



OM SOTI
LA MED TSO KYE GYAL WAI RING LUG CHOG
KA TER MIN DROL ME NGAG SAM MI KHYAB
PEL DZE CHI WA MED PAI RIG DZIN JE
YANG TRUL NYUR JON DZAD THRIN LHUN DRUB SHOG

Wonderful! Chhimed Rigdzin, you who spread the inconceivable instructions of initiation and teachings of the Buddha's oral lineage and the hidden treasures belonging to the ancient tradition of the unsurpassed lake-born Buddha.

*May your Tulku-incarnation come quickly
and may all his/her activities be spontaneously accomplished.*

Our Teacher Khordong Terchen Tulku Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche

was born on a full moon day of the 5th month (June/July) in the year of the water dog (1922) as the 4th incarnation of Nuden Dorje Drophan Lingpa. He was considered to be an emanation of Khyeuchung Lotsawa's body, Nanam Dorje Dudjom's speech and Padmasambhava's mind. When he was 4 years old he was officially recognized as Nuden Dorje's reincarnation and was enthroned at Khordong monastery in Kham/East Tibet. As such he began to be in charge of other nearby monasteries as well. Already during his childhood he showed many signs of realization and siddhis and at the age of 9 he discovered his first terma.

Among his teachers were Tulku Tsurlo, Rigdzin Chenpo Nyamnyid Dorje (the 9th incarnation of Rigdzin Godem), Bane Tulku Orgyan Tenzin, Khenpo Sangthar, Yakhe Khenpo Lodro, Tulku Chokyi Gyaltzen, Khenpo Jigme as well as other great teachers of his time.

After finishing his studies (philosophy, medicine, logic, grammar, mandala, astronomy, astrology, tantra and dzogchen) with the degree of a Dorje Lupon he left his monastery following the instruction of his main teacher Tulku Tsurlo. Adapting the lifestyle of an itinerant yogi he went on a long pilgrimage to the holy Buddhist places in Tibet, Nepal, India, Sikkim and Bhutan. During this period Rinpoche met his future wife. They had 6 children. Four of their children are still alive: the two daughters Norzin and Nise and the two sons Migmed and Ugen. Both the sons have been recognized as tulkus (reincarnations of high lamas). After the pilgrimage Rinpoche went to Tso Pema for a traditional 3 year retreat.

Between 1954 and 1987 Rinpoche lived in Shantiniketan and worked as a teacher and director for the Institute of Tibetan Studies at Visvabharati University. He taught Tibetan language and literature as well as Buddhist philosophy and practice. Many of Rinpoche's early students studied with him during this period. One of the most important is probably Tulku Thondup. Many of them, for example, James Low, Martin Boord and Uli Loserie are teaching today, translating old texts, writing books and commentaries to provide Western students with a deeper understanding of Tibetan Buddhism.

In 1961 Rinpoche founded the Chhimed Rigdzin Society under the patronage of Dudjom Rinpoche together with his students and other high lamas. This society has taken up the task to preserve, to cultivate and to spread the teachings of Padmasambhava. Many important dharma texts, mainly from the Byangter tradition (Northern Treasures), have been translated and reproduced. Rinpoche developed a special translation system that allows the student to recite in Tibetan language while still understanding the meaning of the text. During this time he also helped many Tibetan refugees to start new lives in India, taught as a guest teacher at different European universities, and worked together with different European scholars (Prof. Tucci/Italy, Prof. Hoffman/Munich, etc) on different scientific projects.

In his later years he started to travel to Europe and the United States on a regular basis to transmit the Khordong lineage, mainly consisting of the Byangter cycle and the terma treasures of the Khordong tulkus like Nuden Dorje, Gonpo Wangyal and Chhimed Rigdzin, to his Western students.

In 1990 Rinpoche travelled to Tibet. He took the teachings and initiations of his lineage back to his 'mother monastery' and discovered further termas. In India and Poland two centres for Buddhist studies and practice have been built under Rinpoche's guidance. He empowered regents in different countries to guide, support and strengthen the sangha during his absence. Tulku Ugen Chemchog was appointed general main regent and Jomo Gudrun main regent for Europe.

On June 14th 2002 Rinpoche left for the pure land.

During the cremation and the following ceremonies there were many extraordinary signs that occurred. Parts of his ashes were scattered/dispersed to the rivers around the world by his students and in his monasteries in Tibet and India stupas were constructed and were filled with his relics. And like the rays of the sun his blessing and the power of his lineage reach everyone turning to him and enlighten our daily confusion.

Letters to the sangha

OM AH HUNG MAHA GURU SARVA SIDDHI HUNG

Hello dear people,

here it is again, our 2007 Khordong newsletter. This year started quite turbulently in Berlin, however, I believe that this stormy period will eventually bring clarity. According to the Tibetan calendar this is the year of the fire pig, which means that we will find truffles!

The theme of the newsletter this year is Byangter. The inspiration comes, of course, from the initiations given by Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche in India last year. The thangka we have chosen for the front cover was made available by Sebastian and is also directly related to that. You will find more concerning this in the booklet. Also in this edition, we have decided to include Martin Boord's article once more since it demonstrates at length the roots and developments of the Byangter cycle.



This time it has been particularly difficult for everybody 'to put pen to paper' and so I am more than happy to have received each and every contribution. A big thank you to the authors! Thanks to Marqus, Christian H., Susanne, Frank, Uta, Nele and Olaf for the translations. The images in this volume have been provided by Nele, Gudrun, Harald (TTC), Anne G., Susanne, Sebastian, Ania (PL), Lauri, Marcel and Stefan. Special thanks to Robert Beer whose extraordinary linedrawings we were allowed to use. The proofreading was done by Norzin, Heike, Richard and Moni. Moni was also in charge of the layout and was assisted by Nele. A very special cheers and thanks to Wolfgang, our background advisor and responsible for the printing. In case I have forgotten to mention anyone here please pardon my absent-mindedness (but know that you are appreciated).

If you want to participate in any upcoming projects, please contact me. Some of you have also wanted to know, if and where they could send donations to support the newsletter. Naturally, we would greatly appreciate any financial support as we have started to doubt if we would in the future be able to maintain the current standard. Please use the following bank account:

Khordong e.V., Deutsche Bank, BLZ: 100 700 24, Konto: 324 755 800 (IBAN DE83100700240324755800, BIC / SWIFT-Code DEUTDE33HAN) Password: Rundbrief

Apart from that, all that remains, is to wish you all the very best and finish with the great masters Dudjom Rinpoches words:

An Aspiration to the Great Perfection

*May we gain conviction in the view wherein Samsara and Nirvana are the same.
May we have consummate skill in meditation, a natural flow unaltered uncontrived.
May we bring our action to perfection, a natural, unintended, spontaneity.
May we find the Dharmakaya, beyond all gaining and rejection.*

Paris, 1976

Warmest regards,

Anne anne_wanitschek@hotmail.com

Editor

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Dear members and friends of the German Khordong-Association,

we would like to give you an overview of the association's activities.

The German Khordong-Association (Khordong e.V.) was informally founded in 1993. However, in 1996 it was listed in the Register of Associations (Vereinsregister) of Frankfurt a.M. In 1998 the office of the association was moved to Tübingen, and in 1999 the association got the legal status of an organisation contributing to general welfare.

The aim of Khordong e.V. according to §2 of the statute is the cultivation and promotion of all schools of the Buddhist religion, particularly the Khordong line of the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism, whilst at the same time not excluding other lines and schools.

This for instance means: finding rooms where practice can take place, organizing events with qualified teachers, collecting and maintaining Buddhist art and ritual instruments, archiving Buddhist scriptures, audio- and videotapes, translating and distributing these, cooperating with other centers and supporting them, sponsoring of certain practitioners, and much more.

Since the death of Rinpoche Gudrun Knausenberger is the spiritual head of Khordong e.V.

The last regular assembly of the members took place on October 22nd 2006 in Berlin.

Rolf Haberer, who had been First Chairman of Khordong e.V. since 1999, used this occasion to resign from his position. The reason for his departure being that he felt he would not be able to devote as much time to the association as he wished, since he is currently very busy in his job. We would like to thank him here cordially for everything he has done for the association. Having a deep, heartfelt connection with Rinpoche and being so close to the Sangha, he has shaped the association in a substantial way. We wish him rapid and successful business development so that we can work together in the future.

Following this announcement, the new managing committee (Vorstand) was elected, which now consists of Andreas Ruft (1.chairperson), Anne Wanitschek (2.chairperson) and Wolfgang Zimmermann (treasurer). Norbert Ohl has once again accepted the accountancy role (Cash auditor).

Next on the agenda of the assembly were the financial reports for 2004/2005, which were very detailed and thorough, so a big thanks to Wolfgang and Norbert. They have now been eased of this managing committee task, after having done the 2004/2005 activity reports.

The activities of the managing committee were among others:

- Mailing of newsletter and flyers.
- Providing support for the activities of the monastery in India, such as printing and mailing flyers and detailed brochures about the big 2006 Byangter Cycle of Initiations, emailing event information as well as posting it on the website, in addition to informing many centres around the world about the event.
- The Polish Khordong-Association was supported in part through donations. Information about their events was distributed via e-mail and the website, and appeals for donations were forwarded.
- The archive was extended and older recordings were digitalized.
- Buddhist events were organized and sponsored; five of these took place in Berlin in 2006.
- Publishing

The following titles have been **already published** (some in cooperation with other publishing houses)

- ♦ MARTIN J. BOORD, *A bolt of Lightning From The Blue, The vast commentary on Vajrakila that clearly defines the essential points*, edition Khordong, Berlin, 2002

- ◆ JAMES LOW, *Being Right Here, Commentary on The Mirror of Clear Meaning by Nuden Dorje*, Snow Lion, 2004
- ◆ JAMES LOW, *Hier und Jetzt Sein*, Edition Mandarava, Gutenstein, 2005
- ◆ JAMES LOW, *Being Guru Rinpoche, Commentary on Nuden Dorjes Terma: The Vidyadhara Guru Sadhana*, Trafford, 2006
- ◆ JAMES LOW, *Eins mit Guru Rinpoche, Ein Kommentar zur Vidyadhara Guru Sadhana, edition Khordong, Berlin, 2007*

The following titles are **forthcoming**

- ◆ MARTIN J. BOORD, *A Bolt of Lightning From The Blue* (new edition)
- ◆ JAMES LOW, *Commentary to The Butterlamp Prayer*, first in English, then in German
- ◆ JAMES LOW, *Revised Translation and Commentary on Leo Dünma*, first in English

We also discussed the current office situation. Ultimately, we would like a space where the archives and the publishing house material can be stored, which could serve as office, and where eventually practitioners could meet, or it could even be the location for Khordong's events.

Another issue that was discussed was that of donations intended for a specific purpose,

which could not for various reasons be allocated to that purpose, such as the collection of money for Tara's journey to Tibet, which did not take place. It was decided that donations up to the amount of €50 will be given to other projects; however, donors of larger sums will be contacted.

Donations, whether meant for a special or general purpose are always very welcome. If you need a receipt for the donation please let us know so that we can arrange one for you since we don't automatically provide them.

The yearly fees for the membership have not changed. They are €60 for singles and €90 for couples. A reduction of the fee can be granted upon request. Whoever wants to join the association is welcome to do so with the attached form in the last pages of this newsletter.

In case you feel inclined to support our projects – we can always use some help.

Whether this could be by translating, typing, transcribing, archiving, mailing, editing of recordings, designing websites and filling them with content, organizing of or helping at events... or even by giving financial support, we are very happy to receive any help and time that you may wish to volunteer.

Best wishes,

Your Managing Committee of the German Khordong-Association

Andreas, Anne, Wolfgang



Monastery in India

Dear Dharma friends,



I have just returned from a short visit to Siliguri. Honestly, I was quite afraid to go back there. I had feared that I would miss our Rinpoche so much and that his absence would overwhelm me emotionally. Instead of this, the moment I reached there I felt so much at home and utterly peaceful during my whole stay. There was nothing missing! Many of the people there had similar experiences; they felt that Rinpoche was totally present there. So I am very grateful, especially to Ugen and Sashi who have devoted their whole lives to looking after the place and filling it with life. Bringing young monks there for education and encouraging learned ones to stay, teach and continue practicing at the temple. It was also a wonderful opportunity to meet many people of our sangha after so many years. I enjoyed the practices together, the conversations and just spending time together.

Rolf and I reached Siliguri the day before the last ceremony with H.H. Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche. So we were not fortunate enough to receive any teachings or initiations from him but we had the chance to speak to him personally. On a few occasions I invited him to come to Darnkow, Poland in the summer to give initiations, lungs and teachings there. He assured me that he would like to come, but he needs to have an eye operation and can only let us know after Losar if he would actually be able to come. So let's please pray for the success of his operation and for his good health. It would be really wonderful to receive his teachings on the Byangter practices that Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche gave us. There are the Guru Drakpo, Vajrakila, Drowa Kundrol (Chenresig), Thukdrub, Dongdrub, Leudunma, Zer Nga which have already been translated by Rinpoche and James Low into English.

I hope to see many of you again in Darnkow this year and hopefully we have the good luck to welcome H.H. Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche there.

But if we don't meet personally I wish you happiness and good health, joyful and peaceful practice and I hope that you will accomplish whatever you wish in your life.

Much love to all of you,

Gudrun



Dear Dharma Friends of Khordong Sangha,



Greetings to all the Khordong sangha members!

For many months, I have been hearing a lot of good news from Drophen Ling in Poland, Berlin, other European centers, and from individual sangha members – they are active performing Dharma practices at different sangha centers, in personal shrine rooms, or in the heart-temples of their individual lives. This will certainly please Rinpoche and I am sure that he will give you all a radiant smile and thunderous laughter of approval. I am rejoicing for all the spiritual activities that you are pursuing.

I hope that many of you were able to go to Gonpa Land in India for the great transmission of Byangter (Jangter) cycle given by Kyabje Taglung Tsetul Rinpoche.

In the 8th-9th centuries, Guru Padmasambhava revealed and transmitted many esoteric teachings to Nanam Dorje Dudjom and then concealed them as a Ter. When the time for serving others through those teachings arrived, Dorje Dudjom was reborn as Rigdzin Godden (1337-1408) and discovered the teachings from Riwo Trazang in the Northern province of Tibet. And so, it became known as the Byangter – the Northern Ter. Soon these teachings became one of the great lineages of the Nyingma tradition of Tibetan Buddhism.

Terchen Nuden Dorje was a follower of the Byangter tradition. Also, he himself discovered many profound teachings of Guru Padmasambhava as Ter. His discovered teachings became known as Khordong Ter teachings. So Byangter became the mother tradition for the Khordong lineage of Rinpoche.

With my prayers to Guru Rinpoche for his blessings to all,

Account of the Byangter-Initiation

by S.H. Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche

Anne and Sebastian asked me to write something about India but after Maxim's newsletter (see on the website www.khordong-india.org) there is not much else I have to say, so I will be brief.



From November 26th to December 25th the program went like a marathon – Wang after Wang and Lung after Lung in order to make sure they would all be given. Somehow it took us all this time to build up the mandala step by step and with great effort. However, thanks to the tireless work and organization of a few, things got done despite constant last minutes requests from the Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche monks, who were rushing against time to get ready for the next initiation.

Slowly, slowly the number of both local and foreigner participants increased. The number of tents increased, the wood was full, as well as all the newly built huts and new guest house rooms.

On December 14th we offered Ku Sum Mandal and various presents to Gonjang Rinpoche to thank him for having given us the lungs. It was time for him to go as he was expected by his students in Taiwan. We then had a break and the transmission of the Gompa Zanthal started on December 18th 2006.

It was at that moment we could say the mandala was fully completed. This last part attracted so many that the gompa was packed with people, including the Chenresig Gompa and the staircases. We also set up a pandal outside with a video projector and screen. More than 1400 people were attending the wang every day. Around 17 nationalities were represented and all together 62 foreigners were there. It really looked like a big festival. It went on this way till the 25th of December, when we offered a Dakini Dance and special rituals for the long life of Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche to close this cycle of transmission in great spirit.

Meanwhile the 17th Butterlamp retreat had started and Gudrun and Rolf had arrived. Rinpoche stayed with us for another 2 days while most of the crowd had instantaneously vanished. This gave us some time to breath and we were able to have close encounters with Rinpoche. Gudrun together with Tulku Ugen met Rinpoche and officially invited him to come to Darnkow this year. It was also possible then to receive personal advice from Rinpoche, as well as about the Gompa in India and the sangha at large. Then on December 28th Rinpoche left. Most of us accompanied him to Bagdogra airport with a bus that had been previously arranged. Our hearts were sad and even the sky remained grey on that day.

From the next day onwards the usual program followed. It was very inspiring and there was a feeling of warmth when more than 30 of us were together once again for a few days to do Big Rigdzin and offer the butterlamps. Yes indeed, it was very encouraging to see Gudrun leading us for the pujahs and

to see many of Rinpoche's disciples back here once again after a gap of several years.

Then one after another, our Dharma brothers and sisters left to go back home or continue their journey. We finally matched the number of lamps on Dakini Day, January 13th 2007 and the retreat ended on January 14th with a total of 118, 000 lamps having been offered.

come, organize Losar, reinforce the structure of the Society and the organization of the life here and of course close accounts.

The transmission has been a great success but it also has its cost. We are very happy to have been so dearly supported by those who came here to attend and some of you from Europe who could not come but have been



Then it all went very fast, most people flew back or went up to the hills. Tulku Ugen had been invited to Bodhgaya by the organizing committee of the Nyingma Monlam. So he is there at the moment together with Norbu Gyaltsen, it is a great opportunity for both of them to represent the gompa there and to build new relationships based on the success of the transmission.

Gompalang is now back to its usual quiet state. The young lamas went back home for a 10 days break and Renate, Jean-Jacques, Jens, Arnaud, Nathalie and I are staying here at the moment enjoying a few peaceful days.

Soon the time will come to fix things here and there, define direction for the year to

so generous. We are grateful and fortunate because such transmissions mean never-ending and unexpected expenses.

Thanks to many of you, we could once again offer all the lamps as usual. Otherwise, without your support we would have ended the transmission exercise unable to offer the lamps and we would have been empty-handed in the months to come.

So at the end, all is well...
Warmest wishes to all,

Sarwa Mangalam.

Alexis

Overview of Drophang Ling

Dear Friends in Dharma,

firstly I would like to sum up what has been done this year:

- Doors were put on all the rooms on the 1st floor of the gompa.
- Rooms have been furnished with simple, basic furniture – wooden beds, chairs, shelves.
- We opened the kitchen on the 1st floor – during the retreat tsog was prepared there.
- We moved the Dharma shop to a room on the 1st floor.
- The ceiling over the staircase was protected against the cold and we insulated the roof over the attic. Now the entire building is sealed and the gompa can be heated.
- Maciek Szczypka finished facade decorations – the wall by the terrace over the main entrance – you can see the photos.

We hoped to do the following by the end of 2006:

- Finish bathrooms on the 1st floor of the gompa
- Insulate the roof and plaster the boiler house inside to be ready for installation of the heating system.

And now a few words about the 2006 summer retreat:

Again, we were able to offer 111,111 butterlamps!!!

Although Migme, who was supposed to conduct the ceremony, could not come to Poland (he did not get a new passport in time, his previous passport was invalid) we were able to do the practice unaided.

This year for the first time we used palm oil and although at the beginning some of us were dubious about technology – preparing palm oil is more time consuming, having to be heated before pouring – the result was more than satisfying.

Firstly, the palm oil is higher quality. It burns better without strong smoke. It is easier to clean lamps and after pouring it sets, so wicks do not sink. Also the oil burns cleanly so we did not have problems with black, burnt butterlamps. After the retreat the lamps looked like new ones, mostly thanks to sangha members from Germany, who scrubbed all burnt lamps, so that now they are yellow and shiny.

It is wonderful that still we are able to offer 111,111 lamps every year for peace as our Rinpoche wanted us to do. I hope we will always continue this.

I am a bit sad that less and less Polish sangha members have been participating in this unique practice. This year more than half of the butterlamp cleaning team were people from Germany. We should thank them especially since due to their help we managed to burn all lamps. Of course, also many thanks to sponsors who donated money for oil, wicks and cleaning clothes.

Certainly, it is good that Darnkow is a center for all Khordong sangha in Europe and let it be like that, but Polish sangha seem to be less active and present.

Much the same as last year, we started the summer retreat from Dordje Drollo practices conducted by Frauke Blohm. It is very good that we have short retreats with one practice, like Dordje Drollo or Chod with Gudrun in May. We got many practices from Rinpoche, so I think it would be good to practice then together here. Maybe in the future we could have more time during the year for such short retreats of other pujas.

James Low also visited us this year. While it is true that he stayed only 3 days, the intense teachings made us reflect.



Gudrun gave the Padmasambhava initiation. I am really glad that although Rinpoche passed away, the Padmasambhava initiation is given every year (by Gudrun or Tulku Ugen). Thanks to that Rinpoche's transmission is still alive and new people can get benefit from it.

All teachings from 2006 (and teachings and retreats from previous years, also recordings of retreats with Rinpoche) are available on CD or MP3. You can order them directly from Jacek Skirucha – email address: emaho@wp.pl

We also held the Association members assembly where we also discussed the inside decoration of the gompa. We came up with three ideas:

- Traditional – to invite painters from Bhutan, who painted Siliguri gompa and have the whole gompa decorated in the traditional way – all walls covered with paintings.
- Middle way – elements of traditional decoration – maroon paneling, stylized co-

lumns, painted elements of the ceiling but white walls with thangkas on them.

- As it is now – all walls are white but painted (now we have only plaster) with thangkas on them.

We have to choose one solution. Next year, during the summer retreat we will hold the General Members Assembly and make a decision, but now all of us can express their opinions and give input. Soon we will present detailed descriptions of all three solutions on the website and you can vote on one of them. Each of us can present his/her opinion because the gompa belongs to all of us. I would like to remind you that next year during the general assembly we will elect a new Management Board.

Next year is going to be a special one. We will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Center, in 1998 we held the retreat up here at the wooden gompa (now used as dormitory). Do you remember? We have to celebrate this anniversary. I request you to send photos from 1998 retreat.

Accounts of the 2006 year retreat:

Income	Amount (Zloty)	Expenditure	Amount (Zloty)	Balance (Zloty)
Participation in the retreat	22 078	Retreat organisation (tickets for teachers, salary for the cook, fuel, waste water collection, power supply, office, etc.)	-13 322	8 756
Payment for food	6 135	Food products purchased	- 5 615	520
donations for oil	8 703	oil, wicks and cleaning towels for butterlamps	- 9 051	- 348
Total	36 916	Total	- 27 988	8 926

Also, donations for the gompa in amount of **3 792 PLN** were collected.

Tentative plans for 2007:

Butterlamps offering as usual. If everything goes smoothly we will have a retreat with Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche, who has already accepted our invitation. Details will be known after the retreat in Siliguri where Gadrung will again invite Rinpoche to visit Darnkow. We also invited Tulku Thondup Rinpoche, but his schedule for next year has not been fixed and although he would like to come, nothing has been decided.

Finally, the most important plan to be realized in 2007:

- Gompa heating system I need to explain why we decided not to install the heating system in 2006 although everything was ready to do so. It turns out that there is a possibility of 75% reimbursement of the costs from EU development funds. The only condition is to apply before we start installation. This should be no problem because although we have already prepared the project, all materials have been gathered but we have not started building anything. All funds for 2006 have been already allotted, so to get any money we have to wait till the new reimbursement program starts. It starts in 2007. While it is true that we do not know the criteria of application acceptance the Association board decided to take a chance, wait one

more year and then apply. If we qualify we can use the money for the canteen overhaul repair. With good maintenance in winter the gompa can survive one more winter without heating.

- Overhaul repair of the kitchen and canteen
- It is necessary especially if we (and I hope we will) have retreats with Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche.
- Inside doors in the gompa
- Window sills and painting of walls on the 1st floor
- Library – buying of bookcases and arranging and extending the library
- Finishing of the gompa facade – balcony banisters

You can see that we still need funds for these investments. I hope that thanks to sponsors, thanks to support of all of you we will realize our plans, as in the past. Even the smallest donations make progress.

Best regards,

Sarva Mangalam

Anna Siwecka

Summerretreat in Darnkow 2006



Back in Berlin, writing plying between Schlachtensee, Bilderbuchcafe, and the pc at home, the task to author the report of this year's retreat, having been urged so nicely on me by Anne, is granting me the opportunity to review – virtually per zoom – the rich, colourful time in Darnkow once again. Like already in the last years, Frauke was preludeing the summer with the Dorje Drolo retreat. It was a powerful and very intensive opening of the Darnkow summer, though – or even because (?) – only a small core of practitioners was gathering, proving itself yet as solid and steady, consisting only of about ten applications, a harmonious melange of polish and german sangha members, the real Dorje Drolo fans.

The big surprise for me was, that Wenzel after a never-ending back and forth decided against his sisters birthday to come and was popping all of a sudden up in front of me. Plus: he was adorned with an operative hearing device. Wenzel able to communicate! We were practising energetic, focused, after only a few days almost adeptly, with a lot of humour and great joy. Frauke's teachings were well-grounded, profound, and at times very special.

Haenne from Denmark was enriching the days with lively and cheerful contributions of song, singing wherever one was meeting her, and the evenings with wonderful fire. We were enjoying a highly energetic, harmonious, and informal atmosphere. After a

week we were feeling as if we had reached the very depth of the practise, regretting that it was already over. The wish was arising to extend the Dorje drolo retreat to two weeks, and Frauke was showing herself open for the idea. But since it is planned to invite Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche for the summer 2007, this seems to be rather a vision for summer 2008. Let's see... All of us have been very much appreciating the fact, that Frauke is regularly sharing her precious time – indeed a part of her holidays – with us.

Finally she was staying even a little longer. We were then unpacking the butterlamps – this time cleansed and shining (!) : what a pleasure! – , arraying them and gliding seamlessly into the butterlamp retreat with its notorious highs (or ups) and downs. The common coming and going was commencing, which is invoking in me again and again the image of wayfaring yogis and yoginis, meeting once a year in the place of their hearts, to cherish exchange, to practise together, to gain in experience, and to accomplish karmic work, before turning back to their particular daily tasks, dispersing into the world again. For a few among us this year's butterlamp retreat has been overshadowed by the news, that Migme (due to an unfortunate time frame concerning passport and visa) has not been able to come. I, myself have been seeing the chance therein to configure, shape and personalize the given time in a prolific manner, on one's own discretion and independently from the presence of a spiritual authority, therefore so to speak adultly. For it was feeling, as if we have been released into independence (from Padmasambhava..., from Rinpoche...).

Meanwhile great joy was beeing provoked by the news, that the age of passionate discussions about the most effective cleansing technique („hot water – yes or no? Detergents? Heavens sake, never!) was finally

belonging to the past: literally bucketfuls of marvellous, sootfree burning palm butter was at our disposal. The butterlamps were beaming and we were beaming, too, murmuring mantras or chanting many seven lines prayers in the evening with Christoph or sitting on buckets and wooden planks in the sunshine. The distressful time of sticking lamps, becoming more and more unsightly with every burning process was over once and for all. Thought we. Until we learned of the remainders of the year before. Harshly being brought back to the reality of cleaning,

Christoph: No, this is not working.

Dagmar: Why not?

Christoph: Because the powers are so strong, we would disintegrate.

And after we had noticed, it was worth a try to dip the cleaning rags in oil:

Susanne (asking Ralf): How is it running?

Ralf (dead dry): It is running down.

Still quite witty in the evening:

Somebody: What is it actually, what we are doing here???

Ralf: Oil change. Twice a day.



we were deciding instantly a spontaneous campaign for donations for more magnificent, superb, whitely cooling down palm butter and were resigning ourselves to the (oh, so terrible!) fate of another – the very last! – week filled with soybean oil. Aside from hushed muttering, cautious grumbling, and newly flaring up technique debates this oil period was giving birth to a rich flourishing of unbeatable gallows humour, particularly during advanced night hours.

Here are some excerpts:

Jacek (the small) was quoting, he had been reciting so many mantras, he must have had attained absolute siddhis.

Dagmar: In that case, it would really be fine, if you could clean the lamps by virtue of your mental abilities.

Not quite as witty in the early morning hours:

Susanne: The butterlamp falls to the floor-making me gay as a lark once more.

Ralf: The butterlamp, the butterlamp was burning down the summer camp.

The absolute Highlight during the butterlamp time was on account of Compas. Being one evening so obviously occupied with mysterious activities, that he was very soon provoking the most curious questions. Yet these were just bouncing against an impenetrable pokerface, being responded by the claim for more patience. It was one of those periods of long butterlamp nights. Around midnight he was bobbing up again with several utterly stuffed plastic bags in the lamp-light of the butterlamp house, where in the

mild summernight we were cleansing ourselves through the remaining butterlamp buckets. And all of a sudden there was a barbecue standing beside us on the lawn and we were having – like christmas in summer – at one o'clock in the morning a completely unexpected grill party with delicious meat, sausages, roasted bread, and cheese. It was incredibly gorgeous! Wonderful! Magnificent and splendid! And so yummy! A further highlight, connected with banquet meal and delicacy was the birthday of Ania's and Hondzik's daughter Drolma, to which all attendants had been invited. We were sitting all around the fireplace in front of Ania's and Hondzik's house, chatting, watching Drolma sitting amongst her presents, taking care, that the dogs would not steel our tasty polish sausages, drinking beer and wine, and roasting slices of zucchini. I was finding the openness of Ania and Hondzik most beautiful and special. I am believing, that this event has been an important contribution to the recently arising feeling of many that especially the polish and german sangha is growing together. As usual Christoph was a rock in the surf with his enthusiastic endurance, completely unswerving. He was bringing us chilling moments and refreshing visualisations: While we were igniting the lamps at 50°C (or maybe rather 60°???) , we were by virtue of our spirit enjoying wonderful minutes in fantastic swimming-pools, tiled, and filled with splendid, cool, turquoise blue water, till finally our concentration was flagging, and we were surfacing again, bathed in sweat, with the notorious grey-black rags and a butterlamp in our hands in the full midday-sun. With his sonorous, at times slightly croaking voice he was moreover inducing many a meditative cleansing break, pulling us along, often accompanied by Karin radiating real warmth of heart. Despite the great heat Wenzel was putting his back admirably into it. With his meanwhile legendary humour and unbelievable shoves of energy he was ensuring that the butterlampfraction was enduring even the most dark and desertlike periods, defying all dead calms and symptoms of fatigue. Also to



Olaf we have been owing much in this respect: without the sight of his figure repeatedly strolling by, in the long run we would not have been able to liberate ourselves at least from time to time from our own constricting tunnelvision (rag-butterlamp-box-bucket-rag-butterlamp-box and so forth). The sight of him however – blossomwhite jeans – tanned body – relaxed defocused gaze – was leveraging us not only to unexpected visualisation exercises (e.g. Olaf plus blossomwhite jeans plus tanned body equals Olaf plus surfboard plus Darnkow equals Olaf plus surfboard plus beach ambiance equals us all in California on the beach equals ice in the sunshine... well, and so on), but also to the recurring recognition, that everything is transient and that also the „age of the butterlamps“ will be eventually followed by other times.

The big Jacek being more beautiful than ever, was bringing fresh cleaning rags exactly in the right moment: an entire sack with super fantastic, stunning winter bed linen! Wow!

But it was gaudy not just around the butterlamp house, but also in the gomba. Ricarda was standing every morning certainly at five o'clock in the tsogkitchen, which had been relocated and had outgrown it's provisional commencements. She was practising magic on and on – it was simply amazing!!! Raw vegetarian salads with dressing, yeah!!! Incessantly new unimagined creations and combinations were coming into being in aesthetic variations: stuffed eggs and pancakes, partysnacks, quark dishes and so on and on... so much love has been flowing through her hands. Every day. Over and over again. Tirelessly. She has been overwhelming us indeed...

Whereas Bernhard has been providing us with another kind of variegation of our daily practise, through giving a real personal touch to the originally rather calm guru-yoga section of the Big Rigdzin. His biggest hit was his own original modification of the passage „...and then he is dissolving from the head UPWARDS and from the feet DOWN-

WARDS into a ball of light, which is (melting, sinking) through the fontanelle...“etc. Meanwhile a dictum in our Berlin practise group and unforgettable. Unforgettable, too, the intractable fit of laughter, in which I was finding myself being catapulted by this innovative creation. My visualisation was perfect and so exhilarating, that I was finally running from the gompa, throwing myself on the grass, being shaken still for a long time by fits of laughter. I must have been heard still inside the gompa.

And last but not least: Susanne! Susanne, whose shoe laces we were knotting from time to time backhandedly and tacitly, like Ralf who was giving his debut during this retreat was formulating impishly. Susanne is certainly meriting this year's Butterlamp-Supervision-Medal as well as the distinguished Butterlamp Service Cross. She was not only mistress of figures and calculations, but also of the fallow cleaning potential and was showing us possibilities, which many among us were not even thinking of in their dreams. She was encouraging us, consoling, applauding, controlling and flourishing during the terminal phase once again, when she was giving her blessings to the shining cleaned metal vessels.



Meanwhile Lara (Susanne's daughter) was eating many, many sweet cherries, reading many, many stories to Yeshe (Anne's daughter), was guarding Yeshe's sleep, undefatigably and extremely responsible. All this to give Anne time for her retreat as well as for such swell things as for example carrying me on her back up the whole way from the kitchen to the lamphouse, during a sudden feeling of faintness, which she was really managing. How beautiful this was!

Anyway a lot of children have been present, which was very much animating the entire retreat. As far as I can judge this, the mothers were supporting each other and taking regular turns in caring for the kids. And yet it seems to be difficult every now and again, to bring children aand retreat into accordance. Maybe it is making sense to think once about establishing a childcare.

Looking back the butterlampretreat was a time of small miracles: in times when the cleansing gang was melting and downheartedness was spreading, many, many hands were materializing like out of nowhere and all of a sudden seventeen human beings were present and somehow some were finding again and again the way out of bed, out of the sleeping bag to the butterlamphouse, to ignite the lamps. In the end and to all our surprise we could clean and light 2000 lamps

during the last two days in a completely relaxed way and finally have been ready-ready-ready!!!

And were celebrating under the pelting rain, which had been setting in several days before – a lucullan festival in the dining hall with the notorious sausages, beer, and wodka from Michael – celebrating at the same time Jaqueline's birthday. In the dining hall Hondzik was residing, flanked by a friendly,

young woman from Kudowa and accompanied by Ania, who was taking on him the kitchen during this retreat. There were so few confirmed applications, that the cooking has not been a heavy load for him. On the other hand surely also certain negative remarks concerning last summerretreat's food were making this solution advisable. It is likely, that the fact, that a sangha member was overtaking the cooking, has been the reason for the familiar atmosphere prevailing throughout the whole retreat. Sure, I was cooking most of the time for myself. But I

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was tasting often. It was always delicious and dainty. Everybody else was having positive things to tell as well. The tuna-cheese-salad has been particularly famous.

and powerful place all through the last years, I am yet appreciating this new quality, which is slowly but steadily letting us become a mutually supporting interwoven community.



Yet not only the butterlamp retreat has been a success, but also the polish-german endeavours for friendship were reaching a peak. A profound sensation of growing together has been becoming perceptible. A different kind of openness for one another has been starting to reign. New connections have been tied and existing ones intensified. The close frame, being created by the situation, that though not exactly many of rinpoches students are still coming every year, yet those are doing so constantly and reliably, is providing a fertile ground for this process. Ever more people are knowing ever more of each other, a little bit like in a village. Everybody is becoming more and more transparent. I have been experiencing this in the way, that the challenge to take a stand and to be confronted is increasing. Yet at the same time the chance of mutual support honestly interlinked with one another, meaning also truthful confrontation, is increasing as well. There has been but a little fighting during this retreat, actually none at all. Which is not meaning, that there have been no conflicts. They have been only dealt with in another way. Punches below the belt or violations out of ignorance were staying away. Fairness was ruling.

If I am sometimes regretting, that so few are only taking advantage of this wonder-

Finally some statements concerning the butterlamp retreat:

Stanislawa Wojcik-Sulyok:

In the middle of the retreat I was wanting to leave, because I was feeling insulted, but now everything is purifying itself. There is more mutual support among the german mothers. I am finding you (germans) more symbiotic.

Ralf:

One is recognizing always, who has been freshly arriving, because the eyes are still dull. Later they are shining.

Susanne:

Heaven and hell.

Ula:

Great sangha. People in our sangha change every year and become better and better. They are much more quiet, gentle, sensitive. First time I am not sad, that I am leaving this place, because I can feel: what I feel here, I can feel everywhere. But I am very happy to come here every year and stay here as long as possible.

Compas:

Phat!

Dagmar Wielart



Cover picture of the Gongpa Zhangtal

The thanka of Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche which we have chosen for the this years cover, has been painted according to the Guru-Yoga text of Gongpa Zangthal (Dzogchen cycle of Byangter). Rinpoche himself gave explanations to this thanka (for example the mudra of Shrishimha). The thanka was painted by Kumbu, a bhutanese artist, who also was responsible for the artistic decoration of the Khordong Gompa in Siliguri. The colours are natural colours based on minerals. We scanned the thanka and if you like to download it, you can do it here:

<http://www.khordong.info/thangka/>

Printed on canvas the thanka looks incredibly beautiful and very similar to the original. The passage in the text, where the visualization is described, is as follows:

In the vastness of a sky in front of me, on the lotus tree,
I visualize clearly on a sun and a moon
the original Buddha Kuntuzangpo.
He is blue in colour and is sitting brightly in meditation posture
in the middle of a light sphere of luminous rainbow lights.

Below on a branch of the lotus tree is Vajrasattva.
He is white in colour and holds bell and dorje.

Below it is Garab Dorje,
he is white and makes the mudra of teaching.

Below it is Shrisimha, he is maroon in colour
and makes the mudra of Prativasamutpada
(dependent origination/conditional co production).

Below is Padmasambhava,
he is pink and stately beautiful.
He holds a five prong dorje and a skull bowl
filled with nectar.

Below is Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal.
She is white in colour and holds a mirror.

Below sits Tulku Rigdzin Chenpo (Rigdzin Godem).
He is maroon in colour and is holding a dorje and a kapala
filled with nectar.

Below, on a lotus, is my kindest Root Lama in the posture and with the attributes of Dorje Chang. He is directly in my heart centre.

All these Lamas are precious decorated and are looking at me. On the other branches of the lotus tree all the Khandros are gathering. I offer to all of them my body and everything which gives me pleasure. I give fully everything I love and also those things for which I feel greed – food, my property, my friends... With great devotion I pray to the assembly with the following words:

OM AH HUNG, GREAT MASTER, GIVE ME THE REAL ATTAINMENT OF BUDDHAHOOD.

THE GTER-STON RIG-'DZIN RGOD-LDEM

An Account of the Origin and Development of the Byang-gter or Northern Treasures Tradition

*revised and expanded version ^[1]
by Martin Boord*

Concealment of the treasures

In the various biographies of the treasure revealer dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan (1337-1408) it is said that his dharmakaya form is Samantabhadra and his sambhogakaya form is Vajrasattva. His nirmanakaya career commenced in India, where he manifested in more than two dozen incarnations [2] before he was born in Tibet in the eighth century of the Common Era as sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms.

At that time, the ruler of Tibet and great Buddhist patron, Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, sent messengers to India with offerings of powdered gold in order to invite the assistance of Padmasambhava in the founding of bSam-yas monastery, and one of the messengers entrusted with this task was his minister of state (zhang blon) and close companion sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms. Following his return from India, sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms became the king's minister for religious affairs (chos blon) and one of Padmasambhava's five innermost disciples, [3] remaining close by the guru's side throughout the period of his most intense teaching activity. As a result of practising the many esoteric instructions imparted to him, sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms became master of mind and breath. Skilled in the accomplishment of Vajrakila, he attained unsurpassed awakening which he demonstrated by such feats as passing through solid rock and travelling great distances in the blink of an eye. Said to be of vital importance for the protection of the future descendants of king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, the teachings received by sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms throughout his lifetime were carefully concealed in a cave in the mountains where once Padmasambhava and his retinue had meditated for seven days. Alongside the texts were placed



images of Vajrakila and the ten wrathful kings, as well as blessed ritual kila which were stabbed into the rock, and a self-igniting fire. All of this was sealed up by guru Padmasambhava himself who inscribed three symbolic letters on the door to the treasure cave and hid three keys on the mountain summit. Finally he marked the middle of the mountain with 600 jewels obtained from the guardian nagaraja. This mountain, he predicted, was destined to become the abode of buddhahood and its treasure revealed in the future for the benefit of Tibet in general and for the welfare of the royal line in particular.

In 1173 sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms was born again in Tibet, this time in Khro-phu, southern Tsang. His name is variously recorded as Byams-pa-dpal the translator, or as

Bal-po A-hum-'bar the tantric yogin. In this life he revealed some gter ma from their place of concealment in sPa-gro, Bhutan, which were transmitted by dPal dga'-ba lung-pa. By the time of Kong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas these texts had disappeared, but then 'Jam-dbyangs mkhyen-brtse received an ancient copy from the hands of a dakini and Kong-sprul was thus able to include them in the Rin chen gter mdzod, together with his own supplementary notes.

Rediscovery of the hidden treasures

In 1337, on the tenth day of the first month of the fire ox year, he was reborn in the area known as gNyan-yul (Place of Snake Demons) or Tho-yor nag-po (Country of the Black Stone Cairn), near mount bKra-bzang in western gTsang, just north of gCung ri-bo-che. [4] The name he was given in this incarnation was dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan (Victory Banner of Spiritual Attainment). The sky was filled with rainbow light and the air was sweetly scented at the time of his birth. Music was heard and flowers fell from the heavens. Upon his newborn body were seen many auspicious marks including the sign of a vajra upon his forehead, the sacred seed-syllable O[?] upon his chest, a conch-like neck and a pair of black and white moles (sme ba, tilaka) upon the crown of his head.

dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan's mother, Jolcam bsod-nams khye-'dren, was a virtuous lady of noble descent, daughter of a mantra adept called Do-pa, son of Phug-cha.

dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan's father, sLob-dpon bdud-'dul (Sri-'dul-dpal), belonged to the distinguished De-gyin-hor clan whose ancestry was said to trace back to the Mongolian king Gur-ser. His forebear De-gyin deva raja came to Tibet as part of the retinue of the maternal uncle of the Chinese princess Chin-ch'eng, daughter of Shou-li, prince of Yung. Chin-ch'eng was one of the wives of Khri lde-gtsug-brtsan (Mes-ag-tshom), father of Khri Srong-lde'u-brtsan. Upon his arrival in Tibet, De-gyin deva raja became minister of religious offerings (mchod blon) and his family was bequeathed the estate (gzhi kha) of sNa-mo.

sNa-mo-lung-pa sLop-dpon bdud-'dul was also a tantric yogin with expertise in the practice of Mayajala, Matarah and the Phur bu ze'u smug gu, an early cycle of the deity Vajrakila that had been passed down in his family for many generations, and the young dNgos-grub rgyal-mtshan studied these doctrines under his father's tutelage. He demonstrated remarkable skill in both understanding and practice from a very early age, perfecting the samadhi of Vajrakila by the time he was eight years old. Following the death of his father, he continued to be educated by his mother and then by dPal-chen 'bum-pa, the teacher from Se, and his brother Legs-pa-ba.

When he was just eleven years old, three feathery growths appeared on the top of his head and when he was twenty-three there were five. Because these growths looked like the feathers of a vulture he became famous as rGod kyi ldem-'phru-can, "the one with vulture's feathers." These extraordinary signs had been foretold in the prophecies and were regarded with awe as the marks of a truly special being. He also became known as Mahavidyadhara (Rig 'dzin chen po) and this is the title which has been held ever since by each of his successive incarnations.

When he was 25 years of age, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem found the first of the naga jewels left for him as a sign by Padmasambhava on the eastern slope of mount bKra-bzang. It had the form of a hexagonal crystal, about the size of a goose egg, and was discovered in the heart of a globular container, immersed in sweet-tasting fragrant nectar that sparkled like the sun.



During this same period, while the former rDo-rje bdud-'joms was incarnate in the person of Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem, the former lha sras Mu-khri btsan-po (son of king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan) took birth in southern Lastod as the sprul sku bZang-po grags-pa. Living as a monk in the bKa'-brgyud school, he practised resolutely for many years in re-

treat until the signs of success were accomplished. With the blessings of guru Padma-sambhava, who actually appeared as a yogin and trained him, bZang-po grags-pa unearthed a number of treasure texts, including the famous Seven Chapter Prayer of Padma-sambhava (Le'u bdun ma) and the Prayer Which Clears the Path of all Obstacles (gSol 'debs bar chad lam sel). From the temple of Gram-pa-rgyang, built in the seventh century by Srong-btsan sgam-po, [5] he took out rituals of both Hayagriva and Maitreya and then, in 1364 at rGyang yon-po-lung, he discovered several sadhana of Vajrapani, guides to places of pilgrimage, and keys to the discovery of yet more gter ma. Among these texts, eight were related to the concealed treasures of Zang-zang lha-brag, including the Gab pa snying gi lde mig (Key to the Concealed Heart) which specifically mentioned the discovery of the naga jewel on the eastern slope of mount bKra-bzang, and also the essential inventory (snying byang) entitled Man ngag gnas kyi don bdun ma. [6] In the new year (February/ March 1365) bZang-po grags-pa entrusted these texts to sTon-pa bsod-nams dbang-phyug [7] and two companions with instructions to pass them on to "a yogin carrying a statue or rosary in his hand" that supposedly they would encounter to the east of the Zang-zang mountain and who would begin to engage them in a conversation concerning bKra-shis-lde, the ruler of Gung-thang. [8]

A week or so later, as the three travellers were eating their meal on the bank of a stream near Brag-lung monastery in northern gYas-ru, rGod-ldem-can arrived there from sNa-mo-lung carrying in his hands a brass image of Vajrakila and a rosary. As they spoke together, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem lamented the death of Khri bKra-shis-lde and all the requirements of the prophecy were fulfilled. Recognizing him as the one they sought, they handed over the various treasure scrolls together with a letter of good wishes sealed by Padmasambhava himself.

Upon his return to sNa-mo-lung, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem interpreted the rising of the planet Jupiter in the eighth lunar mansion [9] as a sign that the time had come to take

out the key to the treasures. At the first crack of dawn on the eighth day of the snake month in the year of the fire horse (1366), there came from the east a beam of white light "like the trunk of the wish-fulfilling kalpalata" that struck the summit of mount bKra-bzang and a spot beneath that was indicated by a light fall of snow. Thus, from the vicinity of three obelisks (rdo ring) within the cavity of a projecting white rock ('dzeng brag dkar po) beneath the summit of Ri-bo bkra-bzang, rGod-ldem-can unearthed the next link in the chain of the Northern Treasures in the form of seven paper scrolls (shog ril). These scrolls were stored in a box of stone,



arranged together with others of bronze and copper so as to serve the mountain as its heart, mouth and eye. In order to compensate for the removal of these scrolls, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem buried another treasure in their place, sponsored by the king of Gung-thang, and the resultant cavity known as rLung-gseng (Windy Hollow) is reported to be still in existence today. [10] During the new year celebrations on the following year, as Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem reached the age of thirty, a fruit tree spontaneously grew up there which is also thought to have remained until now.

Two months later, on the fourth day of the sheep month 1366, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem was engaged in the rite of bestowing upon his disciples the abhiseka of Vajrakila. During the preliminary section of the rite, just as he was establishing the mandala of deities within the bodies of his disciples, the guru arose and led his followers up into the mountains that look like a heap of poisonous snakes (dug sbrul spung 'dra). The texts describe the air as sweetly scented and filled with rainbows as Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem guided his disciples to the southwest face of the mountain where the atmosphere glowed with ruby-red light in the splendour of the setting sun. They climbed up to a mountain cave and, leaving two disciples stationed beneath the entrance, [11] rGod-ldem-can went inside and began to pray. As the sky grew dark following the setting of the sun, the rock cave began to tremor and shake as a sign that the master of the treasures (gter bdag) had

arrived. At midnight they lit a number of butter-lamps and by their light the group was able to discern upon the rock the clear image of a visvavajra. When the guru pressed beneath that mark with his paper scroll (the symbolic key to the treasures) it seemed to open like a door onto a triangular chamber within which they found a pale blue snake of liquid copper with a yellow belly, as thick as a man's arm. It was lying in a coil with its face to the southeast upon a square blue stone, the top of which was marked in nine sections with silver coloured nails so that it resembled the back of a tortoise. The coils of the snake looked like an enormous eight-sided precious stone and upon its heart were three gem-like excrescences from which were extracted a roll of paper and a symbolic jewel (rin po che'i rtags tsam cig).

Resting upon the blue stone slab, concealed within the serpent's coils, lay a maroon leather casket, the five-fold repository of the Northern Treasures.

From the central compartment of deep red leather, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem took out the Kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal cycle in four volumes, said to be the distilled essence of one hundred thousand profound texts of the Great Perfection. This cycle was subsequently to become one of the most famous and revered of all the expositions of atiyoga doctrines in Tibet. From within this central compartment he also took out the teachings of Bla ma rig 'dzin gdung sgrub and other texts related to the sadhana of guru, deva and dakini, [12] together with the atiyoga texts of Vajrakila and three kila wrapped in maroon silk, all of which had been activated by Padmasambhava himself. The first one he had used on the occasion of attaining siddhi in Yang-le-shod in Nepal, the second he was using when he saw the face of Vajrakila at dPal chu-bo-ri, and the third he used to subjugate the enemies and obstructors in sTag-tshang seng-ge bsam-'grub in Bhutan. [13] Also there were thirty paper scrolls wrapped in blue silk, lockets of hair from the heads of Padmasambhava, Khri Srong-lde'u-brtsan, Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal, sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms and others, as well as sundry additional sacred articles (byin rlabs kyi rdzas).

The front (eastern) compartment of the box was fashioned of white conch shell and contained texts of the rGyu 'bras la ldog pa cycle, putting an end to cause and effect, as well as the dGongs pa nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i chos teachings on the similarity of the awakened mind to the sky, and the tantras of the Ka dag rang byung rang shar cycle concerning the natural presence and arising of primordial purity.

The golden southern chamber of the chest contained the sNyen sgrub nam pa bzhi'i chos teachings on the fourfold practice of deity invocation, and the texts of the gSang sgrub guru drag po rtsal and bKa' bgyad drag po rang byung rang shar. These important ritual cycles became famous "like the sun and the moon" due to the brightness and clarity that they induced within the minds of those who practised them. Also in this chamber were found texts relating to Vajrakila in his form as Mahottarakila with nine faces and eighteen hands.

From the western compartment of red copper, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem took out the rTen 'brel khyad par can and the Phyi sgrub 'gro ba kun grol which form part of the rTen 'brel chos bdun cycle. He also took out the Tsan dan gyi sdong bu lta bu'i chos and a volume in which were found the rTa mgrin dregs pa dbang sdud, the 'Khor 'das dbang sdud and the Lha chen teachings, as well as a further volume containing the Byang chub sems dpa'i spyod dbang.



Within the black northern compartment of iron were found the most violent of all the wrathful ritual texts. Many Vajrakila teachings were taken from this chamber of the box as well as the dGra bgegs thal bar rlog pa'i chos, a text said to be as pernicious as the stem of a poisonous plant (dug gi sdong po lta bu). Eight treatises on the compounding of ritual medicine (sman gyi tshad byas pa) were also found there, together with further commentaries (upadesa) and instructions on the making of 'thread crosses' (mdos) [14] but not all of these texts were transcribed and disseminated.

Having discovered these five treasuries of teachings (mdzod lnga), Rig-'dzin rgod-

Idem is said to have organized each of the sections into one hundred and one parts and rearranged the folios of yellow paper (shog ser po ti) into pairs like mother and son, marked with the seed-syllables (bija) of the four goddesses of the gates. Building a small monastery at bKra-bzang which was inherited as the residence of his son rNam-rgyal mgon-po, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem then taught the doctrines contained within the fivefold treasury to his son, his wife and his chosen pupils. [15]

These teachings became known as Byang-ter or Northern Treasures in order to distinguish them from the Lho-gter (Southern Treasures) that had been revealed in previous centuries by Nyang-ral nyi-ma 'od-zer (1136-1204) and Guru chos-dbang (1212-1270). These three gter ston are widely renowned in Tibet as the kaya, vac and citta emanations of Padmasambhava himself and thought to be the three greatest gter ston of all.

Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem is also credited with the discovery of seven 'hidden lands' (sba yul) in which people could live in happiness in the peaceful pursuit of Dharma. [16] Having gone to Sikkim ('Bras-mo gshong) in the year of the ox, he resided in the area for 11 years (1373-84), experiencing many prophetic dreams, working miracles there for the benefit of all beings, and blessing the land (especially the White Rock Cave of bKra-shis-lding) as a powerful place for meditation. [17] The Chronicle of the rulers of Sikkim describes a local cult dedicated to the holiest mountain in that vicinity (Gangchen mdzod-lnga) as contained in the work of a later Byang-gter gter ston, Shes-rab me-'bar. Sacred dances in honour of the deities thought to reside on the five peaks of that mountain are annually performed by royal command on the full moon day of the seventh Tibetan month and Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem himself recovered further gter ma from the central peak. This secondary revelation was in the form of images: one of Padmasambhava in wrathful guise and one of the goddess mThing-kha. Letters announcing these discoveries were dispatched to Tibet suspended from the necks of vultures.

Apart from the gter ma which he himself revealed, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem held the key to other lists of hiding places (them byang, kha byang) and was thus instrumental in the unearthing of many more texts and powerful cult objects.

In fulfilment of the prophecies that describe the treasures of Zang-zang lha-brag as being of particular importance to the dynastic descendents of Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, in 1389 at the age of fifty-two, Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem was appointed the role of personal preceptor to the king of Gung-thang, mChog-sgrub-lde. [18] The bla ma bestowed a large number of instructions and empowerments upon the king, as well as giving him Padmasambhava's own kila called Srid gsum bdud 'dul [19] and other sundry sacred items of great potency. A particular cult object deemed to be endowed with especial power for the descendents of the royal line is referred to in our texts as 'the precious Gong khug ma.' It remains unclear as to whether this item is itself a text, or a ritual kila that was always carried by the siddha of Oddiyana and inherited from him, together with appropriate oral instructions, by Ye-shes mts-ho-rgyal. [20] In either case it is reckoned to represent the power of Vajrakila and embody the essence of the Vajrakila doctrines.

It was during his period of residency with king mChog-sgrub-lde that Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem opened up the hidden land of sKyid-mo-lung. Most of the period, however, he spent engaged in meditation in his monastery at Ri-bo dpal-'bar, a gift from the king.

During summertime in the year of the iron snake (1401), Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem bestowed the extensive transmission of the dGongs pa zang thal upon Se-ston thugs-rje rgyal-mtshan and fifteen of his followers. Thus the important branch lineage in Se was strengthened.

Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem passed away in Zilgnon, Sikkim, at the age of seventy-one in 1408, the year of the male earth mouse. The large number of teachings and special tantric precepts that he handed down to posterity were transmitted through the three lineages known as the Mother, Son and Disciple lines. The successive holders of these doctri-

nes are renowned as having attained many higher and ordinary siddhi.

Maintaining the continuity of the tradition

Having thus established the school of the Northern Treasures in Tibet, Rig-'dzin rGod-ldem remains, to this day, committed by his vows as a bodhisattva to propagate these teachings so long as they continue to serve the needs of humanity. Thus, in accordance with his religious precepts, he is said to have manifested an emanation in the mid-14th century known as the rGod ldem yang sprul, the glorious (dpal ldan) 'Jam-dbyangs bla-ma. Appearing in gTsang at upper Nyang, which is west of Yar-'brog lake along the Nyang-chu river in the region of rGyal-rtse, from an early age 'Jam-dbyangs bla-ma made his home within a community of rNying-ma practitioners and he was able to clear away all their doubts and confusions concerning the teachings of both sutra and tantra. In upper Nyang, in a secret Dakini treasure cave, he discovered gter ma teachings including powerful prayers to the guru, deva and dakini, through which thousands of individuals attained liberation. Bringing particular blessings to the local populations of Shangs, rTa-nag and 'U-yug, the teachings revealed by him at that time were later incorporated into the Northern Treasures system and the lineage of these teachings remained unbroken even in the time of Kong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas, who included several of these texts in the Rin chen gter mdzod and composed supplementary explanations to accompany them.



The first of his 'great' incarnations, however, said to have been predicted by Kun-skyong gling-pa, was in mNga'-ris glo-bo [21] as the gter ston Legs-ldan bdud-'joms rdo-rje (1512-1625). His father at that time was 'Jam-dbyangs rin-chen rgyal-mtshan, a renowned scholar and yogin, the final incarnation of Marpa lo-tsa-ba. His mother was the lady 'Bro-lcam Khrom-pa-rgyan, and his

elder brother was the famous mNga'-ris pan-chen. His father was his first teacher, but it was from his root guru Sakya bzang-po that he received the transmission of the Northern Treasures. [22] He also studied with a number of other great masters of both bka' ma and gter ma, and became a vital link in the transmission of the anuyoga teachings, which he received from his father and subsequently entrusted to sKyi-ston Tshe-ring dbang-po along a lineage that descended to Rig-'dzin Padma 'phrin-las. From their places of concealment in bSam-yas, 'On-phu stag-tshangs and Lha-ri snying-po in Sikkim, he revealed three further volumes of teachings. [23]

His elder brother, mNga'-ris pan-chen Padma dbang-rgyal (1487-1543), [24] a distinguished scholar and adept in the Byang-gter lineage, established a temporary monastery around his mountainside retreat cave, to which he gave the name Evam lcog-sgar. [25] Anticipating the future expansion of this encamped community of monks, he composed a strict code of conduct to be followed by all who dwelt there. [26] In this way, the teachings of the vidyadhara householder rGod-ldem-can came to be the central field of study for a community of ordained bhiksu. These teachings were further supplemented by Padma dbang-rgyal's own gter ma discovery, the cycle of Rig 'dzin yongs 'dus. [27] Encouraged by the gter ston Shes-rab 'od-zer, Padma dbang-rgyal continued to build up both the fabric and the reputation of this religious community and eventually established the monastery of Thub-bstan gser-mdog-can. He died at the age of fifty-six in the village of 'On-sme-thang.

In 1550 Padma dbang-rgyal was reborn in upper gYas-ru, northern Tibet, as bKra-shis stobs-rgyal dbang-po'i-sde (1550-1607), the son of clan chieftain Nam-mkha' rin-chen, a descendent of the kings of Mi-nyag. His mother was Chos-skyong 'dzom-chen. Furthering the work of his predecessor, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal discovered important gter ma in the temple of 'rya Palo in bSam-yas, and in the golden stupa at Lho-brag 'jod-pa. Flying up to a cave of secret practice on top of the Lhang-lhang rock in gTsang-rong, he unearthed three further cycles of teachings [28]

and he became famous for his religious activities in both Khams and China. Among his collected writings is a biography of guru Padma, completed in 1603, and the Byangter mnga' dbang skor gyi mtha' dpyod byang pa gu ru ral pa can gyi legs bshad. His main Byang-ter teacher was Rig-'dzin legsldan rdo-rje, but he also studied with Byams-pa chos kyi rgyal-mtshan, Ratna bhadra, Rinchen phun-tshogs and Yan-pa blo-bde. Wishing to heal the rift with the rulers of gTsang that had disrupted the peace of the Byangter monastic community and forced the monks to wander from place to place, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal, with the support of his religious patron Pho-bo bka'-gnam rgyal-po, continued to build up the mountainside retreat centre mNga'-ris pan-chen evam lcog-sgar which he now renamed Guru padma'i evam lcog-sgar.

At the age of thirty, bKra-shis stobs-rgyal fathered a son who was to be the last in his family line of hereditary princes of Byangngam-ring descended from the kings of Minyag. The boy's mother was Lha-lcam yid-bzhin dbang-mo of the divine clan of Za-hor. Recognized as the third incarnation of the Mahavidyadhara rGod kyi ldem-'phru-can, this great incarnation Ngag-gi dbang-po (1580-1639) took refuge with the 'Bri-gung chos rgyal Rin-chen phun-tshogs from whom he received the name Ngag-dbang rig-'dzin rdo-rje chos-rgyal bstan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan dpal-bzang-po. Receiving from his father all the empowerments of bka' ma and gter ma, he trained as a bhiksu, a bodhisattva and guhyamantrin, upholding all three sets of vows in perfect purity. Practising with single-pointed application at Yar-lung shel-brag and other power places associated with guru Padmasambhava, he beheld the faces of deva and dharmapala so that he gained incomparable siddhi and the ability to bring enormous benefit to all beings. Among his disciples were mKhas-grub bkra-shis rnam-rgyal, author of a seminal work clarifying the tenets of the rNying-ma school, and Zur-chen Chos-dbyings rang-grol, a great guru whose own disciples included Dalai Lama V (to whom he imparted the teachings of Vajrakila, the eight heruka sadhana and the sNying thig), Rig-'dzin Padma phrin-las, and

others.

Under Ngag-gi dbang-po's influence, peace and harmony came to prevail among the feuding warlords of eastern Tibet.

Travelling westwards, he shifted the residence of Evam lcog-sgar to the northern bank of the Tshang-po river, to an auspicious location indicated by the self-arisen symbol of a vajra (rdo rje) in the form of a nearby rock (brag), west of bSam-yas in the central province of dBus. There, in 1632 (the year of the water monkey), he founded the monastery Guru padma'i evam lcog-sgar thub-bstan rdo-rje-brag. Since then, that monastery has been the main seat of learning for the lineage of the Northern Treasures and the see for all successive incarnations of its gter ston, subsequently known by the title "Vidyadhara of rDo-rje-brag." Ngag-gi dbang-po, the third incarnation of rGod-ldem-can, was thus also known as rDo-rje-brag rig-'dzin I. During the lifetime of its founder, the monastery of rDo-rje-brag probably housed around two hundred monks. [29] Growing larger in later years, it was destined to become one of the principal rNying-ma-pa monasteries in Tibet. Even so, Rig-'dzin Ngag-gi dbang-po was not satisfied with what he had been able to achieve by the end of his lifetime and he entrusted further plans for its development to his leading disciple bsTan-'dzin nor-bu of Yol-mo. [30]

The great Fifth Dalai Lama, in the year of his birth in 1617, was given an empowerment of long life by Ngag-gi dbang-po. As he grew up he came to receive the full series of tantric authorisations of the Northern Treasure tradition (some of which were said to have been received directly from the deceased master bKra-shis stobs-rgyal in mystic visions [31]), as well as the unbiased teachings of his own (dGe-lugs-pa) and other schools. The Great Fifth admired and honoured Ngag-gi dbang-po and composed his biography.

Ngag-gi dbang-po died in 1639.

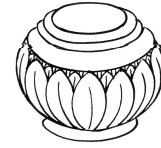
Two years later, at Mon-mkhar rnam-sras-gling, Blo-bzang padma 'phrin-las (1641-1718) was born as the son of Karma phun-tshogs dbang-rgyal of the Bya-nag

clan. His birth being marked by an unusually high number of auspicious portents, the boy was soon recognized as the fourth in the line of Mahavidyadhara. At the age of six he was placed upon the throne of rDo-rje-brag by his former disciple bsTan-'dzin nor-bu of Yol-mo. Padma 'phrin-las subsequently became a disciple of the Fifth Dalai Lama from whom he received both sramanera and bhik-su vows.

Studying intensively under some of the greatest teachers of his day, [32] Padma 'phrin-las received the empowerments and commentaries of a large number of tantric doctrines from both the old and new schools which he put into practice during extended periods of retreat, not only in the monastery of rDo-rje-brag but also in the power places of sGrags yang-rdzong and Chu-bo-ri, blessed by Padmasambhava. As a result of his great erudition and insight, he was able to revise and greatly extend the teachings of his own incarnation line, the Northern Treasures school of rDo-rje-brag. Gathering together all of the teachings that had been handed down in the three streams of transmission from the original gter ston (the Mother, Son and Disciple lineages), he united them into a single line. He composed a number of new treatises and worked extensively to arrange the ritual texts of the Byang-gter in proper liturgical order, supplementing the original texts with extra parts wherever necessary. Correcting such errors as had arisen in the transmission, he reinstated earlier traditions of ritual activity which had become lost or confused, such as the proper systems of chanting, laying out of mandala, preparing the sacrificial bali and so on, filling thirteen volumes with his work.

As well as the great importance attached to his efforts on behalf of the Byang-gter, Kun-mkhyen padma 'phrin-las is renowned for his role in the transmission lineage of the mDo dgongs pa 'dus pa, the preeminent scripture of anuyoga. Urged by the instigations of his teacher, the great Fifth Dalai Lama, he composed the 'Dus pa mdo'i dbang chog dkyil 'khor rgya mtsho'i 'jug ngogs and conferred the empowerment of the sutra on numerous occasions. He also transmitted the complete teachings and em-

powerments of the Kalacakra-tantra and the empowerments of mahayoga. Both O-rgyen gter-bdag gling-pa and Lo-chen dharma-sri were among his disciples. [33]



Rig-'dzin chen-po padma 'phrin-las was killed in 1718 when the invading Dzungar Mongols, fanatical protectors of the dGelugs-pa, razed the monastery of Thub-bstan rdo-rje-brag to the ground. [34]

The fifth incarnation of Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem was bsKal-bzang padma dbang-phyug (1720-1770), born at Nyag-rong lcags-mdud in the district of sPo-'bor-sgang (Bu-bor-sgang) in southeastern Tibet, to a family claiming descent from the ancient lHa dynasty of Tibetan monarchs. Following his enthronement as rDo-rje-brag rig-'dzin III he thoroughly repaired all damage to his monastery which, once revitalized, remained a major centre for the rNying-ma tradition for the next two hundred years. His own visionary teachings (dag snang) include the bKa' 'dus chos kyi rgya mtsho and the Padma drag po meditations upon the guru in ferocious aspect. Scenes from these visions are reenacted as sacred dances in the first month of every year, as part of the New Year celebrations.

After him came Khams-gsum zil-gnon (Kun-bzang 'gyur-med lhun-grub rdo-rje, the sixth incarnation and rDo-rje-brag rig-'dzin IV), born at gSer-tog in the region of Dar-tse-mdo. [35] He founded a monastery called sGar grwa-tshang at Dar-tse-mdo as a branch of rDo-rje-brag (rDor-brag-smad), and this easternmost establishment of the Byang-gter tradition became the family monastery of the lCags-la rulers of Dar-tse-mdo. He also obtained a special longevity practice in a pure vision, which was included in the Rin chen gter mdzod by Kong-sprul blo-gros mtha'-yas.

The next incarnation was Ngag-dbang 'jam-dpal mi-'gyur lhun-grub rdo-rje (rDo-rje-brag rig-'dzin V, 1839-1861) who came

from rNam-sras-gling in Mon-mkhar. Unfortunately, dying at the young age of 22 years, little is recorded of his lifetime's achievements.

The sixth Mahavidyadhara of rDo-rje-brag was sKal-bzang padma dbang-rgyal bdud-'dul rdo-rje, born in upper La-yag in lHo-brag. Famous for his skill in fierce tantric rites, he is said to have repulsed the invading Gorkha army by means of his occult power, for which service to his country he was rewarded by the government with the title Hu thug thu. He also died young.

Thub-bstan chos-dbang mnyam-nyid rdo-rje, the ninth incarnation of Rig-'dzin rgod-ldem, was born at Ra-mo-che rgyal-gdong, near Lhasa, in the fifth month of the wood monkey year (1884). His father was bSod-nams stobs-rgyal and his mother was Tshe-gcig-sgrol-ma. He received his first vows at the age of two from Dalai Lama XIII, who also gave him his name. At the age of three he was recognized and taken to rDo-rje-brag to be enthroned. Having received the entire lineage teachings of the Northern Treasures school from the masters 'Jigs-med rgyal-ba'i-myu-gu and Yongs-'dzin skal-bzang ts-hul-khrims, in the year of the iron rat (1900) he was able to welcome his first preceptor, the thirteenth Dalai Lama, as a guest to rDo-

rje-brag. Five years later he took his final vows at Yar-'brog brag-ra from the preceptor Kun-bzang padma 'gro-'dul rdo-rje. In 1911 he restored the structure of rDo-rje-brag monastery and in 1916 he established a new retreat centre for the monastery, called Shel-brag ri-bo lho-nub. Having been invited by the lCags-la prince to visit Dar-rtse-mdo, Thub-bstan mnyam-nyid rdo-rje travelled extensively in Khams, visiting many of the Byang-gter monasteries and building a great stupa. He passed away in the year of the water monkey, 1932.

The present incumbent (rDo-rje-brag rig-'dzin VIII) is Thub-bstan 'jig-med mam-grol rgya-mtsho who was born in Lhasa in 1936. Recognized as the tenth incarnation of the gter ston, he was ordained as a monk by Ra-sgreng rinpoche, the regent after the Thirteenth Dalai Lama. As well as studying the Byang-gter tradition with 'Go-tsha mkhan-chen Theg-mchog bstan-'dzin, a disciple of his predecessor, he has been taught by mKhan rinpoche of sMin-grol-gling and bDud-'joms rinpoche. Despite the overthrow of Tibet by the communist Chinese, rNam-grol rgya-mtsho has remained in Tibet where he has lately been active in the rebuilding of his monastery which was almost completely devastated during the 'cultural revolution.' [36]

Notes

- [1] An earlier version of this text was published as the first chapter in *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakila*, Tring, 1993.
- [2] The Fifth Dalai Lama lists the prior incarnations of the Byang-gter gter ston in India and Nepal as: (1) Samantabhadra, the dharmakaya, (2) Vajrasattva, the sambhogakaya, (3) Vajragarbha, the nirmanakaya who gathered together all the doctrines of esoteric Buddhism, (4) Khye'u-chung she-la rog-po, (5) rGyal-sras deva bzang-skyong, (6) Byang-sems ye-shes snying-po, (7) bKa'i-sdud-po Nam-mkha'i mdog-can (also known as Vajragarbha II), (8) sKye-rgu'i bdag-mo, (9) mKha-'gro bde-ldan-ma, (10) mKha-'gro rig-byed bde-ma, (11) Yid-byin (sbyin) dpal, (12) the Dharma minister (chos kyi blon po) Blo-gros-mchog, (13) Byang-sems nam-mkha'i snying-po, (14) Sems-dpa' chen-po nor-bu 'dzin-pa, (15) bDe-ba'i rdo-rje, (16) Drag-po gtum-po, (17) Sakyamitra, (18) the bhiksu Zhi-ba'i snying-po, (19) lha-lcam Mandarava (Yid-'dzin lha-mo), (20) the beer-seller Vinasa, (21) the Dharma minister Ye-shes-gsal, (22) bTs-

un-mo 'od-'chang-ma, (23) bDe-ba'i 'byung-gnas, (24) the dakini Gar-gyi dbang-phyug (Nartesvari), (25) the dakini Susati (bDe-'byung II), (26) Ded-dpon ka-kha-'dzin, and (27) the Nepalese Jinamitra.

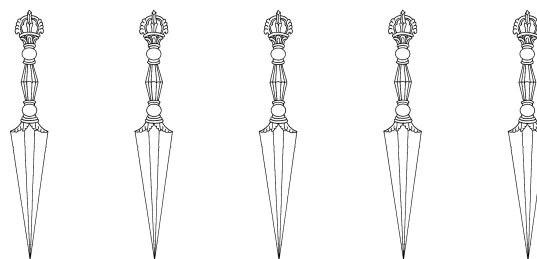
- [3] Las can dag pa'i 'khor lnga, "the fortunate circle of five", consisted of sNa-nam rdo-rje bdud-'joms, king Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan, his son prince Mukhri btsan-po, Nam-mkha'i snying-po and the lady Ye-shes mtsho-rgyal.
- [4] This place is within the myriarchy (khri skor) of Byang, one of the 13 myriarchies of Central Tibet during the Mongolian period (Yuan dynasty). It is part of the area called La-stod (western gTsang), the capital of which is Ngam-ring.
- [5] This is one of the 12 temples built by Srong-btsan sgam-po to subjugate and hold down the demomness of Tibet. It is said to press upon her left hip.
- [6] Other extensive, medium and abbreviated texts bore the titles: sNying byang rgyas pa gnad kyi

- them bu, 'Bring po thugs rje'i 'od zer, and bsDus pa thugs rje'i lcags kyu. Together with these were the Phyr zlog 'khor lo 'bar ba, the Zhal chems thugs kyi thig pa, the Kha byang gter gyi bang md-zod, and the Lam byang gsal ba'i sgron me.
- [7] A vinaya master involved in the ordination of Rinchen 'byung-gnas. G.Roerich, *The Blue Annals* 634.
- [8] The kingdom of Gung-thang lies to the southwest of Byang. Its capital is rDzong-dkar, situated at the end of the Trisul-gandaki river valley. Between here and lake sPa-gu is the famous Gung-thang pass through which Padmasambhava entered and left Tibet. bKra-shis-lde ruled from 1352-1365. His son, Phun-tshogs-lde, ruled from 1365-1370 (see below, note 10). mChog-grub-lde ruled 1370-1396.
- [9] This auspicious configuration marked the birth of the Buddha. *Buddhacarita* I.9, II.36.
- [10] Khri Phun-tshogs-lde, the king of Gung-thang at that time, was not well disposed towards the gter ston Rig-'dzin rgod-lde and the offerings that he provided were meagre. Rig-'dzin rgod-lde therefore took out those scrolls that offered protection to the royal lineage and reconcealed them at Ri-bo dpal-'bar. They were later restored to the king's eldest son, mChog-grub-lde, with whom the gter ston had an excellent relationship. Khri Phun-tshogs-lde was assassinated in 1370.
- [11] The two left outside the door were rDo-rje mgon-po and Sangs-rgyas bstan-pa (see note 15, below). The cave has since been known by the name Lha'i-skyed-tshal, Pleasure Grove of the Gods.
- [12] Known as "the three roots" of tantric practice.
- [13] In the words of Padmasambhava himself: "Contained within this treasure there is a kila the length of my handspan, forged of iron by the blacksmith dPal-rtsegs of Mon. It has been consecrated as a karmakila and so, merely by brandishing it in the air, all the mischief of enemies and obstructors will immediately be averted. The name of that kila is Srid gsum bdud 'dul (Controller of Demons in the Three Worlds) and its activity is such as to quell all demonic interferences. There is also a kila which has the blessings of Krodha-mañjuri (Yamantaka) which was carved by Chinese experts from black rosewood. It is eight of my finger-widths in length and is for use in meditation. The name of this kila is 'Bar ba mchog (Supreme Radiance) and whoever continues to hold it will very quickly see the face of the deity Vajrakumara. There is yet another kila in that treasure which was made by an Indian expert from five different kinds of iron. It has the length of five of my finger-widths and goes by the name of Sras mchog nyi ma (Sunshine of the Supreme Son). Its activity is such that the family lineage of its owner will run for many generations." A33, 239-240.
- [14] None of my sources list any Bon-po doctrines among his discoveries unless these are hinted at here by the words "mDos... and further upadesa". Both Ramon Prats and Tulku Thondup, however, say that rGod-lde-can is revered by the Bon-po as a gter ston (Prats naming him dPon-gsas khyung-thog) but neither specifies the revelations attributed to him. R.Prats, "Some Preliminary Considerations Arising from a Biographical Study of the Early gTer-ston" 259. T.Thondup, *Buddha Mind* 110.
- [15] According to Dalai Lama V, Rig-'dzin rgod-lde bestowed 32 of these teachings upon his son rNam-rgyal mgon-po in the form of instructions and empowerments. He bestowed 15 of them upon rDo-rje mgon-po and four upon his uncle Sangs-rgyas bstan-pa (aka bLa-ma do-pa-ba), both of whom had been present when the treasures were originally revealed. He gave another four to his uncle Sangs-rgyas byams-bzang, and seven to his nephew rDo-rje dpal-ba. Nam-mkha' grags-pa and bDe-legs rgyal-mtshan each received three. Other recipients of the original teachings included Nam-mkha' bsod-nams, Sangs-rgyas dpon-chen, Don-grub dpal-bzang, mGon-po bzang-po, and Ye-shes mkha'-'gro, as well as sGrub-pa-mo (wife of the governor of Lho-'brag), kings Phun-tshogs-lde and mChog-grub-lde (rulers of Gung-thang), Thugs-rje rgyal-mtshan (the teacher from Se, where an important branch of the Byang-gter became established), Nyi-ma bzang-po (the young author of rGod-lde's biography who was with the gter ston for the last ten years of his life) and, of course, Rig-'dzin rgod-lde's wife, about whom the biography is strangely silent.
- sTag-lung-rtse-sprul rinpoche speaks of "eight sons, eight ladies and three pupils."
A Brief History of rDo-rje-brag Monastery" p.5
- [16] The biography of Rig-'dzin rgod-lde mentions only two sbas yul: 'Bras-mo-gzhong and sKyid-mo-lung. Dalai Lama V, however, shows that the gter ston possessed guides to the following seven hidden lands: 'Bras-mo-gzhong, bde-ldan sKyid-mo-lung, sbas-pa Padma'i tshal, rol-pa mKha'-'gro-gling, rgyal-gyi mKhan-pa-lung, Lha'i pho-brang-sdings, and Gro-mo-khud, as well as the keys to Yol-mo-gangs, Bu-le-gangs, 'Bras-mo-khud, and rTag-so gangs-ra. Johan Reinhard in his article "Khembalung, the hidden valley" lists the seven hidden lands as: Khumbu, Helambu, Rongshar, Lapchi, Dolpo, Nubri and Sikkim. Unfortunately it is not possible to match these two lists exactly. With regard to Helambu, see Appendix Yol-mo to the present work. With regard to Sikkim, see next note.
- [17] See my "Pilgrim's Guide to the Hidden Land of Sikkim," *Bulletin of Tibetology*, 2003.
- [18] See above, note 8.
- [19] See above, note 13.
- [20] Gong khug means either a small pouch worn around the neck or the breast pocket of a shirt, etc.

In either case, the Gong khug ma is that which was always kept by Padmasambhava close to his heart. Some indication that the item referred to here is indeed a ritual kila is found in the gSol 'debs bar chad lam sel in which Padmasambhava is described as having a kila of bell metal in his right hand (with which the mara and raksasa are subjugated), a kila of khadira wood in his left hand (with which the devoted disciples are protected), and an iron kila worn around his neck which is indivisible from the deity. C.R.Lama, on the other hand, insists that the Gong khug ma is a condensed ritual text.

- [21] gLo-bo is the kingdom of Mustang in present-day Nepal. Up until the 18th century, gLo-bo, Dol-po and Gung-thang were all regarded as part of lower mNga'-ris (mNga'-ris-smad). During the Mongol period (1240-1368), the three districts of mNga'-ris (mNga'-ris-skor-gsum) may have included La-dvags in the west, Zhang-zhung in the central region, and Gu-ge sPu-hrang in the south.
- [22] Concerning Sakya bzang-po, see Appendix on Yol-mo.
- [23] Thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dbyings grol (1 vol.), Tshe sgrub bdud rtsi 'khyil pa (1 vol.), and Drag po dbu dgu (1 small vol.). These three volumes include teachings on Avalokitesvara, Mañjusri and Vajrapani, as well as the longevity practice which enabled him to live for 113 years.
- [24] For a potted biography of this lama, said to be the incarnation of King Khri Srong-lde'u-btsan and the ninth incarnation of rGyal-sras lha-rje, see: Eva Dargyay, *The Rise of Esoteric Buddhism in Tibet 156-160*, NSTB I 805-808, and *Masters of the Nyingma Lineage 207-208*.
- [25] According to bDud-'joms rinpoche; "The entire monastic community of their seminary became a wandering encampment as a result of the deprivations of Zhing-Shag-pa (Tshe-brtan rdo-rje), the governor of Tsang." NSTB I 783. The troubles caused by that governor are said to have come to an end, however, when he was killed by the wrathful magic rites of Byang-bdag bKra-shis stobs-rgyal who earned his title "Byang-bdag" (Protector of the Northern Treasures) as a result of this deed.
- [26] bsGrigs kyi bka' yig rdo rje 'bar ba gzi byin. He also composed the renowned sDom gsum rnam nges in which he demonstrated the interrelationship of the pratimoksa, bodhisattva and mantra vows.
- [27] Bla ma bka' bryad yongs 'dus chos skor.
- [28] These are the Tshe sgrub sku gsum rig 'dus, the Karma guru'i chos skor and the Ma rgyud khrag rlung ma (also known as the Ma rgyud snying po don gsum).
- [29] The figure given by Rigzin & Russell is 2,000. Both E.Gene Smith (*Among Tibetan Texts*) and Tarthang Tulku (*Crystal Mirror V*) gives the figure as 200, whilst Wylie (*The Geography of Tibet*) and Ferrari & Petech (*mKhyen-brtse's Guide*) give 400. Gene Smith and Tarthang Tulku also mention that, at this time, the monastery had three incarnate lamas.
- [30] Third incarnation of sngags-'chang Sakya bzang-po. See Appendix on Yol-mo.
- [31] See Samten Karmay, *Secret Visions* 66, 74, etc., also 34 where it is said that Padmasambhava himself gives the Fifth Dalai Lama instructions in the Byang-gter.
- [32] Among whom were Zur-chen chos-dbyings rang-grol, bKa'-gyur-ba bsod-nams mchog-ldan, Khra-tshang-ba blo-mchog rdo-rje, gTer-chen 'gyur-med rdo-rje, lHa-btsun nam-mkha' 'jigs-med and Weston thugs-mchog 'od-'bar.
- [33] Among his disciples, also, was the siddha bLo-bzang lha-mchog (1672-1747) who came from Lho-brag gro-bo. He is famed as the revealer of four hidden lands: Seng-ge-ri, mKhan-pa-ljongs, Long-mo lha-steng, and 'Or-mo lha-sa (within which he discovered the palace of Yam-shud dmar-po). Following the tragic murder of his teacher Rig-'dzin Padma 'phrin-las in 1718, he rejoiced at the discovery of his reincarnation sKal-bzang padma dbang-phyug and, following his reenthronement at rDo-rje-brag, he visited him there in 1734 and 1735 in order to teach him the rDzogs chen thugs rje chen po 'khor ba dbyings grol.
- [34] See L.Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early Eighteenth Century*; and Snellgrove & Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, for details of this troubled historical period.
- [35] The town of Dar-rtse-mdo lies deep within a gorge at the confluence of the Cheto-chu and the Yakra-chu tributaries which form the Dardo River. It was formerly the capital of the lCags-la kingdom (one of the five independent kingdoms of Khams) under the hereditary authority of the lCags-la rgyal-po. Gyurme Dorje, *Tibet Handbook* (2nd edition), Bath, 1999, p.447
- [36] Photographs of the newly restored monastery of rDo-rje-brag can be seen by clicking on GALLERY at www.tbrc.org

The preliminary practice of the ‘Zer Nga’, the ‘Five Nails’ of the Jangter



So, what are these Zer Nga or translated Five Nails? In one sentence, they are the necessary preparation for one of the central and most profound practices of the Jangter, the ‘Northern Revealed Treasure’ lineage contained within the Nyingma school of Tibetan Buddhism.

For most of us, after our first encounter with Buddhism, in whatever form that may have been, we will have found out something about it in general – what the Four Truths are, what the Noble Eight-Fold Path is, why we take refuge in the Three Jewels and so on. This is natural and necessary, just as, if we wish to go to Rinpoche’s gumpa, we must first find out that it is in India, then where in India it is, how to get there from Delhi and so on.

Then, we will decide which particular form of the Buddha-Dharma we want to practice. All the readers of this newsletter, I assume, have chosen to follow the Jangter tradition as it was taught to us by Khordong Tertrul Chime Rigdzin Rinpoche.

Rinpoche visited Europe so many times to meet us and teach us. During these visits he gave initiations and we practiced sadhanas, texts arranged for group recitation, together. Especially we read the ‘Tsa Sum Rigdzin Lha Drub’ or ‘Vidyadhara Guru Sadhana’ or ‘Big Rigdzin’ which he had compiled mainly from the terma discovered by the great tertön Nudan Dorje, whose (fourth) reincarnation he was. He gave us so many blessings by the power of his mind, by the power of his great compassion, and he gave us the introduction to his texts so that we can recite them and enter into them.

Many of us who became his students also travelled to India for the regular winter practice of offering butter lamps, through reciting his own ‘mind terma’ the ‘Marme Monlam.

Then, how can we make use of what he gave us and develop our practice?

In general, Lamas are able to guide us in three ways: by teaching the Dharma, by giving direct practice instructions and by performing rituals. Rinpoche sometimes gave teachings and instruction and these were precious and profound, but they were few. Mainly he taught by performing rituals. Rinpoche knew very well what he was doing – which does not need to be said – and my own, limited, understanding is that the purpose of these rituals was to clear away our obstacles, so that we could proceed further along the path of Dharma.

How this manifests differs for different people: the right thing for some is to live quietly and keep their commitment to recite whatever practice engaged them; others feel the need to learn Tibetan in order to understand the texts more fully and still others feel motivated to make long retreats. Many of Rinpoche’s committed students also started preliminary practices, or ‘ngondro.’

To my knowledge, Rinpoche never publicly emphasised that we should complete the ngondro, or that we should make long retreats, or that we learn Tibetan. However, I believe there is a very good reason for this. Simply, he wanted us to do these things because we saw the necessity and benefit for ourselves, not just because we wanted to please him. He did not think in the least way

that these things were unimportant or unnecessary.

There is much evidence to support this view: he composed his own text for making prostrations, which is the first of the ngondro practices, and for the practice of Dorje Sempa, which is the second (usually). He said publicly, on several occasions, that anyone who did not learn Tibetan would not be able to understand more than half of the meaning of the texts. He also encouraged and helped several people to my knowledge who had decided to make long periods of retreat which included ngondro practice. It is also true that, although he gave many many empowerments, he very seldom gave the samaya, or commitment that goes with them and is the heart of tantric practice.

The Zer Nga and the Gongpa Zangthal

Both of these are part of Rigdzin Godem's Jangter treasures. All the traditions of Buddhism as practiced in Tibet (and even the Bon tradition too), have a special preparation practice which every student must complete before entering into the exceptional path of Vajrayana. The Zer Nga is the preliminary practice which is specific to the Gongpa Zangthal cycle of teachings, so anyone who wants to practice that part of the Jangter teachings will need to practice the Zer Nga first.

When Rinpoche came to Otwock, near Warsaw in Poland in 1996 he gave the 'lung' or reading transmission for the Gongpa Zangthal. At that time, I did not know anything at all about it, but this transmission had such a strong effect on me that I had to find out more. Not even the slightest effort was needed, since soon afterwards, in France, Rinpoche gave the initiation (dbang) for it. At that time he also explained to us that his teacher, the great scholar and adept Tulku Tshurlo, had composed an explanation text, ('khrid yig') to systemise and condense all the teachings of the five large volumes of the Gongpa Zangthal.

One of his dedicated disciples, Stephane Arguillere, had been asking him to give the transmission of the Gongpa Zangthal for some years and Rinpoche now instructed him to translate Tulku Tshurlo's commentary to it. Stephane is fluent in Tibetan, one

of the foremost European scholars in Nyingma philosophy and knows European philosophy very well too, so that he can translate difficult points in a way that can be clearly and properly understood.

How did this help me? I had the good fortune to help Stephane by translating his first draft from French into English, whilst starting to learn Tibetan.

Then I was able, by reading Tulku Tshurlo's text, to get an idea of what would be necessary to be able to practice the system of the Gongpa Zangthal.

After some years of work, just before Rinpoche died, he put another text in my hand. This was also a manual of Tulku Tshurlo and this one is a commentary on the preliminary practices for the Gongpa Zangthal. That is, it is a clear and detailed explanation of the Zer Nga. Stephane and I had already agreed that we would translate this text and now, when H.H. Taklung Tsetrul Rinpoche is giving the transmission of all the Jangter teachings, culminating with the Gongpa Zangthal, in Rinpoche's gompa near Siliguri in India, this is a good and auspicious time to say that this work has been started. To be able to get the heart-advice of Tulku Tshurlo will surely be of great benefit to everyone who wants to complete the five nails which are the Zer Nga, in order to follow the teachings of the Gongpa Zangthal.

The Zer Nga and Tulku Tshurlo's manual

Generally speaking, Vajrayana practice begins with the 'common preliminaries' which are the 'four thoughts which turn the mind away from samsara.' Then, when they have been properly understood, we move on to the preparatory practices specific to the extraordinary and swift path of secret mantra, which are the ngondro as such.

So, before describing the ngondro, a few words about the four thoughts:

We all recite these every time we read through the 'Big Rigdzin' and I believe it is significant that Rinpoche included them and placed them right at the beginning of the practice. They are described in six lines which appear immediately after two short prayers to the Lama. If someone is really intelligent, these six lines will be all that is ne-

cessary, but I definitely need much more detail and explanation in order to grasp some of their vast extent and profound impact.

So far, about forty pages of Tulku Tshurlo's manual have been translated and they all concern the urgent need to really grasp the meaning of the four thoughts. If we could really see our situation accurately, without being blinded by our habits and hopes, few of us would carry on acting as we do.

I know that I do have the strong habit to take for granted that I have a relatively healthy human body and a relatively trouble-free life, with free time to study and meditate and so on. This is something rare and precious, which so many do not, yet I forget this and idle my time away or get distracted with unimportant things – things which do not lead me to liberation. *This is the first thought.*

Death is definitely going to come and when it happens, it cannot be delayed even for an instant. Am I really ready to die right now? Have I done all I can to prepare myself? Will worldly possessions and so on help me when it is time to die? *This is the second thought.*

Every action I perform will have consequences for me in the future, both immediately and for many lives to come. It is so clear that although I try, I cannot really understand what I can so easily describe. If I really understood, how could I ever again get angry again, just to take one example? If I could understand how much harm I create for myself by anger and negative thoughts, I would immediately drop them. *This is the third thought.*

Just now, I don't have much pain or even discomfort, and I like to think things will continue like this: the world will remain an enjoyable place for me. Science will provide medicines and I will die in peace with a clear mind. Yet I know about car accidents, for example –(I have even been in one) – and I have seen old people dying slowly in confusion and fear. What can make me so sure these things will not come to me, when even realised Lamas have to endure the suffering of sickness and old age? *This is the fourth thought.*

That was a brief attempt to describe the

four thoughts from a personal viewpoint. What we need to understand is that it is only genuine Dharma, an authentic understanding of our actual human situation which is not based on just hoping or imagining, which can provide us with real, reliable protection from the inevitable suffering of our conditioned existence. Whether it is cancer or bankruptcy or divorce, all we can do is hope it won't happen to us. Without Dharma, we have no reliable method by which we can influence our future. Whatever we accumulate during our lives, in terms of material or worldly accomplishments, at the end we will go empty-handed, except for our good and bad karma which will accompany us, whether we wish it to or not.....

Now, the ngondro.

As was mentioned earlier, all schools of Tibetan Buddhism practice ngondro and their systems have very much in common. In all schools, the intention of these practices is the same: to clear away obstacles and accumulate helpful conditions which will make our progress along the path easy and swift. In each case there are practices of:

1. taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta (the firm commitment to reach the goal of complete Enlightenment)
2. Recitation of the mantra of Dorje Sempa
3. Offering a mandala of all the world
4. Practicing Guru Yoga

And in each tradition, each of these practices is to be repeated 100,000 times.

The usual Nyingmapa tradition is slightly different in that taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta are practiced individually, so that there are five practices.

The Zer Nga practice is again slightly different and its constituent parts are as follows:

1. Taking refuge and generating Bodhicitta (as one).
2. Offering of outer, inner and secret mandala.
3. Visualisation of Dorje Sempa and recitation of his mantra.
4. Meditation on impermanence.
5. Guru Yoga.

So in this case, although there are five sections, they are not quite the usual five of the Nyingmapa tradition, since the reflection on impermanence has been added. We can see that all five of these practices are contained, in a condensed form, in the ‘Big Rigdzin’ so we have already been preparing ourselves for this ngondro.

Someone might ask, “Why should it be necessary to go through these long preparations before even beginning on the path of Vajrayana? After all, there are plenty of authentic teachers who come to the West and give teachings directly on Dzogchen. If that is so, why not get on with the actual practice right now?”

1. If we decide to go on a journey, we need some idea of what sort of place we are going to. When we hear all the wonderful qualities of that place described, and especially when they are described by someone who has been to that place, or even lives there, it can inspire us and motivate us, so that we really strongly desire to go there. Direct teachings on Dzogchen and so on can serve that purpose, so they are very helpful.

Then we could just leave the house, jump into our car, start the engine and eagerly set off. But if we are sensible, we will prepare ourselves and we will prepare our vehicle before we leave. We will fill the car with petrol, with oil and with water, pump up the tyres to the right pressure and so on and we will study the map of the place we are going to, to make sure that we don’t lose our path halfway.

2. Tulku Tsurlo, in his commentary to the main text of the Gongpa Zangthal describes a farmer who wishes to irrigate a field so that he can grow a good crop on it. If he does not first build a wall around that field, he can channel water onto it, sure enough, and the field will get wet. But the water will not stay there, it will run off. If we start advanced practices immediately, without protecting our practice with the wall of the preliminaries, we may get some experiences of bliss, clarity, non-

conceptuality and so on. But these will not remain stably, and then, when they fade away, as they will surely do, we will feel tremendously sad, and long for them to return. The more efforts we make to get them back, the more tense we will become and the less likely we are to succeed.

3. The practices of Vajrayana may broadly be divided into two: development phase (sKye rim) and completion phase (rdzogs rim) and a large part of development practice is visualisation. When we visualise Dorje Sempa as we recite his mantra, we are developing our ability to visualise, so in that way, by making the preliminary practice, we are actually at the same time, practicing Kye rim. This is one example out of many which could be given of how the preliminary practices are not separate from the main practices.

4. The great Vajrayana master (and friend of Rinpoche) Tulku Urgyen takes this point further. He has stated, in a book called “Rainbow Painting”, that the preliminary practices are the same as the advanced practices – they are just named differently. He gives the example of his uncle, a most terrifying man who could read the minds of others and would confront anyone in Tibet, no matter how high or powerful, without the slightest trace of disquiet: he practiced the preliminaries every day of his life and said his powers came from them.

This is what the ngondro can do for us. The Zer Nga is itself a profound set of practices as well as being a method for removing obstacles to the development and stability of our meditation and for establishing the necessary qualities within us for that meditation to develop properly.

Completing the given number of recitations (as a first step) also establishes us firmly and stably within the correct and authentic way of practicing the tradition of Khordong, of Jangter and of the Nyingma tradition.

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The Heart Nectar of the Saints

A Prayer of Aspiration That Condenses the Essence of the Oral Teachings



By His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche

SOLE unfailing and unchanging Refuge, Lord of the Mandala,
Most precious and kind Root Guru, hold me with compassion
When I squander the freedoms and endowments,
Ignoring death, providing only for this life.

THIS fleeting human life, like a dream,
If it's happy that's all right, if it's unhappy that's all right.
Without concern for happiness or sorrow,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS mortal existence, like a candle in the wind,
If it's long, that's all right, if it's short, that's all right.
Without intensifying the tight grip of the ego,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE intellectual judgements, like the lure of a mirage,
If they're suitable, that's all right, if they're not that's all right.
Discarding like hay, whatever carries the eight worldly concerns,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS entourage, like a flock of birds in a tree,
If it's assembled that's all right, if it's scattered that's all right.
Without letting others lead me by the nose,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS illusory body, like a hundred year old house
If it survives that's all right, if it collapses that's all right.
Without becoming obsessed by food, clothes and medicine,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS religious position, like a child's game,
If it's kept up that's all right, if it's dropped that's all right.
Without deceiving myself with numerous diversions,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE gods and demons, like reflections in a mirror,
If they're helpful that's all right, if they're harmful that's all right.
Without perceiving my own hallucinations as enemies,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS delusive talk, like a trackless echo,
If it's pleasing that's all right, if it's unpleasant that's all right.
Taking the Three Jewels and my own mind as witness,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THAT which is useless at the time of need, like the antlers of a deer,
If it's known that's all right, if it's unknown that's all right.
Without simply relying on the various sciences,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE religious possessions, like virulent poisons,
If they come that's all right, if they don't that's all right.
Without devoting my life to sinful unwholesome means of survival
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS form of greatness like dogshit wrapped in brocade,
If it's obtained that's all right, if it's not that's all right,
Having smelled the rot of my own head
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE relationships, like gatherings on a market day,
If they're loving that's all right, if they're spiteful that's all right.
Cutting the ties of passionate attachment from deep within the heart,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS material wealth, like what's found in a dream,
If it's acquired that's all right, if it's not that's all right.
Without deceiving others by flattery and assent,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS rank, like a little bird perch on top of a tree
If it's high that's all right, if it's low that's all right.
Without aspiring to that which actually brings sorrow,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS black magic like a sharpened weapon,
If it's successful that's all right, if it's not that's all right.
Without buying the blade that will cut off my life.
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE recitations, like a parrot's six syllables,
If they're repeated that's all right, if they're not that's all right.
Without counting the numbers of the various practices,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

MERE religious discourse, like a mountain cascade
If it's eloquent that's all right, if it's not that's all right.
Without thinking of this glibness as Dharma,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE mind quick to judge, like a pig's snout,
If it's sharp that's all right, if it's dull that's all right.
Without uselessly digging up the rubble of anger and attachment,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE yogi's experience, like a stream in summer,
If it expands that's all right, if it recedes that's all right
Without chasing rainbows like a child,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE pure visions, like rain on a mountain top,
If they happen that's all right, if they don't that's all right.
Without giving credence to illusory experiences,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE freedoms and endowments, like a wish-fulfilling gem,
If I do not obtain them, there is no way to accomplish Dharma.
When I have them in hand, without letting them spoil
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE glorious Guru, light on the path of liberation,
If I do not meet him, there is no way to realize the true nature.
When I know the way to go, without jumping into the precipice,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE holy Dharma, like a medicine that cures sickness,
If I have not heard it, there is no way to decide what to give up and what to take up.
Distinguishing the beneficial from the harmful, without swallowing the poison,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE alternation of happiness and suffering, like the changing of summer and winter,
If I do not recognize it, there is no way to develop renunciation.
Being certain that I will suffer in turn,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS immersion in Samsara, like a stone in deep water,
If I do not get out of it now, I will not be free of it later.
Holding on to the lifeline of the compassionate Three Jewels,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE qualities of liberation, like an island of jewels,
If I am unaware of them, there is no way to develop diligence.
Seeing the unending benefits to be gained,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

Projects

THE life stories of the great saints, like the essence of nectar,
If I am unacquainted with them, there is no way to awaken faith.
When I recognize the real gains and losses
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE aspiration towards enlightenment, like a fertile field,
If I do not cultivate it, there is no way to attain Buddhahood,
Without becoming indifferent to the accomplishment of this great goal,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE thoughts of mine, like a monkey's antics,
If I do not tame them, there is no way to eliminate my afflictive emotions,
Without falling into all kinds of crazy mimicry
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS attachment to ego, like an inherent shadow,
If I do not give it up, there is no way to reach a peaceful place.
When I recognize the enemy, without befriending it
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE five poisons, like embers glowing in the ash,
If I do not extinguish them, I cannot abide in mind's self-nature.
Without breeding venomous baby snakes in my bed,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS temperament of mine, like the stiff hide of a butter-bag,
If I do not soften it, the Dharma and my mind will never blend,
Without indulging the child that is born from my self,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE ingrained bad habits, like the course of a river,
If I do not eliminate them, I cannot part from the profane.
Without delivering weapons into the hands of the enemy,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THESE distractions, like the ceaseless rippling of water,
If I do not reject them, there is no way to become steadfast.
When I have the freedom of choice, without devoting myself to Samsara,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE Guru's blessing, like the warming of earth and water,
If I do not receive it, there is no way to recognize my own true nature.
When I step on the short path, without turning in circles,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE solitary place, like a summer valley of medicine plants,
If I do not dwell there, there is no way for the good qualities to grow.
When I stay in the mountains, without wandering off to dark cities,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS desire for comfort like a greedy ghost lodged at the hearth,
If I do not part from it, painful efforts will never cease.
Without making, as to a god, offerings to a hungry demon,
May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS alert mindfulness, like the key to a fortress,
 If it is not relied upon, the movements of delusion will never stop.
 At the time the thief arrives, without leaving the latch unfastened,
 May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THE true nature, like unchanging space,
 If I do not realize it, the ground of the view will not be established.
 Without chaining myself in iron fetters,
 May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS awareness, like a stainless crystal,
 If I do not see it, the clinging and effort of meditation cannot dissolve.
 When I have this inseparable companion, without searching for another,
 May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

THIS natural mind, like an old friend,
 If I do not recognize it, all my activities will be deluded.
 Without fumbling around with my eyes closed,
 May I constantly practice the Supreme Teaching.

IN short, if I do not abandon the concerns of this life,
 There is no way to apply the teachings for the benefit of the next life.
 Having resolved to be kind to myself,
 May whatever I do become the Supreme Teaching

TO doubt the Guru's instructions that accord with the Dharma,
 To feel bitterness toward the deity when bad karma emerges,
 To discontinue the sadhana and so forth when adverse circumstances arise,
 May such obstacles not occur as accomplishment approaches.

ALL this doing has no more meaning than walking around a desert,
 All these efforts make my character rigid.
 All this thinking just reinforces my delusions,
 What worldly beings consider to be Dharma is the cause of binding myself.

ALL this exertion produces no result,
 All these ideas bring not a single actualization,
 All the numerous wants will never be fulfilled,
 Abandoning activities, may I be able to meditate on the oral instructions.

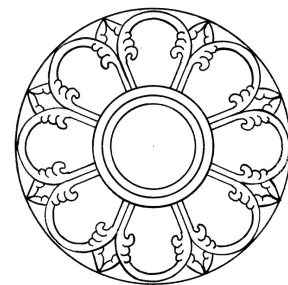
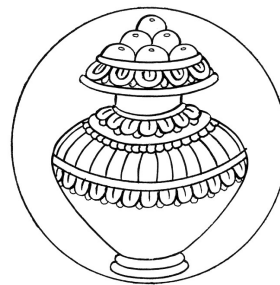
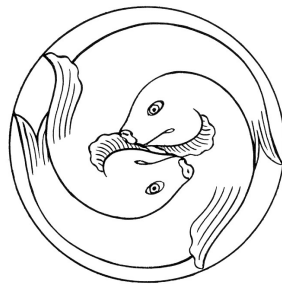
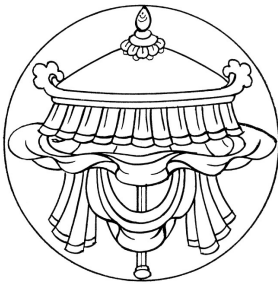
IF you think you want to do it, take the Victorious One's words as witness,
 If you think you can really do it, blend your mind with Dharma,
 If you think you will practice, follow the example of the past saints.
 You spoiled ones is there any other way ?

TAKING a humble position, rich with the treasure of contentment,
 Free from the binds of the eight worldly concerns, firm and strong-hearted in practice,
 Receiving the Guru's blessing, realization becomes equal to space.
 May we inherit the Kingdom of Kuntuzangpo.

Thus having united the meaning of the diamond words of the past saints, I have written this
 as my own prayer.

Jigdral Yeshe Dorje

Khordong Archives Project



Since our incomparable teacher Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche passed into parinirvana we realize more and more how precious it is to listen to his recorded teachings. By listening to them we get inspiration and learn more about the different practices we do. The Archives Project is collecting the various teachings and practices and copying them on digital media. This way they can be useful for the sangha now and in the future. We are collecting all video and audio recordings that were made thanks to some students to get the complete Archives. The Archives will be kept in two sets in two different places and will be available to all students of Rinpoche. Another important aspect of the Archives is that they will preserve a part of Rinpoche's transmission given to us.

Thanks to the great efforts that some sangha friends made we can already offer some recordings by now. They can be ordered from Drophan Ling Monastery in Poland. A list of available teachings has been published in the last newsletter and you will also find it on the new Khordong website that will hopefully be online soon. Please order these recordings from Jacek Skrucha, emaho@wp.pl Jacek is going to prepare more recordings on digital media so that we will be able to offer them in the future. This year's publications are listed at the end of this article.

In Germany we are digitalizing tapes and videos as well. Last year Barbara Harder digitalized Ngöndro teachings, Bardo teachings and a long teaching cycle that Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche gave in Poland in

1995. Her next work will be to digitalize a big number of recordings that Arnim Voigt gave us to copy them for the Archives.

We are asking everybody who is still having audio or video recordings of events with Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche (original or in copy) to inform us in order to find out if we can use them for the Archives. If you have the facilities for copying and digitalizing and would like to join the work for the Archives please let us know. We still need more people.

Christoph Schneider digitalized some material he got from Jomo Gudrun und Michael. This material includes teachings on Medicine Buddha, LoJong, Donsal Melong, 8 Manifestations of Padmasambhava, Mandarava, Machig Labdron and Chöd, Bardo and Phowa. Christoph will be very busy in the time to come because he is going to work on the recordings that Andreas Ruft made over the years. Andreas himself already published some teachings and practices. They were offered in the last newsletter.

Olaf Brockmann finished a new DVD (Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche, Small Rigdzin Practice) and recorded all events which took place in Berlin with Jomo Gudrun, Tulku Thondup, James Low and Keith Dowman during the last number of years.

This article is supposed to give you an overview of what we have accomplished up to now. We are looking forward to give you the complete picture on the new website where you will have the opportunity to order all available recordings.

Another task we are currently working at is a complete database with an overview of all teachings and practices that Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche gave us. Once having the database we can see what we have and what we are still in need of. If you would like to help with the database you are very welcome.

If you have any questions regarding the Archives Project, if you would like to help in any way or if you have recordings, please contact:

Susanne Salem
phone: + 49-431-200 11 17
email: susanne.salem@gmx.de

At this point we want to thank everybody who helped the Archives to grow and develop in order to preserve and pass on the teachings and make them available for the sangha.

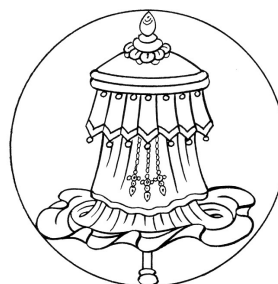
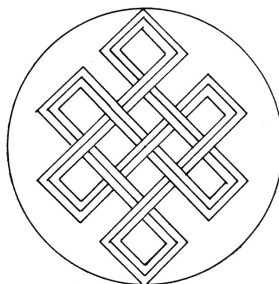
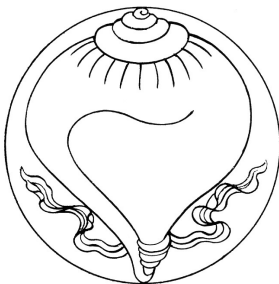
May it be beneficial to all.

Susanne Salem
February 2007

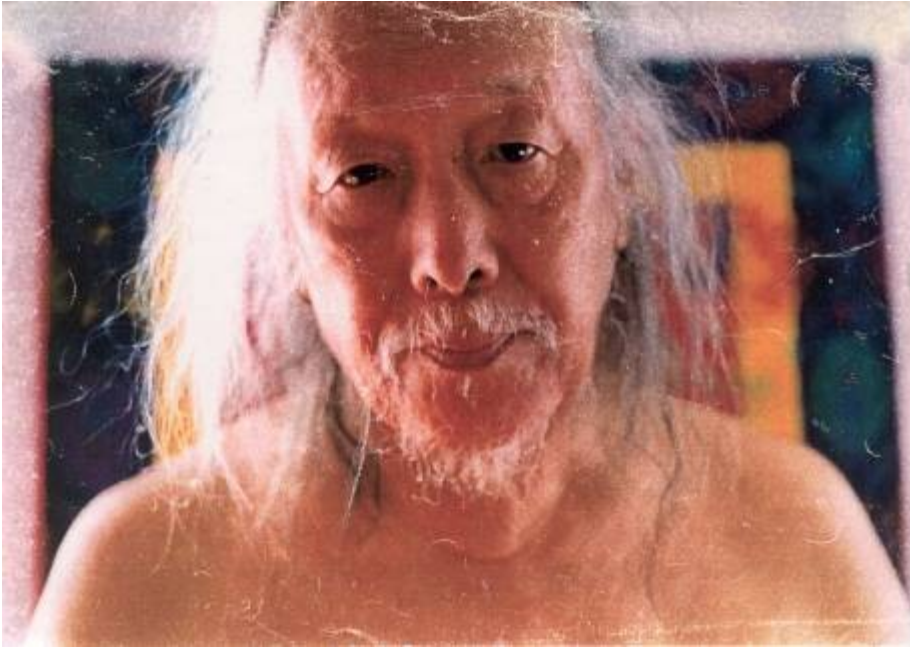
Khordong Archives Darnkow

New publications 2007

Big Rigdzin Practice with Instruments <i>Chhimed Rigdzin Lama / Chime Lodro</i>	Sarnath 1994	1 CD
Lha Drup Puja Practice <i>Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche</i>	Holland 1981	2 CD
Dzogchen Teachings <i>Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche</i>	Seaside 1988	1 CD <i>engl.</i>
Teachings on Emptiness <i>Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche</i>	Geneva 1991	1 CD <i>eng.</i>
Big Rigdzin, Small Rigdzin Practice and Teachings, Butterlamp Practice and Teachings <i>Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche</i>	Krakow 1994	4 DVDs <i>engl./pol.</i>
Small Rigdzin, History of Nyingmapa, Teachings on Emptiness and Ego <i>Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche</i>	Szczecin 1993	3 DVDs <i>engl./pol.</i>



Book Project



At this point we would like to inform you about our book project. As you know we were starting to collect reports from different people based on their personal experience in order to assemble, like a mosaic, a picture of the life and works of our teacher Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche.

Some of you, unfortunately not very many, wrote down their personal experience with Rinpoche and sent it to us. Many thanks for that! It would be nice if even more of you could find some time for this recollection. It is really a very special experience to go back into former life situations and to realize what effects they have on our actual life.

Understanding that we didn't get enough stories, Anne started to collect interviews during the last summer retreat in Poland. The talks have been recorded on tape and are waiting for transcription now. Anne is planning to continue with further talks soon but she doesn't find enough time to type them down.

We therefore urgently ask for help. If you have time to transcribe a tape, please don't

hesitate to contact us. And one thing should be mentioned – it is really *thrilling!*

If you write down your personal story or want to do some interviews (like Dylan for example who talked with Urgyen Tensin) or if you have some pictures (photos or paintings) relating to the project – what kind of material ever – please copy the attached form, fill it out and send it together with the material. We had some trouble with copyrights on another Khordong book project lately and would like to avoid such problems in the future.

In any case we would like to get your feedback. The best feedback would be your own personal report as well as any other support to realize the project.

Anne, anne_wanitschek@hotmail.com

Sebastian, sebastian.s@rediffmail.com

Wolfgang, wolfgang@khordong.net

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James Low

March 10th-12th 2006 in Berlin

„Padmasambhava and Dzogchen Practice“

To welcome James Low in Berlin is a precious gift each time. I like his warm-hearted, loving and humorous way to teach us. In the beginning he talked about ignorance, how it arises and how we feel at home with it. He also pointed its function in tantra and dzogchen and which possibility it contains to lead to liberation.



The most basic fundamental act is to take refuge. We cannot trust ourselves but we can trust the Buddha. And we can trust our profound potential, our Buddha nature. The problem is that we are out of touch with it; we are in contact with our own karmic tendencies and through that with our habitual confusion and our habitual view of the world. We act on the basis of assumptions. We assume that there are real separate objects and that our thoughts and feelings tell us something really important.

All these assumptions are put into question by the buddhist view. Ignorance creates the idea of being humans which is wrong, in reality we are Buddhas. As human beings we live in deception, blindness and delusion because we do not recognize our own nature of mind. We learn the paradigm of believing in the existence of separate objects from our parents and at school.

Padmasambhava, a great saint and an enlightened being, brought tantric buddhism to Tibet. He gave many explanations about how the world is constructed as we experience it and how it actually is. The real nature of our existence is infinitely open, cannot be defined, summed up or conceptualized. Its quality is pure from the very beginning. The true nature is not touched through anything, we are no things, our body, our thoughts and feelings are no things. They are moments of experience that are fundamentally ungraspable. We live in a world of processes, of impermanence and effortless arising.

Then James gave the example of the crying of a small child and here the question is again: Where does the cry come from? He gives us the meditation instruction to look at one's own mind, to ask oneself again and again: Who is it that is having this experience right now? According to the Prajnaparamita sutra form is emptiness and emptiness is form. Everything we experience is unseparable of emptiness and yet it manifests. It is about the essential truth of nonduality which means there is not one single nor many different things.

Back to the example of the child's cry, whose ground is emptiness. A dzogchen way of dealing with it is to hear the cry and the response appears out of emptiness. Comfort and ease is given out of the mode of emptiness. If we are beginners it is hard to do so, because our feeling 'in the guts' are strong and the idea of emptiness is not so

strong. Even if the understanding of the concept may be correct, it is not easy to keep it in a 'hot' situation. That is why Buddha Shakyamuni developed tantra. Traditionally there are 84,000 methods and 9 yantras of proceeding the path. Every path has its view, its method, activity and result. The first step to take refuge usually starts with the understanding that the way I have been living my life cannot go on like this. I have to do something else. It wasn't wrong what I did but the way I looked at it, my view was wrong! The world is not like we assume to be. That is the meaning of the state of ignorance. One of the qualities of ignorance is that we think we exactly know what we do. When we are trying something new, it doesn't feel very authentic. Being stupid is comforting. Being aware is more difficult.

There is nothing to do in the outer world, dzogchen is an inner process. This requires the highest form of refuge: nondual refuge, to take refuge to one's own nature of mind, through instantaneous relaxation into the nature of mind.

Through the practice of tantra, the access to

the lineage and through empowerment we may have a new vision of our own lived experience. Tantric practices let us participate in an other view.

To avoid that this article becomes too long I want to finish with some sentences about dealing with the awareness of oneself:

You always have to observe yourself. We can get trapped into what is happening but we also can step back and watch what is going on through this 'gap'. By doing that we can get nearer to what is happening without being entirely wrapped nor totally outside.

Often we feel guilty like a caught child. Just accept this feeling, let it arise.

We have to stop judging ourselves! It is good to develop a neutral mood or attitude: just observe and look what happens.

My best wishes to all of you,

Liz Messerschmied



Tulku Thondup

April 8th – 10th 2006 in Berlin

„Journey to the Pure Land of Amitabha, Buddha of Limitless Light“



Early in April 2006 we were glad to welcome Tulku Thondup to Berlin. Subject of the event in TTC-buddhistcenter was the healing- and purificationpractice of Buddha Amitabha. This practice is a useful method for the perfect and complete liberation of all sentient beings out of all realms of existence.

Tulku Thondups teachings were too rich and too profound, to give a nearly appropriate impression here.

Our friends at TTC were also very impressed of the intensity of meditations, Tulku Thondup guided. He leaded us on both days in one session each to the pure land of Amitabha and into the healing-practice of the meditation on Padmasambhava. To offer the positive energy evoked, in a joint dedication of merit towards the benefit of all sentient beings left a deep impression on us.

Tulku Thondup invited the students of Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche to talk about their experience since the teachers passage into the pure land on the night of the last day. He spoke lively and warm-heartedly about his meeting with Rinpoche and about the tradition of our transmission-lineage. He explained, that Rinpoches legacy is lying in the treasure of his transmission and stressed the special value of joint practice, by which we keep our lineage alive. Especially the sangha's situation after the teachers death with all it's possible highs and lows was topic, that night. He pointed out that it is an activity full of merit, to uphold the dharma even in dark times (like after the lamas death).

The fact that badly covert conflicts came to the surface immediately after the meeting, was maybe part of a joint clearing-process of problems, Tulku Thondup just spoke about.

Maybe he even had called forth this kind of painful experience for the best of the sangha in the pure goodness of his absolute clear and waken presence.

In any case there are no doubts, that Tulku Thondup is feeling kindly towards us with loving attention, without ignoring differences which occur quite naturally. Naming and focussing on differences is in general key to a solution.

All who met Tulku Thondup were touched deeply by his warm-hearted wisdom. In his instruction for the practice on Amitabha he writes: „We are able to heal body and mind, simply by relying on what we really are, and to allow our own natural healing qualities to

manifest: A peaceful open mind, a loving and positive attitude and a warm happy energy in a condition of mental balance and harmony“. This is not only an instruction for meditation, but a guideline for our daily activities, we continually should strive for, no matter how far away it appears for us now.

We are looking back upon Tulku Thondup Rinpoche and his wife Lydia in full gratitude.

May they be blessed with everlasting luck!

And may their love be good for us!

Ralf Bartholomäus

Keith Dowman

April 28th – May 03rd 2006 in Berlin

„Dzogchen and Tibetan Buddhism“ „Inner Ruzhen and the Purification of the Six Realms“

In the year 2006 for the fourth time we had the opportunity to experience Keith Dowman as guest lecturer in Berlin. Since he first accepted our invitation to hold an introductory class on the „Three statements of Garab Dorje“ in 2003, it has been becoming a wonderful and very important tradition for many among us, to be able to host him every year. During all the teachings „The Three Fundamental Statements of Garab Dorje“ has been serving as the root text for the elucidation of the essential points of view, praxis and result of Dzogchen. In their condensed form these root teachings embrace the fundamental Dzogchen Series and have been interpreted already by many masters such as Patrul



Rinpoche and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. The particular characteristic of Keith Dowmans presentation is the direct presence, the uncompromising and even radical manner, by which he skillfully gives insight into this teaching / view, which is otherwise completely beyond rational grasp.

In giving these teachings Keith Dowman allows us to participate in his own non-artificial self experience and perspective of the limitless view and non-praxis – as he is very much fond to put it.

Non-praxis in this context means; there is nothing to do, no sequence of exercises to perform, at the end of which a seizable result can be found. It is crucial to experience this – that which has always been there, on which

even our common perception is based, that is the intrinsic nature of our mind.

The meaning of the above becomes clearer during the practice seminar which followed the weekend. The practices are a means to awaken and keep awake the above experience without being an end in itself; that is practising without the need to practice, or to achieve anything / result. Again and again I have been personally impressed, how the texts become present and accesible through Keith's intpretation, compared to studying alone at home.

In the end we find ourselves again and again focusing and practicing on what can not be practised. But this is another story.

This year as last year after the weekend workshop in Berlin, we stayed on for the practice seminar. In Menz, years before we engaged in intensive and secluded practice for 24 hours with the master, so I was unsure how it would be in the city environment of Berlin where evening and morning sessions were missed as a consequence of retur-

ning home each evening. I was surprised, that such an intensive experience as in Menz is equally possible in a practise oriented city seminar.

Last year the emphasis during the practice seminar had been on the various Ruzhen exercises. They are represent preliminary practices; an approach to the view of the buddhas, and a penetration of the object relatedness and thus are a preparation to Dzogchen (non-)practise of the Semdzins. The Semdzins are tracing back to Longchen Rabjampa, the great tibetan master from the 14th century, well known for his extensive Dzogchen treatises, whose biography is in itself a source of inspiration and veneration (Tulku Dondrup: Practise of Dzogchen). Keith Dowman's last publication is a translation of Longchenpa's work about the Four Dzogchen Samayas into English. And these constitute further fundamentals of practice together with the Semsdzins.

Andreas Ruft



Jomo Gudrun

September 22nd – 24th 2006 in Berlin

„Padmasambhava: Empowerment, Instruction and Practice“

Gudrun's visit to Berlin this year was marked by special signs. She had agreed in giving a Padmasambhava-Initiation for the first time in Germany. Accordingly “older” and “younger” practitioners came to the TTC on a Saturday, to practice together and to receive the empowerment, which was an intensive and blissful experience for all.

On Sunday the Big Rigdzin was celebrated again, followed by a joint lunch-break. A rich meal was prepared by Thomas. The break was of importance because it opened the opportunity for talks with Gudrun. Such talks are usually quite short on such visits. However practitioners who were new gladly took the chance to ask questions and to get to know Gudrun a little more.

Following the weekend there was a meeting between Andreas Ruft, Anne Gäbler and myself to discuss the activities for the coming year (2007). We have organised Khordong events here for many years and decided to pass responsibility for organising coming events with Gudrun to our new sangha members. There was positive feedback for this proposal from the practice group here in Berlin. Also together we have decided to make a request to Gudrun to grant us a Medicine Buddha empowerment.

So we have reached a new phase of working together with new sangha members who did not meet Rinpoche directly. But most significantly not only are we able to practice with newer sangha members but also they are able to have the opportunity to receive further empowerments and teachings by Gudrun as their teacher.

We received the response from our new sangha members, that since they have received Padmasambhava empowerment, practice has become more accessible to them and the-



re is strong motivation to gain deeper understanding of the practice and texts which have been given.

Anne Wanitschek also mentioned, that the group has since developed closer and more beneficial relations. This is easily seen by the steady attendance of younger sangha members at regular practice events. After Angelika and Rebecca, Moni, Uta and Mark found us, Liz, Markus, Stefan and Florian joined us also. They are regarded as a sympathetic enrichment of our group.

We can be glad about good working and growing practice community, in which sympathy and respect for each other develops. For those, who have decided to move on from our group we wish them all good wishes, contentment and enlightenment on their path.

Ralf Bartholomäus

Martin Boord

November 24th – 26th 2006 in Berlin

„Padmasambhava and his Mandala“



At the very beginning of his teaching Martin Boord talked about the necessary preparations a disciple needs to be introduced into the mandala, which is facilitated by every guru who is teaching us. He explained the ideal of the bodhisattva and what it means to realise this intention in the context of the different Buddhist vehicles which developed over thousands of years. He described the different Ngöndro exercises and explained their psychological effects. Martin gave a special explanation of the mandala offering on its outer, inner and secret aspects. These preliminary exercises were exhausting but good for the disciple's health, giving him/her the necessary clarity and stability for continuing his/her path.

He also explained why an introduction to the mandala without preparation can be a big shock or not show any effect at all. Next, Martin talked about refuge and developing bodhichitta and he emphasized that the disci-

ple is responsible for becoming a refuge himself or herself after taking refuge of the three jewels.

The complexity of the guru, in our case Padmasambhava, becomes evident in his manifestations, which represent different types of personality. After that, he also touched on the meaning of the terma tradition of the Nyingmapa lineage and the different biographies of Guru Rinpoche, which have proven to be a challenge for the accurate historian. Thus, Martin gave us some insights into the connectedness and the mutual inspiration of the existing spiritual groups of that time.

He stressed that without developing bodhichitta, the ideal of the bodhisattva, no valid compassion exists. Buddha hood starts, thereby, with the consideration of the four thoughts which turn the mind away from samsara. The circle of being and turning away from samsara will motivate the disci-

ple to gain the necessary effort. Techniques like changing the self for others and a deeper understanding of emptiness of all phenomena help the student to focus. Martin confronted the ideals of wisdom, compassion, and turning away from samsara with the worldly features of ignorance, aversion and desire. He explained why gathering these first qualities are a sufficient preparation for the introduction into the mandala. He showed the deep meaning of the three jewels and the effects of this understanding, which also become externally visible. To create an active commitment to life without the complication of worldly thinking is a challenge one can only manage to deal when he or she has developed an inartificial and extensive form of compassion.

Martin explained the enormous paradox of the single one gains happiness through the endeavour of making other beings happy on the background of dedicating the merit.

In regard to the preliminary practices, he spoke about chöd practise, which enables the practitioner not only to loosen his/her fixation on the body but that it can also have a healing effect on others.

Vajrasattva meditation has the power to dissolve even the hardest tendencies of impurity that have endured within our mind stream through millions of years of repro-

duction. If this purity does not affect our spiritual attainments through pride again, the disciple is ready to enter the mandala of the guru.

After Martin's teaching many questions were asked. One of them was about the much discussed possibility to transform anger. This was Martin's answer on how to do it: Go on allowing the anger to rise, but don't turn it against someone or something but against one's own confused tendency to get angry about illusionary entities.

On Sunday there was a very detailed explanation about guru yoga. After doing the exercises that he had explained, the next inevitable step is meeting a guru. In tantric practise the guru is in the middle of a borderless mandala in which the core and the four directions represent beside the other five transcendent wisdoms. Finally, the guru gives the key to be reborn within the mandala. Based on these profound teachings we practised the big Rigdzin Padmasambhava-Puja on Sunday afternoon with a lot of insight into their meaning, which was an invaluable enrichment, at least in my opinion.

At the end of the teachings the people organizing the weekend closed with good news. The costs of the whole weekend had been covered from the donations of the participants.

Kind greetings to all sangha members,

Anna Aly Labana



James Low

Purification Practice and Fundamental Purity The Practice of Vajrasattva and its Base of Dzogchen View



This year James Low wants to take a text by Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche called “The meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva, which purifies mistakes and obscuration/obfuscation” (in “Simply being” by James Low 1994) as a supplementary material to his teachings.

The intention of the Vajrasattva Practice is the purification of misapprehensions, bad habits and so on. By recognizing that obscurations have no essential base and through the appropriate method, we are able to disengage from these falsities and habits and recognise our own clear awareness.

James Low began his studies and practice of Tibetan Buddhism in the 1960's in India. He received teachings from Kalu Rinpoche, Chatral Rinpoche, Kanjur Rinpoche and H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche. Having met his root teacher, Chhimed Rigdzin Lama, he stayed with him for many years in Bengal, translating this text among many others. He received the corresponding teachings many times and practiced them in retreat. In 1976 Rinpoche asked James to teach and gave him the necessary transmissions together with full lineage authority. James Low's books, commentaries and continuous seminars make a great contribution to understanding of Tibetan Buddhism in the west in general and to the Dzogchen Teachings in particular.

23.03.07: 7.30 pm.: *Public Talk*

24.- 25.03.07: 10 am – 6 pm.: *Weekend Seminar*

For more information:

www.khordong.de

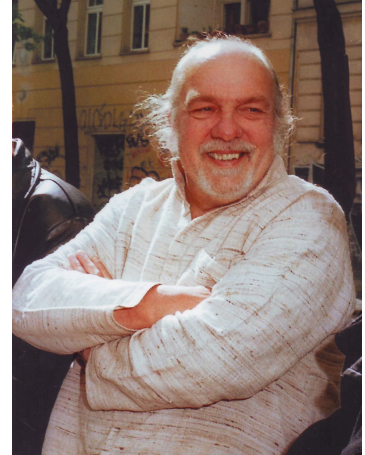
Anne G. +49 30 534 25 08, Email: yontan@gmx.net ·
Andreas +49 30 283 32 76, Email: andreas@khordong.de

Venue: TTC / Bodhicharya e.V., Kinzigstraße 25-29, D-10247 Berlin
How to get there by public transport: U5 Samariterstraße · Tram 23 Wismaer Platz

Keith Dowman

Dzogchen and Tantra Skilful Means for Opening to Spontaneity (Synchronicity)

The three precepts of Garab Dorje form the foundation-stone for Dzogchen, the way to accomplished spontaneity, the view and activity of the Buddhas, the Great Perfection (Skt.: Maha Ati, tib.: Dzogpa Chenpo). Maha Ati is the highest view in the tradition of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism and it is the foundation for all tantric practices. Tantra and Dzogchen are interwoven to a unity, containing a true treasure of skilful and highly effective means to open us up to the real nature of mind, within this nature of mind appearance and accomplishment reveal themselves to be spontaneous, and synchronicity is its outer equivalent.



Keith Dowman is one of the few Western experts on Inner-Dzogchen, a non-dual way founded by Garab Dorje. Keith Dowman has been living in Nepal for almost 30 years and he had the rare opportunity to receive transmissions from famous Nyingma Masters of Dzogchen like Kanyur Rinpoche, H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche as well as Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and Dodrupchen Rinpoche. Out of a huge source of knowledge he is able to give us an insight of our true nature of mind in a brilliant way. In the Rushen-Practice-Seminar he will familiarise us with basic Dzogchen exercises and we will be able to deepen our view, practice and experience.

25.05. 2007, 7 pm

Introduction to Dzogchen on the basis of the three precepts of Garab Dorje

26.-28.05. 2007, 10 am – 6 pm: Pentecost seminar

Dzogchen and Tantra. Skilful means for opening to spontaneity (synchronicity)

29.-31.05. 2007, 10 am – 6 pm (subject to change)

Rushen practice seminar

Registration recommended. For experienced disciples only. Minimum requirement: participants must have attended a weekend seminar with Keith Dowman

For more information

www.khordong.de

Andreas +49 30 283 32 76 · email: andreas@khordong.de

Anne G. +49 30 534 25 08 · email: yontan@gmx.net

Venue: TTC / Bodhicharya e.V., Kinzigstraße 25-29, D-10247 Berlin
How to get there by public transport: U5 Samariterstraße · Tram 23 Wismaer Platz

International Khordong Events Overview 2007

who	when	what	where	contact
James Low	23. - 25. March 2007	<i>Purification praxis and fundamental purity; The Praxis of Vajrasattva and its base of Dzogchen view</i>	Bodhicharya TTC Kinzigstraße 25 D-10247 Berlin U5, Samariterstraße Tram 21, Wismarplatz	Info: Anne G. Fon: +49-(0)30-5342508 email: Yontan@gmx.net
Jomo Gudrun	31. March 2007 15-18h	<i>Teachings about Small Rigdzin Practice</i>	Rangshar Ling Ngakpa Haus , Schillerstraße 3 D-77933 Lahr/Schwarzwald, 45km north of Freiburg, Germany	Bran O. Hodapp Fon: +49-7821-9205557 oder 909726 fax +49 (0) 78 21 99 25 97 email: info@tibet-lahr.de
James Low	17.-20. May 2007	<i>Dzogchen Spring Retreat: Self release of karmic structures</i>	Kamalashila Institut Fon: +49-2655-939055 Kirchstrasse 22a D-56729 Langenfeld (Eifel), Germany	Register with Kamalashila Institut: programm@kamalashila.de Info: Eva-Maria Küchler fon +49-(0)-2245-4689 fax +49-(0)-2245-4528 eva-ma.kuechler@t-online.de
	May 2007	<i>Pentecost Retreat, praxis and teaching and teachers not fixed yet! Jomo Gudrun and Tulku Thondup Rinpoche are invited.</i>	Drophan Ling , Darnków, Poland www.khordong.com.pl	Drophan Ling Darnków khordong@poczta.onet.pl fon +48 - 74 868 88 22 mobile +48 - 601 35 77 76
Keith Dowman	25. May 2007 19h	<i>Introduction to Dzogchen through the Three Incisive Precepts of Garab Dorje</i>	Bodhicharya TTC Kinzigstraße 25 D-10247 Berlin U5, Samariterstraße Tram 21, Wismarplatz	Info Andreas fon 030-2833276 email: andreas@khordong.de
Keith Dowman	26. - 28. Mai 2007 10-18h	<i>Pentecost Retreat, Dzogchen and Tantra: Skilful Means in Opening up to Spontaneity</i>	as above	as above
Keith Dowman	29.-31. May 2007 10-18h	<i>Ruzhen Praxis Seminar</i>	as above	as above

who	when	what	where	contact
<i>June 14th 2007 (following Western Callendar)</i>		<i>Chhimed Rigdzin's Rinpoches 5th aniversary: Paranirvana</i>		<i>in different local groups</i>
James Low	21. June 2007 20:30h	<i>Public speech : Similarity and Difference</i>	Raum der Bewohnerinitiative Langenmarckstr. 97 79100 Freiburg i.Br.	For information Thomas Fon: +49-761-4517008
James Low	22.-24. June 2007	<i>Seminar: Direct Identification of Buddhahood beyond classification (following Nuden Dorje)</i>	Haus am Mühlenbach D-79682 Todtmoos-Au (Südschwarzwald) fon +49-7674 -8165	Ruth Kürmann Im Tannwald 4 79736 Rickenbach fon +49-7765- 918175 email: franzkuer@gmx.de
James Low	27. - 30. September 2007	<i>Dzogchen Fall Retreat</i>	Kamalashila Institut Fon: +49-2655-939055 Kirchstrasse 22a D-56729 Langenfeld (Eifel), Germany	Register with Kamalashila Institut: programm@kamalashila.de Info: Eva-Maria Küchler fon +49-(0)-2245-4689 fax +49-(0)-2245-4528 eva-ma.kuechler@t-online.de
Tulku Ugen Chencho Lama	December 2007/ Januar 2008	<i>18. Butterlamp Retreat</i>	Byangter Khordong Gompa, India, West Bengal Distr. Darjeeling Dhansara Village	Tulku Ugen Chencho Lama fon. gompa: +91-353-2585860 fon, fax residents: +91-353-2581358 mobile +91-9832049416 khordongindia@yahoo.co.in

For more information please visite www.khordong.de



Berlin

Place

TTC | Bodhicharya e.V.

Kinzigstr. 25

D-10247 Berlin

U 5 Samariterstraße

Practice

Start 5 pm

Vidyadhara-Guru-Sadhana, 'Big Rigdzin',
every Sunday, Fullmoon, Padmasambhava-Day

Contact

Ralf Bartholomäus

phone ++ 49 (0) 177-337 58 04

galerieweisserelefant@web.de

Frankfurt

Place

Heike Gregory

Frankenallee 121

D-60326 Frankfurt

Practice

Vidyadhara-Guru-Sadhana, 'Big Rigdzin',
small Mandarava-Puja and
small Padmasambhava-Puja

Contact

Heike Gregory

khordong.frankfurt@yahoo.de

Hamburg

Place

Place of Practice is changing,
please check in advance.

Practice

Vidyadhara-Guru-Sadhana 'Big Rigdzin'
and big Dorje Drollo

Contact

Frauke Blohm

phone ++ 49 (0) 40-530 55 937

kontakt@don-na-pacem.de

Hanau

Place

Sugandha Sibakoti

Otto-Wels-Str. 3

D-63452 Hanau

Practice

every Tuesday 7 pm

small Rigdzin-Puja
study of Vidyadhara-Guru-Sadhana

Contact

Sugandha Sibakoti

Otto-Wels-Str. 3

D-63452 Hanau

phone ++ 49 (0) 6181-180 40 65

München

Place

Barerstr. 52

D-München

Practice

Practicegroup with Uli Loseries

Wednesday 7.30 pm (Byangter-Texts)

Monday Shamatha-Meditation

Contact

Michael Hakel

michaelhakel@yahoo.de

Oldenburg

Place

Tubten Ga Tsal Padma Ling

Gasland 76

D-26203 Littel

Practice

every Sunday 8 pm

Chenresig-Puja or Small Padmasambhava-Puja

Contact

Doris and Hans Driebold

phone ++ 49 (0) 4407-58 57

Ravensburg

Place

Baindter Str.27

D-88339 Bad Waldsee

Practice

every Tuesday 7.15 pm

Vidyadhara-Guru-Sadhana,

'Big Rigdzin' and Chöd

Contact

Eva and Helmut Köckenberger

phone ++ 49 (0) 7524-34 31

EH.Koeckenberger@t-online.de

Tübingen

Place

Siglinde Schauer

Ruth-Marx-Straße 4

D-Tübingen

Practice

small Padmasambhava-Puja

Contact

Anke Thomas

phone ++ 49 (0) 7071-45459

anke.thomas@supra-net.net

or Stephan Jäger

phone ++ 49 (0) 7071-26113

st-jaeger@web.de

We would appreciate, if you send details concerning your own practice-groups to complete the list.

Please copy and mail or fax to the Managing Committee

I want to actively support the Khordong-Association of Germany (Khordong-Verein) and hereby apply for membership. As a member of the association I will get sent all programmes to events and the latest information about the activities of the Sangha of Chhimed Rigdzin Rinpoche.

I can terminate my membership in the association at any time by written notice.

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Street _____ Postal Code _____
City/Country _____
Phone _____ fax _____
2nd Phone _____ email _____

I will transfer the yearly fee of 60 € (couples 90 €) within 4 weeks to the account nominated below:

Khordong e.V. Schulstrasse 15, 72108 Rottenburg
Name of Bank: Deutsche Bank, Bank Code 100 700 24, Account 324 755 800

Date _____ Signature _____

The following form allows us to withdraw the membership fees from your bank-account

PERMISSION

I allow hereby the German Khordong-Association (Khordong e.V.) to withdraw the amount of my yearly membership fees from my bank-account. I can always end this permission by written notice.

The fees shall be withdrawn yearly

Name of Bank _____
Account _____
Bank Code _____

Date _____ Signature _____

1. Chairman: Andreas Ruft, Oppelner Straße 28, 10997 Berlin, phone: ++49-30-28 33 276, email: andreas@khordong.net /// 2. Chairman: Anne Wanitschek, Hagenauer Straße 13, 10435 Berlin, phone: ++49-30-44 03 27 72, email: anne_wanitschek@hotmail.com /// treasurer: Wolfgang Zimmerman, Taborstraße 5, 10997 Berlin, phone.: ++49-618 63 93, email: wolfgang@khordong.net

Khordong e.v.

The Khordong e.V. is registered and has its seat in Tübingen. The charity was recognized for -support of religious purpose- with notification from 09.02.1999.

The committee

chairman Andreas Ruft
Oppelner Str. 28
10997 Berlin
phone ++49 (0)30 283 32 76
email andreas@khordong.net

2nd chairman Anne Wanitschek
Hagenauer Str. 13
10435 Berlin
phone ++49 (0)30 44032772
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treasurer Wolfgang Zimmermann
Taborstr. 5
10997 Berlin
phone ++49 (0)30 618 63 93
email wolfgang@khordong.net

Cash auditor Norbert Ohl

Account
Deutsche Bank
BLZ 10070024
324 755 800 spiritual field
324 755 801 donations for Poland
324 755 802 edition

Tax number: 86166 / 61107
Last notice of non-liability for tax

from 29.06.2004