in, and elaborated upon this knowledge, which has culminated in the body of knowledge now known as Traditional Tibetan Medicine.

We learned about the physical composition of the body – the seven bodily constituents, the three humours, how they circulate through the body, and how the balance of these humours is vital to maintaining the health of the organism. We also learned about the five elements, the physical and the much more subtle energetic play of these purified essences – how they give rise to and energize the body. It was an awesome exposition of the basic concepts of the physical and subtle anatomy of the human body.

It was also a whirlwind tour of the indigenous culture; showing how TTM is a part of the Tibetan cosmology; an integral part of the twelve Natural sciences, which seeks to understand the way that the human organism needs to remain in harmony with the rest of the Universe in order to maintain equilibrium and health. We arrived at the understanding that the microcosm of the body represents the macrocosm; the five elements which bring into being all of the world are the five elements of which we are composed, the subtle aspects of which form the basis of our bodies. This course, which is presented by the Shang-Shung Institute, is the only course in TTM currently running in Europe. The aim of the course is to produce fully qualified TTM doctors by the end of the four to five years. For the initial four years, intensive training takes place face-to-face for one or two intensive seminars

each year, with copious clinical homework set in between times. The final year of training will involve study and practice in a Traditional Tibetan Medicine hospital in Tibet, in the Amdo area. Towards this end, the students are currently also undertaking Tibetan language studies.

This course presented by the Shang-Shung Institute is the only course in TTM currently running in Europe designed for a general audience. The aim of Dr. Nida's course is to produce fully qualified TTM doctors by the end of the 4 - 5 years. The final year of training will involve study and practice in a Traditional Tibetan Medicine hospital in Tibet, in the Amdo area.

The 14 students in attendance came from a variety of backgrounds, including midwifery, physiotherapy, teaching, herbalism, Traditional Chinese Medicine, Music therapy, and Western Medicine. Most - but not all - had some sort of background in the healing arts. Most of the students had a prior connection with Dr Nida, having attending one or another of his courses in some part of the world. The course was taught in English (with absolutely brilliant translation into Italian – many thanks to Alessandra P!) It was a great pleasure to be among such an internationally diverse, highly motivated and focused group of students.

Dr. Nida is an extremely demanding taskmaster! After eight intensive hours of face-to-face instruction, he would set us another two hours' homework of drawing trees, analyzing our learning-partner's constitution, shaking up bottles of urine, drawing up detailed nutritional plans, or simply memorizing the day's teachings. Not just that, but he would then verbally test each of us, individually, in front of the rest of the class the next morning. A lesson

7.3 The measures of the bodily constituents

8. Human categories

9. Physical decay

9.1 The rationale for the indications of physical decay

9.2. Prognosis based on omens

9.3. Dream prognosis

9.4 Prognosis based on the appearance and the humour of the patient

2nd Part

1 The (primary) cause of illnesses

2 The (secondary) causes of illnesses

3 The inception of illnesses

4 Definition of illness through the three aspects: excess, deficiency and imbalance of the three humours

5 Classification of types of illnesses

The course will provide an excellent opportunity to learn the principles of Tibetan Medicine directly from one of the few Tibetan-trained doctors teaching in the west. The material is essential for those interested in studying Tibetan Medicine, and recommended for all holistic health practitioners.

Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo received her advanced degree from the Lhasa University School of Traditional Medicine in 1988.

For registration and more information contact:

Shang Shung Institute in America
Tel: (413) 369-4928
Email: will@shangshung.org
Web site: www.shangshung.org

in humility and embarrassment for many of us! However, this strict and structured approach certainly brought about good results – we retained most of that valuable information!

Then there were many lighter moments, such as our very first urine analysis. One of the strong, healthy and unabashed males in the group kindly peed into a bottle and donated the first sample. I don't think most of us had been quite that close to such a potent steaming urine before. It was enough to make the eyes water. "BILE constitution!" we all cried unanimously.

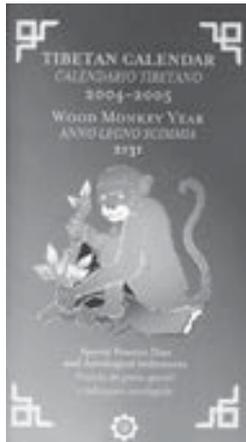
It was a very intense, inspiring and enlightening eight days. It has been a great pleasure and also a great privilege to receive the distillation of four thousand years of Tibetan Medical Knowledge from such an inspirational and dedicated teacher as Dr. Nida. Not only does he have a very direct way of imparting a huge body of information, giving his students the skills to put this knowledge to immediate application, but – most importantly - he also conveys the essence of the tradition and lineage - which breathes life into these teachings. We look forward to continuing our studies and practice in order to soon become fully-fledged Tibetan Medicine Practitioners. Many Thanks to Dr. Nida, Shang-Shung Institute, and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, for creating this invaluable opportunity to study Traditional Tibetan Medicine!

Tsegyalgar Bookstore Conway, Massachusetts

Our New Books Include

Tibetan Calendar for the
Wood Monkey Year
(2003-2004)
\$12US

Pocket agenda containing
concise indications of the
practices recommended by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
for special days, astrologi-
cal data of the Tibetan
Calendar and the individ-
ual aspects for those born
between 1912-2003.
Indispensable for finding
out favorable and unfavor-
able days for daily activi-
ties.



The Necklace of Zi
\$17US

The Necklace of Zi (gzi yi phreng ba) is the revised and extended
text of a lecture given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1975 to the
annual meeting of young Tibetans in Switzerland. Besides an
analysis of the Tibetan history and language this title deals in a
simple but very meaningful way with the crucial topic of the har-
monious union of Tibetan Dharma and politics.

Dzogchen Teachings in Gutenstein, Austria
\$17US

This book contains the transcription of the whole retreat held in
Gutenstein on June 12-14, 1998, including the oral teachings on
the Daki Mantri text of Thangtong Gyalpo belonging to the
Longsal Cycle which is the collection of Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu's rediscovered teachings (see Longsal Teachings, Vol. 1,
Shang Shung Edizioni 2001). It contains the Tibetan text and a
useful glossary of Tibetan names and words.

NEW!! Guru Yoga of White A by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The practice sung by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and repeated three
times. It includes an extract of the 1985 teachings in Nevada City.
72 Minutes.

Instituto Shang Shung \$21.50 Order#: 10045

NEW CD'S

NEW!! Tsok Gye: The Long Ganapuja by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

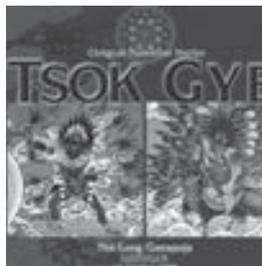
The entire Ganapuja practice, sung by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
The long invocations to Ekajati and Dorje Legpa are included.
Recorded during a collective practice in Merigar, 1998. 51
Minutes.

Instituto Shang Shung
\$21.50 Order#: 10046

NEW!! Ati Lamgyi Ngöndro
MP3 by Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's
teachings given in Merigar,
August 2002. An audio CD
of the practice led by
Adriano Clemente is also
included. 5 Hours 49
Minutes.

Instituto Shang Shung
\$35.00 Order#: 10047



NEW!! Green Tara CD-ROM by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The entire teaching Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave in Peru in the
year 2002. One can choose to listen and to view Rinpoche's expla-
nation, or follow him while he performs the practice. Drawings of
the mudras, images for visualization, and the complete text of the
practice are all included. 3 Hours 20 Minutes. For Windows only.
Instituto Shang Shung \$30.00 Order#: 10048

NEW!! Guru Yoga of White A by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
The practice sung by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and repeated
three times. It includes an extract of the 1985 teachings in
Nevada City. 72 Minutes.
Instituto Shang Shung \$21.50 Order # 10045

A vast back catalog of books and other Dharma supplies for the
Dzogchen Community also available.

To place an order or to request a free catalog please contact:

Anna
Tel: 413-369-4473
Email: bookstore@tsegyalgar.org

july 2004 special practice calendar

International Transmission Day, July 26 & 27, 2004 ***

ANNIVERSARY OF PADMASAMBHAVA

On this day, 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.

6th Tibetan month - 10th day
Celebration at 8 a.m. Oddiyana time.

Monday 26th July 2004

17:00 Hawaii
20:00 San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vancouver
21:00 Denver, Salt Lake City, Pagosa Springs, Edmonton
22:00 Lima, Quito, Chicago, Mexico City
23:00 Caracas, San Juan, Santiago, New York, Conway, Montreal, Atlanta, Detroit, Havana,
Kingston, Indianapolis, Ottawa

Tuesday 27th July 2004

00:00 Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Bermuda
03:00 GMT, Reykjavic,
04:00 London, Dublin, Lisbon
05:00 Johannesburg, Rome, Berlin, Oslo, Paris, Madrid, Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Brussels, Geneva,
Prague, Salzburg, Stockholm, Budapest, Vienna, Warsaw
06:00 Kuwait City, Riyadh, Tashkent, Helsinki, Athens, Ankara, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tallinn, Vilnius,
Istanbul
07:00 Moscow, Murmansk, Baghdad
08:00 ODDIYANA, Islamabad
08:30 New Delhi, Bombay
08:45 Kathmandu
09:00 Dacca
09:30 Rangoon
10:00 Bangkok, Jakarta, Saigon
11:00 Singapore, Beijing, Lhasa, Manila, Hong Kong, Kuala Lumpur, Taipei, Perth
12:00 Tokyo, Seoul,
12:30 Darwin, Adelaide
13:00 Brisbane, Melbourne, Sydney
14:00 Vladivostok
15:00 Fiji, Wellington, Auckland, Kamchatka

5th Month, 14th day Thu. 1st July 2004

This is an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a long or medium Tun collectively or
alone, reciting the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 15th day Fri. 2nd July 2004

FULL MOON. This is a special day for the Long life practice of Amitayus, so you can do the Long life
practice "Union of Primordial Essences". The best moment to do it is between 7 and 8 in the morning,
if possible, either collectively or alone. If you can, try to a Ganapuja as well.

It is also the Dzamling Chisang (Lit. smoke puja of the world in general) so if you know how to do it,
you can do the Sanqod (Sangchod) in the morning.

5th Month, 25th day Monday 12th July 2004

This is a Dakini day as well as an important day for the practice of Ekajati, so try to do a Ganapuja or a
Long Thun collectively with your Vajra brothers and sisters, or a Medium Thun alone. In either case
recite the heart mantra of Ekajati as many times as possible.

5th Month, 30th day Sat. 17th July 2004

DARK MOON. This is a day for purification practices. It is best to do the Purification of the Six Lokas
either collectively or alone, preferably in the early morning. Otherwise you can do a medium or short
Tun or a Ganapuja.

6th Month, 4th day Wed. 21st July 2004

This is the anniversary of the Dharmachakra (the first turning of the Wheel of the Dharma): the first time
that Buddha Sakyamuni gave the teaching of the Four Noble Truths to his disciples at Samath, after his
illumination. To honor the Lord Buddha on this special day you can do a Ganapuja with your Vajra
brothers and sisters.

6th Month, 10th day Tue. 27th July 2004***

Today is the anniversary of the birth of Padmasambhava. On this day when it is 8 am in Oddiyana
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will give the transmission of Guruyoga with the specific practice linked to the
anniversary of Padmasambhava. In this way the transmission will be alive 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. (In Italy, this practice will
be done at 5 am.)

It is also the anniversary of Yeshe Tsogyal, the main consort and disciple of Padmasambhava so it will
be beneficial to do a Guruyoga of Padmasambhava with the Long life mantra and a Ganapuja as we usu-
ally do, otherwise you can do the Long life practice "Union of Universal Wisdom".

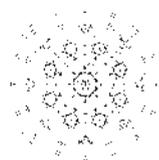
SEE THE GLOBAL TIMETABLE ABOVE

6th Month, 14th day Fri. 30th July 2004

This is the anniversary of the Third Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje (1284-1339), a disciple of Rigdzin
Chenpo Kumaradza and a famous master of Dzogchen Upadesa. On this day it is good to do Akar Lamai
Naljor, Guruyoga with the White A, collectively or alone.

6th Month, 15th day Sat. 31st July 2004

FULL MOON. This is the anniversary of Gampopa, the main disciple of Milarepa, founder of the
Kagyupa School and author of "The Precious Ornament of Liberation". It is, therefore, an excellent day
to do Akar Lamai Naljor, the Guruyoga with the White A. It is also good to do the Long life practice
"Union of Primordial Essences" of Guru Amitayus and, if possible, a Ganapuja.



INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY NEWS

merigar

MERIGAR PROGRAM 2004

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN THE LAST ISSUE OF THE MIRROR THE DATES OF TWO ACTIVITIES ON THE PROGRAM WERE INCORRECT:

THE SMS RETREAT SHOULD BE JULY 16-AUGUST 12 NOT JULY 17-AUGUST 15.

THE IN-DEPTH VAJRA DANCE COURSE WITH PRIMA MAI WILL BE HELD NOVEMBER 26-30 NOT OCTOBER 1-5.

THE MERIGAR GAKYIL APOLOGIZES FOR THE MISPRINTS.

June 25-27 Course of explanation & construction of the Namkha with Cristiana De Falco
The course starts at 6 PM on Friday June 25.
Cost: 75 Euro with discounts for members.

July 3-13
Retreat of explanation & practice of the Guru Yoga of Garab Dorje & the Semdzin with Costantino Albini
Cost: 225 Euro with discounts for members.

July 7
Worldwide practice of the Song of the Vajra Dance
This practice day is included in the retreat program.

July 16-August 12
Complete retreat of the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level, Yantra Yoga & Vajra Dance with Jim Valby, Prima Mai, Laura Evangelisti & Rita Renzi.
A few places are still available. * (see page)

July 27
World Transmission Day – Anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava
Guru Yoga of Padmasambhava practice
The practice starts at 5 AM

August 18-25
Retreat of explanation & practice of Mandarava Long Life combined with Chülden with Nina Robinson
Explanation of the Tibetan pronunciation by Cristiana De Falco
The retreat starts at 10 a.m. on Wednesday August 18.
Cost: 200 Euro with discounts for members.

August 28-29
Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners
with Laura Evangelisti
The retreat starts at 10 AM on Saturday August 28.
Cost: 70 Euro with discounts for members.

September 1-7
Course of explanation & practice of the Song of the Vajra Dance (part 2) with Prima Mai
The course starts at 5 PM on Wednesday September 1.
Cost: 245 with discounts for members.

September 18-19
Course of explanation & practice of the Liberation of the Six Lokas Dance
The course starts at 5 PM on Saturday September 18.
Cost: 50 Euro with discounts for members.

September 25-26
Retreat of Shitro practice & Karma Yoga practice
The retreat starts at 5 PM on Saturday September 25.

November 26-30
In-depth Course of Song of the Vajra Dance
with Prima Mai
The course starts at 5 PM on Friday October 1.
Cost: 175 Euro with discounts for members.

ENROLLMENT

If you wish to enroll for a course, seminar or retreat, please contact the office to book a place and send advance payment of 25 Euro to confirm your booking via postal order at least 10 days before the beginning of the course, indicating the course you are confirming your place on. The postal order should be addressed to:

Associazione Culturale Comunità Dzogchen – Merigar – 58031 Arcidosso GR. - Italy.

You should make your booking with the office sufficiently ahead of time since courses that do not reach a minimum number of participants will be cancelled.

To take part in the activities of the Association 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 the discounts for members.

Discounts for paid up members are: 20% for ordinary members, 40% for sustaining members and 50% for students and retired people on a low income.

For further information, contact:
Merigar Office

MERIGAR
Dzogchen Community in ITALY
58031 Arcidosso GR, Italy
Tel.:++39 0564 966837
Email:
merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
Web site:
<http://web.tiscalinet.it/merigar>

There's Still Time

Participate in the Base Level Santi Maha Sangha Practice Retreat with Jim Valby, Prima Mai, Laura Evangelisti and Rita Renzi
Merigar, Italy
July 16 - Aug 12

There are still two or three places available for the retreat on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance, which will be held at Merigar from July 16th to August 12th by Jim Valby, Prima Mai, Laura Evangelisti and Rita Renzi. Anyone interested to participate as soon as possible should contact:

Merigar
Email: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it
Tel: 0039-0564-966837 from 10:0 0AM to 1:00PM except on Wednesday

WEB CAST AT

MERIGAR MANDARAVA RETREAT
WITH
CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU
JULY 17 TO AUGUST 1, 2004

From July 17 to August 1, 2004, at Merigar, we will have the opportunity to link up to the web cast of the Mandarava Chülden teaching and practice retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Margarita Island. We will be publishing further details and information for those who wish to follow the retreat as soon as we are able to.
Merigar Update
Mandarava Web Cast Retreat & Camping

As was briefly announced on June Merigar Letter, we confirm that the retreat led by our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Mandarava Practice associated with chülden in Tashigar del Norte, from July 17th to August 1st, will be entirely audio broadcasted on the web at Merigar. Single practitioners or groups of them will be able to connect and follow the live Teachings. The technical details will be communicated later, as soon as Ambienti Web Consulting fixes the last details.
In Merigar the retreat can be followed in the Gonpa, with translation into Italian language. A daily guided Thun of Mandarava long life practice will also be organized in the morning, 8:30 to 9:30AM.

People, who wish to, can take the chülden pills, available from the Merishop, at the price of 17 Euro for the number of 12, necessary for the all retreat. It will be also available a simple meal, suitable for the chülden practice, from Merigar kitchen. The participating members will be asked to make a free offer to contribute for Merigar expenses.

Since in the same period there is also the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance retreat with Jim Valby, Prima Mai, Rita Renzi and Laura Evangelisti, it would be extremely useful to know how many people are planning to come and fol-

low the web cast. So we are kindly asking the local responsible members to spread these information widely, collect the list of practitioners who wish to come to Merigar and communicate it to <merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it>, specifying those who intend to practice the chülden.

Following you can find the retreat schedule, with Margarita hours, for Italy you need to add 6 hours.

The retreat will be from July 17th to August 1st.

July 17th — 5-7 PM
Introduction of the Retreat
July 18th — 10-12 AM
Mandarava Tshedrub Instruction
July 19th — 9-12 AM
Giving Lama Khadro'i Zhallung and collective practice with chülden;
July 20th — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 1 and collective practice with chülden;
July 21st — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 2 and collective practice with chülden;
July 22nd — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 3 and collective practice with chülden;
July 23rd — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 4 and collective practice with chülden;
July 24th — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 5 and collective
Practice with chülden;
July 25th — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 6 and collective
Practice with chülden;
July 26th — 9-12 AM
Srogthig Instruction no. 7 and collective Practice with chülden;

At 11 PM
Worldwide Guruyoga
Transmission;

July 27th — 10-12 AM
Tshedrub with Srogthig Lungjyor and Chülden;
July 28th — 10-12 AM
'Tshedrub with Srogthig Lungjyor and Chülden;
July 29th — 10-12 AM
Tshedrub with Srogthig Lungjyor and Chülden;
July 30th — 10-12 AM
Tshedrub with Srogthig Lungjyor and Chülden;
July 31st — 10-12 AM
Giving Tshewang;

Web cast continued from previous page

At 5 PM
Full moon Ganapuja and so on;

August 1st — 10-12 AM
Conclusion of the Retreat

July 26th, preceding the Worldwide Transmission Day, there will be an explanation of the Guru Yoga practice, which will take place at 9AM in the Mandala Hall. Next day, July 27th, at 5AM, there will be the Direct Transmission of Guru Yoga in the Anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava; all interested people are invited and very welcome.

July 27th is also a day in which the international Dzogchen Community, with the coordination of the Greek Gakyil, will practice the 24 hours Guru Draghpur mantra, therefore the morning Mandarava Thun will be substituted with the practice of Guru Draghpur, in the Mandala Hall, from 8:30AM to 10:15 AM.

CAMPING UPDATE

Now a more practical announcement. You know that it is not possible to camp on Merigar's land any more. We have been able to negotiate discounts with the two camp sights in the area. People don't need a reservation but in order to obtain the special fare; they need to show evidence of their participation to Merigar's activities. The secretary will issue such paper on request.

Camping Amiata
Via Roma, 15 - 58033
Casteldelplano - GR - Italia
Tel. 0564-956260, Fax. 0564-955107, Email: bernabei@amiata.org

Web site: www.amiata.org
(distance from Merigar about 6 km)

We agreed on a discount of 10 % with this camping:

Examples of reduced fares:
- one person with one tent 11,16 Euro/day
- two persons in one tent 16,74 Euro/day
- four persons staying in the same pitch in one or two tents 29,88 Euro/day

Camping Lucherino
(with swimming pool)
Località Luccherino, 58047 -
Monticello Amiata (GR) Italia
Tel. & Fax 0564-992975, Email: meichu@tiscali.it

Web site: www.lucherino.nl
(distance from Merigar 12 km)

We agreed on a discount of 13 % with this camping:

Examples of reduced fares:
- one person with one tent 13,48 Euro/day
- two persons in one tent 19,57 Euro/day
- four persons staying in the same pitch in one or two tents 31,75 Euro/day

At both campgrounds you are allowed to park with a mobile home, and it also possible to take your dog along.

We thank you for your cooperation and are looking forward to welcoming you at Merigar!

The Gakyil of Merigar

IMPORTANT NEWS FROM MERIGAR Camping discontinued on Merigar Land

Dear practitioners of the Dzogchen Community,
We would like to inform you of some important news regarding the summer activities at Merigar. Last year the local authorities confirmed that they no longer allow any kind of camping on the Merigar land. They had allowed camping up to last year on the basis of a special license that was granted to us on the condition that we would respect the prohibition for the future.
So the Merigar campsite no longer exists. This means that no one may stay on the land with a tent, camper, van or caravan. The only place where people may sleep is in the dormitory. The Gakyil of Merigar is looking for alternative possibilities with the local campsites (see Camping Update in article to the left) and for other cheap solutions. We will update the information about the results of our research. In the meantime, we ask you to kindly help us to spread the news, in order to avoid people having expectations that we won't be able to fulfill. We realize this will be a disappointment, but it is beyond our control.

Thank you for your collaboration,
The Merigar Gakyil and the Geköes

IMPORTANT INFORMATION REGARDING THE MANDARAVA RETREAT WEB CAST WITH CHOEGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU JULY 17 – AUGUST 1, 2004

Dear All,
As many of you already know, from July 17th to August 1st, 2004, we will have the possibility to receive the live audio web cast of the entire Mandarava retreat held in Tashigar del Norte, Margarita Island, by our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

This is a first-time event on two respects: it will be the first web cast ever of an entire retreat (including also Guru Yoga Transmission), and it will be delivered using the communication network which Merigar is setting up for serving the Dzogchen Community worldwide.

Merigar will deliver this entire retreat web cast as a service to all Community Gars, Gakyils and members worldwide. It will be free of charge.

In order to listen to the web cast the following qualifications should be present:

- 1) To have received the Guru Yoga transmission
- 2) To be a member of the Dzogchen Community

Those practitioners who have received transmission but are not yet members will be asked to fill in a registration form in order to have access to the connection page, and will be reminded of the importance and benefits of becoming members.

If persons who have not yet received transmission ("new" practitioners) are seriously intend to follow the Mandarava web cast retreat, they can be allowed to participate collectively in a Gar or center where group attendance is organized so that they can receive help and assistance.

They must also pledge not to miss the worldwide Guru Yoga Transmission on the 26th of July. These conditions, which have been approved by Rinpoche, allow "new" practitioners to take part in the web cast retreat.

Additional services may be available (according to local circumstances) to those who will participate collectively in this way at a Gar or center, i.e. translation into the local language and practical advice by more experienced practitioners.

Although the web cast in will be free of charge, an offering may be asked by the organizing Gar or Gakyil to meet the expenses of organizing the group attendance.

The Mandarava retreat will include the use of Chüdlen. Each individual practitioner will need no. 12 Chüdlen pills during the retreat. To receive authenticated Chüdlen pills you can write to Merigar at: Email: merigaroffice@tiscalinet.it.

The address (URL) of the Web cast page will be communicated to all Gars and Gakyils and published on Norbunet well in advance of the event.

Thank you for your attention,
Tashi Delegs,

The Gakyil of Merigar

The Longlife and Chüdlen practice of Mandarava, Dakini of Immortality and the Sphere of the Vital Essence of the Vajra (A retreat to be led by Nina Robinson at Merigar August 18-25, 2004)

by Nina Robinson

In April, twenty years ago, our precious Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu went on pilgrimage to Nepal to do the longlife practice of Guru Amitayus, according to the terma of Nyagla Pema Dundul (Nyag bla Padma bDud Odul), the Master of several of his Masters among which Chang Chub Dorje and Ayu Khadro. Leading a group of disciples, Rinpoche stopped at the sacred cave of Maratika where Guru Padmasambhava and his consort, the Princess Mandarava, had practiced the longlife practice of Amitayus that gave them realization of immortality.

During the pilgrimage, Rinpoche had many wonderful dreams. On the twenty-fifth day of the second month of the Tibetan calendar, he received in his dreams and in his visions, the terma of the longlife practice of the Dakini Mandarava.

In 1985, during a retreat of teaching and practice at Tsegyalgar in the USA, Rinpoche received the terma of all the ingredients of the Seven Nectars recipe to use in the Chüdlen practice related to the Mandarava longlife practice. The marvelous story of the revelation of these Teachings and the teachings themselves were translated by Jacobella Gaetani who was one of the fortunate disciples who participated in the pilgrimage to Maratika (published by Shang Shung Edizioni 1999). The main reason for doing the longlife practice, like all practices in general, is to obtain total realization which is beyond the concept of time, beyond death and birth, and is the real Immortality. However, in order to attempt this, we need more time, a longer life, free from obstacles and with all the favorable conditions – health, well being, the opportunity to practice, etc. The longlife practice reinforces all aspects of our vitality and our protective energy and improves our circumstances. In the Dzogchen teachings, it is considered important to do at least the simplest form of Chüdlen from time to time because it helps to develop our clarity.

During the August retreat, we will try to learn about the different aspects of this practice: the visualizations, the melodies, the mudra, using the objects and ritual instruments and the breathing, visualizations and diet of the Chüdlen practice.

There are three ways of doing the Chüdlen practice: Nirmanakaya style, Sambhogakaya style and Dharmakaya style all of which should be practiced very gradually. In the Nirmanakaya style, the diet is very simple: barley and brown rice with a little fresh butter and a little good quality honey. One drinks water. No heavy food or intoxicating substances. In the Sambhogakaya style one only uses the nectar or the pills while in the Dharmakaya style one feeds exclusively from the essence of the elements. In order to practice the latter you need to have quite high capacity! We will, of course, follow the Nirmanakaya style.

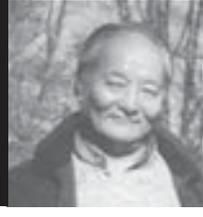
Those who wish to do only the long life practice and not the Chüdlen, will have a good opportunity to stay in contemplation while the others do the breathing, etc., and can eat and drink normally. There will be the possibility to practice Yantra Yoga in order to be more confident about doing the breathing and the khumbaka and there will also be the opportunity to practice the Dance of the Vajra.

The retreat begins at 10 am on August 18th. There will be 3 or 4 sessions a day. We will learn and practice the short and long practice combined with the Chüdlen and we will also do the Mandarava Ganapuja, the long short and long form.

DZOGCHEN

The Self-Perfected State





**by Chögyal
Namkhai Norbu**

In this classic work, Rinpoche clearly explains Dzogchen and then reveals what is meant by the practice of Dzogchen.

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**Prima Mai's Teaching Schedule of the Vajra Dance
September – November, 2004**

September: 1-7
Merigar/Italy
Vajra Dance
2nd Part Beginners, with Prima Mai or Rita Renzi

September: 3-6
Kunselling/UK
Purification of the Six Spaces
Beginners, Supervision course of Cindy Faulkner
(To be confirmed)

September or October/November:
Tashigar Norte/Venezuela
Purification of the Six Spaces /Om Ah Hum Dance
TT 1st level course with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo
(To be confirmed)

November: 26-30
Merigar/Italy
Vajra Dance Advanced Course

**Yantra Yoga
with Fabio Andrico, June 29 – August 14, 2004
Riga, Latvia**

**KUNSELLING RETREAT SCHEDULE
Summer/Autumn 2004
Wales, UK**

The UK Gakyil would like to announce the following events at our new retreat center Kunselling in Wales:

August 2-8
Dance of the Vajra Second Part with Stoffelina Verdonk

August 20-29
Santi Maha Sangha Base with Jim Valby

September 3-6
Dance Retreat of the Six Spaces, Cindy Faulkner under Prima Mai's supervision

October 27-30
Dr Nida will be teaching Mantra Healing in London

November 1-9
Kum Nye Massage First Level with Dr Nida

We also offer comfortable facilities for individual and dark retreat.

For further details email: rowanwylie@hotmail.com or call 0044 1223 473 528

**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat
with Jim Valby
Kunselling, UK**

Dates: Friday August 20, 10AM, until Sunday August 29th, 2PM
Venue: Kunselling Retreat Centre, in Powys County, mid-Wales.

Regarding the course Jim says:
"We will study & practice the essence of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen a presented by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his "Precious Vase". We will have 4 sessions each day: 9-10:30AM, 11-12:30, 4-5:30PM, 6-7:30PM. During the 4-5:30PM session each day we hope to practice Yantra Yoga and/or Vajra Dance. In the evening session we will study Dzogchen Tantras ending with an abbreviated Chöd practice."

For updates and details see: www.dzogchencommunity.org

Cost of the Course: GBP400 (600 Euros) full board residential with discounts for members.

The non-residential cost will be GBP200 (300 Euros).

In case of hardship, working discounts may be available subject to agreement.

For those interested in attending, please ensure your place by booking as soon as possible. A non-returnable deposit of GBP80 (120 Euros) residential, GBP40 (60 Euros) non-residential is required. Checks to be made payable to "Dzogchen Community UK".

Deposits must be received by August 1st, after which date verbal bookings will be considered invalid.

To book contact:
Peter White
35 Finchams Close, Linton, Cambridge, CB1 6ND
Tel: 07900 496909
Email: peterwhite@i12.com

Detailed course information Thomas Beaver:
Email: booboobello@yahoo.co.uk

e u r o p e

New Books in Portuguese

Zer-nga
The Practice of Seven Sem-dzin
The Yoga of Arya Tara
The Three Sacred Fundamentals (Khorde Rushen, the external rushen and the Purification of the Six Lokas)

Please contact: dzogchenbrasil@uol.com.br.

**DANCE OF THE VAJRA PART TWO
UK**

The UK Gakyil is pleased to announce that Stoffelina Verdonk will be teaching the second part of the Dance of the Vajra at Kunselling from Monday, August 2nd to Sunday, August 8th. This course is open to those who have already learned the first part from an accredited teacher.

The full residential price is 437 Euros (376 Euros for members) available to the first 16 applicants. Non residential 225 Euros (180 Euros for members). A few camping spaces are available. In cases of financial hardship concessions are available subject to negotiation with the Gakyil.

To secure your place please send a non-refundable deposit of 83 Euros for residential or 45 Euros for non residential. Cheques should be made out to Dzogchen Community UK and addressed to: Rowan Wylie, 29 Almoners Avenue, Cambridge CB1 8NZ. Telephone 01223 473 428.

Should no place be available your check will be returned. Please let me know if you will be learning the male or female part.

Rowan Wylie (Red Gakyil)

SUMMER AT DEJAMLING

Dear all,

If you're staying in Europe this summer, you're warmly welcome in Dejamling - our Dzogchen Community center in the South France (near Montpellier, in the beautiful Cevennes mountains)!

There are some of our High Season Activities:

JULY
1st - 7th - The Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra Retreat
Contact:
Stoffelina Verdonk
Tel : +33 5 65 49 53 89
Email: stoffelina@wanadoo.fr

July 7th - The International Day of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra

July 24th - 31st - Mandarava Long Life Practice Retreat (With the web cast from Margarita if technically possible & the Vajra Dance practice)

Contact: Joan Ponsich, joan.ponsich@tiscali.fr, Tel : +33 1 43 89 43 89 or Nadia Poureau, cadette@club-internet.fr

Hope to see you soon in Dejamling!
The French Gakyil

**YANTRA YOGA COURSE for beginners
with ELKE GLANDER in Germany**

July 16th - 18, 2004 for beginners, Krankengymnastikpraxis Preuss, Herzog-Spitalstr. 5 in München.

The course will start on Friday at 19:30 and end on Sunday at 13:00. Fees will be 95 Euro for non-members, 80 Euro for members, booking in advance (until 15.6.) 85 Euro for non-members, 70 Euro for members (also 70 Euro reduced).

Please remit to the account of the Dzogchengemeinschaft Deutschland e.V., Stadtparkasse Düsseldorf, Knt.-Nr.: 11047891, BLZ: 30050110, IBAN DE 40 3005 0110 0011 047891, SWIFT/BIC DUSSEDDXXX

For registration, accommodation & more information please contact: Regine Zettler, Regine-125@gmx.net, tel: 0049-(0)89-74298244

**New Web Site
Lithuanian Dzogchen Community**

The Lithuanian Dzogchen Community is developing a web site where basic information is also available in English.

If you are administrating web site of your community and you have reference list of all communities around the world, please include Lithuanian community to the list as www.dzogcenas.lt. Thank you!

**CONTINUATION OF GURU
DRAGPHUR
24 HOUR
NON-STOP PRACTICE
WORLDWIDE.**

Dear Sangha members,
As you may have seen for yourselves by now, we (the Greek DZ Community) has found that the series of Guru Dragphur 24hour non-stop practice sessions, which were held recently by our Dzogchen Community worldwide, have been quite helpful to all of us.

However, as you might also have noticed, samsara is not something that can be totally overlooked, or is it such an easy thing to cope with. And, perhaps, it's no breaking news to say that our local Dzogchen Community of Greece has been faced with several severe obstacles for quite a long while now. This results, not only often making our collective practice difficult, but also makes the assistance of newcomers almost impossible.

There's no need to elaborate much on this issue here since, as it can be witnessed, these kinds of obstacles are more or less the same as the ones that other local Dzogchen Communities are also facing. Yet, it has also been quite evident that most of these so-called obstacles are not really anything concrete in themselves, but rather, they are coming from the perplexed patterns of attachment and aversion that are performing in our very own minds.

We thought that perhaps if we could continue this practice, which aims especially towards the elimination of those two restless delusion provocateurs, then maybe we might as well become a little bit more able to deal sufficiently with the particulars of the situation.

We asked Rinpoche if he thinks it's a good idea for us to organize another series of sessions and we received a warm, positive answer. Therefore, we immediately set out to make it happen.

This next series of 3 Guru Dragphur 24hour non-stop practice sessions are:

- SEPTEMBER 23, Thursday
- OCTOBER 23, Saturday

We DO need your active participation and support.

Everyone who has received the transmission of Guru Dragphur from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is welcome to join in.

We surely hope that this action may also inspire other Dzogchen Communities around the globe to take turns in continuing this series of sessions in the future, whenever they feel that it's mostly necessary and appropriate to them. In this way, the focus of benefit may be directed to every next local Dzogchen Community that will undertake this organizing. And through this, perhaps, everyone may experience (and better understand) that we are all interconnected and interrelated to each other, as the vital parts of the very same one big mandala.

Please send your hours of participation (this time in GMT time zone) to: liber@up2u.gr

Details about the participation can be found at:

<http://www.tsegyalgar.org/features/24h.html>

All weekly updates will be posted on Tsegyalgar website and Norbunet.

New Gakyil Styria/Tirol Elected at the Autumn Retreat in Salzburg on 11/8/03

Blue Gakyil - Siegi Schwaiger Email: siegi.schwaiger@utanet.at
Red Gakyil - Gabi Leik
Yellow Gakyil - Oliver Gstoettner Email: oliver.gstoettner@chello.at

Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra, Part One July 3-9, 2004 Vienna, Austria with Rita Renzi under the supervision of Prima Mai

The course will start on July 3rd in the afternoon, and finish on July 8th at noon with a Ganapuja. The afternoon of the 8th and the whole 9th of July will be reserved for intense practice.

Costs: 170.- Euros
135.- Euros for members
100.- Euros for people with little money

If you wish to come, please register, and please, as the number of participants is limited, we would ask you to pay 30 Euros in advance together with the registration to:

Kontono, 44.846-4, Meindl Bank BLZ 19240, SWIFT MEIN AT WW,
To the name of Hannes Binder. (Viennese Yellow Gakyil)

For further information, registration and accommodation please contact Elisha Koppensteiner at:
Email: elishanana@hotmail.com
Tel: 0043/676/796 83 16 (is a cellular phone so quite expensive to call,

New French Gakyil

YELLOW
Marie-Hélène FOA (treasury) <mhfoa@free.fr>

RED
Jean-François AYME (President) <jf.ayme@tiscali.fr>
Hubert KOTOWICZ <kotohub@yahoo.com>
Michel TOUVERON <michel.touve@tiscali.fr>

BLUE
Margot BERTRAND (secretary) <margotbe@free.fr>
Nadia POUREAU <cadette@club-internet.fr>

GAKYIL HELPERS

Blue
Francois Calmes <fcalmes@free.fr>
Laurent Stemmler <lstemmler@free.fr>
Anne Lambiel <alambiel@club-internet.fr>
Beatrix Orbaiceta <bea.orbaiceta@wanadoo.fr>
Marie Christine Dauge <mchdauge@noos.fr>
Eric Maestracci <ericvar2001@free.fr>

Yellow
Laurent Maurice <lmaurice@orange.fr>

Red
Laurent Soen <stoffelina@wanadoo.fr>
Anne Zuker <anne.max@free.fr>
Hélène Lafage <hmsmf@ohotmail.com>
Ermanno Lagana <e.lagana@voila.fr>
Catherine Duez <catherineduez@autre-provence.com>
Christian Cabassut

Longde Cabin Available Paldenling, Poland

As one of our practitioners is finishing his long retreat, the Longde Cabin in Paldenling is free. Everybody is welcome.

For people interested in doing a retreat there, we have prepared a web page with relevant information:

<http://www.dzogchen.pl/longdel>

Vajra Dance and the Dance of the Liberation of the Six Lokas, Amsterdam

Orangerie in Abcoude, 10 km. from Amsterdam in the Netherlands

Friday, September 17 – Sunday, September 19th, 2004

The schedule is:
Friday 19.00 till 22.00 hr.
Saturday 10.00 - 22.00 hr
Sunday 10.00 - 15.00 hr.

We finish with a Ganapuja at 16.00 hr.
Including breaks for drinks and food (bring your own).

For registration, description of itinerary, low fees and accommodation in Amsterdam please contact:
Ans Swart, Tel: 0031-020-6162763, Email: ansswart@dds.nl

Retreat of Vajra Dance practice in Switzerland August 7-14, 2004

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters,

The Geneva Dzogchen Community is pleased to announce a Vajra Dance practice retreat in Switzerland.

The retreat will take place in the old Chartreuse de la Pardieu near Bulle from 7 - 14, August 2004, and will cost 15 Swiss francs (10 Euros) for the location of the hall.

Accommodation cost 36 Swiss francs (23 Euros) for a double room per night and per person and 45 Swiss francs(28 Euros) for single room.

Possibility to put 3 tents for 19 Swiss francs (11 Euros) per person.

For more details please contact:

Jocelyne Carasso

Tel: 00 33 (0) 450 35 1142

Email: jocelyne.carasso@wanadoo.fr.

or Monique Leguen

Tel: 00 41 (0) 22 797 37 21

The New Gakyil of Finland

BLUE

Mika Sillanpää
msillanp@messi.uku.fi

RED

Reija Lilja
reija.lilja@labour.fi

YELLOW

marja.sakari@kiasma.fi

The Dzogchen Community Contact Person in Finland

Marja Sakari

Rysäkuja 5 A 6

00980 Helsinki

Finland

Tel. 358-9-3415334

Email: marja.sakari@kiasma.fi

MERIGAR ACCOMODATION AND RECEPTION SERVICE

FOR PEOPLE WHO INTEND TO COME TO MERIGAR FOR
RETREATS OR COURSES OR JUST VISITING AND PARTICI-
PATING IN ONE OF MERIGAR'S PROGRAMS

If you need accommodation in a local hotel, boarding house, or a private room with other practitioners or if you want to rent an apartment or a house for a week or longer we have our own accommodation service to help you.

We can also advise on transport from the airports, give train schedules, information and booking of rental cars and other questions related to your travel to Merigar.

We speak English, French, German and Italian:

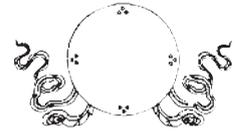
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Christina von Geispitzheim

Email: merigar-reservations@libero.it

Telephone office: 0039 0564 957542

Mobile phone: 0039 339 1370739



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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Main Office:
PO Box 277
Conway, MA 01341
USA
Tel: 413 369 4208
Fax: 413 369 4473
Email:
Mirrornk@cs.com

European Office:
The Mirror
Merigar
Arcidosso
58031 GR
Italy
Email: lizmirror@tiscalinet.it
Tel: 39 3298865292
Fax: 39 0564- 968 110

Editorial Staff:
Naomi Zeitz,
Tsegyalgar
Conway, MA USA

Liz Granger
Merigar
Arcidosso, Italy

Literary Editor:
John Shane

Advisors:
Adriano Clemente
Anna Eid
Barbara Paparazzo
Des Barry
Jim Valby

Layout & Design:
N. Zeitz

Illustration:
Wood Monkey
Bepe Goia

Web Site Managers:
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P A S S A G E S

MARRIED

Raffaella Blasi and Mateusz Kocylowski
were married at the Town Hall in Arcidosso
on June 5, 2004, in the company of family
and friends. The wedding party celebrated
the new "sposi" at a local restaurant, danc-
ing the tarantella to the foot-tapping tunes
of a troupe of Neapolitan musicians and
enjoying the romantic melodies of a group
of Rumanian travelling musicians.

Kunsangar News

Our dear friends!

Kunsangar sends its warm regards; many kind words and wishes to achieve maximum progress in practice to everybody!

This current year was not easy for us. We faced plenty of external difficulties similar in many respects to the problems of Tsegylgar. We did not understand right away that the cause of our bad luck was within ourselves. Trying to be in the state beyond all the limitations, we did not always realize the external factors. Last year all our efforts were focused on adapting Kunsangar to rules and regulations of the country, and at the same time keeping the minimum tax payment. The main goal for us was to keep Kunsangar as the place where Dzogchen teachings would be being maintained and transmitted. It really took a great deal of time, effort and financial resources to change the situation.

At the present moment, the Gakyil is working on elaboration of further strategy of life in Kunsangar, taking into account the principal problems and past mistakes. Nevertheless, Kunsangar was functioning (except for a three-month period) almost all this time as the place of teachings and practice.

For a period of time, all retreats took place in Moscow instead of Kunsangar. It can be said that this complicated situation erased misunderstanding and the lack of co-ordination in relationships between people, which easily arises under such circumstances. We discovered that we were all together in one boat and that the teaching was the most important thing for us. The Moscow Dzogchen Community held a Santi Maha Sangha Base Level retreat with Igor Berkhin, including Yantra Yoga with Victor Krachkovsky. In December we had an unforgettable retreat of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra with the enigmatic Adriano dal Borgo and "our" Ludmila Kislichenko. By a strange configuration of circumstances, the retreat was held in the Theatre Center on Dubrovka where the dramatic story with hostages had happened. The Mandalas were kept in a room from which the terrorists were leading their video recording, and we were dancing in a foyer of the same hall where, in October 2002, tragic events that shook the world took place. Retreats in Kunsangar recommenced from the middle of January 2002. At the time of the Losar celebration, we had a Santi Maha Sangha Base Level retreat with Igor Berkhin and the theme was "Karma". It was very cold (- 25 C) and beautiful outside; everything was snowed under up to our knees. We were walking on small narrow paths made by someone who had been walking there before. Russian winters are severe... and again...

Spring. Everything is rising, the birds are singing, the trees are filling with sap and the flowers are blooming. In Kunsangar there were about 50 people on the day of Garab Dorje. We go on...

At present, the most important tasks are the right arrangement of documents on realty and land, as well as obtaining Kunsangar's financial independence. Now we are coming closer than ever to the necessity of right work on the external level, taking into consideration all our "specific Russian peculiarities". The Kunsangar Gakyil has already offered three financial programs that may help Kunsangar become self-sustaining.

One of these programs is a regular voluntary sponsorship. Our idea is to attract as many members of the Community as possible who would invest a certain voluntary sum every month, with the intention to support the place of the Teaching transmission. On the last Saturday of every month, the yellow Kunsangar Gakyil presents a complete report about their expenditure. There are nearly 30 such people. We are also elaborating some other programs. We hope to meet with Yeshe Namkhai to discuss a question of financial independence under the favorable circumstances of place and time. We have a lot of projects. At the end of this year we plan to build a public swimming pool at Kunsangar. We hope it will become another Kunsangar adornment and additional source of financing.

A "planting of greenery" project has now begun in Kunsangar. Near Rinpoche's house and Gonpa, amazing "northern" roses, other perennial and annual flowers and herbs were planted. A little bit later you will see these beautiful sights in photographs and we hope you will enjoy them.

From the very outset, Kunsangar was a not-for-profit organization and acted as a Charitable Fund "Dostoyanie" dealing with social, cultural and health related activities. The Russian Dzogchen Community was leading, and keeps on leading by means of CF "Dostoyanie" charitable activity, in the field of social assistance, mostly in the territory of Pavlovsky Pasad Region. This is done basically by supporting establishments of social and cultural spheres: schools, children's homes, hospitals. At the present moment we are rendering charitable aid to invalids and a country youth center. They wrote about us with gratitude in a local newspaper and a few articles were published with warm words of our activities.

We resumed collaboration with The Social Questions Committee of the Pavlovsky Pasad administration. In August, 2004, the Charitable Fund "Dostoyanie" plans to give, on a charitable basis, the "Pine Forest" that belongs to its premises and territory of cultural and sanitary center, to the summer ecological international camp under the auspices of the European Union program, "The Youth for Europe". The realization of this project, we hope, will help us to solve many problems connected with our interaction with our external surroundings.

Of course, we co-ordinate all the strategic projects with Rinpoche. His patience is endless and there are not enough words to express our thanks and infinite love for the Precious Source.

Thanks to all practitioners of International Dzogchen Community for support and participation.

On behalf of Kunsangar Gakyil, Natasha Maximova

Kunsangar
142500 RUSSIA, Moscow region
Pavlovskiy Posad, RUPS,a/ya 13, BF "Dostoyanie"
Nina Rusanovich, Secretary
Tel /Fax: 7 096 43 21156
Tel: 7 901 900 36 46
Email: kunsang@gar.legko.ru

The Russian Mirror

The Dzogchen Community of Kharkov (Ukraine) is going to publish a Russian version of "The Mirror". We have asked Rinpoche and he supports this idea.

The editorial board will consist of 3 people:

- The editor-in-chief - Valery Botsula (the elder Kharkov DK, was one of initiators of the invitation of Rinpoche to Russia in 1992);

- The associate editor - Mironenko Igor (3-rd level SMS, practicing since 1994);

- The associate editor Larissa Radcheko (practicing since 1996).

Moscow Web Site

Dear Friends,
Welcome to the new web-site of Moscow Dzogchen Community (MDC)
"Rinchen-ling":

<http://www.dzogchen.ru/mdo/>

Here you can find both in Russian and English the information about MDC and the latest news. There is a small photo gallery as well.
With best regards,
Moscow Dzogchen Community "Rinchen-ling"

t s e g y a l g a r e a s t & w e s t

Tsegylgar, Dzogchen Community in America,
18 Schoolhouse Road, Conway, MA 01341
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473
Email: secretary@tsegylgar.org

Tsegylgar Summer & Fall Program 2004

JULY:

July 1st - 6th

Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat with Jim Valby
Khandroling Karma Yoga (as part of SMS practice retreat) July 1-6th, 2-4PM

July 7th

The International Day of the Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra:

July 9-13 (3 to 5 days)

Mandarava Retreat with Nina Robinson
(People can stay for 3 or 5 days)

July 17-August 1st* see schedule below

Mandarava web cast direct from Margarita Island

July 26th

Video Anniversary transmission

AUGUST:

August 6-8 or August 20-22 (exact schedule/dates will be announced soon)

Vajra Dance retreat with Anastasia McGhee (Tentative)

SEPTEMBER:

September 10-14

Chöd Retreat with Constantino Albini

September 18-19

Introduction to Contemplation with Constantino Albini
Workshop in New York City

Tsegylgar Mandrava WebCast Hours

17 July 5-7PM	25 July 9-12AM
18 July 10-12AM	26 July 9-12AM
19 July 9-12AM	27 July 10-12AM
20 July 9-12AM	28 July 10-12AM
21 July 9-12AM	29 July 10-12AM
22 July 10-12AM	30 July 10-12AM
23 July 9-12AM	31 July 10-12AM
24 July 8-12AM	1 Aug. 10-12AM

SANTI MAHA
SANGHA
Base level Practice
Retreat with
Jim Valby
Tsegylgar, Conway,
Massachusetts
July 1-6, 2004

Tsegylgar, The Dzogchen Community in America, is pleased to announce that Jim Valby will lead a Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Practice Retreat in Tsegylgar, Conway, July 1-July 6, 2004.

Dr. Jim Valby has been a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982. Jim is an authorized instructor for the Base Level of Santi Maha Sangha. Jim earned his doctorate in Far Eastern Studies under Herbert V. Guenther at the University of Saskatchewan and translates Dzogchen Tantras. He presents the methods for practice with great clarity, warmth, and humor.

Program
Date: July 1st (Thursday) - July 6th (Tuesday)

Practice session: 8:30-10am,
10:30am-noon, 5:30pm-7pm

Vajra Dance & Yantra Yoga practice hours will be confirmed.

Who may attend:

The Base Level Training is open to all interested persons who have received transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Cost:

\$150 for the 6 days or \$25/day
Pre-registration is recommended.

Thank you.

Tel: 413-369-4153

Fax: 413-369-4473

Email: secretary@tsegylgar.org

Accommodations:

Dormitory: \$10/night

Please contact: Cindy the Geköes to reserve space at:

Email: geko@tsegylgar.org

Shopping, cooking and cost for meals will be shared onsite.

Dorm is limited to 20 people.

For more information how to get to Tsegylgar and all about other Accommodation please visit this link:

<http://www.tsegylgar.org/features/InfoPractical3.html>

ADDRESS:

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

Chokyi Nyima's 2004 East Coast Teachings

Friday night, July 9; Saturday, July 10; and Sunday, July 11.

The Friday Night Teaching: The Dharma Belongs in Everyone's Heart
7:30 PM Karuna Center,
25 Main Street,
Northampton, Massachusetts.

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche will speak on how to enrich our own lives and the lives of those around us by cultivating the five noble qualities: forgiveness, contentment, rejoicing, the good heart and mindfulness. All five qualities are within the realistic reach of each of us.

The Saturday & Sunday Teachings: The Essence of Dzogchen.
Saturday, July 10: 11:30 AM -1:30 PM & 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM
Sunday, July 11: 10:00 AM - 12:00 noon & 2:00 - 4:00 PM

At The Dzogchen Community in America
18 Schoolhouse Rd.
Conway, Massachusetts.

Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche will give a special teaching on Vital Essence by Shakya Shri. This text covers the most important points on Dzogchen in a very practical hands-on fashion. Rinpoche has remarked about the text, "You could gather information and knowledge on Buddhism for decades and yet not understand this simple text. On the other hand, this short text is enough to reach complete enlightenment in just one lifetime."

The cost for Friday night is \$25 and the cost for Saturday and Sunday is \$125.

The registration address is:
CNR Teachings
P.O. Box 332
Northampton, MA 01061.

KARMA YOGA AT KHANDROLING, BUCKLAND, MASSACHUSETTS Summer 2004

This season at Khandroling, we will begin with preparing the site for the new universe size Mandala, so that the actual construction can coincide with the Santi Maha Sangha practice retreat. Here are the dates we will be coordinating work there. (There is a bulletin board to give instruction for those working at other times.)

June 29- July 6
Construction of the Mandala (laying down 2X4's, carrying & 3/4" plywood and pounding it together with sledge hammers, screwing the plywood down).
Karma yoga of SMS participants from 1:00 PM-4:30 PM, but more helpers are needed all day these days to get it done. When done, people can prime it, lay out the Mandala, and paint it (Vajra Dance Retreat Aug 6-8)

July 13-15
Use excavator to clear cabin sites and dig holes for concrete piers. Setting up forms and pouring concrete into them.

July 20-22
Build a cabin and a thögdal cabin, rehab the tool shed at the pond into a handicap accessible cabin, and finish the bathhouse.

July 27-29 -continued
Aug 3-5 - continued
Aug 10-12 -continued
Aug 17-19 -continued
Aug 24-25 -continued

Weekends in the Fall -continued

Santo
Tsegyalgar Red Gakyil

Green Tara in California
Green Tara Practice at the Dondrup Ling Center
Wednesdays 7PM 8:30PM
Wed July 14, 2004
Contact: Stephanie Kim 707.319.7600

visit
The Mirror
on line
@
www.
melong.com

MANDARAVA Retreat in Khandroling

Tsegyalgar, Conway, Massachusetts
with Nina Robinson (Merigar)
JULY 9-15, 2004

Tsegyalgar, The Dzogchen Community in America, is pleased to announce that Nina Robinson, of Merigar, will lead a 3-6 days MANDARAVA CHÜDLEN retreat, in Khandroling. The requested number of registrants necessary for organizing this retreat was reached in a record 24 hours. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu warmly supported our initiative. We hope that others who are interested in participating but who still have not registered will do so soon to give us some idea of how many people to expect, allowing us to better organize it for you. Please register even if you live in Conway area!!

When: July 9-15
3 days (extendible) to 6 days.
Where: At KHANDROLING

Due to the purification character of this practice, we decided to organize it to take place in the cleanest environment. Our first choice is Khandroling (Tsegyalgar), second, (in case of a bad weather), the Schoolhouse (Tsegyalgar).

Who may participate: all interested practitioners who have received Mandarava transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu are we invited to join us.

Cost: \$100 (3days) | \$180* (6 day) // \$30/day
* payment plans will be available for all those with financial difficulty.
Pre-registration is recommended. All donations welcome. Tel: 413-369-4153 |
Fax: 413-369-4473 | secretary@tsegyalgar.org

Food:
Shopping, cooking and cost for meals will be shared onsite.
Note: Mandarava diet may be applied as part of this retreat.

Accommodation: Dorms*: \$10/night Khandroling camping: \$5

Please contact: geko@tsegyalgar.org to reserve space.
* Dorms are limited to 20 people.

For more information on how to get to Tsegyalgar and all about other accommodations, please visit this link: <http://www.tsegyalgar.org/features/InfoPractical3.html>

MANDARAVA weekend retreat

At this weekend retreat, we will be guided in the Short & Long Mandarava Practices together with mudras, use of instruments, making of the dadar, application of Chüdülen Practice, etc. Further information will be soon communicated to all participants registered for this retreat.

Nina Robinson is a long-time student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Nina was asked by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to lead the Merigar Mandarava Retreat over Easter of 2003 and has been invited to various places in Italy and all over the world to lead Mandarava practice retreats. We will benefit from her experience, which she will share with us.

If you wish to participate please register by calling Tsegyalgar Office:
413-369-4153 or by email to bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org as soon as possible.

Tsegyalgar, Dzogchen Community in America,
18 Schoolhouse Road, Conway, MA 01341
Tel: 413-369-4153 | Fax: 413-369-4473
Email: secretary@tsegyalgar.org

Dance of the Song of the Vajra with Anastasia McGhee

September 3-8, 2004
Santa Fe, New Mexico, USA

The Dzogchen Community of New Mexico is very pleased to announce that we will be hosting a beginning course in the Second Part of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, taught by Anastasia McGhee, 2nd-level local instructor, in early September of this year in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

WHEN: September 3-8, 2004 (precise schedule to be announced later; on workdays, teaching sessions will be in the evening to allow more people to attend)
WHERE: Santa Fe, New Mexico
COST: Sliding scale US\$165-225 (pay what you can within that range; if you can pay more than the minimum, that would be very helpful)
CONTACT: Julia Deisler, Email: jmdeisler@aol.com

TO REGISTER: Send check or money order for \$100 US (deposit) or for the entire amount to:
The Dzogchen Community of New Mexico
c/o Julia Deisler
PO Box 1838
Santa Fe, NM 87504-1838
USA

(Checks should be made payable to The Dzogchen Community of New Mexico.)

Note: Registration is limited to 20 people.

In order to practice the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, a practitioner should already have received the transmission of the Dzogchen Teachings and the "Lung" of the Song of the Vajra from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

baja days



Stayed tuned for Baja driving instructions courtesy of John Bidleman in future issues of *The Mirror*.

photos by Anastasia McGhee




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New Gakyil, Baja California, Mexico

All the personal details of the people on the New Gakyil of Baja California, Mexico have been removed from this article due to security issues that have arisen in November 2014.

Yantra Yoga in Santa Fe, New Mexico August 19-22, 2004

The Dzogchen Community of New Mexico is pleased to announce that Lynn Sutherland will be teaching a course in Yantra Yoga August 19-22, 2004, in Santa Fe, NM.

We will review the preliminary practices that are essential for building a strong foundation for Yantra Yoga. Then we will focus on the First Series (The Four Characteristic Conditions) and, time permitting, the Second Series (The Four Profound Applications). Emphasis will be on cultivating presence and awareness while developing and deepening our understanding and experience of the breath, within both the yantras (movements) and the pranayamas (breathing practices).

WHEN: Thursday 19 August through Sunday 22 August 2004, beginning Thursday evening

WHERE: Santa Fe, NM (exact location to be announced)

COST: US\$100-150 sliding scale; pay what you can within that range. (If you can pay more than the minimum, that would be very helpful.)

CONTACT: Julia Deisler at jmdeisler@aol.com

TO REGISTER: Send check or money order for \$50 (deposit) or whole amount to
THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF NEW MEXICO
c/o Julia Deisler
PO Box 1838
Santa Fe, NM 87504 USA

Checks should be made out to THE DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY OF NEW MEXICO

In order to participate in this retreat, a practitioner must have already received the transmission of the Dzogchen Teachings from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and have prior experience with at least the Eight Movements.

\$25,000 Challenge Grant for Baja, California

by Carol Fields

The kind anonymous donor of the last two years' challenge grants has notified us that there will be another very generous challenge grant this year for the Baja Winter Gar Project, in the amount of \$25,000. We must match this amount to release the money. We have been very successful in matching \$20,000 in previous challenge grants over the last year. So, let's all row the boat here for a spectacular result of \$50,000 this year for Baja!!!!!!

Land Update:

We are currently collecting contractor bids for the completion of the 22 casitas on the San Miguel land, to be solar-powered, plus activation of the water system and cistern. There are tentative plans to sponsor forest service ecological workshops for the local residents dealing with preservation of trees and shrubs and finding alternatives to cattle grazing. We expect to hold our first compost toilet workshop soon!

We are planning to have the next Baja retreat with Rinpoche in April of 2005, on the land, and will need to have camping facilities, parking, tent cabins, the teaching space, working kitchen, and hopefully, the casitas, prepared. Several high-clearance vehicles will be needed for those residing on the land, and we have put out a notice to find 2-5 "pioneers" to be the first Community members to live on the property. The good news is that the highway engineers are intensively conducting further repairs this month at multiple spots on the Naranjas Road, which leads to the property.

To be part of this spectacular project (see pictures at <http://bajasangha.org>), please send your contribution made out to the Dzogchen Community West Coast, and mark it "Winter Gar Fund." Address it to: Dzogchen Community West Coast, 2748 Adeline, Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94703 Contributions are fully tax-deductible in the U.S. and will be promptly acknowledged.

The success and joy of this venture now rests in your capable hands! Many thanks for your support in all its forms!

The Baja Gakyil (gakyil@bajasangha.org)

Mandarava Chülden Retreat from Margarita Island July 17 - August 1, 2004 California Schedule

What:

The entire Mandarava Chülden Retreat from Margarita Island will be live web cast for the first time ever.

Where:

Dondrub Ling, the home of the Dzogchen Community West Coast
2748 Adeline Street Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94703
Phone: (510) 644-2260

July 17 Sat 5-7 PM Local time: 2-4 PM	July 25 Sun 9-12 AM Local time: 6-9 AM	When:
July 18 Sun 10-12 AM Local time: 7-9 AM	July 26 Mon 9-12 AM 6- Local time: 9 AM	
July 19 Mon 9-12 AM Local time: 6-9 AM	July 27 Tues 10-12 AM Local time: 7-9 AM	
July 20 Tues 9-12 AM 6- Local time: 9 AM	July 28 Wed 10-12 AM Local time: 7-9 AM	
July 21 Wed 9-12 AM 6- Local time: 9 AM	July 29 Thurs 10-12 AM Local time: 7-9 AM	
July 22 Thurs 10-12 AM Local time: 7-10 AM	July 30 Fri 10-12 AM 7- Local time: 9 AM	
July 23 Fri 9-12 AM Local time: 6-9 AM	July 31 Sat 10-12 AM 7- Local time: 9 AM	
July 24 Sat 8-12 AM Local time: 5-9 AM	Aug. 1 Sun 10-12 AM 7- Local time: 9 AM	

Registration:

At the door, \$20 per session.
Advanced enrollment, \$15 per session.
Advanced enrollment for the entire course, \$180 = 16*15* 75%
Advanced enrollment must be received by June 24.

Please make checks payable to:

Dzogchen Community West Coast. Please put "Mandarava" in the memo line. Please send checks to
Dzogchen Community West Coast, 2748 Adeline Street Suite D
Berkeley, CA 94703
Contact person for this retreat is:
Stefanie Kim
Tel: 707-319-7600
Email: shk108@aol.com

Other Items of Note:

Chülden pills will be available.
The price has not yet been determined.

PIONEER SETTLERS NEEDED FOR BAJA DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY LAND

As many of you know, we have been given a wonderfully large (3,000 acres) and beautiful piece of wild ranch land in Baja California Sur, Mexico, near the towns and beaches which are most attractive to tourists and to ex-patriots who have retired there. Small groups of rural vaquero families live scattered throughout the valley where the land of San Miguel is located. It is a forty-five minute drive to the international airport from the property on a rural, dirt road, which is sometimes challenging, and periodically can be closed during the rainy season (August - mid-October).

Currently, we are in the process of planning the completion of 22 one-room casitas already on the property, the water system, the toilets, and other related buildings. We are looking for 2-to-5 members or close friends of the Dzogchen Community who would be comfortable living in this wild and unspoiled landscape, and who would be able to commit themselves to a stay of a minimum of 6 months, but preferably a year.

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Those applying must speak Spanish and are preferably bilingual in Spanish and English.
- Having a history of attending retreats with Rinpoche and practicing with other Dzogchen Community members—highly preferable.
- Familiarity and ease with the desert outdoors—able to use an outhouse, water filtration, tent or tent cabin or unfinished dwelling; drive a truck or van with clearance and 4-wheel drive over rough roads; cook on a camp stove; be away from town for days at a time; O.K. with wild animals such as large lizards, wild pigs, wandering cows and donkeys, and the occasional snake; are physically hardy and able to do physical work, walk distances on rough desert trails, etc. A plus if you own your own camping equipment. A double-plus if you own a high-clearance vehicle.

We know that for some people, this describes a paradise, but for others, this is not what they had

in mind. Our land is just starting to be settled and developed, and the people who are there in the beginning need to be the outdoors type.

4. Prefer those with easy-going personalities, who will enjoy conversing positively and casually with the locals in the area, will not be overly paranoid or worried when something new or challenging comes up, and who like to work.

5. Skills which are of use in this environment: garden and plant cultivation; eco-touring; hospitality; construction; healing and health; familiarity with water and solar systems; tent and deck installation; shopping for supplies; cooking; engineering or fix-it mechanical background; trail-building; leading practices; supervision of workers; general outdoors background; general manual labor background; and interfacing with the culture at large in Baja which is friendly, and low-key.

COMMUNITY WILL PROVIDE

- Vehicle(s), gas, and repairs for transportation to and from, as well as around, the property.
- Food expenses.
- Assistance with visa, car insurance, etc.
- A sheltered place to live on the property.
- Personal support—we have a very friendly and supportive group of people in Baja who are working on the land project, and who like to practice together. They are very familiar with all details of living in Baja. This is a wonderful group to work and practice with! Plus, there is a full Baja Gakyil, with members also in California and Mexico City, as well as Baja.
- Retreats with Rinpoche—one is scheduled for April 2005, and one may be scheduled earlier than that.
- Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Retreats with certified members of the Dzogchen Community (projected for November 2004 in Baja).

DUTIES:

- Provide support for and take part in work-parties and projects being conducted on the land. This requires working very

closely with the local members of the Dzogchen Community and Gakyil, also requires some supervision of local workers.

- Provide a friendly continuous presence on the land, as caretakers and observers, and interface with visitors and neighbors, acting as positive representatives of the Dzogchen Community.
- Keep Gakyil and local Community informed of land and road concerns, suggestions, observations on trespassing, fencing, cattle, wild animals, changes due to weather, resource use, water flows, neighbor concerns, guest accommodation and management, etc.
- Manage eco-tour and camping guest traffic, and assist in developing these programs.
- Help to ready the land for events to be held there by the Dzogchen Community.
- Meet and practice regularly with the local Dzogchen Community.
- Carry out defined roles conscientiously and consistently: such as cooking and shopping; obtaining supplies; hospitality and management of guests; physical work of all kinds; building; gardening and plant care; setting up communication system; management of workers, etc.
- Those working on the land will be expected to commit to a job description and to have periodic discussions with the local Gakyil members about their progress.

If you are interested in this opportunity, please send a communication of interest to one of the following people, and include a resume or history of your background with the Community and your work and skill background, as well as what you wish to gain from this experience. We would like to hear from you by July 31, 2004.

Contacts:

Carolyn Bass,
cbass@prodigy.net.mx
Andres Orvananos,
bubulu49@yahoo.com.mx
Carol Fields,
carolmfields@aol.com

Thank you,

The Baja Gakyil

getting from here to there.....

To Baja California, Mexico from Europe A Journey Made in 2003

by Cristina von Geispitzheim

The airline I flew was Iberia; the route was from Rome to Madrid, where I changed aircraft to Mexico City. In Mexico City I made a nice stop over for a day and then took Aeromexico to San José del Cabo. Without a stop over in Mexico City it is also possible to proceed directly from Rome to San José del Cabo, but it becomes a bit long and all the way it would be about 22 hours on the road. The cost was 650 Euro round trip, which is quite convenient considering the long distance from Rome to Baja California. I checked out other solutions, for example passing through Houston or Dallas, with Continental or other American carriers, and from Europe it is possible with British Airways. From Europe the most convenient for timing and cost was Iberia. Also it was a very comfortable aircraft on the route Madrid-Mexico City, the seats seemed bigger than most other companies and they have a contract with Aeromexico to guarantee this booking.

south america tashigar north & south

Tashigar North
Calle Bolivar Nro 32
Valle de Pedro Gonzalez
Municipio Gomez, Isla de Margarita
Venezuela
Tel: 0058 4165800
Email:
tashinor@mail.dzogchen.ru
Tashigar North Gakyil:
tashinor@gruposyahoo.com.ar

Tashigar South
Rosa Altamirano – Secretary
Comunidad Dzogchen
Tashigar
Calle pública S/N
Tanti 5155
Pcia. de Córdoba
Argentina
Tel & Fax: 0054- 3541-498 356
Email: tashigar@dcc.com.ar



Happy Retreatants at SMS Base Retreat in Merida, Venezuela

**Fireflies Seen and Unseen
in the Andean Night**
A Santi Maha Sangha Retreat
with Jim Valby and Friends

by Jerri Bassi

I had spoken with Rinpoche at 6AM the morning of my departure for Merida, and when I told him where I was going Rinpoche immediately painted a picture in my mind of flying into this fairly narrow, high Andean valley where jets cannot land. I felt good knowing he knew where I was going, and set off for the airport on a warm, breezy Margarita morning.

I arrived to the little Merida airport and after a while saw Jim's face appear on the other side of the glass screen while I was waiting for my bag to appear out of the darkness of the baggage area. Jim's warm and knowing face was soon joined by Rowena Hill, our Andean Mountain host, who had the wisdom to acquire an old mountain home some thirty years previously.

There I was, having arrived in time to climb aboard one of three Jeep's that would take us to discover more of the teachings, the mountains, each other and ourselves. We were nine people including Cleris, our very experienced driver. My bag was thrown leisurely atop the jeep and we headed out to the outskirts of Merida where we met with the second Jeep; we were now fifteen. Here we collected what we needed and the usual extras and continued on an upward journey above Merida and around the famous mountain, Pico Bolivar that stands at 5170m. We drove up through farmlets and country houses, banana trees, mountain frangipani, bullocks and mules.

When we arrived at a mountain farm/coffee house we met our third Jeep with Rowena's son, Andres and grandson, along with Catharine and our food, for the forthcoming seven-day retreat. Now we were complete and confident together, traveling in convoy for the next three hours, down a steep valley and up a narrow ridge to the end of the road. The road was rough in places and on several occasions it seemed like the best decision was to walk and let the Jeeps and their drivers negotiate very difficult terrain. We needed to check the wheels on several occasions, swap tires with folk on the way who knew

Cleris and eat lunch in the midst of forest trees with leaves almost the same size as the wheels. We were being introduced to the sensitivities and the dangers of traveling in this enormous land of high peaks and steeply farmed valleys.

We reached the end of the road and as planned teamed up with several other folk and four mules who carried most of our food and gear along a track for another hour before we all reached the farmhouse safely; it was close to dark. Our time there was greatly assisted by Philomeno, who managed the mules amongst many other things and his wife Pancha who was constantly available.

What a process, arriving into such a new environment, the other side of Pico Bolivar. The world always seems different from the other side! We soon settled into our rooms, set the fires and cooked a meal. Settling into retreat time means simplifying and relishing the time to observe the mind and arising experiences.

Whilst sitting on the grass banks surrounding the house, the night was revealing its shadowy forms. Then fireflies appeared and disappeared in a random dance of light. Relaxing in this experience I discovered why I had made this effort to attend this SMS base retreat. My attention, to applying the practices in new environments and understanding rigpa, is somewhat like these invisible creatures of the night. There is light and there is dark and yet I never saw the firefly itself. Here our intention was to study and practice, to know and test what we know in practice. Jim's teaching is rooted in deep commitment, knowledge and experience. His humorous style made people want to do more practices. His melodious Tibetan songs to the Maestro moved me profoundly; at that point I found myself wanting more and could relax in the soulful gift I was receiving.

Some Semdzin practices took us off separately high on the ridge, in the ruins of old rammed earth buildings, on rocks in the river or in little grazing paddocks. One day a large cow came in to see me in response to my soundings, she thought there was an invitation to something. By the time she came up to me she was an imposing size, but my experience of fear soon abated and she chewed grass for a while. The quiet of the valleys is still happening as I write this piece at home. Such a treasure.

Thank you Jim for saying yes so often, thank you Rowena for your persistence, and thanks to Rinpoche for being our guide.

TASHIGAR NORTH
Vajra Dance Courses

August 4 - 11
Dance of Song of Vajra (Part 2)
with Adriana dal Borgo

Dance of the Liberation of 6 Lokas
with Carmen Rivas:
July 2 - 6

Santi Maha Sangha Practice Retreat Peru
with Jim Valby
October 30 – November 10, 2004

The Dzogchen Community of Peru is happy to host a SMS Practice Retreat with Jim Valby in Lima from October 30 to November 10, 2004.

Anyone wanting to participate please contact:
subelaunde@yahoo.com

New Gakyil, Gekoes & Secretary of Tashigar South

Yellow
Mario Cech (Treasurer)
Maria Garcia Ruvira

Blue
Marta Trillo
Diana Montenegro
Daniel Simonelli

Red
Martin Bortagaray (President)
Jose Poncio

New Gekoes: Luis Olivera

Secretary: Rosa Altamirano

How to Use the Ritual Drum

by Prima Mai

During our visit in Tashigar Norte in Venezuela/Margarita island in March 2004, on several occasions Rinpoche explained how to use the small ritual Drum. To make it brief, I believe it was not the first time Rinpoche gave this explanation, but it was the first time I understood it in a more concrete way.

When you have the chance to practice together with Rinpoche, it's good to closely observe his movements performing mudras and/or using ritual instruments even when you think you know more or less how by heart.

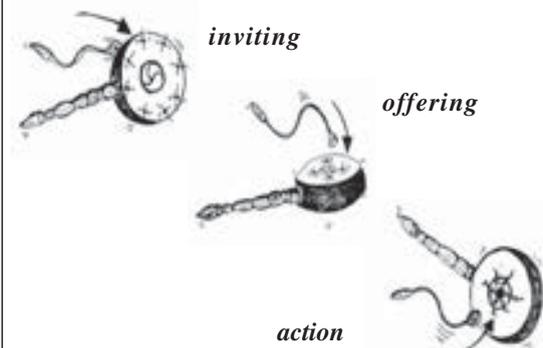
Rinpoche also mentioned that when doing Naggong, to end this cycle one plays the Drum (action) with one single beat and not with many beats, as if one is playing the ritual bell.

Besides respecting the indication offered in practice texts of using a different force with the swinging sounder, the Drum turns towards oneself during practice phases of 'invitation'. The swinging sounder is played inwardly and the borders of the out-facing part of the Drum, which has a higher and sweeter sound.

During practice phases of 'offering', the Drum is facing to the left of your right side. The swinging sounder is now playing the part closer to the center of the Drum, which will have a deeper and compact sound.

During practice phases of 'action', the Drum is also facing toward oneself. The swinging sounder though, is playing outwardly and in the center of the Drum, which sounds the deepest sound on the Drum.

Hopefully these diagrams will help clarify:



Mandarava Retreat in Margarita

Diet and behavior information:

Diet: light food, like rice and cooked vegetables, boiled or grilled fish, fruit juices and coconut water. If somebody feels hungrier or has special needs it is possible to eat more.

Proper food will be available in the Gar's kitchen for retreat

Behavior: it would be very important not to drink alcohol, not to get tired with physical efforts, not to lay down under the sun and not to smoke.

The cost of the retreat is 180US\$, it would be very good for the Community if people pay in dollars. It is recommended to register at the Tashigar Norte some days before retreat starts. People will get the Chüdlen pills at the moment of registration.

Warm greetings,

Tashigar Norte Gakyil

Namgyalgar Gakyil, Australia

BLUE

Jan Taylor (Vice-President)
Paul Mortensen
Kamalesh Raecannon

YELLOW

Peter Phipps (Treasurer)
Ivan Barker (Co-Treasurer)

RED

Joanna Tyshing (President)
Jean Mackintosh

Vacancies exist on Red and Yellow.

Expressions of interest to join the Gakyil can be lodged with the President or secretary.

Namgyalgar DzogchenCommunity in Australia
PO Box 14 Central Tilba,
NSW 2546
Tel/Fax: 61 02 4473 7668
Email: namgyalg@acr.net.au
Web site: www.dzogchen.org.au

namgyalgar & pacific rim

Namgyalgar Updates

AudioVisual Archive

Thank-you to Phil and Veneta for their earlier work on the archive. Many thanks to outgoing member of the AV committee: Charles.

Easter SMS Retreat

An SMS retreat led by Angie Gilbert on the contemplation of the Four Immeasurables and Chöd practice was held at Namgyalgar over Easter and attended by 25 people who benefited from Angie's clear, concise explanations. At the retreat, Mathew Long gave Yantra Yoga instructions and Jean Mackintosh guided Vajra Dance practice. Some practitioners traveled from as far away as Perth and Brisbane to attend the retreat which overall was very successful and enjoyed by all participants.

Annual General Meeting

The AGM was held at Namgyalgar during the Easter SMS Retreat and attended by approximately 30 people.

At the meeting the 2002-03 audited financial accounts were tabled along with reports from the President, Treasurer, Secretary and Gakyil. This was followed by an open discussion regarding the situation and future of Namgyalgar with suggestions being made concerning possible income generating ventures which could help the Gar become more self-sufficient, and ideas about how to attract more people to visit, attend practice retreats and settle near the Gar.

Namgyalgar Projects :

Dark Retreat Cabin

The foundations of the dark retreat cabin have been laid and work is in progress, set to be completed within the near future. This cabin will have a dual function with a small light retreat room for Longde practice as well as the dedicated dark retreat section.

Geköes Cabin

Presently minor modifications to the design of the cabin are being finalized for submission to the Council for approval. Construction on the cabin is expected to start by mid-winter this year.

Gonpa Shrine

A design for a shrine table in the Gonpa has been accepted. This project is seen as part of the completion of the Gonpa and will be built as soon as funds are available. Donations to help finance the shrine's construction are most welcome.

Future Gakyil meeting dates :

July 24 in Melbourne

Sept 25 at the Gar

Namgyalgar's Easter Practice Retreat Easter, 2004

by Antonia McGarity and Viki Forscutt

A Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga practice retreat, led by Angie Gilbert and Mathew Long, was held at Namgyalgar over the Easter weekend in April, the theme of which was "Working with behavior, focusing upon the cultivation of Bodhicitta and letting go of the ego".

The retreat was attended by approximately thirty enthusiastic practitioners, some of whom traveled long distances to participate, making it one of the largest practice events at Namgyalgar for some time. Though there was only a small gathering of people at the Thundrin practice to open the retreat on Friday night, the numbers swelled the next day with the arrival of many more Vajra kin from near and far. It had been some time since the Gar's infamous bush kitchen - which just seems to go on and on - became a hub of Vajra family social activity. Once again, huddled together inside this rustic "humpy" nestled amidst the eucalyptis trees, brothers and sisters enjoyed lively conversation and catching up with each other over tasty, healthy meals which they shared in the preparation of.

Aimed at helping to overcome the ego-ridden dualistic self, each day of the retreat included sessions on the contemplation of the Four Immeasurables, Chöd and Yantra Yoga. Gently and calmly SMS teacher Angie Gilbert spoke about Equanimity and Loving-kindness which was contemplated in the context of the Short Thun. In her direct way, Angie also led people through explanations of the Chöd punctuated by the Guru Yoga verse with Machig Labdron. Angie's skill of structuring the retreat in such a way as to hold everyone's attention and inspiration, aided by her measured leading of the practices, was much appreciated by all in attendance.

In the context of cutting the ego and developing the heart, the new teacher Mathew Long led the Yantra Yoga which was very refreshing and relaxing. Complimenting the main practices of the retreat, each day before the evening meal, several people danced the Song of the Vajra around the Mandala led by Jean Mackintosh. In the evenings, after dinner, people gathered around a large open fire in the gazebo to do Chöd practice, before snuggling into their

sleeping bags in the tents and caravans poised upon the hillsides.

On the last night of the retreat, following a barbecue, the remaining retreatants ventured out from under the trees and away from the gazebo fire onto an open field to do the Chöd. With torches in hand, seated around a fire beneath a starlit sky, people did a vigorous Chöd that included an extremely short form taught during the retreat. In the early morning on the last day a Sang practice - which is becoming more popular at Namgyalgar - was performed at the Sankhang, not far from the new retreat cabin situated near the coral tree in the saddle. The retreat ended with a final Thun on loving-kindness followed by a Ganapuja that included the Marme Monlan that reminds us of inter-dependence and potentiality. Coincidentally as the balimta was being offered, a large old goanna lizard that came strolling purposefully along, paused for a moment outside the Gonpa, then turned and scuffled off, hauling itself up a wall through the Vajra Garden.

Scheduled into the retreat was the Annual General Meeting at which the audited financial accounts were presented, along with reports from Namgyalgar's office bearers. Following the official business there was an open discussion regarding the situation and future of Namgyalgar. In particular people talked about the need to have a long-term vision for the Gar and how financially viable schemes might be created to help sustain it. Issues were raised about the lack of people and under-utilization of the Gar, about its isolation and how far away many practitioners live from it. This led into a lively brainstorming session in which people suggested possible income-generating activities and ways of attracting and assisting more people to visit, attend practice retreats and settle near the Gar. Ideas about practitioners possibly living together either on the Gar or nearby in shared accommodations of some sort, with a view to supporting each other and practicing together in their older age, were flagged. The Namgyalgar Gakyil is now considering ways to further investigate and explore some of these ideas.

Overall it was a most positive and enjoyable retreat in which a cluster of Vajra kin greatly benefited in deepening their practice and understanding of the teachings, and reconnecting with each other and with their wonderful victorious Gar.

PASSAGES



Born:
Arya Dewa Phipps was born in Melbourne on March 22, 2004, to the chants on the Mantra Healing CD

and into the arms of overjoyed parents Suzana Dewa and Peter Phipps. Arya smiles wide-eyed at her brother Gabriel, her sister Sylvia and her dog Oki, sleeps snuggled between her mum and dad, and is simply too beautiful for words. She reminds us of things that we've forgotten and are trying to unlearn our way back to. As our Tibetan friends say, Arya still remembers everything and knows a lot more than we ever will in our human lifetime. It is for this that we not only adore her but also deeply respect her.

Namgyalgar Retreat Program 2004

Aug 12th - 22nd Aug
Michael Katz Tour

Sydney

Lecture: August 20th
7 - 9 PM The Buddhist Library
90 - 92 Church St Camperdown
Workshop: August 21st
9.30 AM - 4 PM Rigpa Fellowship 3/822 George St Sydney

Geelong

Lecture: August 14th
7 - 9 PM The Lindell Theatre

Geelong Hospital
Bellarine St Geelong

Melbourne

Lectures: August 13th & 19th
7 - 9 PM Melbourne University Private
442 Auburn Rd. Hawthorn
Workshop: August 15th
9.30 AM - 4 PM Faulkner Park
65 Toorak Rd South Yarra

Lecture \$20 per person Concession \$15
Workshop \$100 per person Concession \$80

Saturday Sept 25th 2004

SMS retreat at Gar

Namgyalgar Gakyil Update

April 2004

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu visit 2005

Rinpoche has informed the Namgyalgar Gakyil that he will not be visiting the Asia - Pacific region in 2005. In light of this the Blue Gakyil is planning a retreat program for summer 2004 - 05 for the Gar which will be publicized when confirmed

Tibetan Medicine Program

Dr. Nida will conduct Tibetan Medicine courses in Australia between December 2004 and February 2005 which include: Ku Nye Massage Levels 1: 2: 3, Mantra Healing Level 1 and Dream Analysis. The full program will be publicized when finalized.

Namgyalgar's 10 year anniversary

The Gakyil is planning a celebration for Namgyalgar's 10th Anniversary to be held at the Gar in early 2005.

Namgyalgar Gakyil Changes

Many thanks to outgoing Namgyalgar Gakyil members Steph Kerr, Lily Giblin and Maggie Camfield, for their generous contribution to the Community. Welcome to new Gakyil members Jean Mackintosh on Red and Kamalesh Raenannon on Blue.

Dreaming and Awakening 2004 Australian Tour Dr. Michael Katz

Editor of *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light*
Author of *The White Dolphin*

Sponsored by the Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar

Tour dates:

Aug 13th - Aug 21st, 2004

Sydney

Lecture: August 20th
7 PM - 9 PM The Buddhist Library
90 - 92 Church St Camperdown
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442 Auburn Rd. Hawthorn
Workshop: August 15th
9:30 AM - 4 PM Faulkner Park
65 Toorak Rd South Yarra

Dr Michael Katz is a psychologist (B.A. Lafayette College, M.A.; Psy.D. New York University) who has studied Ericksonian hypnotherapy, Reichian therapy, Gestalt, Embodied Dream Imagery and psychodrama. He has practiced Tibetan Buddhism and Dzogchen meditation since 1974, and is a long-standing student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, a Tibetan master of the Dzogchen tradition. He edited and wrote the "Introduction" to that master's definitive book, *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light*. He has also written a novel, *The White Dolphin*, which publicizes the plight of marine mammals. He currently lives in New York City and since 2001 has lectured and led workshops throughout the USA and Europe on lucid dreaming for personal growth. This will be his first visit to Australia.

Publications:

Norbu, Namkhai, *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light*, Ithaca, NY, Snow Lion Publications, 2002. 2nd edition, Edited and introduced by Michael Katz.

Katz, Michael, *The White Dolphin*, Psychology Help Publications, 2001

Lectures

Lectures will outline how Dream Yoga and the practice of the "natural light" fit into the context of Tibetan Buddhism as well as delineate the various psychological systems used in dream work. Dr Michael Katz will instruct on exercises drawing upon both Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Dzogchen tradition and psychological methods that assist us in actively and creatively working with dreams. The exercises taught at the lectures will not require attendance at a workshop in order to be useful. However the workshops will deepen and extend the dream work.
No pre-registration is required to attend the lectures, please pay at the door on the night.

Communicating within the Sangha Part III

by Dorothea Franck

V. Vajra-family

It is obvious that most of the things I said in the previous parts of this essay are not necessarily specific for the exchange between members of the Sangha. Their relevance rather derives from the fact that communicating with fellow students, while sometimes strangely easy, at other times can be particularly difficult. It seems as if we meet all our best friends and our best "enemies". In this respect it very much resembles a family, where in case of differences emotions tend to rise high. There is an additional problem. Just because we realize the immeasurable value of these teachings and hence the profound commitment for its pure preservation, we feel justified in getting very worried and angry if others interpret the Masters words in a "wrong", i.e. a different way. Of course, we do have to communicate our concern when we see that things go wrong. But we have to mind the famous words of Atisha: "The Dharma has to be applied in the way of the Dharma"! This means in the first place that we have stay relaxed and remain open in the communication. This is the more difficult the more the things at stake really seem to matter. But being present and relaxed is more important than any other matter, because in a noisy, angry inner state the soft inner voice of our intuitive wisdom can hardly come through.

"God is on our side – the Guru is on my side"

Let's stay with the family comparison. As children, we all wanted to be daddies or mummies favourite. We all want to be recognized and loved. We want to feel special, deserving a special relationship with the parent or the master. In cases of conflict we want to feel: Daddy/God/the Guru is on my side!

Also if we feel not respected enough by Sangha members, we feel deep indignation. How can a Vajra brother or sister do this to me! And we might feel jealous when we see the master give special attention or show a smile to another person, and not to us, and think like a spoiled child: This isn't fair! Just like we cried when our brother or sister got a (seemingly) bigger piece of chocolate! Behavioral advice usually goes primarily to the "active" person: do not hit your brother or sister, do not hurt the other person, be aware of the needs of others. But the maturity of the receiving side is just as relevant! For example, when you feel hurt: don't assume too quickly bad intentions. We should look for the reasons why the other person might feel justified to raise a critical voice, and check our own sensitivities and sore spots, where we get defensive or furious or deeply hurt. This is a very efficient way to gain insight into our trigger spots: the weak point where past experiences, and particularly a lack of self-acceptance, causes disproportionately emotional responses. If you manage to consider these not too pleasant situations

as a kind of discovery procedure for blind spots, they are still not pleasant, but at least no longer useless.

When we make the comparison to the family situation, we must not forget that the analogy is only half-true. While we students might feel and behave somewhat similar to how we did as children, our Master is not like an ordinary parent. Even if in a given dispute my opinion might contain some real understanding and the teacher even confirms this in some way, the Guru is never "on my side" - nor for or against yours, because he is not on any side. He is impartial, non-dualistic and non-judgemental. He has a special, i.e. a specific relationship with every one of us. While we know this rationally, it is hard to really base our emotions and behaviour on this conviction. Nevertheless we can remind ourselves of it when necessary, because there is an immense danger there: that the spiritual connection to a teacher rather feeds our ego than destroying it.

We might also suffer from the opposite syndrome, feeling extremely insecure, unworthy, unlovable, stupid and immature in front of the master, naked and transparent in all our misery. Sometimes in the proximity to the master we feel like the lost son coming home, at other moments we feel like under an X-ray machine or cut open on the operation table, all our shortcomings and hidden flaws totally exposed.

I am sure we are totally "seen", in more ways than we can imagine. But at the same time we have to realize that we seriously under-rate the compassionate capacity and impartiality of the master if we feel judged and rejected. Why would we follow a teacher if we would not find special qualities like unlimited compassion in him?

The case of insecurity causes perhaps fewer problems towards other Sangha members, but it is a mirror image of the problem of the spoiled child. In both cases we project our own limitations and fears onto someone who is beyond these limits.

Hard cases: Breathing with a snake

There are other ways of communication in the Sangha than talking and arguing. Doing practice together is also a way to communicate, and a highly relevant one. The co-ordination of the actions of body and voice also co-ordinates the energies in the group.

Thinking specifically of Rinpoche's advice to co-ordinate our breathing at certain parts of the collective practices, because it creates a kind of resonance or link between us, a strange memory came to my mind.

A long time ago I was visiting an eccentric pop musician and his family in England. He especially cherished a pet snake, which was lying motionless in the middle of a large terrarium. It didn't seem to take notice of us trying to get its attention. The owner claimed the snake would recognize him and

respond to him in special ways when he takes it out of its box. Somehow, I had a hard time believing this, and I tried to find out whether I could get any response from the animal. It wasn't interested in our gestures, even when I ticked on the glass. But I decided to spend some time in front of the terrarium and watch it. After a while, I saw that the movement of breathing was slightly noticeable in the coiled up body. It had a very strange way of breathing: inhaling seemed slow and normal but the exhaling was not one continuous smooth movement but it went in bits and pieces in a strange, irregular, stuttering rhythm. Looking for a way to feel closer to the snake I started to imitate this and followed the snake exactly with my own breathing. Nothing happened for quite a while. But then all of a sudden the snake made a dramatic quick movement and shot its head forward to the glass on the side where I was standing. It raised its head and opened the mouth moving the forked tongue towards me. I almost jolted. But then I steadied myself and just stared back, after all, there was thick glass between us. We exchanged glances for quite a while. I was convinced that the synchronized breathing had brought about this contact.

So if the co-ordination of such a basic process provides a kind of contact between species, how much more should this be the case among humans? As I said earlier, trying to understand another being is like visiting another planet. But the teachings offer methods to bridge the gap. Communication with a snake might indeed seem a hard case. But among our fellow human beings there are definitely persons we find hard to love and respect. Well, in extreme cases we have to find extreme remedies.

I received a lesson recently that was profoundly painful and beautiful as well. Death is an existential situation which functions like a crystal-clear mirror. I had the privilege to attend a dear old aunt of mine in her very last days. Asking myself: when did I really help her and when did I fail, I realized that it was all a question of good listening - especially when there is no more talking. There was a profound contact. But there were also moments when I was hiding my helplessness and hidden panic behind busy action like pushing her to eat and drink when she had clearly no desire to do so. It's like skating over thin ice: we fear to break through a hole when we stop and stand still. While in fact we could break through the hole and learn to fly!

Besides these insights I received a gift. I realized that you can love more profoundly than ever when you are a witness of dying. We all know the old rule "de mortibus nihil nisi bene." (Only speak well of the deceased.) This not only a wise rule of conduct but also a realistic observation. When someone has died and even more when we see someone dying, we are naturally inclined to see the

continued on page 22

Love, Relationships & the Teachings

Love is probably the most highly prized, most sought after human experience after sex. Or maybe for the romantic, the top of the heap. Love has many forms and exists within a variety of contexts, some more conditional than others. There is the love of the parent for the child, the child for the parent, the lover and the beloved, love of country, love of God, love of nature, animals, art, food, chocolate, etc., etc. You name it and we love it.

And then we relate to the object of our love. We objectify it, we idealize it, we long for it, we grasp at it, we judge it, we cling to it, we fantasize about it, we're suffocated by it, sometimes we leave it or it leaves us, and we suffer. We have wars based in nationalism and "love of country". We hurt others through the exclusivity of our "love". We create huge chasms of separation because of our "love of God". We can find our muse and great creative inspiration through love. We can achieve enormous feats in love. We can become totally one pointed and totally distracted in love. Love is a strong basic human emotion that feels infinitely good

Love & Marriage

An offering by Barrie Simmons

A few weeks ago, while in New York for the marriage of our son Noah and his Sandra, I came upon the quotation attached, which seems to me to make great sense, in a book by Tom Malone. He was one of the pioneers, with my friend Carl Whitaker, of an approach we call "experiential psychotherapy." In one of history's extreme ironies, they worked out their very humane way of helping in the mental health clinic at Los Alamos, part of the secret installation where the Atomic Bomb was first being built. For years, they worked with ostensibly incurable schizophrenics, achieving remarkable results. Then they developed a deep and effective mode of family therapy, which has healed thousands. NB: Nancy and I are celebrating our 50th wedding anniversary on December 16th of this year.

From *THE WINDOWS OF EXPERIENCE* by Thomas P. Malone:

"To stay married we have to... Realize that marriage is ongoing hard work. There is no other way to be married. Understand that we marry the missing parts, the rest of us. Being married to oneself would not only be a bore, but would almost guarantee our premature demise as a person. Realize that we have to learn from the ways in which we differ. The task is a significant portion of our motivation for marrying this particular person. Decide that we are going to stay in the marriage. It is astonishing how few people ever decide that. Realize that we are responsible for our own happiness and unhappiness. Know that if our spouse is having a bad time, we have something to do with it even though we may not be "responsible" for it. Bring something new of our person into the relationship every day. Our living together healthily involves a constant renewal. Know without any reservations that the greatest gift we can give our spouse is our genuine love of ourselves. The greatest gift we can give our children is our love of each other. Know that if we want something, we must give it. If we want our spouse to tell us about himself or herself, we must tell them about ourselves. If we want our spouse to listen, we must listen to our spouse. Accept the fact that despite being male and female, both of us are both masculine and feminine. Realize that play makes marriages. Without joy and laughter, marriage is simply an incessant dying."

.....suggested by Barrie Simmons

Errata

On page 2 of the last Mirror, issue 67, Georg Meschede of Munich, not Marie Krupp, transcribed the Web Cast Teaching. Apologies to Georg.

The Santi Maha Sangha Retreat dates with Jim Valby in Merigar are: July 16 – August 12, 2004

The correct email of Carmen Rivas on Margarita Island, Venezuela is marcarmenrivas@yahoo.com.ar

words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Respecting Others

Rome, November 21, 2000
Mirror Issue # 56

Knowing how to respect the value and character of each thing is a part of our awareness. First of all, a practitioner should know how to respect the individual and, above all, other practitioners, because each individual has his or her dimension. We have a great many problems with this. We are constantly forgetting to respect the dimension of others, particularly people who are in couples.

When both people in the couple are young and lovely then everything goes wonderfully. They are blinded by their passion

and think they are like one individual and see all aspects of things in the same way. A year later it's a little like that, and after a few more years they are a little disillusioned and discover that they don't exactly see eye to eye. At the beginning [of their relationship] they want to be seated on the same chair when they are eating, even if they break the chair! After two or three years they definitely want two different chairs, and after a few more years they want two different beds. After a while, one house isn't big enough and they want two.

After all this time, all they have really discovered is that they are two individuals, each with their own dimension. If, from the beginning, they had acknowl-

edged that they were two individuals with their own dimensions, their own ways of seeing and being but wanted to collaborate and be together, then they would have respected each other – especially if they are people who are following a spiritual path and have a sense of these values. In this way, if they live long enough to become old people then they will be two old people who will be sweet to each other and respect each other. But today that's very hard to do.

Even if it's not that way, it's very important that we understand that each person is an individual with his or her own dimension and way of seeing and being.

Love & Relationships

by Paul Bail

The need for love. The need to feel related to someone or something. This drives so many behaviors, some relatively sane, some relatively "insane." So much money spent, hours of sleep lost, tears shed, lies told, moments of hope and fear, all in the name of love. We hide parts of ourselves that we think will be unacceptable, so that we can be "loved." How crazy! And the traits that initially attract us to a lover are often the very things that later annoy us. How strange! And yet, we never totally give up on chasing love. Love is another topic I can get woefully confused about, right up there with sex!

Does love require another person, in order to manifest? When I am fully present, in that moment, isn't that love? Or, at least, the ground and potentiality out of which love can emerge? And when two people are fully present to each other, that's the essence of love, isn't it? That seems simple enough, but then it gets more complicated. There can be a moment of presence with someone I'm passing on the street, and a moment of presence in a committed relationship. I'd better not get these two mixed up, or there may be repercussions! "Instant karma," as they say!

Some relationships seem more "special" than others do, and this is part of the manifestation. Sometimes I have worried over the idea that exclusive relationships are "attachment." I got lost in the concept that attachment was "bad." But, there are many types of special relationships in our material life – parent and child, student and teacher, lovers, life-partners. Each of these has its own rules and codes. The codes are constructions, but so what? We can use constructions, can we not, knowing them to be such? In the provisional world in which we live, some constructions are "better" than others – nourishing food, a warm dry place to sleep, kindness and love in relationships. While love, or any preference, is "attachment," clearly we can distinguish between possessive, controlling, selfish love and a more open, honest, unselfish love. And every relationship is a mixture of these, at various moments.

And then again, there are moments of peace, when all distinctions become forgotten for the moment. Between craziness, and satisfaction, and peace – this is how my life swings.

To Develop Love

His Holiness the Dalai Lama

Excerpted from *Mirror 8*, 1991

"Many people say that human nature is violent, but I often jokingly say that observing our bodies, our fingernails and our teeth, etc., we can categorize men as docile animals. Also if we closely observe men's nature and the very existence of human communities, I think they arise from the need for human contact and love. Even scientists say that the first couple of weeks are extremely important for babies with regards to their relationship with their mother. This shows how even biologically man needs affection. I think that affection, love and benevolence, are fundamentally important."

next topic
family & parenting
deadline: July 16

SINGLE WHITE FEMALE DZ PRACTITIONER SEEKS CYBER LOVER FOR EXCHANGE OF WELL-WRITTEN LOVE NOTES.

Age irrelevant, looks irrelevant, unbearable personal habits that would normally drive a lover away, not an issue here as it is preferable that we never meet. Fear of intimacy not an issue, fear of commitment could be if you don't think you could commit to a few minutes writing per day. Sexual preference not an issue either as I will accept love notes from all sexes

and sexual persuasions, but let me say up front, that depending on the response to this ad, even though I cannot absolutely guarantee I will be monogamous, you will feel like you are the one and only in my life. I may however with your permission, share your love notes with other DZ practitioners like myself who while they may be strong, beautiful, radiant people in the prime of their lives, live each day untouched by the sweet words or tender hands of another's love.

And while these men and women may be great practitioners and know that love is a dream, love is a projection, love is a samsaric drug or just too goddamned painful to ever go there again, they still long for some simple love words to thrill them, to light the flame of Eros in their hearts, so that they may go to their meditation cushion with a little skip in their step and greet the day thinking "someone cares about me, someone desires me, someone wants to talk to me, someone wants to share the innermost secrets of my soul!"

However please be aware that love notes will only be responded to if it is apparent that some thought has gone into them. The common and generic "love you" that is uttered at the end of every phone call and email message will not be accepted. Use of erotic imagery and metaphor is encouraged while pornography is not (initially) encouraged.

While a high quality of writing is sought, schmaltz and corny language will be tolerated and love notes submitted in broken English, in another language or from an unusual world location will be at an advantage because of the exotic nature of their origin. Married men who respond to this ad will be encouraged to write love notes for their wives instead. If you find the thought of a cyber love letter exchange too intimidating but you still want to take part, why not write love notes to yourself and just cc me in. I won't respond to you directly but will send my response on to someone else, they can send their response to another, and so on, and in true Dzogchen style, the benefit of your love can be shared among many without you even knowing it.

This is my latest solution to the question of loving in a post global, post love/hate world.

Maybe you have a better idea. I'd love to hear about it. I look forward to receiving your first love note post haste, (seriously and not seriously) yours

LoveLetterWriter,
jnana@ozemail.com.au

Dear friends

I'm sending you a little detail here from my life on the island of Margarita where life often seems easier than anywhere else it is colorful with music and dancing in the streets at this time people of Pedro Gonzalez are celebrating their patron San Pedro who protects the fishermen

all the streets and houses are beautiful decorated with paper and plastic flowers handmade boats and so on... people here are poor but cheerful and friendly part of the daily picture of life are old huge american cars often without number plates part of the radiator is missing and sometimes even the doors often people repair their cars in the middle of the roads

cows are walking along the streets alone sometimes I feel like in India one sees four people together riding on one bicycle and it is hot always hot one feels happy if the wind blows a bit stronger we eat fish and chicken and arepas freshly baked corn tortillas and a lot of papaya mangos and coconut the ocean gets warmer every day in wintertime the water is pretty cold the locals go swimming for first time around Easter

One day we spent long time on the beach it's evening the colors of the houses on the beach the palm trees and the flowers are glowing in the last sunrays the atmosphere makes us feeling happy the sun surrounded by golden rays changing into a bigger growing red ball slowly sinking into the ocean It is calm on the beach the restaurants are closed people have left

Suddenly some children are shouting and pointing to the far end on the beach there in the distance a huge sea turtle at least 2 meters long is slowly moving walking towards the beach it's looking like a big moving rock

I'm amazed had no idea that something like this is still existing we walk towards the end of the beach where some people from the village already are standing in a distance watching the spectacle respectfully whispering with each other

The huge water turtle slowly moves forward searching after a little while she starts to draw a big circle

we are getting excited how old could she be maybe 200 or 300 years old who knows she is very impressive

slowly it is getting dark above us the stars and some light from the waning moon I'm happy to be here participating

The turtle has found her place drawing circles with her big fins then she scratches (scrapes) into the sand shoveling deep holes and remaining seated

We can move closer She is totally busy depositing her eggs

there will be a hundred to hundred and fifty as the local people say not all will survive The turtle is under protection of the civil nature guard we hear that some people might eat her eggs and meat here two men feel responsible

We are very close and stay quiet somehow however voice has spread the event so more people are coming

She is still depositing her eggs and nothing seems to disturb her she seems to be deeply involved in what she is doing

after a long while she slowly raises herself she snorts (blows) breathes heavily and deeply "she is crying" I hear a child saying

with her huge fins she shuffles the sand around her to cover the place where she has been sitting drawing again a circle

Two cars arrive their headlights irritate her soldiers come to keep guard

She tries to find her way back to the sea the eggs are lying half meter under the sand they will be dug out, that's what we hear and brought to safe place there after two months the turtles will slip out

It seems that she doesn't find her way back to the sea we worry a bit and wish her to find her way home Finally she reaches the border of the water she walks along the ocean walks a bit into the ocean it seems that the lights from the village irritate her

Five strong men decide to help her in and so she reaches the depths of the sea

Here I'm sitting in the internet cafe it is terrible cold the air conditioning is blowing

with affection and lots of regards

Anna Eid



Zaragosa Beach, Isla Margarita

A Day in the Life at Playa Zaragosa, Isla Margarita with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

by Monica Wittib

The activity in the morning at Zaragosa beach builds up slowly until midday. When I come down for breakfast after the practice at about 9:30AM, the tall smiling Cabana man is taking out the sun shades, getting the lounge chairs ready, and pulling the speedboat to the shore across the only tiled pathway on the island surrounded by "uba de playa" or "guagacom" trees. A small stone wall separates the white sandy beach from the promenade. While I head along the row of houses to Roger's Restaurant, Conde stops to kiss me good morning and to wish me a good day, the shop owners wave out of their houses, the fruit-juice seller says "hola", Joaquin, one of the necklace vendors, prepares the jewelry on the stone wall, inviting the passers-by to view his treasures and buy at such a good occasion.

I order eggs, cheese, arepas (corn flour cakes) and walk back to get a small paper cup full of cappuccino con vanilla out of the machine in the corner shop. I share the cheese with the white cat that begs for food with its blue eyes. Small groups of practitioners stroll in, lingering here and there, saying hello to others, craning their necks to see what is going on and if Rinpoche is already at his usual place or in the sea. The places in the shade of the palm trees are soon taken and some sit on the low stone wall. Someone puts Rinpoche's white plastic chair into the shade of the sunscreen that forms a protection for two seats. You can hear Petra call, "Empanadas, empanadas", in her sing song style, before she even appears, holding the big pot in front of her belly. It contains triangles made of dough, filled

with cheese, fish or chicken and fried in oil. You eat it right there by the stone wall and if you like you can put some green hot sauce on top of it. Ignazio clears the table from my breakfast and prepares the others for lunch, putting salt and pepper, cutlery, and napkins on each table.

The bustle and noise come to a sudden standstill and everybody gets up as Rinpoche appears. He heads directly for his chair where he only shortly sits down to take his red cap and T-shirt off and apply sunscreen. Gustavo (a.k.a. Chocolate) starts to run busily around taking orders for pina coladas and cocadas after the swim. After that, Rinpoche immediately walks into the sea surrounded by the disciples, Now something begins what I call the "deep-blue-sea teaching" for those who are prepared to stay in the relatively chilly ocean for about an hour. There will be jokes, or games, just talking with friends and stories that often develop into profound teachings.

One day Rinpoche was musing about the pelicans who rest quietly on a small fishing boats with their big beaks folded down on their breasts, eyes darting here and there looking for fish. Occasionally these prehistoric looking creatures swoop up into the sky with their enormous wings and dive precisely into the sea, scooping up fish and swallowing them whole. Sometimes you can see the fish wiggling in fear inside the beak. The pelican discussion with Rinpoche went something like this: What might they think of us human beings who take away all their prey and eat it without working for it? What might they think when they circle around our heads - do they for a moment consider us their

prey? Perhaps out of their existence over thousands of years they wonder what funny creatures have come to live on this planet? Let us all swim out to "Pelican Island" and stay there with the pelicans without water and food. We will catch fish like they do, although they will surely think how funny those beings are, in what strange way they eat fish.

For a while, Rinpoche lies very still on his back on the waves, stretching his arms and legs apart, singing the Song of the Vajra and sometimes chanting mantras quietly. The ones who can withstand the cool water join in and others swim around trying to keep warm. Then the circle of people slowly swims to the shore with Rinpoche.

In between swims with Rinpoche, and sometimes there are several, there are the daily musical serenades and straw bands, more stories, discussions of world politics, and salutations of comings and goings. Then Rinpoche puts on his red cap and T-shirt, gathers his belongings, washes his feet in the bucket of warm water waiting for him and strolls to the car with Fabio. The locals from Playa Zaragosa also stop and call their greetings. Life has changed since Rinpoche and his students arrived in Margarita.

The people disband into small groups, some for lunch on the beach, some go home, some run to Juan Griego or Porlamar for email and shopping, some look for rides, and some remain on the beach to improve their tan or swim some more. And that is the typical day in the life at Playa Zaragosa, Isla Margarita, with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Communication in the Sangha continued from page 20

beauty and the goodness of this person and this person's life. We see the whole picture now, not the temporary irritations or shortcomings. I made the vow to myself that I will apply this insight to people who are more difficult to love for me than this beloved old auntie. It seems like a morbid fantasy, but in fact, when you want to feel more accepting and loving toward a person you really don't like, imagine them on their deathbed. Your heart will open up.

The other day I heard a translation of a beautiful Iranian song. It sings about two windows caught up in a wall at a fixed distance. They were hoping for the wall to collapse so that the distance would vanish, knowing that the fall of the wall would mean that they too would break. Isn't this a perfect image for our own process, where in the end, all our walls will crumble and our limitations dissolve in Big Space?

REFLECTIONS

Dream Yoga and Death

by Michael Katz
Merigar, August 2003

I am looking out over the hills of Tuscany. The sun is rising in a cloudless sky. In the distance is Merigar and I can also see the Maestro's house from the "pensione" we have rented. Last night as I drove home from dinner at a friend's house, a white owl flew near my car and lingered. I am reminded that I had a very similar experience with a white owl while visiting Hawaii a few years back. I had also presented a course on dreams there. Now I ask myself is this a dream.

It is the second consecutive summer that I have presented a sort of training on Dream Yoga at Merigar and now I am staying on so as to participate in a Santi Maha Sangha course with Rinpoche. I feel a great honor to present this material at Rinpoche's invitation as his dream transmission is the heart essence gift, which he gives us his students. Although my capacity in comparison to his is like a candle to the sun, I hope to communicate something useful as Rinpoche has only two arms.

There is something gnawing at me since the Dream course concluded, perhaps it is related to the strong emotions that welled up within me as the course ended. I feel an urgency to write. As I begin the theme becomes clearer.

Two of the participants in this year's course were struggling with cancer. One of them had remarked that all other fears are insignificant to the fear of death. As I write I remember back now nearly fifty years. My mother is tickling me and I am nearly crying with laughter. These years have passed impossibly fast and now it is I tickling my son almost to tears. I recall the year spent with Rinpoche in New York City as he recovered from leukemia. I think also of my teachers Dudjom Rinpoche, Khyentse Rinpoche, Chogyam Trungpa and Lama Gonpo who have passed. I am wondering if the white owl might be a personal reminder that death is our shadow.

It is our condition that we become so involved in our complicated lives we forget the need to prepare for our death. Perhaps we forget that Samsara is an ocean of suffering and the preciousness of the human rebirth. I also prefer to put these considerations off. After all, tonight there is the fine wine of Montalcino, but there is also the voice of the Maestro whispering about that famous tomorrow, a tomorrow that may not come. There are also the students struggling with cancer, the years which pass more and more quickly, and the white owl.

It is something like thirty years I am practicing the Dharma. I have forgotten even the name of so many important secondary practices. I am attempting to work with instant presence. Instant presence as Lama Tarchen once reminded me, is something relatively easy to pick up but difficult to carry. In the lives of the MahaSiddhas there are stories of those who upon receiving a direct introduction became instantly realized. Guru Padmasambhava, for example, achieved the great transference in his life. When I look in the mirror I don't believe it will happen to me. On the other hand I still have hope that I might do something at the time of my death.

According to the teachers there are two particular opportunities for liberation at death. These correspond to the Chonyid and the Sidpai bardos. The opportunities at these times are directly related to the Practice of Natural Light, and the Dream Yoga practices respectively. For example, if one is successful with the practice of the night, one's familiarity with "instant presence" may allow one to integrate with the natural light of our intrinsic nature. The famous unification of the "mother and son" wisdoms.

The other possibility for some sort of liberation is at the time of the manifestation of hallucinations, which occurs during the process of the Sidpai bardo. If we are successful in realizing that our nighttime dreams are illusory we have a strong base for realizing that the hallucinations of the Sidpai bardo are unreal.

There are also the more relative but still profound benefits of the dream practices for psychological healing. To illustrate I recount the dream of one of the participants of the recent Merigar course. "She is examining photos with members of her family when she notices that something is missing from several of them. She realizes that what is missing are the images of the children. As she is struggling with cancer the inability to bear children has weighed upon her. Noticing that the photos are somehow strange she suddenly realizes that it is a dream. Now lucid she subsequently finds herself in a shadowy room something like a root cellar and in front of her is a vampire. She realizes this is the vampire who tormented her many times in recurring dreams during her childhood. A vampire that preyed upon her sucking her blood but always leaving her with enough life so as to be able to return and prey upon her again. Now in the dream she confronts the vampire and tells it that she is not afraid. She takes it by the neck and chokes it. As she chokes the vampire it deflates like a balloon.

The central place that dream experience occupies within Rinpoche's transmission and the unique opportunities of this practice leading to liberation at the time of death means that the importance of these practices cannot be overestimated. It is for these reasons that I am personally inspired by the practices of the night, and that I am hoping there will in the future be increased possibilities for training within our world wide Community.

COMING BACK FROM THE BARDO

by Alicia Caballero

On December 1995, the day after Christmas, my parents and I were traveling by car from Asuncion, Paraguay to Cordoba, Argentina, 1,200 kilometers. Mid way into the journey we had a terrible accident en route.

We left Asuncion when the sun rose. I drove until midday and then my father took over. I was tired and laid down in the back seat. My mother was sitting beside my father and they were talking when I fell deeply asleep. The next memory was a strong throbbing at my forehead and everything became dark. I found myself in the middle of a dark space, like a night without stars. I was very, very confused: "Where are the people? Where are my parents? What is that?" I looked to my front, back, left, right, down, up, there was nothing. I didn't know what to do. Never in my all life was I so desperate.

Up, in front of me, a light appeared, like a sun. It moved toward me and soon it reached me and went through me. I was in the middle of the light and felt completely at peace.

At that time, a video was going inside my mind and I started seeing all my life in it - from the last scenes lived that day after to the past, day by day. I was looking at scenes I had forgotten with many, many details, some I didn't like. So many parties, dancing, enjoying and then driving drunk on the road. I felt ashamed and started crying.

The light was looking at the video with me, like a Presence, and more than that it seemed to know everything about me. It was like God, so powerful, so wise, and so compassionate. It didn't judge me. The clarity of my mind was judging me relentlessly. It was at my twentieth year, in high school, when I recognized the process: "I'm dying!" and realized that I had wasted my time and didn't fulfill the goal. I begged: "I shall do it! I shall do it! Give me another opportunity". Someone heard and the video stopped and started going ahead, quickly. I saw scenes of the future - I suppose- places that I've never been, people that I never met in terrible suffering. For example, I saw women running along a desert, holding their children in their arms, fire falling from the sky over them, wearing strange clothes, and their heads covered by shawls.

I recognized just one place: the north of

Argentina where it was completely dry, cracks in the earth, people wandering thirstily looking for water. I heard a voice in my mind: "The next years the fate of beings will be decided, there are many people who are still in the dark and should reach the Path. You must do your work." It asked me: "Will you remember?"

I said, "Yes" and a luminous journey began to someplace. When it finished I felt at home, inside the body. I had a wonderful meditation, no thoughts, no feelings, no perceptions, and no intention, just consciousness.

After a while I realized I didn't have contact and I worked hard to recover sight, sound, all the senses. I tried to open the eyes but I couldn't see, I became to nervous and moving in my bed: "the computer is not working" I said, my brother - who is a physician - was at my side, "Don't worry Aly, we'll fix it" Oh my God, I couldn't see but I recognized that voice. The sixth day of I sitting in my bed I started asking, "Who am I? Where am I? Amnesia, I couldn't remember anything, but I knew very well one thing: "I'm a practitioner and remember my promise, "I'll do it".

Coming back to my house I thought it was a nightmare, and could not believe the whole story, but it came back every night in my dreams. I thought I was becoming crazy, so decided to write to Rinpoche asking his advice.

He answered:

"Oh, yes that represents the nature beyond the human condition, it seems terrible but that is a real situation, so it's important to be aware that way".

It took me one year to recover, because I had a cerebral hemorrhage, blood going inside the brain, but I was lucky because it stopped at the last cover (membrane) and because the second vertebral bound was broken too, it took a long time recover the body's normal functions.

I told this story to my relatives and close friends, but they didn't care very much, may be they didn't believe me. So I think, "It better to shut my mouth and not talk about it anymore".

But, this beautiful summer night at Tashigar, Naomi and I were talking about Death and I told her. She convinced me it was important to share with our Vajra Brothers and Sisters. So, here it is.

Thanks for listening, dear friends. It helps me remember my promise.

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HOW I MET CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

Luminous Mind Meeting the Master by Cindy Thibeau

Luminous Mind first set me on the path to meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Deep in the heart of a cold Maine winter night, snuggled in my bed, I was reading a book by the beautiful Kalu Rinpoche called "Luminous Mind", and in it was a short chapter on Dzogchen. It really sparked something in me and I thought, Dzogchen, that's what I want to study and practice! That same night I mentally asked for a teacher in my life to guide my practice.

As winter turned to spring I felt a strong urge to make a change, to go and do extended retreat, but where? I looked through Dharma magazines and while reading Shambala Sun I saw a pretty advertisement for Gampo Abbey. Having read and reread and loved Chogyam Trungpa and Pema Chodron's books, that seemed like a good

connection. I went to the library and downloaded an application for retreat to Gampo Abbey and sent it in. A few weeks went by and I received a telephone call and had a phone interview. Another few weeks later I was accepted for a six month retreat starting in September.

In the meantime a friend had called and proposed that I come and work for her in her center in Colrain, Massachusetts where she held various teaching workshops on alternative healing. I considered it and decided to close my massage practice and go to work for her for a few months before going to Gampo Abbey in the wilds of Nova Scotia. Also during this time period I received a copy of the Snow Lion paper and on the front page were pictures of a man doing some interesting movements along with an article about Yantra Yoga which was being taught at Lingmincha Institute in Virginia. It really cap-



N ZEITZ

tured my attention and I really wanted to go. At the end of the article was a telephone number and an address in Virginia. I called and a woman named Andrea answered the phone and I said I was interested in the Yantra Yoga course being offered. She said, "We're not offering Yantra Yoga this year, that will be next year." I said, "But this article in the Snow Lion says it is being offered this summer at Lingmincha Institute." She said

"You are calling Tsegylgar, The Dzogchen Community in America in Conway, Massachusetts."

We finally figured out Snow Lion had made a mistake and put Tsegylgar's number in place of Lingmincha's number. Lucky me! Andrea then explained that they sometimes offered Yantra Yoga courses with two wonderful teachers from Italy and would I like some information about their teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a list of his books along with a complimentary copy of the Mirror. I said "Sure" and several days later a packet came. I noticed that on the list of Namkhai Norbu's books was "The Supreme Source" one of the same books I had just ordered from Snow Lion. Hmmm, funny coincidence. Also in the Mirror was a short story about the position of Geköes in some far away country. How interesting, I thought. I would love to do that.

So after many years of living

in Maine I started pulling up roots, getting rid of some belongings and storing others, to prepare for my journey. A few days before I was to leave I looked at the map to find the best route to Colrain, Massachusetts. As I circled Colrain I noticed that Conway was just a short jaunt down the road from Colrain. Wow! What a coincidence, I thought. I'll have to drop by there sometime. Well, one day I did drop by Tsegylgar and I met Andrea (the secretary at the time), Damien (the geköes at the time) and Bob, and Bob spent several hours showing me around the Gar and talking about the teachings, and they invited me to a Ganapuja. It all felt quite magical. I came for a video transmission. I started doing karma yoga. Gampo Abbey started becoming a distant memory. The following June Rinpoche came to Tsegylgar. I met my Teacher.

Cindy is the current Geköes of Tsegylgar.

Baja Beyul *continued from page 1*

walked ahead a stretch to reconnoiter and we continued on our way.

After one hour we arrived at what has been termed as the "Squatter's Cabin". It is situated on an arroyo and has a spring running just above it. It is constructed of woven Pau D'Arco and Palm leaf. Fabricated almost entirely of local natural materials, it was just large enough for a small cooking area and a mattress. A corral tree and fruit trees were nearby. The location is easily the most remote place I've been in for years. Enclosed by mountain walls on three sides, it had a nice exposure to the western sky. Looking around I noticed that below the house the arroyo formed a small canyon with the vestiges of flowing water. The house lay on a narrow ledge overlooking the arroyo. Nathalie took down some notes as I walked away from the house down a path where the ledge opened up and followed the arroyo.



New Baja Gakyil

A MCGHEE

While it seemed an ideal retreat cabin I couldn't help but wonder how much time was involved in just surviving here. Certainly trips to town for food and other supplies would consume an entire day each week. As Fabio, Nary and Nathalie started to arrive at the vehicle, Rinpoche looked up above the ridge tops and said, "This is nice, we will keep it."

On the way back we ventured down another shorter road that was a back entrance to the main arroyo he had traversed earlier. As Rinpoche began to take in the scope of the more than 3,000 acres, one got the impression that while he was pleasantly surprised; he also seemed like he always knew about this place. Carol Fields had related her feeling that as she filled him in with the details of the long, sometimes arduous process of the land decision and then transfer, he always seemed already completely aware of everything.

Later that night, under a full moon, the Mandala was unfurled and dancers traced the sacred path for all. Ludavina handed me a fire-made burrito and later, on his way to bed. Rinpoche seemed a bit tired but satisfied. His earlier remarks about a Beyul rung like a bell in my head as I fell off to sleep.

Beyuls are historically valleys that are hidden from people with ordinary vision. Nyingmapa tradition says that Padma Sambhava empowered 108 of these havens, places where there was peace and prosperity and where spiritual progress was facilitated. "Lotus-land" or Padma Kod is somewhere on the border of East Tibet and northeast India, perhaps Assam. Terma, or hidden teachings, describing the way to Pemako were revealed by Rigdzin Jetsun Nyingpo (1585-1656) and also by Rigdzin Dudul Dorje (1615-1672).

There is much lore surrounding Beyul's (spas-yul Tib.).

At the root of the Shangri-La myth popularized by James Hilton's Lost Horizon, is the Tibetan Buddhist tradition of the "hidden valley." This term has been applied to both legendary locales, such as Shambala, and to well-known places, including Rolwaling, Khumbu, and all of Nepal. (In fact, the Tibetan name for Nepal is "Beyul"). While the idea is new to the West as such, there is always the idea that the Beyul exists not just in Tibet, but in places on the entire planet. Perhaps we see the extension of other dimensions in this concept.

The Tibetan tradition of hidden valleys is generally traced back to Padma Sambhava. The story is that, foreseeing a time of chaos, he and his students wrote their teachings in books (ter-ma; collectively, the Rinchen Terzu) and that they hid underground or in a cloak of invisibility, to remain

contemporary English as: "When the iron bird flies and the horse runs on wheels, the Tibetan people will be scattered like ants across the face of the Earth, and the Dharma will come to the land of the red men."

Now that Dharma has come to the West in a full sense, is it surprising that the attributes of recognition have followed?

The recognition of a Beyul in the West is more of a call to participation than it is one of fantasy or speculation. Beyul's, at their core, have always been about Community whether it be Mahasiddhas or simple mountain people. Community where there are no limits. Where even the earth itself participates.

In the early 1900s, The Statesman carried the report by a British army officer of a very tall, lightly clad man with long hair who, when he noticed the Major, leaped down an extreme vertical slope and disappeared. The Tibetans back at the encampment showed no surprise at the Major's experience, but simply explained that he had seen one of the sentries of the local "Beyul".

But Beyuls have a more pragmatic aspect than just legendary. Today, in what is called by some, the "Dzogchen Holy Area" (Central Khams-Derge'), you will find what is perhaps Tibet's cultural and Buddhist center. Near the mountainous region of this area you will find about a thousand natural caves that are still populated by practitioners of various disciplines. This area has been active throughout history (and beyond). At Gangtro Barma, the Snow Mountain's middle lake cave, Padmasambhava lived for three years. He concealed many Dharma treasures in this area. Many practitioners have attained enlightenment there. Dzogchen Khenpo Choga Rinpoche has since rebuilt a statue of Padmasambhava in this cave. At the Beyul Jong caves, many secret yogis achieved realization. Padmasambhava discovered a sacred, hidden Dakini city in the Galaxy Lake of Beyul Jong. There is also Ekajati Lake, Rahula Rock Mountain, Vajra Sadhu Cave and Padmasambhava's Footprints. While we see a rich tapestry of legend and history, one can also find



Fig Tree on the Land

A MCGHEE

there until his future reincarnations (the Tertons) rediscovered them. He further predicted that in a time of war, Tibetans would take refuge in "hidden valleys" deep in the mountains. Among the identified valleys are Khumbu, Rolwaling, and Khanbalung (said to lie somewhere to the south of Khumbu). Several of the rediscovered texts, including Dorje Pagme Sabthig, Gongpa Sangthel, and Khanbalung Lamyig, describe Khumbu and Khanbalung, giving directions how to get there from Tibet. According to Buddhist traditions, Guru Rinpoche actually visited Khumbu. At one point he flew to Akar-phug, a cave in Khumbila above Khumjung. Though Khumbu was then covered with snow and glaciers, Guru Rinpoche predicted that Khumbu valley would be a beyul. Khanbalung is a hidden valley where people will age slowly. It has not yet been opened to people and sits at the center of a ring of hidden valleys, like the center of a mandala. There are many ways to get to it from all around. Khumbu is one of these routes.

The Vimalaprabha is the source of a prophecy that is also attributed to Padmasambhava, and often rendered into

it as an area still very much used by practitioners and a local population that supports them.

So while history and imagination regale us, we also must be aware that there is a development possible, not just in the individual but also importantly in the Community as a whole. The Baja Community, while new, has already received a directional gesture from Rinpoche.

The worldwide Dzogchen Community ultimately shares what we do with that. As the world progresses in many directions we as practitioners have a responsibility to procure the resources for the continuation of the Dzogchen Teachings we have received. The Baja Beyul is definitely a big piece of the future.