

Illustrious Members of the Norwegian Nobel Committee

The Shang Shung Institute - International Institute for Tibetan Studies

asks for

the Nomination of Prof. Namkhai Norbu to the Nobel Peace Prize 2009

Statement of Reasons

For more than thirty years Namkhai Norbu has been giving spiritual teachings, called Dzogchen, inspired to compassion and no violence to hundreds and hundreds of people from all over the world. With great tenacity he has always promoted the concrete realization of an authentic message of peace: a brotherhood among men and women from different parts of the world, trying to lead a style of life relaxed, pacific and collaborative not apart, but harmoniously integrated in the normality of daily life.

Besides his spiritual teachings, Namkhai Norbu has deeply involved himself in bettering the conditions of life of the Tibetan people and in preserving the millenary culture of his country. The Tibetan culture is a magnificent culture which started more than 4000 years ago in Shang Shung, the first kingdom of Tibet. Knowledge in Tibetan culture is traditionally classified into five major fields: art, craft, linguistics and poetry, medicine and the so called “inner knowledge” which refers to the understanding of the relative and ultimate condition of the individual.

For about twenty years, thanks to a non-governmental organization, called ASIA (Association for International Solidarity in Asia), dedicated to serving the educational and medical needs of the Tibetan people, and Shang-Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies, Namkhai Norbu has been promoting the social and cultural development of his native country always being in touch with the local authority.

He has heartily devoted himself to preserve the immense cultural Tibetan heritage in order to transmit it to the new generations and to the Western world. In fact the safeguard of an ancient culture, with its noble roots and tradition, threatened by powerful homologous factors, is by itself a fundamental step in the delivering of the message of compassion and peace in the world.

Arcidosso (Italy) January 9, 2009

The director
Luigi Ottaviani

Curriculum of Prof. Namkhai Norbu

1. A brief Biography

1938-1950s Namkhai Norbu, one of the foremost living Dzogchen masters, was born in Derghe (Kham, Eastern Tibet) on December 8th, 1938.

From an early age he was sent by his family, of noble origin, to study at important Buddhist monasteries and colleges (Gonchen, Ohon tyo, Ku Ser Serjong and Zongsar Khamchen in Derghe) where he spent twelve years studying the Five Major Arts (Technology, Medicine, Grammar, Logic, Philosophy) and the Five Minor Arts (Rhetoric, Words and Expressions, Syntax, Drama, Astrology), acquiring a vast and profound knowledge of all of them and excelling in the philosophical, medical and religious fields, receiving a degree from Gonchen, an institution of the Sakyapa order.

From 1954 to 1957 he was instructor of Tibetan language at the Southwestern University for the Minorities in Cheng-tu (Sze Chuan), People's Republic of China, and thus had the opportunity to learn classical Chinese.

Notwithstanding his young age, at the end of the 1950s he was already famous in Tibet as a spiritual master and as a scholar of Tibetan Buddhism.

On account of the political events in his own country he was forced into exile and was not able to return to Tibet from India, where he had spent two years (1958-1960) as author and chief editor of Tibetan textbooks at the Development Office of the Government of Sikkim, Gangtok, Sikkim. Therefore, in 1959, after considering the various and prestigious academic offers from different countries (Japan, France), he accepted the invitation of Prof. Giuseppe Tucci, the famous Orientalist, since he was acquainted with the large library of Tibetan texts that he had created and was interested in carrying on his research.

1960s In 1960, Namkhai Norbu started his academic collaboration with Prof. Tucci at ISMEO (Istituto per il Medio e l'Estremo Oriente - Institute for the Near and Far East) in Rome, Italy - a collaboration that lasted till 1963 - on a grant from the Rockefeller Foundation.

In 1964 he accepted a post in Naples at the Istituto Universitario Orientale (Oriental University of Naples) where he taught Tibetan and Mongolian Language and Literature until 1992.

From the time of his residence in Italy, besides all his activities as a spiritual Master, Namkhai Norbu focused his twenty years of research mainly on the ancient history of Tibet, thoroughly investigating the autochthonous pre-Buddhist Bön tradition and the monarchic age connected to the Shang Shung Kingdom. The results of his studies, which rediscovered the origins of Tibetan culture, have revolutionised the current historical viewpoint and are appreciated by eminent

scholars as well as being taught in Lhasa, Beijing and in Western Universities. Other fields of his research were the origin, theory and practice of Astrology and, above all, Tibetan traditional medicine, a medical system that integrates the highest aspects of the culture's science and spirituality into a comprehensive system of health and healing. His books and conferences on these subjects are evidence of his profound knowledge of Tibetan culture and his commitment to preserving this ancient cultural heritage. They have been highly appreciated by Tibetans as well as scholars throughout the world.

In the 1960s Namkhai Norbu was received by His Holiness Pope Paul VI and by Italian President Giovanni Gronchi.

In 1968 he married and started a family.

1970s In 1971 he began to teach Yantra Yoga, an ancient form of Tibetan Yoga combining movement, breathing and visualization. Yantra Yoga is based on the text, *The union of the sun and the moon*, written by Vairochana, a famous 8th century master, although its oral tradition is even more ancient. Its principal aim is to harmonize one's energy so that the mind relaxes and finds its authentic balance which is the basis for getting into the state of contemplation.

In the 1970s Namkhai Norbu started giving Dzogchen teachings (a spiritual teaching whose meaning is 'great perfection', referring to our own real nature) for the first time in the Western world. In fact, he was the first to begin divulging this ancient teaching and establishing a community of people interested in knowledge of this spiritual path.

1980s According to the inspired advice of Namkhai Norbu, the first centre of the Dzogchen Community was founded in Italy (in Arcidosso, Mt. Amiata, Tuscany). Successively thanks to his profound knowledge and natural capacity for transmitting its meaning, other centres spread in different parts of the world (Europe, the USA, South America, Australia, Russia and Asia).

1990s In 1990 His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama was invited to inaugurate the Gompa ("Temple of Great Contemplation") at the Italian centre of the Dzogchen Community called Merigar (in Arcidosso, Mt. Amiata, Tuscany). The meeting, with the participation of the local authorities and thousands of people not all of whom were interested in a spiritual path, was an example of the harmonic dialogue with people of different cultures and spirituality that Namkhai Norbu has pursued throughout his life.

In the 1990s Namkhai Norbu was received by Giorgio Napolitano, President of the Italian Republic since May 2006.

In 1998 with the patronage of the local authorities, Namkhai Norbu inaugurated the Stupa at Merigar, a holy monument representing the enlightenment of Buddha

and symbolically promoting the peace and prosperity of the place where it is built. This monument was built also with the financial contribution of the local people.

2000s In 2000 he inaugurated the exhibition “The Celestial Treasure. The Tibetan Art of Medicine”, at the Museo Nazionale Etnografico L. Pigorini (L. Pigorini National Ethnographic Museum) in Rome, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the exhibition a cycle of seminars were held by Tibetan and Western doctors to discuss the relationship between traditional Tibetan medicine and conventional medicine. They also tried to confront the issue of sanitary development in Tibet.

In 2003 he held a conference at the Pigorini Museum in Rome on the subject of a Development Education project to inform the public about Tibetan culture and the critical problems it is facing. Through the reconstruction of the daily life habitats of nomads, a photographic exhibition and a cycle of seminars, the event aimed at spreading knowledge about the culture of the nomads and drawing attention to the problems related to the survival of a unique ecosystem and an extraordinary civilization, with particular reference to the problems of selecting the type of development that could be envisaged for these regions and the role that could be played by international cooperation.

In 2006 he celebrated the 25th anniversary of Merigar in the presence of the local political authorities who thanked him for contributing to the development and well-being of the Amiata area and for the spreading of cosmopolitan values.

From the 1970s up to the present, Namkhai Norbu has dedicated his whole life and energy travelling all over the world to give spiritual teachings and knowledge for the benefit of all sentient beings, infusing peace, joy and loving care.

Since 2005, thousands of people have been able to follow his teachings via webcast.

He has given more than 400 lectures, public talks and seminars at many Universities and Institutes for Advanced Studies, spreading a message of brotherhood among people.

This “uncommon” exacting activity arises from the altruistic will to transmit to mankind a heritage of values asserting the preciousness of any single person so overcoming injustice and violence.

2. Conferences and Public Talks

Below is a short list of some of the organizations which have invited Namkhai Norbu:

- Parigi, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes 1980/1/8 : ‘Origines de l’Histoire du Tibet

- Berkeley, University of California, Department of Oriental Languages 1980/8/11: ‘Ancient Tibetan history’

- Rome, Assessorato alla cultura, Museo del Folclore, 1981/2/21 to 1981/5/21 (a series of conferences on Meditation, Medicine, Astrology and Yantra Yoga).
- Spain, Lloret de Mar, 1981/9: 'Mind in Buddhist Psychology'
- Amsterdam, State Institute De Kosmos¹
- Rome, Museo di Storia dell'Arte Sanitaria, Ospedale Santo Spirito 1985/6/9 (Introduction to and history of Tibetan medicine)
- Amherst, American Institute for Buddhist Studies 1985/7/22
- Caracas, Facultad de Humanidades, Escuela de Filosofia, Universidad Central de Venezuela 1986/4/14²
- Caracas, Servicio de Psiquitria del Hospital Universitario 1986/4/14
- Bologna, Università, Sala Polivalente, Via Faenza 4 1987/2/22
- Copenhagen, Museo Nazionale 1987/7/2
- New York, Columbia University 1987/7/6
- Los Angeles, International Buddhist Meditation Center, California (USA), 1987/8 (Mind and mental illness)
- Melbourne, University 1988/1/3
- Beijing, Central Institute for National Minorities 1988/2/13³
- Beijing, National Buddhist Institute 1988/3/9 (The four noble truths)
- Beijing, Institute of Tibetology - China 1988/4 (History of Shang Shung)
- Cantin, Cantin Central Political Committee, autonomous district of Cantin and Kanze - China, 1988/6 (The source of culture and ancient traditions of Tibet)
- Cantin University, Sechuan Prov. - China, 1988/6 (Tibetan Literature)
- Lhasa, University 1988/7/4 (History of Tibetan culture)
- Lhasa, Sman-rtsis Khang Medical Centre, 1988/9 (Tibetan Medicine)
- Melbourne, University 1989/9/22
- Rome, Università Lateranense 1990/5
- Rome, Senato della Repubblica Italiana, Palazzo Giustiniani, sala Zuccari 1990/6
- Bonn, Castle of Wachenddorf 1991/9/15
- Firenze, Università, Centro Internazionale Studenti G. La Pira 1991/9/25
- New York, Columbia University 1993/4/3
- Jerusalem, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Faculty of Humanities 1993/6/22
- Tel Aviv, University of Tel Aviv 1993/6/27
- Dharamsala, Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts 1997/11/1
- Bangkok, Siam Society 1998/9/29
- Rome, Museo Pigorini 2000/11/17
- Rome, Istituto San Leone Magno 2000/11/20
- Miami, University 2003/9/10
- Barcelona, Pompeu Fabra University 2005/4/10
- Rome, Università La Sapienza 2005/6/14

¹ Annual conferences (talks) from 1982 to 1988

² four conferences on : Introduction to Dzogchen and ancient History of Tibet

³ A series of conferences on: Tibetan culture; History of Tibet; ancient History of Tibet; Tibetan literature

Namkhai Norbu was also invited to participate in:

- the first International Convention of Tibetan Medicine ‘Man-Medicine-Society’ held in Venice, Italy, Fondazione Cini 1983/4/26-30 and Arcidosso 1983/5/2-8
- the International Seminar: Spirit of Peace, 40 years United Nations, Intercultural Gathering spirit of peace, Amsterdam, Netherlands, Congrescentrum, Europaplein 1985/3/2-7
- the first International Seminar on Tibetan Language in Dharamsala, India, H.P., 1987/3/11-18.
- in the Congress of writers and editors from the five autonomous provinces in Chentu – Sechuan, China, 1988/6 (Ancient History of Shang Shung and Bön)

3. Publications

In 1983 Shang Shung Publications was founded in Italy with the aim of publishing the teachings of Namkhai Norbu and of other masters belonging to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Namkhai Norbu has written and published more than 80 works (translated into various languages) including books on Tibetan Buddhism, history, collections of poetry, works on Tibetan culture, etc., many of them published by Snow Lion (USA) and Ubaldini (Italy). Some of his books, published in China, have also become a reference point for young people. A short bibliography includes:

Tibetan culture

*The Necklace of Zi*⁴

Drung, Deu and Bön

*Bagchen*⁵

Manual of Tibetan language (phonetic and morphologic method)

The Practice of Tibetan Kunye Massage

Meditation

The Mirror - an Advice on Presence and Awareness

On Birth, Life and Death

The Supreme Source

The Crystal and the Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen

Dzogchen, the Self-Perfected State;

Dzogchen Teachings

The Foundation of the Path

Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light

The Tibetan book of the dead

The cycle of day and night

Dzogchen and Zen

Precious ship

Yantra Yoga: the Tibetan Yoga of Movement

⁴ A cultural history of Tibet. Model Press –Rani Jhansi Rd, New Delhi - India

⁵ An ancient Tibetan game that counts several thousands years

Teachings on Yantra Yoga
Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga for children

Astrology
*Key for consulting the Tibetan calendar*⁶
*Mo*⁷

Poetry
The Voice of the Bee
From the depth of my Heart to my Mother
Songs from the Hospital and Other Poems

Publications in Tibetan or Chinese
- *The small collection of hidden precepts* (in Tibetan)⁸
- *Bod 'brog-gi shes-rig* (in Tibetan)⁹
- *Yantra Yoga. The Yoga of movement* (in Tibetan)¹⁰
- *Sgrun ldeu bon gsum-gyi gtam* (in Tibetan)¹¹
- *Bod – sman stabs – bde lag – len byed – tshul* (in Tibetan)¹²
- *Chuan – kang mu – qu shin* (in Chinese)¹³
- *Zang – ming gudai lishi* (in Chinese)¹⁴
- *Bod-kyi gna' –rabs dusrim – gyi lo-rgyus* (in Chinese)¹⁵
- *Dngul gyi melong* (in Tibetan)¹⁶

Other works
- Illustrations to the volume *The religions of Tibet* by G. Tucci, Ed. Mediterranee, Rome 1966
- Cinemagraphic documentaries:
Arura, viaggio nella medicina tibetana (Arura, a journey into Tibetan medicine). 250' documentary produced by Karma Films, Rome 1978. Bought by RAI (Italian television) and broadcast on channel one in March 1981.
Garcham, Tibetan ritual dances of Tashi Jong produced by Karma Films, Rome 1978. Bought by RAI and broadcast on channel one.

⁶ Much information on Tibetan astrology and on its application to daily life

⁷ A concise manual on a Tibetan divination method

⁸ A study of an ancient manuscript on Dzogchen from Thun-Huang. Shang Shung Ed. Arcidosso (GR) 1984

⁹ A journey into the culture of Tibetan nomads. Shang Shung Ed. Arcidosso (GR) 1983

¹⁰ Shang Shung Ed., Arcidosso (GR) 1983

¹¹ Research commentaries on the state administration of Tibet's ancient kings based on illustration of stories, riddles and bon. Gangchen Kyishong Library, Dharamsala – India 1986

¹² Tibetan Works & Archives, Dharamsala – India 1988

¹³ Sechuan Ming-cu Chubanshe, Chintu –China 1988

¹⁴ Zhungguo sangxue yenjiu – Shungshing, Beijing – China 1988

¹⁵ Shizang yenjiu Edition, Lhasa – China 1988

¹⁶ Treatise on the traditional Tibetan medicine. Librery of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharamsala (H.P. India)

4. Humanitarian Activity for helping the Tibetan People

In 1988, following the inspired thought of Namkhai Norbu, ASIA (Association for International Solidarity in Asia) was founded. ASIA is a non-governmental organization which is mainly devoted to serving the educational and medical needs of the Tibetan people. The aim of the association is the building of schools and hospitals in accordance with local cultural traditions and environment, the restoration of monasteries, distance adoptions etc.

In 1996 with financing from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, ASIA realised its first great multi-sector intervention in support of the nomadic populations of the northeast TAR (Tibet Autonomous Region). The project, consisting of health, education and social-economic components, allowed ASIA to develop a deep knowledge of the area and was the basis for two projects for the development of health conditions of the Tibetan population.

Since 1993 ASIA has carried out more than 150 projects of development, emergency and long distance sponsorship in Tibet, China, India, Nepal and, since 2005 after the Tsunami emergency, also in Sri Lanka.

In October 1999, ASIA was awarded official recognition by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs of its competency in the selection, training and appointment of alternative service volunteers, in the realisation of short and medium term programmes in developing countries, in the training in loco of nationals of developing countries and in public awareness projects.

In May 2001, ASIA became a partner of ECHO (European Community Humanitarian Office) for emergency interventions in areas where ASIA is present through signing the Partnership Framework Contract.

5. Activity for preserving the Tibetan Culture

Thanks to the untiring energy of Namkhai Norbu and to the interest of the members of the Dzogchen Community and of eminent scholars of Tibetan culture, the International Shang-Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies was created in 1989. The aim of the Institute is to deepen knowledge and understanding of Tibetan cultural traditions in their religious, historical, philosophical, artistic, medical and social aspects in order to contribute to the survival and preservation of this culture. Its purpose is to encourage cooperation among interested groups and individuals, thus keeping alive the essential values of this tradition. Being aware of the risk of losing the precious heritage that Tibetan culture represents, the Shang-Shung Institute focuses on promoting all initiatives that are aimed at spreading and deepening knowledge of Tibetan culture and helps to ensure its survival.

After the founding of the Shang-Shung Institute in Italy, other branches of the Institute were created in the USA (1994) and in Austria (2000).

The Shang-Shung Institute has realized different projects concerning Tibetan culture.

For instance, one of the main projects regards the preservation of the Tibetan written patrimony. The Digital Archives of the Shang Shung Institute are dedicated

to ensuring that all information related to ancient manuscripts, books and documents on Tibetan culture are digitally preserved so as to remain available and accessible for generations to come. Thanks to the support received from the Dzogchen Community and researchers who have donated to the Archives Project, the Institute has been able to enter a new phase which constitutes a quantum leap in quality and efficiency.

Another important task of the Shang Shung Institute regards the work on translation of unique and sacred Tibetan texts. The crucial point of this work is to guarantee qualified translations of this ancient wisdom into Western languages, therefore the Institute periodically organizes training courses for translators.

In 2006 the International Shang Shung Institute englobed the publishing house.

Enclosures:

THE SHANG-SHUNG INSTITUTE

The Shang-Shung Institute exists for the preservation of Tibetan culture and to translate Tibetan books into western languages. Through the Shang-Shung Institute we are trying to do something to maintain the survival of Tibetan culture and understanding.

Shang Shung, the name of the Institute, reflects the source of Tibetan culture and history - it was known as a great empire throughout the Orient and the study of Shang Shung is extremely important if we are to understand the great antiquity, the unique nature and the universal importance of Tibetan culture, past and present.

The Tibetan culture started more than 4000 years ago in Shang Shung, the first kingdom of Tibet. Its deep knowledge and understanding has been kept alive through all the centuries. This treasure has been transmitted from generation to generation through all the centuries and is therefore still alive today. But for various reasons there really exists the great danger that this unique treasure is getting lost in our days. For that reason the aim of the Shang-Shung Institute is to deepen the knowledge and the understanding of the Tibetan cultural traditions.

Since the beginning of the Institute several seminars, courses, conferences and exhibitions on the various aspects of the Tibetan culture - such as history, art, medicine, astrology, language, philosophy and religion - were held in collaboration with Tibetan and European scientists mainly in Italy and America.

THE SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE in Italy

The Shang Shung International Institute for Tibetan Studies has as its objective to promote all initiatives that are aimed at spreading and deepening the knowledge of Tibetan culture, in order to ensure its survival. It organises courses, study seminars, lectures, exhibitions and publications; it is an active multi-media documentation centre on Tibetan culture; offers scholarships to young Tibetans, promoting research and exchanges between Tibet and Western countries.

The Institute was founded in 1989 by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. It was officially inaugurated in 1990 by His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It is a cultural non-profit association without political aims.

The Institute's main seat is in Arcidosso, Italy. Over the years the Institute has carried out a series of initiatives, collaborating with a variety of Universities, Foundations and Museums in various parts of the world and with the support of UNESCO, the European Parliament, the Italian Foreign Office and the region of Tuscany.

The Institute is active in four main areas of interest: Archives and multimedia; Culture and events; Traditional Tibetan medicine; Tibetan language study and research.

THE SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE in the USA

Shang Shung Institute in America's objective is to promote and preserve Tibetan cultural knowledge and to foster interest in Tibetan Medicine, Arts, Culture, History, Philosophy, and Religion. Founded in 1994 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Shang Shung Institute in America is in Conway, Massachusetts at Tsegyalgar.

THE SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE in Austria

The Shang Shung Institute Austria was founded in 2000 and is recognized as a cultural non-profit association without political aims. One of our main aim is the preservation of the Tibetan cultural heritage by making its literary tradition widely available in the form of correct translations and digital images.

For more information: www.shangshunginstitute.org

ASIA - Association for International Solidarity in Asia

ASIA is a Non-Governmental Organization founded in December 1988, with its office in Rome. President and founder of the organization is Prof. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, a scholar of international distinction and the promoter of many endeavours for the safeguard of the Tibetan culture.

The principal sectors of intervention have been training, educational, social and health development, the preservation of traditional culture, emergency interventions, development education projects and adoptions at distance.

EMERGENCY PROJECTS

Operating in Tibet, one of the most world's inhospitable regions and one of the worst hit by natural calamities such as drought and snowstorms, in these years ASIA has acquired great experience in the emergency sector. In 1998 the first emergency project was executed in aid of the nomad populations of west Tibet realised with funds allocated by the Italian government through OCHA. Currently two other projects financed by ECHO are underway in Qinghai Province in aid of the nomad communities in the area, and another emergency project is about to be started in aid of the nomad populations of the Inner Mongolian Autonomous Region where ASIA will operate for the first time.

PUBLIC AWARENESS PROJECTS

The public awareness sector, to which ASIA has always attended with programmes of information and sensibilisation about the problems of ethnic minorities and development, has grown considerably following the recognition of competency awarded by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Various solidarity and benefit events, conferences, presentations of documentaries, photo exhibitions and educational programmes for schools have been periodically organized by ASIA, as well as a project on traditional Tibetan medicine and a project on Tibetan nomads, both financed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

ADOPTIONS AT DISTANCE

The tragedy of Tibetan's people is not only a case of human suffering, but also the risk of disappearance of an ancient culture. ASIA's commitment to the conservation of the traditional cultures of ethnic minorities is actualised also by sponsorship of the poorer Tibetan children and refugees in Tibet, India and Nepal.

Objective of the sponsorships is to support children and young monks during their studies and to assist the elderly living alone. In the schools in the more remote areas of Tibet, the support aims to guarantee access for all the children, including those of nomads, to basic education and in the monasteries to preserve the ancient Tibetan culture through supporting monks.

MICROPROJECTS

From the start of its operations ASIA has specialised in small development interventions to assist the Tibetan population in rural China. These interventions, financed by foreign embassies in Beijing and private foundations and by ASIA's own funds derived from donations and fund-raising, have contributed to the improvement of the education, health, cultural and social conditions of the Tibetan minority at village level. In fact the realisation of microprojects remains the means favoured by ASIA in its work because it constitutes the most immediate response to the needs of those populations which, as they live in the most remote rural areas, often remain marginalised from the larger circuits of international cooperation.

For more information: www.asia-onlus.org

THE DZOGCHEN AND THE INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY

DZOGCHEN

Dzogchen, or "The Great Perfection", is considered the most immediate path towards spiritual progress. Rather than a religious doctrine it is better defined as a system of inner knowledge, given the great importance to the development of individual awareness. This spiritual path, which is open to all, involves working towards self-awareness; personal freedom is an essential aspect so there is no obligation to follow rules or take monastic vows.

The fundamental practice consists of reaching a deep knowledge of oneself and one's essential existence through the various experiences of daily life. For this reason, Dzogchen is particularly well suited to the needs of modern society.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is an influential figure of undisputed prestige as one of the present day exponents of this ancient tradition.

Historical notes

In Tibet, Dzogchen has existed and still lives in both the Buddhist tradition and that of Bon, the indigenous pre-Buddhist religion. In the Buddhist tradition, historians attribute the origins of the Dzogchen teaching to twelve primordial masters who lived in archaic times, while the Dzogchen passed down to our day within Tibetan Buddhism, was first expounded more than two thousand years ago by master Garab Dorje. He was born in the land of Oddiyana, an ancient kingdom sometimes identified with the valley of Swat in Pakistan. In the VIIIth century of our era, the Teaching transmitted by Garab Dorje was brought to Tibet by great masters such as Vairochana, Vimalamitra, and Padmasambhava. In that period, which saw the first diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet and

the large-scale translation of Buddhist scriptures from Sanskrit into Tibetan, the texts of Dzogchen were also translated, in great measure from the language of Oddiyana.

In Bon, the introduction of Dzogchen is ascribed to the great master Shenrab Miwoche, who transmitted this knowledge as part of a tradition widespread in the ancient Shang Shung realm, located in what is now western Tibet. Today, Dzogchen - as taught above all in the Nyingmapa lineage of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon tradition, but known and practiced in other schools as well - has begun to spread in the west, thanks to Tibetan masters who, after leaving their country, teach tirelessly in Europe, the Americas, and Australia.

THE INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY

The International Dzogchen Community counts among its members all those who are interested in the practice of Dzogchen. The community is thus seen as a place for people who share the same path towards knowledge.

The various community centres are considered places for the practice of awareness where it is possible to collaborate with others in the perspective of a common spiritual enrichment.

The International Dzogchen Community has a non-bureaucratic organisation and is based on the development of systems of communication which respect the various autonomous local conditions.

The co-ordination of the various activities of the association is organised by the Gakyil, the basic unit of organisation. The Gakyil can be a reference point for a country or even for smaller groupings. Each Gakyil is autonomous and there is no one Gakyil that rules over another.

For more information: www.dzogchen.it

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