

Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Photo: P. Fassoli

2014

Barcelona
January 10–12
Sorig Lhandus Tshogschen
“Integrated Medicine Event”
a meeting between different
medical systems

Tenerife
January 24–28
Int. Ludroi Tshogschen

February 6–11
Tibetan Culture Event
“Arts in Tibetan Culture – Past,
Present and Future”

February 16–20
Umdze Training at Dzamling Gar –
a special course on how to lead
ritual practices led by Adriano
Clemente

February 21–25
Dzogchen Community Instructors
Dagther conference

Feb. 28–29
Festival for ending
the Melo 3930

– Wood Horse Melo: 3931 –

March 2
Losar Festival

March 7–11
Ati Yoga retreat at Meriling
Open webcast

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Photo: A. Swart

First Steps Aboard Dzamling Gar

Enriching Our Journey with Mandarava

Carisa O'Kelly

The big tent was ready, tried and tested through several weeks of daily Tibetan singing and dancing with the Master. The wind and sun frequently reminded us that we were indeed in a tent and even more so was the feeling of being all together on a ship with the sound of the sails and rigging creaking and straining with the elements.

Now it was time for the first retreat at Dzamling Gar, the topic, Mandarava Teachings and Practice with Chudlen. In case we had overlooked it, Rinpoche pointed out the significance of this first retreat at the youngest Gar being linked to long life which made it feel especially auspicious.

During his opening remarks for this retreat Rinpoche said: “This is our first retreat and we are doing in particular a Mandarava

retreat. For individuals the practice of Mandarava means increasing our potentiality and going well in our life. This is also combined with the first retreat at Dzamling Gar so my hope is that it will bring more prosperity for Dzamling Gar and everybody.”

The title for this practice of Mandarava explained that it belongs to the practice of Jnanadakini, and that the principle of the practice of Jnanadakini is “for having total realization”. Its principle method combines both Anu and Ati yoga. Rinpoche repeatedly emphasized the importance of going to the essence of the teachings, so, while it is important to know the words, mudras, the mantra recitation and do the practice precisely as it has been transmitted to us, the main point is to integrate all of this with the state of contemplation. He illustrates

this for us in so many ways at different times reminding us to always work with circumstances. And in this retreat again he did so with the precise, yet flexible way in which he led us in the practice each day.

Some people remarked on how profound and precious it was for them to do this practice together in this time and place with the Master and all the students here present and around the globe (Dzamling). And even the elements sang with us and the skies poured down cascades of rain until the barrancos were running fast with torrents.

Rinpoche's birthday fell during the retreat and so we began the day with the long practice of Mandarava and then we continued into the evening with Tibetan

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Excerpt from the Last Day of Teaching from the Santi Maha Sangha Training Kunsangar South

August 9th, 2013
Santi Maha Sangha Level One

The most important attitude in Dzogchen practitioners is Ati Kunzang Chopa, the attitude of the Samantabhadra. In order to have that attitude very precisely, we need to discover our real nature. So in the Dzogchen teaching the teacher introduces directly with some method or in a very simple way. You remember in the Three Statements of Garab Dorje that the number one statement is Direct Introduction. If we do not have that base, we cannot discover our real nature. Even if we think we are doing Dzogchen practice, we are not really applying it. We only having the *intention* of applying Dzogchen teaching; there is no seed in the field and nothing is growing. Just like a seed, we discover our real nature. This is indispensable in the Dzogchen teaching.

For that reason, you may not have a very precise experience when we do Direct Introduction. But even if you are not one hundred percent sure, you have still received that transmission and now you are connected with it. You know the method and you apply it until you have discovered that. So this is what you should do first thing. And when you do not discover, you can use the method explained in Nyi zla kha sbyor. Another method is to use the Song of Vajra. You increase your clarity with the Song of Vajra. Somehow, with some method, you discover and then get in the knowledge. When you succeed being in this kind of knowledge, you finally have integration.

Now you can understand what integrating means; integrating means we are living in time and limited space. This is our life. In this moment, if we have knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching, then we try to be beyond that. This is the practice of Guruyoga. When we are in the state of Guruyoga, of course this is not ordinary life. We are not in the state of Guruyoga for a long time, only for a few minutes or seconds. Then we live in an ordinary way - being present and not distracted is most important. You should learn this. Many people say, "Oh, I tried, you always say being present is very important, but it is not so easy for me. I try sometimes, but I am always distracted. It is not so easy."

You must remember to read the biography of Milarepa. Milarepa sacrificed for many years for realization. He did not do practice just for a day or two to become the yogi Milarepa. How can we learn if when we try to be present sometimes and it feels difficult, we give up? This is practice, you know this is practice and you learn. The problem is that you do not consider that this is an important practice. Maybe you think: "Oh, the most important practice is being in the state of Guruyoga." We cannot be in state of Guruyoga always. You think, "Now I should practice a thun or sitting practice. This is the practice." When I ask, "Try to be present", you think, "Oh yes, but this is not the thun book."

But the application of trying to be present is much more important than a thun book. This you must understand. In the Dzogchen teaching, the most important thing is being in the state of contemplation. After that, most important is that you integrate your body, speech, and mind in that knowledge. How do you integrate? It is difficult. For example, if someone is making noise, or creating a problem, then you think, "Oh, I must not fall into dualistic vision. I am a Dzogchen practitioner. I want to integrate." That person is making a problem, how do you integrate now? It is not so easy, even if you know what integrating means intellectually.

Integrating means you do not have dualistic vision. But how do you integrate this movement, or the person(s) creating the problem? For that reason we must start with being present. This is the number one step. If you succeed to be in this kind of presence, slowly, slowly you can integrate. We have the aspect of mind, then energy, and the physical level. We can easily integrate everything; the relative concepts of mind and then the energy level movements. In the end, we can also have the capacity to integrate the more material level, since we are living with dualistic vision.

For that reason, you should learn and do the practice of being present precisely. Some people say, "Oh, I am follow-

ing Dzogchen teaching from you and you always ask us to be present, etc. For many years you have asked." For many years and then we become old. The teacher is becoming old, and the students are also slowly, slowly becoming old. But it is not that we have no value when we become old. We are old just like good wine or something. So, we know that - particularly old students. You must really, successfully, integrate in the present.

I am not saying that most of my students are really very present. If you are present, presence manifests. It is not necessary for me to ask if you being present or not. Your way of seeing, way of living, way of doing, everything manifests, if you are being present. So it is very important in our life and therefore I am repeating this always, that presence is something important.

You must think that you are doing Santi Maha Sangha. You should know what Santi Maha Sangha is. Santi Maha means Dzogchen. Sangha means Community. The real meaning, if you translate Santi Maha Sangha, is Dzogchen Community. We have, in general, the Dzogchen Community as part of our dualistic condition. It is presented like a kind of association, or a social organization. But this is not really the Dzogchen Community. This is the relative Dzogchen Community, because we are living in limited society. If we deal with the limitations of society, we cannot do anything. This is called the relative Dzogchen Community. But my hope and my desire is that it becomes a serious Dzogchen Community because the Dzogchen teaching is very important.

I know very well, and this is how it is explained in the Dzogchen sGra thal 'gyur tantra. It is important for all human beings, in general for all sentient beings, but particularly for human beings. A human being has more capacity, more possibility to learn, to apply, to study, and also for having realization. In this case, in our dimension we have this precious teaching. But even if there is this precious teaching, if we go after it in the traditional way, only through words etc, we will not get in its real sense. Of course, when we are not in the real sense, its function is not manifesting.

The Dzogchen teaching is very important and must manifest some benefit, particularly for human beings. You see how many limitations we have in our world. Firstly, we have many different kinds of ethnic limitations. Each group is different; each has different traditions, ways of seeing, ways of thinking, for example. Then there are so many geographic limitations. And then there are nations and groups, etc. Even if there is one country, in this country, how many political parties exist? No one can really agree, between person and person. Everybody is dominated by ego. So, we know this is and this is samsara.

Then, we have the very precious Dzogchen teaching going beyond that. If we really apply the Dzogchen teaching,

we can go beyond. Dzogchen practitioners are starting to go in this direction. Then it must become something concrete, what we apply and follow. Then we are collaborating as a serious Dzogchen Community. Santi Maha Sangha is for learning that.

Some people think that they want to do Santi Maha Sangha because all the secrets of the Dzogchen teaching are revealed. This is not the main point. Even you are not doing Santi Maha Sangha, you can also have some secrets of the teaching of Dzogchen, of Ati Yoga. Some people also think that they want to become a teacher. This is also not the main point. It is not necessary to become a teacher. Some people already have the idea of wanting to be a teacher. This is bad. You never become a really serious teacher if you already have that intention and you want to dominate someone. So, you must go beyond that. It is not really a good idea. You should learn what the real sense of the teaching is.

My idea is that people doing Santi Maha Sangha will develop, one by one, to have real knowledge of Dzogchen. They will apply it and be concretely in that state. For that reason, I am also working very hard for Santi Maha Sangha all over the world. People who do Santi Maha Sangha need to understand that. Of course we need to continue this teaching seriously, how it should be. You remember that we have many teachers of Santi Maha Sangha. Firstly, they are participate in Santi Maha Sangha and we consider if they can become the really "perfect ones" of the Dzogchen Community. Then they present saying they want to be a teacher. Then we check and we say they can become Santi Maha Sangha teachers or not. So we work very slowly in that way. This is for continuation.

You remember that when I came to Italy for the first time, I came to study and learn a little culture and knowledge of Westerners. They offered me two years of work in Italy. I came for that. My interest was not only to work and make money. But I was also interested in learning a little more culture and knowledge of Westerners. After two years I remained in Italy because they asked me to work in the university. Of course, then, I remained. I had no idea of becoming a teacher and I had no idea that I wanted to be a teacher. When I was working at the university His Holiness the Gyalwa Karmapa, the 16th Karmapa, sent me two letters saying that if someone is interested in his teachings I should go and teach at his [the Karmapa's] dharma centers. I refused two times saying I was not a teacher, I was still a student and I still wanted to learn. I said this because I did not really feel I wanted to be a teacher. But then, at the end, I started to teach because there were so many people interested and they insisted that I teach something.

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Photo: P. Fassoli



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When I started to teach, I thought maybe I was satisfying these people just a little. I did not think I was becoming a teacher with students. But then, it developed automatically and I couldn't stop it. And today, you see, I am going here and there, to satisfy people. Not only to satisfy them, but I understand how the situation of this world is and therefore I also know that it is very important to help people understand the principle of the Dzogchen teaching. I am working that way. It is not that I am working to have more students and have a position as the teacher, etc. I absolutely don't care about these things. I prefer to be in a quiet place where no one is disturbing me. But we should work with circumstances, as Dzogchen practitioners. Circumstances are showing that it is necessary for me to travel and teach. So, it is very important you must understand that.

People who are doing Santi Maha Sangha today, nobody knows, that even if you have no idea to become a teacher, maybe you can also become a teacher. You should work with circumstances, not with your intention that you want to be a teacher. When you become a teacher, you must know then how you should work. If you are creating your personal position, all our teachers in the Dzogchen Community, Santi Maha Sangha teachers, Yantra Yoga teachers and teachers of the Vajra Dance and some other specific teachers, if you have the idea that you want to prepare and develop your position, please leave. You should not do anything with Dzogchen Community. This is not the principle of the Dzogchen Community. If you are dedicating totally for the Dzogchen Community, that means that the people who are interested for the future will evolve. Then everything you are doing is welcome. So it is really very important to be present. Sometimes I observe our qualified teachers, and some are manifesting their personal interest a little. This is not good. We don't want anything of this kind created in the Dzogchen Community. Then it is better they leave the Dzogchen Community.

I don't think I will live for a very long time. In order to finish more of this training of Santi Maha Sangha, I am always trying to live longer. This is my contribution for the Dzogchen Community and the Dzogchen teaching, that it continue purely on this globe. I have very much confidence in the Dzogchen teaching, with this knowledge, that it really contributes to the peace of the world. This is the best thing that exists on this globe. I am convinced of that and I am working for that. You also know that. So that is the reason I say we all have that responsibility because we are on the Dzogchen path. One by one we are learning Dzogchen knowledge.

In Santi Maha Sangha, for example, it says that we that we are learning the principle of Dzogchen Semde, Dzogchen Longde, and then Upadesha - everything. Even if there is no different understanding or knowledge presented in these three series, it becomes more complete, and we become rich in that knowledge. So, for that reason, I prepare Santi Maha Sangha trainings, books, and we always continue. Everybody should collaborate for that. It is not sufficient that I prepare books and sometimes I give Santi Maha Sangha trainings. The training is to produce people who have that kind of knowledge. When there is this knowledge, then it multiplies.

We are not missionaries, so we are not making publicity. In Sutra teaching they consider that being a missionary is positive. In the Dzogchen teaching it is negative; being a missionary means you are conditioning people. Even if that person is not participating, and you tell them to do like this or that, it is negative. You should respect others' dimensions, how they are. It is not necessary to make publicity. Instead of making publicity, I am always saying in the Dzogchen teaching we have the six liberation method where we chant or sing mantras, and if a being hears it we can make a cause of the liberation for small animals, for example, and others, even if they have no intention to follow that teaching or to be on a path. This is an example, it is very important in daily life that we work that way. This is much better than publicity. Instead of publicity, we should pay respect. This is very important. Each person has his or her dimension, even animals. We know they have their dimension and we pay respect. This is part of our awareness, how we should work with circumstances. And it is very important that you are all becoming good Dzogchen practitioners. This is what I need.

So, you remember, it doesn't mean that you are becoming a good Dzogchen practitioner if you are doing some formal practice every day. Of course if you are a Dzogchen practitioner, you know very well that formal practice is also useful. You can participate, and you can also develop that. But that is not the main point. The main point you already know, for Dzogchen practitioners, is to be in the state of contemplation and integrate. Integration is most important; integration means we are present. Some people ask what

the method is of learning to be present. The method is that you are not distracted.

You already know that we are always distracted. I am always giving this advice: All Westerners know how to drive a car. So, when you are driving a car, you are present. When you were learning to drive a car, you remember how difficult it was. But after a little while, you drove and there was no difficulty. So in the same way, also, is being present. First you should learn, it is not so easy. Even if it is not easy, if you learn, then it becomes easy. This is not only about driving a car, but everything. You can learn to be present.

For example, when you have free time, dedicate it to the practice of being present. For some hours, for example, in one day, you take a commitment. You commit to not being distracted. Not being distracted means always knowing what you are doing. This is, in the teaching, called "being present". Distraction does not mean how we think of it in general; it's a little different. For example, if you want to be present for one hour, you start in this moment. After a little while, in your mind, you are thinking something. Or you remember that you should do something. In that moment, you must not be distracted with that. You remember: "Oh, I am thinking, I remembered some things". In that moment you are applying that. But you know, "Oh, now I am remembering. Now I am applying that." And then you finish applying that. You know - now it's finished. So, you go that way until the end of one hour. You succeed and you learn how to be present for one hour. After that, you are free. But the next day, for example, you do it another time. Two times, three times, you do that way, and it becomes much easier to be present. At the end, you don't need very much effort to be present. When you know you want to be present, you continue.

Then you remember everything and together with being present, it becomes very easy. Some people wonder how they can think and judge if they are always being present and checking. For example, someone says they have many complicated things to do. Someone else has to go to the office. There are many things to do. People wonder how they can apply this and think and talk with people. You can talk, you can think, you can do everything. When you are driving a car, you also think, you talk with people, but you are not distracted. In the same way, you can think and talk. There is no problem. When you really become more familiar being present, for hours and hours you can be in that presence, talking, working, etc., and it is not necessary that you are distracted. When you become something like that, being relatively present, you can really integrate many things, particularly mental concepts. Slowly you develop with your aspect of the energy level and you become a good Dzogchen practitioner. Everybody can try and learn that way.

Ok, these are the most important for this part of the teaching related to attitude. In the end there are some verses and a text I wrote for my students, so that they can easily have that kind of knowledge of the background. If you are trying to learn and you are integrating this knowledge in you, then it can arise concretely. This is the principle of the teaching and something very difficult to get and meet. So you know that and then you apply. That means you know how precious it [the teaching] is. When we have this fantastic teaching, and we are in that knowledge, there is no need to sacrifice or have difficulties in order to have realization. Also, we are not having realization only for ourselves, but we also apply benefits for all sentient beings. Then automatically everything manifests easily. That means that everybody finds his/her real nature and that realization. This is a dedication for all sentient beings to have this realization. These verses I wrote down in the style of a poem. There is the same syllable for each four verses. For example, the first says, A, A, A, A. The second, LA, LA, LA, LA. Then, another, also, LA, LA, LA, LA. Then when you put it altogether, A LA LA, A LA LA, it means fantastic. Then, E E E E. Then, MA MA MA MA. Then, HO HO HO HO. E MA HO, you know. This is a way of writing a poetic style.

So, this is my work for this First Level Santi Maha Sangha training. It is very useful for practitioners, and our Santi Maha Sangha people, because you don't need to learn so many arguments from books. The most important points are concentrated here. If you know what is explained here, you are also becoming a scholar. You need sufficient background and knowledge. But not only that, you must integrate in the knowledge of Dzogchen. So, this you should know and you do your best. ☸

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu approved the use of the material from the Santi Maha Sangha training.

Transcribed by Vladimir Smirnov
Edited by Naomi Zeitz

Editorial

Dear Mirror Readers,

We would like to send you some important information about The Mirror for the coming year. Firstly, with the New Year, The Mirror will be moving from the 'umbrella' of Shang Shung Institute to the 'umbrella' of the International Dzogchen Community and the IG, which will bring about a few changes.

Our online website – **melong.com** – will become an online journal in a blog style format, where we will continue to do our best to bring you the most recent news from our global Community, keep you updated on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's latest schedule and publish feature articles, videos and photos from our worldwide sangha. Other new features we intend to incorporate in the online journal include the possibility to print out material and readers will no longer need to login to access articles. We are planning to present the new online Mirror in late January after the last issue of 2013, no. 125, has been published.

At the same time, the changes will also mean that there will be an interim period during which we will not be publishing the paper version of the newspaper due, unfortunately, to being unable to sustain its cost. If circumstances permit and there is sufficient interest, we may try to produce one or two print-on-demand issues in the coming year.

The new online Mirror will be open to all members of the Dzogchen Community and the general public since there will be no login required. This will mean that we no longer require membership information from the Gars and Lings in order to give access to current members.

So that is The Mirror's big news for 2014. We so appreciate each Gar and Ling's ongoing and consistent support and generosity on many levels that has helped us to keep going.

We are looking forward to a new and exciting online Mirror that has functionality for everyone who would like to read it!

If you have any questions or concerns, please write us:
Naomi Zeitz **mirror@tsegyalgar.org**
Liz Granger **liz@melong.com**

Warm wishes and holiday greetings,
The Mirror Staff
Liz, Naomi and Thomas



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singing and dancing, about which he recently said: "I never do things that are useless". We can understand from this remark and other things he has said how important these activities are for us as Dzogchen practitioners, developing our presence and also as a way of respecting and even going towards preserving Tibetan language and culture.

During the evening festivities, the Gar was able to to make a live video connection via Skype with a well-known Tibetan singer, Lob-sang Delek, who sent his birthday greetings, and offered a live rendition of one of Rinpoche's favorite songs "Puyana". While he sang from across the globe, all those in the Gonpa were able to dance along, thus creating a unique and memorable moment, adding to the vibrancy of modern Tibetan culture at the Global Gar. ☸



International Dzogchen Community Membership Brief 2014

Mark Farrington

In the past week many of you who are Gakyil members would have seen the notice from the International Gakyil (IG) providing information on guidelines for membership in 2014. As the planned start date for “global membership” is still January 2015, what we are hoping to achieve in 2014 is simply greater convergence of the Membership System and associated benefits for each membership tier. If this convergence can be improved during the 2014 membership renewal period, the impact on members in January 2015 will be less dramatic, and essentially, be more related to technical aspects of how one renews and enters personal information into the database.

As the IG has written previously, the rationale for moving to an international membership system is firstly to achieve Rinpoche’s stated goal of having the Community “feel and act as one community.” In order to achieve this we will need to standardise the essential aspects of the Membership System. The important points of standardisation we are seeking to achieve in 2014 were noted in the IG Blue notification on 4 December, i.e., **Introduction of a Welcome Card system and greater consistency in fees & benefits offered to higher membership tiers** (Sustaining members and Meritorious members). The use of a Welcome Card system addresses the important points of “ownership & responsibility” that Rinpoche reminds us are the purpose for having a membership system. While, standardising the higher membership tier fees & benefits, aims to achieve unified economic rationale where we have the most flexibility; those mem-

bers with the greatest capacity to financial support the IDC.

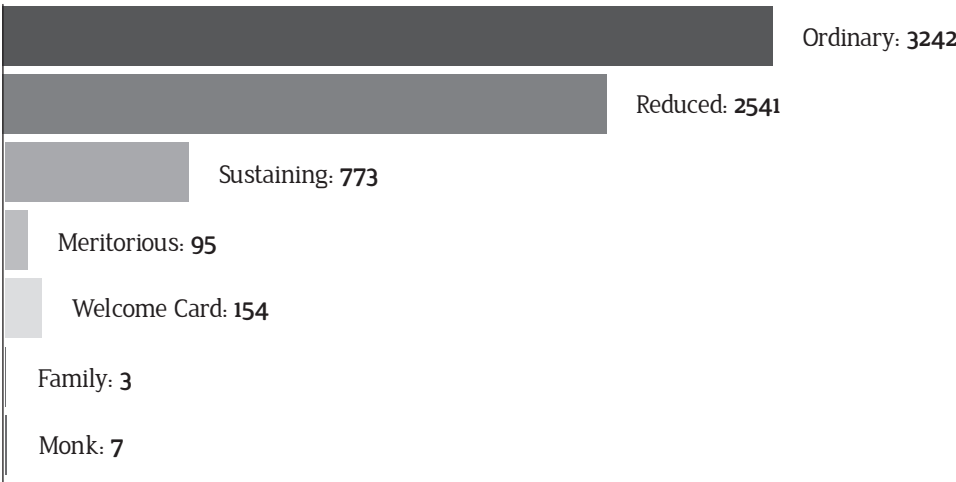
If our modifications to the membership fees & benefits are successful, what we should expect to achieve are “healthy” trends in membership activity. Some of these improved trends we would like to see are;

- New members (Welcome Card) consistently renewing their membership
- Increases in Sustaining Membership
- Stability in Meritorious Membership
- Shifts from Reduced Membership to Ordinary Membership
- Growth in new members from all Regions

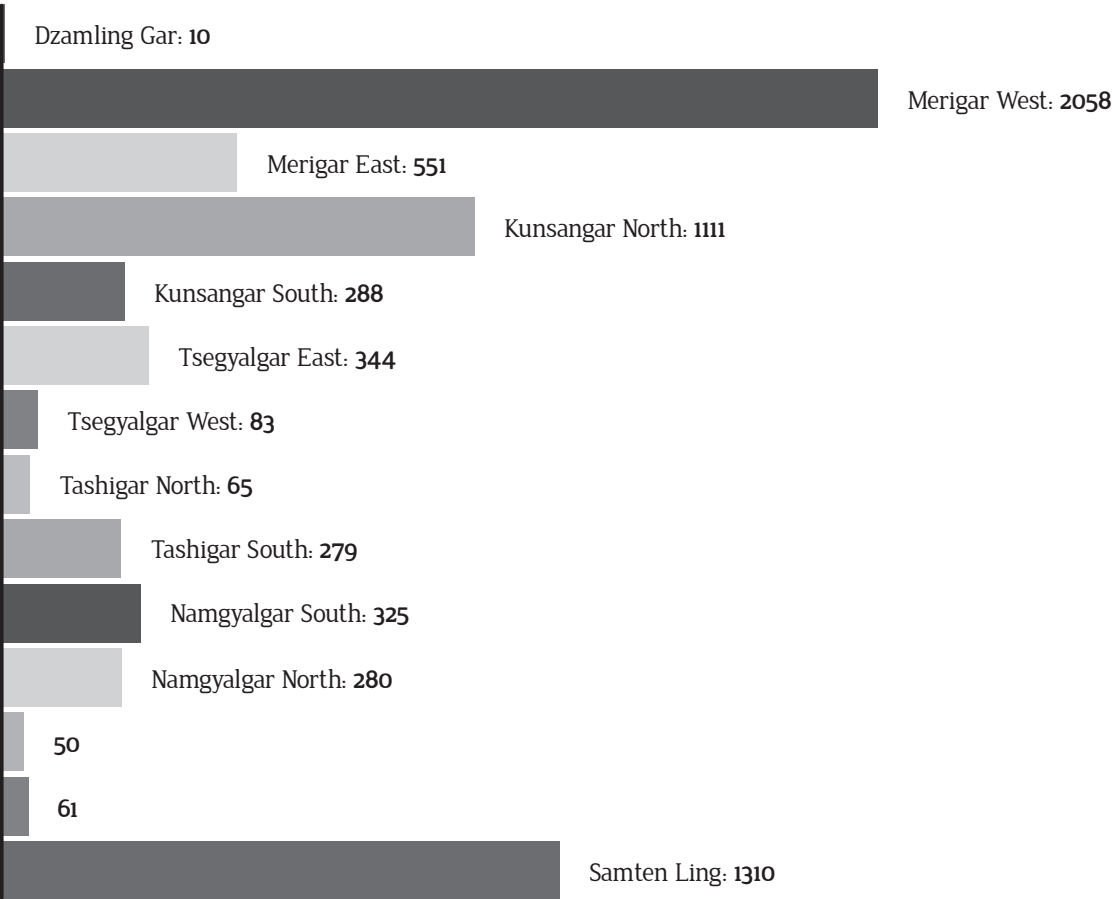
To measure the improvements to membership trends we need to understand as best we can our starting point. Unfortunately, without an international database, we are unable to generate reliable membership data on a global basis. Nevertheless, in order to glean some information from what data we have available, we’ve used survey results, partial database work and country estimates to arrive at 2012 IDC Membership numbers. While not perfect, we should at least be able to obtain some comparative membership trend information from use of this data as the starting point.

We provide here a few graphs to get a feel of what our Community looks like from “type” of membership and “location” of membership perspectives. As one would expect, Ordinary Membership makes up our largest group, followed closely by Reduced. Our three largest membership bases

Dzogchen Community Membership (2012 estimates)



Dzogchen Community Membership (2012 estimates)



are Meri Gar West, Samten Ling and Kunsan Gar North.

While data are obviously not perfect, what can be useful in these graphs is for the members of the IDC to understand how much it

has grown, and where it will grow to in the future. IG Yellow and the Membership Committee will continue to update these graphs annually in order to provide information and perspective to our global

members. The updates for 2013 we will try to have ready by March. ©

Transition of Responsibility for Services from Shang Shung Institute to the International Dzogchen Community

As part of the reorganisation of the Dzogchen Community and of Shang Shung Institute, it has been the intention to pass over responsibility for services relating to the IDC so that Shang Shung Institute is free to focus on its core purpose of working for the continuation of Tibetan Culture in all its aspects.

The transition of responsibility for some key services is being brought forward to Jan 1st 2014.

From that time, the Gakyil of the International Dzogchen Community will take on responsibility for

- The Mirror
- the Webcast

and the coordination of SMS exams and trainings, for Instructors as well as for other students.

Contributions from the Gars for these services, which have previously been paid to SSI, will now need to be paid to the IDC account – further details will be sent to the Gakyils of Gars and Lings.

The Mirror

A committee has been set up under the Blue International Gakyil umbrella.

It was hoped that it might be possible to continue publication in the usual format, at least through this transition period. However it has become clear that the paper publication of the Mirror is not financially sustainable at the mo-

ment, and Rinpoche has approved a provisional move to online only.

The committee has passed on its criteria for a blog style publication to the IG Red Management Services Committee to investigate solutions. This would retain all essential features, should have possibility to print some or all for personal use, and with multi language options. There would still be costs and these would need to be met by the Gars as before, but the online publication would be open and free to all. An open letter from the Mirror follows.

The Webcast

No change is currently planned in the existing system, except perhaps to change the branding on the webpage from SSI to IDC.

IDC will need to take over login and password support and this will be announced as it happens.

Santi Maha Sangha

Details will be announced as they become available. ©

Membership Renewal Time

For many members January 1st is membership renewal time.

Rinpoche has spoken many times about the purpose of membership. The main point is not about making money, but about responsibility, commitment and continuity.

In the Principles of the Dzogchen Community, Rinpoche wrote about a kind of introductory membership; it is the period in which a person has met the Teacher and the Teachings and is interested to follow and go deeper. This is what we are now calling the Welcome Card. So in this period of three years, it becomes clear to that person how important it is for these essential teachings to remain available in our dimension, not only for themselves, but also for the benefit of all beings.

At that point then it is possible to become a full member, to be able to vote at meetings of the general assembly, and maybe also to take up positions of responsibility in the organisation of the community.

Then there are also different levels of commitment; it is possible to choose to be an ordinary member, a sustaining member or a meritorious member – and if your financial circumstances are hard, it is also possible to have a reduced membership fee. These levels are not just about how wealthy a person is; someone whose commitment is very strong might choose to have sustaining membership even though it is a larger part of their income, while someone who is really quite rich might only choose ordinary membership. That is ok, we all choose how to use our resources!

Taking on a higher level of membership is a very important way for sustaining the Gars

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Thokcha

The Talisman Fallen from
the Sky

On the 23rd of December, 25 years ago, before a notary in Rome, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and nine of his students established ASIA, Association for International Solidarity in Asia, with the mission to preserve the cultural and spiritual identity of Tibet.

Today, a quarter of a century since that evening, ASIA wants to celebrate the milestones and achievements that have been reached with a special pendant: a Thokcha, a talisman fallen from the sky, the same as the one in our logo.



In Tibet the Thokcha are objects that are considered sacred and magical. Legend has it that they were not forged by human hands but that they fell to earth from the sky.

These talismans, generally made of bronze and metals of meteoric origin, can be traced back to the Bronze Age.

Their meaning is to be found in pre-Buddhist religious beliefs, particularly in the Bönpo tradition, and has been enriched with new values and forms following the introduction of Buddhism.

Traditionally, they are worn around the neck as a pendant or sewn to clothing or even bound to other sacred objects in order to attract good luck and ward off evil demons.

The Thokcha are objects of great importance for understanding the origins, and the historical and cultural development of Tibet and are part of the Tibetan cultural and spiritual heritage that ASIA has been safe-guarding for 25 years.

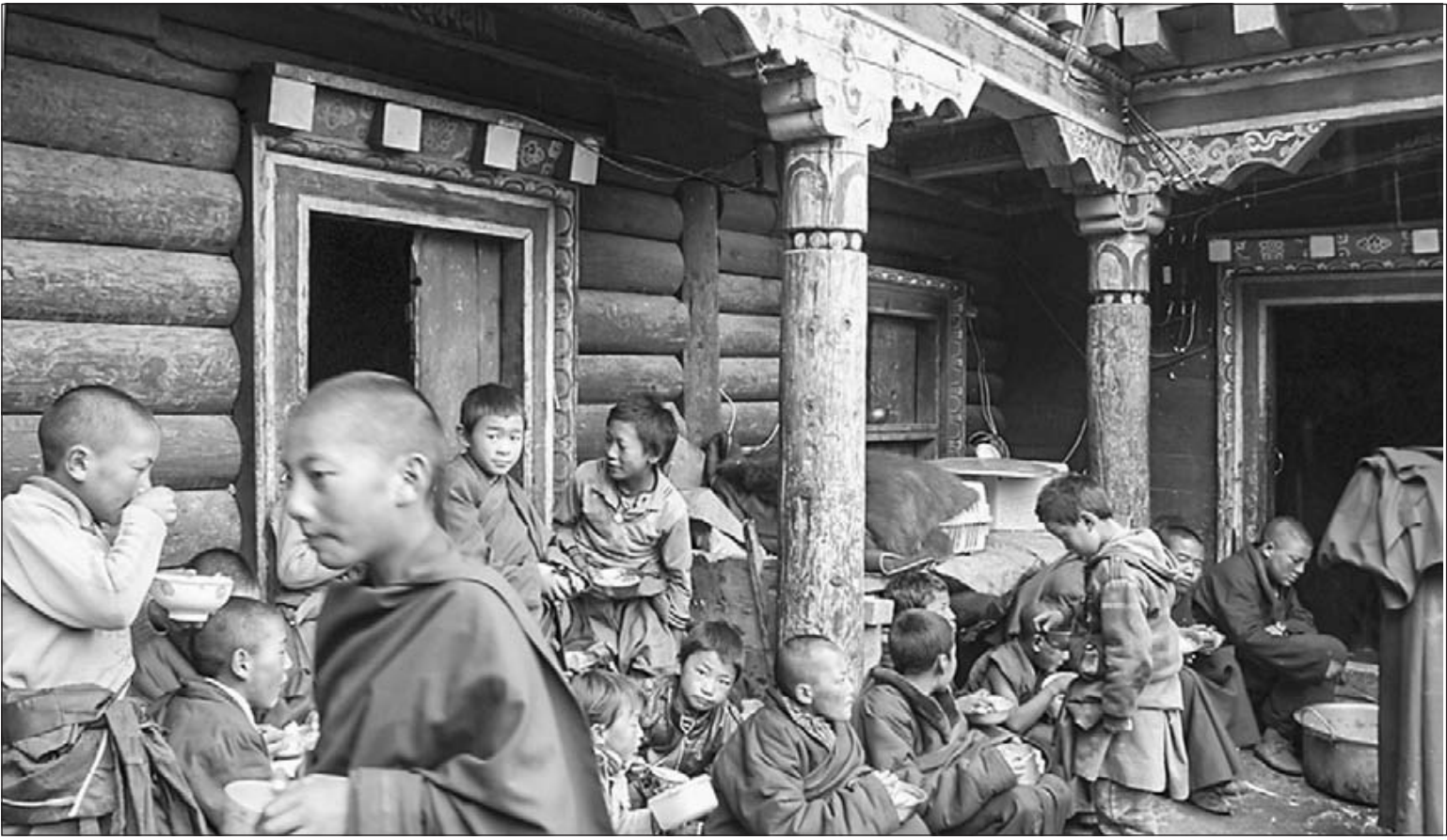
Made by Nepalese goldsmiths in bronze and copper, the Thokcha are a symbol of participation in ASIA's mission and a way to contribute to our future projects. The funds raised will, in fact, be entirely donated to support our activities and projects in Tibet. The minimum donation requested for a Thokcha is €25 to which we must add shipping charges.

To order one or for more information write to:
l.fidanzia@asia-onlus.org
or call +39 06 44340034. ©

SOS Galingteng: we're at 51!

Dear friends of Merigar,
Thank you for accepting the request of **Tashi Choepel, the Khenpo of Galingteng**, so quickly! In the last month **40 other monks have found a long distance supporter, but there are still 51** in order to give a concrete and generous reply to the Khenpo and adopt all the resident monks, giving new impetus to the spiritual and cultural needs of this place that is so sacred and important to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Supporting the Monastery of Galingteng is essential in order that the cultural and spiritual heritage of Tibet is passed on to the new generations and can live on in the future.

"When my entire generation of Tibetans and I will be gone, the new generation will only know Chinese. Where will Tibet be? The history, culture and knowledge of Tibet will be in a museum. You should think a little about how it will be then, because although you are not Tibetans, Tibetan culture and knowledge are valuable for all the peoples of our planet."
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



The amount is 25 euros per month for a period of at least 3 years.

1) Adopt a Monk From Galingteng Right Away!
Visit our website www.asia-onlus.org and follow the steps to start up a long distance adoption.

2) If you feel that your circumstances do not allow you to take

on this commitment, you can join other people and create a group to share an adoption.

For any further information you can write to me at adozioni@asia-onlus.org or call ++39 06 44 34 00 34.

Thank you.
Season's Greetings!
Roberta Caminiti
(Long Distance Sponsorship) ©

So for this new year of 2014, please continue your membership of your Gar and Ling as you already do, considering what level of contribution you are able and wish to make. Then in January 2015, we should all be in a position to become members in a literal sense, of the International Dzogchen Community! ©

» continued from previous page
and the services we provide for people who are interested. It is not just that we provide services for members, or that Rinpoche gives teachings only for members; it is for anyone who is interested. But becoming a member is an important way in which we can all contribute to keep open that possibility.

Books on Asia:
Buddhist Practice
Philosophy
Art
Language
Culture
Travel



We are pleased to deliver any new and antiquarian books on Asia, remote publications, or hard to find titles. Ask for our actual stock list! Garuda Books Switzerland Bookshop.
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www.shangshung.org

Shang Shung Institute
Russia

This Year’s
Events

Dear friends!

The Shang Shung Institute would like to share with you the joy of the Tibetan Medicine events held this year in Russia. All events were directly connected to the Shang Shung Institute’s School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine and Doctor Phuntsog Wangmo.

The year was full of events

· The Shang Shung Institute’s School of Traditional Tibetan Medicine was established at Kunsangar North. It was a long-awaited project and required a lot of effort but it has given a precious opportunity for more than 60 students

to study Tibetan Medicine under the guidance of Doctor Phuntsog and, as a result, it has become the real jewel of Kunsangar North. (The School’s site www.tibetanmedicineschool.ru)

· Our precious Teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the Guru Urgyen Menla (Guru Rinpoche in the form of the Buddha of Medicine) transmission to the School’s students and medical practitioners during the summer.

· Doctor Phuntsog Wangmo held an important foundation workshop on Tibetan Medicine for practitioners during the inauguration of the SSI last summer.

· Eminent professor Namlakhar was invited from Tibet for a month. The doctor taught classes for the School students, received more than 150 patients and gave a unique talk about stomach tumour healing at the Open World Centre.

· A great job with the mass-media was done, and several notable articles about Doctor Phuntsog and The School were published.

Paper based mass-media

· Marie Claire magazine, November. The name of the issue is “Mysticism”. The article “Be Healthy” not only popularizes Tibetan Medicine, but contains additional information about our Teacher’s book, “Birth, life and death” and the SSI (4 pages).

Copies are available to purchase and also online (iPad, iPhone) <http://www.marieclaire.ru/ipad/>

· Yoga Journal magazine, issue 57. The fascinating article “The forest school” (4 pages) talks about our Tibetan Medical School and SSI.

E-media

· Komsomolskaya Pravda - <http://www.kp.ru/daily/26123/3016248/>

This article is about the harm of smoking and how to stop.

· Evening Moscow - <http://vmdaily.ru/news/2013/09/16/v-podmoskovnoj-shkole-tibetskoj-meditcini-uchat-raspoznavat-zabolevaniya-na-fizicheskom-astrologicheskom-i-karmicheskom-214060.html>

An interesting article about our School was published.

· ELLE Magazine, the article “5 health diet rules from a Tibetan Doctor” - http://www.elle.ru/krasota/beauty_blog/5-pravil-zdorovogo-pitaniya-ot-tibetskogo-vracha/ (More than 100,000 views in the first week and this article became the most popular at ELLE online for a long period)

We really want to thank everyone who helped to implement all this. Many people participated in the projects and we send our sincere gratitude and our best wishes to everyone!!!

The second term at the School has started and students are studying intensively till the end of January. We are developing on-line courses for distance learning that will be in place for the next group of students. Details will be announced in the near future on the website and on Voice (Russian DC email list).

The Tibetan Medicine clinic project development is continuing to develop at Kunsangar North.

Please send or call your questions and suggestions to Vladimir Belyaev mob. +7 926 5899148 email: stm@shangshung.ru

Thank you for your attention and kind regards.
Happy New Year!
With love,
Vladimir Belyaev
Shang Shung Institute Russia ©

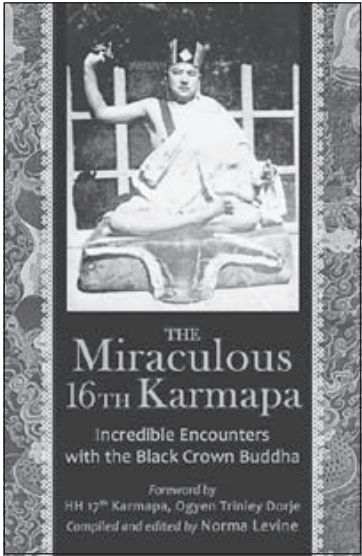


SHANG SHUNG EDITIONS

The Miraculous
16th Karmapa

Incredible Encounters with the Black Crown Buddha
The Sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpe Dorje

Who was this extraordinary individual with the spiritual signs of a buddha, the Sixteenth Karmapa, Holder of the Black Crown?



Norma Levine has travelled to Tibet, India, Europe and North America to record the stories of this memorable man and the impact he had on the people who met him.

His Holiness was the greatest enlightened lama I ever met... Many lamas of his time were in awe of his all-seeing wisdom, endless compassion, and his prodigious powers of clairvoyance and prognostication, particularly his obvious ability to see through people.

Lama Surya Das, Buddhist writer and teacher

This book gives us a rare and intimate insight into the personal-

ity of the man who was the 16th Karmapa. His mere presence, akin to a powerful force of nature, would deeply affect those around him; his cosmic laughter, like a lion’s roar proclaiming supremacy, could be heard streets away. He was able to teach anywhere, at any time, when the moment was right and was followed wherever he went by his beloved entourage of birds who travelled with him and sang his mantra: Karmapa Kyenno, Master of Activity, Be With Me.

This book offers the stories of Western students and prominent reincarnate Lamas who had meaningful contact with the 16th Karmapa in both India and the West. In the context of the free-

dom and spontaneity of Western culture in the 1960s, the profound mind transmission of this remarkable Master transformed the lives of those whom he encountered. Each story is a spiritual adventure; vibrant, authentic, sometimes shocking, but always inspiring.

Norma Levine is a lifelong Buddhist practitioner and the author of *Blessing Power of the Buddhas: Sacred Objects, Sacred Lands; A Yearbook of Buddhist Wisdom; and Chronicles of Love and Death: My Years with the Lost Spiritual King of Bhutan.*

Available now from www.shangshungstore.org ©

Spain, Tenerife

IV Tibetan Culture Event in Tenerife

Arts in Tibetan Culture –
Past, Present and Future

February 6–11, 2014 Tenerife

Come and Enjoy!!

Thursday Feb. 6, Centro Cultural de Adeje
7 pm Conference: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
Past Present and Future of Tibetan Culture
8 pm Welcoming Rinpoche to Dzamling Gar, Song and Dance Performance
Topgyal Gontse, Tsering Dolker and Sithar Sithar

Friday Feb. 7, Centro Cultural de Adeje
7 pm Conference: Traditional and Modern Dances
In and Outside Tibet
Adriana Dal Borgo
Modern Dance Performance
Dzamlinggar dance group

Saturday Feb. 8, Dzamling Gar
10 am–1 pm Activities for Children: Storytelling, theatre and Tibetan dances
age 7 to 12, Lourdes Velaochaga a.o.
4 pm Tibetan games
7 pm Concert, Topgyal Gontse, Tsering Dolker and Sithar Sithar
Open dances and celebration with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Sunday Feb. 9, Dzamling Gar
11 am–12 pm Kumar Kumari Yoga for children
with Laura Evangelisti
1 pm Momo Cooking together, Tsering
4 pm–6 pm Conference: Arts in Tibetan Culture
Elio Guarisco
7 pm Traditional Tibetan Song and Dance Performance, Presentation of the culture days workshop
with Topgyal Gontse, Tsering Dolker, Sithar Sithar and participants

Tuesday Feb 11, 4 pm–8 pm,
Universidad de la Laguna
Aula Magna Campus de Guajara
Arts in Tibetan Culture
Round Table with
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,
Alfonso Garcia, Elio Guarisco
Moderation:
Francisco Diez de Velasco

Interview with Yuchen Namkhai

Joe Zurylo for The Mirror

Joe Zurylo: What made you leave your home in Italy and move to the States?

Yuchen Namkhai: Luigi and I lived in Castel del Piano, a small village close to Merigar West, for over three years. Luigi had been working as a director for Shang Shung Institute/Italy for five years and in 2009 we realized we had to leave Italy in order to fulfill one of our own priorities: our family. It was time to make important decisions about our daughters' future education and how to provide the best care for them. We always valued an English based education and the possibility of living abroad to expand our horizons.

Initially we looked into moving to Australia, since it is a great place for young ones, as it still seems to provide a sense of 'future'. Pretty soon some coincidences and favorable conditions showed us a different path.

At that time we realized we could help SSI USA and give our girls an English based education at the same time! What more could we ask for?

As we began to consider moving, I started to remember my first visits to the US in the '80s.

The very first time in Conway was my first experience of the dark retreat, of truly vegan food, amusement parks, and even West Coast nudism. I was amazed how different this country could be from Italy! This is one of the reasons why I considered traveling with Rinpoche, the greatest opportunity of my life; there was always a lot to learn, understand and assimilate wherever we headed for!

We chose to move specifically to the Tsegyalgar East area because we wanted to live close to Community people in a rural area. It is also very important for us to be able to raise our family in the countryside in close contact with nature.

Some aspects I always respected and much valued about this area are the pioneering spirit and the work ethic. I think these aspects, along with the closeness to nature, provide us the lifestyle we're enjoying up to now.

Living in touch with nature can be a little hard at first, especially at our latitude and for Mediterranean people, but it teaches us to rethink how we live our 'modern' lives and to be more responsible in how we manage our natural resources.

Following the seasons and dealing with the natural elements teaches us how to endure and appreciate the good time, the need for enduring and collaboration. And most of all, the gift of connection!

JZ: Now that you're here, what do you see as the biggest difference between the USA and Europe?



Yuchen tending the bees.

Photo: P. Barry

YN: There are many differences... maybe the very first difference that strikes me is open space. There is a lot of open space here! Space means less tension, less crowding and less pressure. It is not as secondary as many people might think, since even if we humans are a social breed, we don't cope very well with tight quarters and crowds. That is because we also are a predatory species. And the more I age, the more I appreciate open space and silence.

The second big difference I see is the sense of community up here in the hill towns. It's a kind of culture I never experienced in Italy. Because nature is strong, every year I witness this community's resilience in action in finding solutions and collaboration when and where it's needed.

Whenever there is an emergency, someone in need, a threat for the population, people and entire villages here activate in many different ways... The schools act as a magnet in every village; it provides information, education, socialization, outreach and good memories. The collaboration in every neighborhood is also another local example of this.

The third difference I see here is about law and politics; it is very straightforward, anyone can understand and navigate it easily. There is a high level of respect for the law and the legislation system is very fast and efficient compared to Europe. American politics looks easier to me compared to European; especially less complicated to reach agreements.

Europeans tend to be more liberal regarding soft drugs, prostitution, alcohol, abortion, or cloning (but not so for GM food). Americans grant greater freedoms when it comes to gun possession, driving a car from a relatively young age (the norm is eighteen years old in Europe). Though the laws differ in each state, American teenagers can start driving

with an adult as early as fourteen years and nine months old!!

JZ: What do you see as the difference between Merigar West and Tsegyalgar East?

YN: Merigar West plays a very institutional role in the IDC context. It is the very first Gar Rinpoche founded and since then it con-

ing at first. But consider this: the small number of members allows individual participation to have greater impact!

JZ: Last year you decided to reopen the old farm, which we know as Lower Khandroling. Why did you decide to do this?

YN: The main reason is to give people access to positive energy and support to the Gar for the long term. A place like a Gar needs human presence, so that it doesn't turn into a museum, and constant maintenance. A place like a community needs skills to foster connections and a certain level of trust to be at peace. Apparently, people too need a constant 'maintenance' in order to experience connection, compassion and peace.

So I simply thought that the old farm could bring benefit in both these aspects; we can learn how to relate ourselves in a respectful and nurturing way, meet our human needs for connection and, in the meantime, work sustainable solutions for the Gar.

As human beings, we inherently enjoy contributing to others when we have connected with our own and others' needs and can experience our giving as coming from choice.

In order to live in a flow of authentic self-connection, and deep connection with others, self-responsibility is the key. I am re-

place. On the lower part stands a cute little farm in need of restoration that's been successfully run in the past. That means there is enough space for practicing, hosting our own food and making specialty products, while experiencing the connection with the Land of the Dakinis.

JZ: Since then Lower Khandroling has been referred to as the farm or the coop. Why did you choose the organizational structure of a workers cooperative to run the farm?

YN: When you think about it, the very idea of community comes into being because people like to cooperate with each other. The sense of cooperation begins at home and it leads to a strong feeling of international brotherhood. Knowing that, what I tried to do was simply to turn it into a strategy.

Let me share personal considerations about this cooperative project.

I think we need the simplest and more efficient form of organization to run the farm. Workers cooperatives have been around for decades and proved to be efficient organizational structures.

We need to work with what we have now, not in twenty years, and with the first generation of Rinpoche's students so that we'll build a bridge for future genera-



Yuchen and Joe prepare for the blueberry bush planting.

nected thousands of practitioners at different levels. Over the years Merigar West has hosted hundreds of practice retreats and initiations, many guests and many events. We can easily say that the place has been empowered for over thirty years!

Tsegyalgar East resembles Merigar West at the beginning in some ways, but the culture here is different and so are the people. Like Merigar West there are sacred locations and retreat cabins for personal retreats, but there are less people and we lack Rinpoche's presence. Tsegyalgar East is still defining itself as a Gar and Community, I think. I find this aspect very inspiring and enjoyable as people can contribute in many different ways. When you see few people and lots of development to do, it can be discourag-

sponsible for my intentions, my actions, my ability to stay connected to others and myself, and for the choices I make. When we're not 'aligned' internally so, we feel depressed, angry and unsatisfied.

We all have the same needs; although the strategies we use to meet these needs may differ. Conflict occurs at the level of strategies, not at the level of needs.

We all have an innate capacity for compassion, though not always the knowledge of how to access it. Growing compassion contributes directly to our capacity to meet needs peacefully.

I consider myself very lucky to live close to Khandroling, a very special place for many reasons; not only we have upper Khandroling with its sacred sites and cabins, which is already in itself a very empowered and *terma*

tions and a true legacy.

We need to support a culture of commitment and service.

I truly believe the most unexpected joys come in serving others and the greater good.

A worker cooperative simply gives access to those people willing to commit to some projects aimed to sustain the Gar in the long term. It is a way to organize ourselves as an independent team from the DCA in our own decisions and responsibilities, yet still being part of the same Mandala. To the public it is a practical organizational structure that dignifies human work, allows self-management and promotes community and local development. I believe that would be a great presentation and integration for our Community!

» continued on the following page

YN: I have no particular attachment to the coop structure in itself, but I do care about the team members and what we are accomplishing. That is because I see commitment and teamwork heading in the right direction. Even if we change the term and the activities, I believe the substance would remain the same. Agricultural activities are at the core of the cooperative because we need to preserve our natural resources if we want to be sustainable in the long term.

Activities I planned to incorporate in the future, if possible, are to include informal education and workshops. It is important to offer education and hands on workshops to interested people and local people before we lose our existing knowledge and life skills. We need mentors for the young ones, we need to be the living examples of what we learned and walk the walk together. A community is not a solitary path.

I think soon enough all Gars will need to become more self-sustainable by promoting small working groups and activities that bring benefit and profits to the Gars and local people. I don't see big numbers in the future, but rather small local resilient communities.

I believe the future is in pushing small communities to become units of production (raising/growing/making their own food, sewing their own clothes, trading skills and homemade goods with other people, etc.) instead of units of consumption.

YN: Generally speaking, we humans couldn't evolve that far simply on a solitary path. A solitary path has a short lifespan by definition. We live in a very limited condition. Not only our time is limited, also our capacities and resources are, too.

A community is the combination of 'common' and 'unity', and it represents a social unit that shares common values.

We know that we consider ourselves not an ordinary community nor a traditional Dharma sangha (monastic community of Buddhist monks or nuns). We claim we don't need 'formal' definition since we consider ourselves connected

It means we are in a relationship. And, as in all relationships, it requires from our part to work on different levels at the same time (we may be spouses, fathers, brothers, teachers, friends, and neighbors).

As individuals we're in a life-long journey to discover ourselves, our limits, our potentialities, to develop clarity and cultivate compassion. As human beings we try to meet our basic needs: a sense of security, a sense of connection, and a sense of meaning. Sometimes we like to skip the basic and wish to jump directly to transcendence. But then our actions reflect this solitary path pattern.

No chance we can meet these needs on a solitary path.

As Community members we stand to serve our Vajra brothers and sisters and the Community needs, since that is foundation for the continuation of the Transmission. There is no continuation of the Transmission without a Sangha.

Today, as a Community, we face some challenges since intent, belief, resources, preferences, needs, risks, and other important aspects are not clear enough to people. Unfortunately these aspects not only affect the identity of ANY community members but above all their degree of belonging and cohesiveness. If sometimes it seems that we behave as if community means solitary path, I think that is because we need to better clarify our culture of values and have it become alive and shared.

A sense of community is not defined by membership (sense of loyalty), influence (a reactive performance), or fulfillment of individuals' goals, but by sharing quality time (stories of events) with emotional connections. In other words, it is not like being part of a club, rather being part of a family, a Vajra family. For years we heard the terms Vajra brothers and sisters not accidentally. For years we've been practicing good intention for others; let's not forget an intention is an action statement, not a ritual. An organization doesn't replace a community; all it does is setting a system of accountability in place in a leaderless group. The more we learn, accept and share the same culture of values, the higher our sense of belonging will be.

We've been requested many times to collaborate between each other...and amazingly enough one of the most basic values of ANY community is cooperation! And one of the very first forms of community we experience is family; so it should be easy enough for us to get the picture... all we need is to care enough. If we wish to continue collectively as a community, we need to accept and serve as a community. Not only it will bring benefits for us as individuals, but also it will put a seed for next generations.

JZ: What is your motivation for starting this enterprise?

YN: The motivation is to help people realize their potential. As soon as we realize our potential, we feel empowered and willing to participate and contribute. Hopefully and eventually, a culture of self-less

service might emerge and spread worldwide. To get there I think someone needs to set up an example; a simple organization that can be replicated in any Gar to help sustain the local Community. I think it's important to give a concrete example on what can be accomplished, at a material level. It is my little contribution to the DCA. I saw a potential and I decided to commit.

JZ: To become a member of the coop requires that one puts in 12 hours of work a month. Why did you set it up that way?

YN: I believe if you start a cooperative and set it well, the rest will follow naturally. Knowing our core beliefs (responsibility for self-management) and values, (common purpose, integrity, respect and self-responsibility), our actions will follow naturally.

Perceiving the 12 hours like a duty or a fixed rule, it means we still didn't get the right spirit of the cooperative. It's not a matter of the amount of hours, but rather to show real commitment through actions, not just in words. We look for team players. Teams can accomplish tasks that individuals alone cannot, which is why teamwork is so valued in many communities.

Teamwork requires actual work, shared experience and personal commitment. The reward that will naturally flourish is patience, compassion and understanding.

If we wish to bring actual benefit to our Community we need, as The King (Elvis Presley) sang: “a little less conversation, a little more action” (1968, by Mac Davis and Billy Strange – A Little Less Conversation). ©

» continued from page 1

Spain, Tenerife
April 4-10
Longsal Thodgal teaching
retreat
(For this retreat, those who
really believe they have the
base of the Tregchod should
make a request to attend to the
Dzamling Gar Gakyil who will
coordinate the retreat.)

Italy
Merigar West
April 24-30
Merigar West Retreat

May 7-13
Guru Amitayus teaching and
Chudlen practices

Romania
May 23-31
Merigar East retreat

Ukraine, Crimea
June 6-14
Kunsangar South retreat

Russia
June 20-28
Kunsangar North retreat

USA
July 4-6
New York retreat

Tsegialgar East
July 11-13
Mandala Hall Inauguration

July 16–20
Tsegyalgar East retreat

Italy
Merigar West
July 31–August 2
Changchog retreat

India
August 27-31
Retreat at Doboorn
Rinpoche's centre

Bhutan
September 2-11

Singapore
September 17-21
Singapore retreat

PRC
Samtenling
October 1-7
Main Ati Yoga retreat

Shanghai **changed**
October 12
Public Talk on Dzogchen
and Daily Life

Australia
October 20–26
Namgyalgar North retreat

Argentina
November 21-27
Tashigar Sur retreat

Brazil
December 5–9
Sao Paulo retreat

Peru
Lima
December 17-21
Peruvian retreat

Venezuela
Dec. 26–Jan. 1, 2015
Tashigar Norte retreat

For the year 2014 there is not yet information about the Teachings. For that reason, we do not yet know about the nature of the webcasts.

b o d h i

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Bhutan as an Example to the World: Happiness and Education for Sustainable Development

Paivi Ahonen

I went to Bhutan first time about five years ago from Nepal, while working in Kathmandu. I have been working for development of education systems in many countries for over fifteen years and was invited to Bhutan to explore the cooperation opportunities between the National Board of Education of Finland and the Royal Education Council of Bhutan. The plan was to develop together the national basic education curriculum with the support of Finland's development cooperation resources. However, the plan did not come true, because it turned out, that Bhutan was moving forward in developing their country with their own resources much better, than some of the real poor countries, in Asia or Africa.

I continued to work in Kathmandu and had been lucky to find accommodation in Boudhanath in the apartment building, inside the garden of the Shechen monastery. The monastery is established by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in 1980s, during those years, many Tibetan monasteries were built in Kathmandu. Due to this special connection, I was invited to Bhutan

education development in Asia. Originally I aimed at finding the reasons for successes and challenges of development of basic education in Nepal, Bhutan and in one province in China. In 2011, I carried out the first interviews on this topic for one week in Paro, which was then the third visit to the country. However, when reporting the results to my new supervisor, she advised me to focus fully on education system development in Bhutan and have sustainable development as a theoretical background. I was very pleased on this proposal and immediately started to develop the new research plan for it. During the first half of 2012, I compiled the plan with the title "Strategies of Bhutan in Implementing the Gross National Happiness Policies – How is GNH Philosophy Applied in the Context of Education for Sustainable Development?"

After one months' full time period at the university in June 2012, I was ready to move forward to carry out interviews in Paro and Thimphu in July. The host of the interview period, as all the other work-related visits, was Royal Ed-



It was a great opportunity to meet scholars interested in the similar studies and also attend the week-end retreat of Steve Landsberg, in Tsegylgar East, in Conway, located close by Amherst. The visit to construction site of the Vajra Hall, which will house and protect the Universal Mandala, was unforgettable.

What makes Bhutan interesting?

I am sometimes wondering, what makes Bhutan such an interesting place? Already in 2002, in Nepal, I started to hear stories from the people, who came to Kathmandu from Bhutan. It's so clean there, was the first reaction. People were amazed of the crystal clean rivers and also about the beautiful architecture respecting the traditional building styles. I remember having read the first story about Gross National Happiness, (GNH) development philosophy, in Katmandu weekly magazine Nepali Times. GNH aims at well-being of the nation instead of economic growth. The writer was praising the clean and well cared environment and the strict tourist policy. There is big difference on the number of tourists between these two neighbors. Nepal welcomes everyone and travelers are free to move by themselves and stay in modest guesthouses and lodges. Bhutan is organizing the travel, tourists need a guide and the travel becomes fairly costly.

When entering to the country, I could see all the beauty with my own eyes. It is quiet, peaceful and clean. There is no-plastic bags policy, even smoking is forbidden. There are hardly any litters at the streets. The official national policy is to save 60% of the country's forests as natural resources and mining industry is not allowed. Hunting is not allowed, fishing to some extent after permission has been required. The old fortresses and monasteries, called dzongs built between 12th and 17th century, dominate the view, along with the snow covered mountain tops. During the summer months, rice green plantations decorate the valleys and apple orchards grow well along the rapidly running rivers. You always get the feeling of being especially blessed, when staying in this beautiful country of thunder dragon.

How is education being developed in Bhutan?

How is the future generation educated, so that young people will value the Gross National Happi-

cal well-being, standard of living, good governance, health, education, community vitality, cultural diversity and resilience, time use, ecological diversity and resilience.

Conservation of the environment is connected pedagogically to the broader learning environment; teachers are encouraged to connect the teaching to the nature by adopting the nearby forests and rivers for the classes to protect. Pupils of the higher grades also clean the gardens of temples and public places if needed. The schools, if needed, help the municipality in waste management. Parents with the support of pupils bring the waste to schools and schools find the collectors. The collected money is used for pupils' in-country study tours. Holistic evaluation has changed, according to the teachers, the teaching-learning methods in the classrooms. The teachers are aiming at evaluating their teaching regularly, not only by given marks at the end of the year. While evaluating they have learned to teach by using more dialogue and less lecturing. The last area of the GNH



second time, in 2010 to attend the centenary celebrations of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche in a group of thousands of both Bhutanese and international guests. It was about ten day visit including three day's celebrations in Paro and five days travel to Bumthang, to Eastern Bhutan. On the way we stopped for a night in Punakha and visited a very special place, the Punakha Dzong. There are three great statues in the main Gonpa, which are very powerful. When entering to the Gonpa, we all went to sit quietly alone, to do practice of our own for long time.

Meanwhile in Finland, I continued my slowly developing academic career along with the work in the consultancy company specialized in development cooperation programs. Already in 2006 I got a status of doctoral student at the University of Oulu to work for doctoral theses connected to edu-

ucation Council. Questions on the research topic were answered by educational administrators (10), teaching staff (7) academics (6), NGOs and Buddhist organizations (6). During the period of one month all together twenty nine recorded interviews were carried out. The discussion with informants, took between 45 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes.

After the interview period, I finally got to the point to take leave from my work and focus full time on Bhutan research. Between August 2013 and March 2014, I have the status of doctoral student and I keep writing the articles to the international journals about the contents of the research, based on the background theory and the contents of the interviews. In September, I got a special chance to work on this research in Amherst Colleague in USA, with the scholarship of Mind and Life Institute.



training during the last five years. Knowledge and reasons of the vulnerability of environment are part of the contents of the training manual. There are six basic parts in the teacher training program: contextualizing education for GNH, meditation and mind training, infusing GNH into school curriculum, broader learning environment, holistic assessment and critical thinking and media literacy.

As a result of the national GNH policies, there are important changes in everyday classroom teaching and activities. In the beginning of every class, there is a short 3-4 minutes meditation session guided by the teacher. Purpose of the meditation is to increase the concentration skills and improve the pupils' focus on the topic of the lesson. Teachers aim at including the basic GNH development framework, four pillars and nine domains into the teaching of all the subjects. The pillars and domains create the conditions for human wellbeing and happiness. The pillars include sustainable and equitable socioeconomic development, conservation of the environment, preservation and promotion of culture, and good governance. The nine domains consist of psychologi-

teacher training manual gives advice to develop the media literacy and critical thinking of the students. The news are analyzed and discussed, the sources are verified and different opinions are raised during the discussions in the classrooms about the different topics.

In general educators and teachers are very pleased with the GNH education policy and see that the traditions and culture of Bhutan are supporting the GNH policy and sustainable development in general. As for the reasons for global unsustainable development teachers do mention greed, weak policies of economically prosperous countries, materialistic values, consumerism and life styles. Bhutanese educators are concerned about the global environmental problems and wish to have more cooperation with representatives of the different countries of the world to learn about their strengths and concerns. ©

Community Artist Gabriele Arnon

I am a Vajra sister of yours from New York City who met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Conway in the early eighties and who has been living in Paris for nearly twenty-five years. In the old days I was a music student and budding singer. I still am. Later I caught the songwriting bug and developed enough instrumental skills to accompany myself on the piano. I sang in some funky places in New York, “paying my dues”, as they say. One night I was singing in such a place after returning from my first retreat with Rinpoche, when in he walked, surrounded by a retinue of about ten students. Obviously I felt incredibly honored. And amazed, because the connection with Rinpoche and the transmission were very present in what I was doing even before the royal party walked in. That evening I experienced singing in a completely new way: being in the moment with each tone, every note was a pearl being strung onto a necklace of pearls with the needle of conscious intention. I met Rinpoche and the Dzogchen teaching just before music really became my profession, and the encounter has much to do with the way I experience making music today.

Rinpoche often invited to sing at retreats after he’d finished teaching for the day. Once after a “tour de chant” in the Gonpa at Merigar, Roberto Cacciapaglia, a gifted pianist and composer from Milan and Vajra brother, introduced himself to me and asked me to sing on an album he was to record for Polygram, Italy. Entitled “Angelus Rock”, it was to be homage to ten rock angels, including John Lennon, Janis Joplin, Bob Marley, Jimmy Hendrix, and Jim Morrison. Featuring ten songs by defunct rock luminaries, the music was arranged with classical orchestra, house rhythms, and baroque voices. How creative is the Italian mind of Samantabhadra! This, too, was a novel experience, and very challenging technically. Our voices needed to be free of vibrato, pure and reedy, requiring a lot of vocal “substance”. Mamma mia... un po difficile ma bello! Sometimes a lot of effort is required and it really makes you wonder what doing artwork has to do with your natural state! You spend a lot of time “honing your chops” in preparation for the day when the work does come out of you in a spontaneous way. And when it does, it is quite magical!

In his artist essay for the Mirror, James Walton Fox wrote “Part of my job as an artist is to bridge disparate cultures, to remove limitations to cultural integration. Dzogchen is a perfect guide.” I too aspire to this ideal when making music. My first singer-songwriter album, “The Listening Tree”, was created in partnership with a Swiss electro musician called



Christoph Mueller. Between his five spoken languages and my three, we called our band “Ten Mother Tongues”. We loved the name and the concept; the songs were laced with a multitude of sampled voices and sounds from all over the world and the message was one of “no frontiers”. The album was loved by people and had some critical acclaim in France, though not too much commercial success. Nonetheless it fulfilled a strong need we both felt to share the idea that human beings are all one, no matter what different countries or cultures they may come from.

Music offers a myriad of different and unique experiences of “unity”. Music expresses a vehicles oneness. You can be playing in a group when suddenly a crescendo rises out of nowhere like a wave and is felt and carried out by each player in exactly the same way at exactly the same moment. I’m not sure what other singers and musicians experience but there is clearly an element of absorption in making music or in doing any art form. At a certain point creative work plunges you into a space or state beyond thought. With your awareness you let the emptiness be there so creative intelligence can manifest in whichever way it will. And you try to stay conscious! In improvising vocal jazz for instance, you open your ears wide and silence your mind. You plunge into the space as if diving into a pond, absorbed in the experience of the flight, the sound, the space, the water, the light... You become a reflection of it all. You are present in the texture and transparent at the same time.

As a singer - songwriter I long to share a sense of unity through the vibrations of the music as well as the messages in my songs. “Pyramid Lake”, my third album, is just coming out in France. It resembles “The Listening Tree” in its “one world” ethic. Here, though, the sounds are made with a grand mélange of acoustic instruments from all different times and places: Pre-Columbian flutes, dulcimer, bouzouki, soprano sax, crickets, guitars, dobro, mandolin, banjo, lap steel, harmonica, double bass, piano, harp, voices, udu, pandeiro, shakers, cajon, bells...

After being in the Dzogchen Community for all these years, I finally became a member of the Gakyil in 2012. It was a deeply enriching experience in which my musical training really felt useful in putting the art of listening combined with Rinpoche’s essential notion of collaboration into practice. Being on the Gakyil is like being in a band: both require listen-

At one of our quarterly meetings, the French Gakyil came up with the idea of creating fundraising events under the name “Les fruits de nos talents” (“The Fruits of our Talents”). The Gakyil encouraged my idea of organizing a concert to support the activities of the French community. The ideal time for a concert seemed to be during the Santi



ing with an open heart and feeling what is called for in the moment, whether it is leaving space or coming in with an idea, expressing oneself in the most harmonious and constructive way possible! So there is a part of you analyzing what you’re hearing and another feeling what you need to say, with the positive intention of creating something beautiful and useful for all beings! A notion of service to each and to the greater good. An idea that hopefully brings tingles to all budding Bodhisattvas! Applying the right amount of sound, or energy, with the right intensity, in tune with the other members requires the suspension of judgment (listening), and teaches one to express oneself with “measure”. Committing oneself to a communal task, getting a piece played or a job done where all are focused on the same intention is a cleansing and empowering experience. Be it in the clear communication of a song, the organization of a retreat, or the spreading of lights from one’s ground of being...

Maha Sangha Base Level retreat Jim Valby would give in Paris in April of 2013. And Jim agreed to play the fiddle, much to the surprise and delight of the Gakyil and the French Community!

A poster for the event read: “Sailing between Africa, Europe, and North America, without losing true North, these talented musicians will transport you into a poetic universe bejeweled with rich vocal palettes, delicate harmonies, and exhilarating rhythms.” The concert featured eight musicians including three from the Community (Jim Valby, Renaud Schweitzer and myself), and five friends. Moudou Gaye, a hang player – singer from a Sufi village in Sénégal, opened the concert. We combined one of his instrumental works with excerpts from a poem in which Rumi exhorts us to “come back to the origin of your own origin” – back to the state, says the poet too! Threads of meaning weaving traditions together, the teaching is everywhere, and music is a continuation of it. Betty Rojas and Linda Mayer lent us their beautiful voices while Stéphane Missri played Jerry Garcia – like electric guitar; Marten Ingle played “Groove master” bass and sang. Renaud Shweitzer, (with

whom we’d created a soundtrack for Alex Siedlecki’s 2011 Bardo exhibit in Tenerife), added a cosmic dimension to the evening with electronic sounds. For the “pièce de résistance”, Marten and Stéphane accompanied Jim’s wonderful fiddle playing on a few high-energy bluegrass tunes. A moment of collective levitation was had by all. And by eleven p.m. everyone had gone home to rest up for the last day of the retreat!

It has been a privilege to collaborate on artistic projects within the Community. Singing in Harvey Kaiser’s Vajra Choir at the Trentennale of Merigar with my then – 12 year old daughter, we met wonderful old and new friends, including Jan Cornall, with whom we taught writing and singing workshop in Paris last June. What a blast it has been experiencing the gifts of the community of artists within the Community. What gifted painters, dancers, actors, writers, musicians and healers are with us, not to mention all the

rest! Sharing one’s art “within” or “outside of” the Community may be quite a different experience, but the motivation remains the same and so does the ideal.

Finally, it seems that dharma practice enriches the practice of an art, and vice-versa!

With my deepest love and gratitude to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to the Teaching, and to the Sangha.

Gabriela Arnon
Gent, Belgium, December 14th, 2013

Review of the CD “Queen of the May” by Gabriela Arnon

Paula Barry

It is always a special thrill when a Vajra brother or sister releases a new work, a new example, and a new exposition of their creative energy. It is like being let in on a secret, or being invited through a doorway to glimpse the wellspring of the passion of their inner life. This is especially true for Gabriela Arnon’s new CD of original songs aptly named *Pyramid Lake*. Titled after a mythic body of water that mystically unites the four elements of ancient earth, its desert winds and its waters that reflect the fire of the sun, the lake like Arnon’s music is both divine and inspirational.

The savvy listener can easily discern the years of practice and devotion to the process of self-discovery and understand that this compilation of songs is the fruit of the coming together or stabilization of Arnon’s spiritual path.

In the first track entitled “No Mail Today” Gabriela sings gently and lyrically about the solace of being alone at home in the womb-like quiet warmth of a grey day. There is an overriding sense of the feelings of aloneness without loneliness that in fact is expressed through her voice as a kind of quiet ecstasy of presence.

The joyful track “Queen of the May” showcases Gabriela’s soaring vocals in a song reminiscent of music from an earlier time. It is a happy, dancing, merry, affirming song perhaps evocative of Natalie Merchant or the early works of Van Morrison. Especially pleasing is the magical sound of the Pre-Columbian flute played by Luiz Marquez that weaves in and out throughout this and other songs. One cannot help but feel the joy of being “...the luckiest girl in the world.”

Throughout the album Gabriela continues to gently and light-heartedly bring the listener back to presence and the joy of being alive. She invites us to sing and dance in nature in order to rediscover the inner spirit that is innately a part of the greater universe, and to purify ourselves with the elements and become one with them. “Can you be what you truly are...give up the ego’s tug of war”, she implores, and again the minstrel, playful sound of flute dances us closer that oneness.

Gabriela introduces to impermanence in the song entitled “Dream”. It is another example of discovery and fruition. Having spent a great deal of life worrying about yesterday, today and tomorrow it is an ode to the falling away of worry and in its place discovering the simple joy of being free and in the moment.



Although the songs in “Pyramid Lake” often have a deep and spiritual significance they are never without a joyful and playful aspect. This is evidenced in the diverse vocal styles sometimes evocative of early music, at others of jazz, rock, folk and world music.

The gamut of the human condition is before us in a vocal canvas of tears, fears, struggle and doubt, but always with the affirmative, confident conclusion of someone who has ultimately attained the understanding that indeed...everything is fine, as evidenced in the lyrics: “I am sure that I can... learn how to fly.”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8rtq6yblRho>

With Gabriela Arnon (vocals, keyboards), Niels Delvaux (percussion), Gijs Hollebosch (guitars, dobro, mandolin, lapsteel), Luiz Marquez (soprano sax, Pre-Columbian flutes, harmonica, crickets), HT Roberts (mandolin, dulcimer, bouzouki, banjo, guitar), and Arne Van Dongen (double bass).

Bio

Gabriela Arnon (singer-songwriter, pianist) studied classical music and jazz before touring Latin America as a support vocalist with Willie Colon. She began a solo career in France at the Festivals of Jazz in Juan-les-Pins and Mulhouse, and has performed at Rochefort-en-Accords. She has sung at such Parisian venues as Le Petit Journal, Le Triton, Hôtel du Nord, La Java, etc. In the City of Lights she founded “Ten Mother Tongues” with Christoph H. Mueller (Gotan Project). Together they created her first album, *The Listening Tree*. She has recorded two albums with her new band: *Trouble With Park Avenue*, and most recently, *Pyramid Lake*, which has just been released in France in December 2013.

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Hidden Dimensions

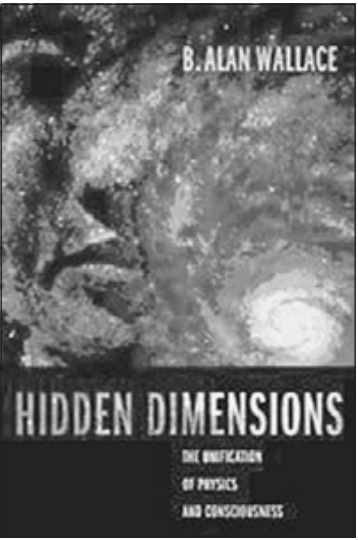
The Unification of Physics and Consciousness

by B. Alan Wallace,
Columbia U. Press, 2007

Andy Lukianowicz

This is a marvellous book on the interface, or more properly the seamless unity, of consciousness studies and scientific disciplines such as psychology, cognitive neuroscience and physics. And Wallace is well qualified to draw together such seemingly disparate disciplines, holding a Ph.D. in religious studies from Stanford University and a B.A. in physics and philosophy of science from Amherst College. Also, since 1976, Wallace has taught Buddhism, philosophy and meditation in Asia, Europe, North and South America and Australia. Apart from doing valuable translations of works by Dudjom Lingpa and studies on *shamatha* practice and the “attention revolution” he has also published numerous works in his endeavour to chart the relationships and commonalities between Eastern and Western scientific, philosophical, and contemplative modes of inquiry, many published by Columbia U. Press.

This book, in some ways a reprise and further development of his “Choosing Reality” (1989), is in many ways challenging and controversial, arguing as it does for the deep relationship among quantum mechanics, quantum cosmology and brain science, where the solution to the measurement problem of the first, the time problem of the second and the hard problem of the third will only find a mutual solution. And that can only be sought by scientists once the mistrust of the role of subjective consciousness (and



by implication personal meditation experience and insight) has been overcome and use made of such a valuable tool.

Of special interest are the hidden dimensions of the title: a deep dimension of reality that subtends the mental and the material. How apposite has been the choice of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to refer to the “primordial” state! Wallace being the translator of Dudjom Lingpa’s *Vajra Essence*, that deals in detail with Dzogchen *thogal* practice, might one discern in this hidden dimension underpinning reality, a resonance with the *thogal* dimension of Buddhists and Bonpos – and the Hurqualya realm of the Sufis Sohravardi and Najmuddin Cobra, the former recognising that the “I” of self-awareness (*rang-rig*) is pure immaterial light (and being martyred for his pains). It is precisely Wallace’s rejection of the materialist reduction of consciousness to the physical, a view rooted in a naturalistic metaphysical framework (science, too, like religion, is burdened with “idols”, prejudices and presuppositions) that leads him to explore, theorise, and eventually conjecture workable and repeatable experiments – a *sine qua non* of scientific investigation – in consciousness studies. And building on the work of his mentor, the

Russian scientist Michael Mensky of Moscow, on the relation between mind and matter at the quantum level (microcosmic and macroscopic, the novelty of Mensky’s contribution to the exciting world of consciousness, quantum and relativity studies), he expands on Mensky’s idea of the participatory universe as a self-excited circuit. This is an expansion on the theories of Bohm and Paul Davies, two scientists much admired and quoted in the works on Dzogchen and Longchenpa by Herbert Guenther, perhaps the first Tibetologist to shed “scientific light” on the cosmology of Dzogchen.

Constantly drawing on Buddhist notions, practices and values, emphasising the crucial importance of meditation not only to live a healthier, more balanced life but also, from a scientist’s point of view, to develop the calm abiding to enable gaining access and insight into the deep structure and working of the mind, Wallace also lends impassioned support for a culture of ethics in science, the loving-kindness or *karuna* of the four immeasurables basic to Buddhist practice. Then maybe science would serve people and our planet and not only those whose single quest is profit.

A last note. As a (probably paranoid?) sociologist, I would be interested in Wallace’s thoughts on the way the socio-economic-political authorities – big business and government, and their executive arm, the religions, military and the police – will act to control and manipulate the powerful tool of mental power advocated by Wallace and those meditators and scientists proficient in its use and able to teach it to others.

A must-read for those interested in the issues raised, and especially those interested in exploring a side of Dzogchen – the relation between *arupa* and *rupa* – not so much explored in general. ©



Cartoon by Tenzin Gendun.

A Glimpse into the Future

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s message at the opening of the Global Gar

Good day for everybody and everywhere. Yesterday we opened Dzamling Gar here in Tenerife and today we are continuing.

We want to make people understand what Dzamling Gar means. We should remember the whole Dzogchen Community is following a very precious teaching called Dzogchen, one of the most ancient teachings existing on this globe. We can learn that in the Dzogchen tantra, *Dra thalgyur*, which is the most ancient teaching tantra in existence.

I don’t particularly want to explain about that, however we know the understanding that is transmitted in this teaching is not only for maintaining a kind of tradition or path, but it makes us understand that we are human beings. Human beings are better, cleverer than animals and in this case we learn and understand how our condition is, how we should live, how we can study, learn, everything, according to circumstances. This is the main point of the Dzogchen teachings.

When I started to teach Dzogchen teachings that is what I transmitted. Of course relative to that sometimes we integrate other things such as some kinds of practice, puja, etc. But I always explain that these are not the main point in the Dzogchen teaching.

In the Dzogchen teaching we try to understand that Dzogchen is the condition of the individual so we must understand how that condition is and try to be in that state. When we are in that state and we train and apply everything in our life, this is called evolution. It really corresponds to how the situation in our dimension is. So this is the principle of the Dzogchen Community.

There are many continents on this globe and on each continent there are many nations and limited places - today, if we have no passport we cannot travel - we have these kinds of limitations. But the real nature of all human beings is beyond those limitations. Why do we have them - because we are not in our real nature. We live in a limited society and in our condition it is indispensable that we pay respect to that and also apply it as long as we are in the human condition. But we must understand how our real



nature is and when we have that knowledge of our real nature and pay respect to the relative condition, we do not feel that life is so heavy. When we are ignorant of our real nature, then when there are limitations and problems, we take them seriously. Even if there are very small problems, they become very heavy for us.

For that reason, it is very important that people who have knowledge of evolution bring it to the future. We must also contribute that knowledge for all human beings. This is the root of peace in the world. Many people say that we need peace in the world and they have a big meeting in which everybody talks about peace. It is very nice but when the conference finishes, there is nothing. This is not the way to make peace. The way to make peace is developing evolution one by one.

We must distinguish between the meaning of evolution and revolution. Revolution means we believe something outside, ignoring our real nature, changing, modifying and forcing things. Evolution means we enter into knowledge of our real nature. In the teaching of the Buddha, in sutra, not particularly in the Dzogchen teaching, there are very important words of the Buddha which really correspond to the real sense of evolution: do not hurt others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful. That way you don’t create problems for others, and pay respect to them. For example, if someone insults you, you don’t like it. So when you have learned that, you don’t insult others because they don’t like it.

Evolution must start from number one and number one is each individual. It doesn’t mean that I, number one, am a more important person. This is not evolution but egoism. Evolution means that if there is no number one, number two, number three, a hundred etc. don’t exist. For me, I am

number one. For him, he is number one. Everybody knows that they are number one, and so we modify, we change in our own condition first of all.

When we have a problem with someone, then with our ego we always think that we are innocent, and that he or she is the guilty one, explaining and trying to convince ourselves about that. This is the way of revolution. You should observe. Buddha said that everything is interdependent, so if I have a problem with someone, of course I am related to that problem. It is interdependent. If I am really innocent, why do I have a problem with that person? In this case we need evolution. We observe ourselves, what the problem is, and we free ourselves. We cannot convert other people easily because everybody has a strong ego, so when we have done our evolution, showing that, then other people slowly learn that and free themselves. If we try to force someone to change, this is called revolution.

In the Dzogchen Community all practitioners have this kind of responsibility for all human beings. That is our knowledge and our understanding. We keep that and go ahead. For that reason, all Dzogchen practitioners need to collaborate and pay respect so that we become like a seed of this kind of knowledge on this globe. This is why it is very important that we have a place and a starting point for applying this knowledge which is called Dzamling Gar.

I told you already that I am interested in this place because circumstances are very positive. We don’t know how long each person will live. We have very short lives. But even though we have very short lives, we do our best. I am also dedicating myself in that way. Everyone can dedicate themselves in that way.

Transcribed and edited by Liz Granger Photo: P. Fassoli

The Opening of Dzamling Gar

With great joy, Dzamling Gar, the Global Gar in Tenerife, Spain, opened its doors to the world for its official Inauguration from November 15–18, 2013. As a place for all worldwide Gars and Lings of the International Dzogchen Community, it is the fruition of Rinpoche’s vision for “everybody and everywhere” to collaborate and enjoy. While this large scale project is still a work in progress, it has rapidly become the heart of the international mandala.

The Inauguration opened with an inspiring welcome from Rinpoche and a performance of Tibetan Dances by a group of expert dancers from the Community who had been training together for weeks. Many people from the surrounding area of Adeje were in attendance, and the Dances were a cultural showcase that was a strong attraction and entry point for locals curious about this vibrant new addition to their home. Unlike other Gars which are often located in secluded rural locations, Dzamling Gar is a very public and open environment for the Community to engage with the world.



Rinpoche with the Mayor of Adeje and Prof. Diez de Velasco.

There was a panel discussion with Rinpoche, the Mayor of Adeje, José Miguel Rodríguez Fraga, Francisco Diez de Velasco, professor at La Laguna University, Joelle Schneider, a representative of Karma Ling (France), as well as Dzamling Gar’s architect, Benedetta Tagliabue and engineer, Giovanni Boni. Rinpoche explained his attraction to Tenerife, with its ideal circumstances of a perfect climate and friendly, open people. The Mayor expressed strong enthusiasm in the Gar’s contribution to the cultural enrichment of the island and offered strong support for the further development of the project. Tenerife journalists covered the meeting with a sense of excitement about the development and the word “Dzogchen”



Photos: P. Fassoli



Articles on the inauguration were published in several Tenerife newspapers including the Tenerife News.

was introduced into the local media.

On the following day, Rinpoche opened the morning session by expressing his vision for Dzamling Gar as a seed for developing evolution in this world. After his talk everyone participated in a gathering for discussing the Dzamling Gar Development Project with focus groups for various subjects related to the future development of the Gar: Sustainability and Environment, Center of Tibetan Medicine and Culture, Gar and Ling Representation, Fundraising, and Development, Regulation and Communication. This was so inspiring because it was a large room full of Rinpoche’s students from all over the world collaborating to make

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Dzamling Gar



Participants in the group discussions on the Dzamling Gar Development Project.



Photos: P. Fassoli

Teaching about how Dzamling Gar presents the opportunity for all of his students to come together, go beyond their sense of limitations, and make this dream a reality now. Representatives from all Gars chose from scrolls Rinpoche prepared with numbers that would assign each region a house on the property. Each Gar has its own

unique set of circumstances, but all will share in rising to the occasion to develop these local headquarters for their activity. ©

» continued from previous page
their Rinpoche and The Community's dream into a fully awakened reality. In the end, everyone shared their groups' discussions with each other, and there was a feeling that Dzamling Gar is really happening, as Rinpoche writes in the Song of Dzamling Gar "quickly, in a relaxed way."

The following morning, everybody gathered for a boat ride on a large catamaran. Cruising on the ocean in front of the land where the Gar is located, the boat was occasionally met by dolphins and pilot whales on the surface of the waves. Rinpoche led everyone in an extremely unelaborate and essential ganapuja on the boat. Everyone sang Tibetan songs together and enjoyed "all being in the same boat".

On the final day of the opening, the different phases of the whole project for the Global Gar were presented in some detail by the project's engineer.

In the afternoon, Rinpoche gave an inspiring and powerful



Boat trip with Rinpoche.

Photo: P. Fassoli



Choosing the houses for each Gar.



Photos: P. Fassoli

The Dzamling Gar Project

An interview with Benedetta Tagliabue, the architect, and Giovanni Boni, the engineer

The Mirror: You recently gave a wonderful presentation of the Dzamling Gar Project during the inauguration of the Gar in Tenerife in mid-November. Could you share it with us for The Mirror.

Benedetta Tagliabue: It's something that everyone is curious about. The presentation that I gave was basically telling the story about how we arrived here because this story is part of the story of what it will be.

We spent a long time looking for this land. We were not sure about what we could find and where the best place was because there are so many different as-



Photo: P. Fassoli

pects to Tenerife. At the beginning we thought that perhaps the north part of the island would be

more 'natural' with its beautiful coast, beautiful nature. But we suddenly realized that the climate

in the south of the island was fantastic. However it is difficult to find land in the south so what we did

was look for much longer and it was not so easy.

Actually this piece of land that is now Dzamling Gar was one of the first that we found but we thought it would be impossible to buy because of budget, because of size, because of difficulties. But then little by little we understood that our Master had this piece of land in mind and, by chance, it was a moment when this land became available because of many factors such as the general crisis in Spain, the bank crisis etc. and it was possible to buy it. So from that moment on we realized that although the land is very difficult to build on, it is fantastically big and with incredible possibilities. So this was the beginning of the story.

The Mirror: Recently the International Gakyil spoke about some of

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Dzamling Gar

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the legal details of how the land was bought.

Benedetta: At the beginning we set up a company in order to buy some land in the north of Tenerife. We already had something that we thought would be perfect and people may remember that we had this webpage where we tried to involve people in buying this property. But at a certain moment, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said that he had had a dream about that and it wasn't the right place, so from one day to another we had to start searching again.

Several people were busy searching and we came many times to Tenerife and kept a file of the many possibilities. In the end when the opportunity arose to finally buy the land we had to do it very quickly. It was a strange situation because in order to have a good price we had to buy it before Christmas so we had to start very quickly and use the company, Meriling, that we had already set up because it was the only available one to buy so quickly.

So now we have this land of Dzamling Gar bought by a company called Meriling but which is gradually going to be transformed, and Meriling is, in its turn, owned by the International Dzogchen Community (IDC). Then soon, in some way, it will be given to Dzamling Gar which will become the owner. So this is the legal situation.

The Mirror: We are at the beginning of the Dzamling Gar Project so perhaps you could let people know about the situation in this moment and how you see the future.

Benedetta Tagliabue: I think that the program for this place is given in the Dzamling Gar Song written by our Master. We dance and sing Dzamling Gar and we have heard our Master explaining what it is in the words of the Song. I think it is a fantastic fulfillment of the path which we have already seen in many places in the world. But I imagine it to be the place where everything can happen. The perfect place.

It's also very rational because this place is so easy to reach from all over the world since it is a touristic place. And it's such a fantastic climate – it's nice and very comfortable throughout the year. So this is what we have in mind and the program that Giovanni and I are working on.

Giovanni Boni was entrusted by the Master to be the one to look after the construction of the place. I was entrusted by the Master to help him in making the project. I'm an architect but the way I work here is very different from the way I work on a normal project. I want to work in a different way because first of all I have an enormous respect for our Master and I think that he is the one who has to be able to give us the instructions. That means that we have to have a certain attitude in order to receive his instructions so we don't have to have definitive drawings that cannot be changed.



Then another reason is the program that is happening here, which is not defined yet. It's defined in a song as a desire, but it is not defined in the details such as who is occupying the different houses, in which way, what will take place at the big center and so on. We are imagining it little by little and providing a plan that is able to change enough so that whenever the ideas come, whenever the reality comes, whenever our Master gives us instructions, we can introduce them into the plan.

This is why this project is very different from the one of the many projects I have on the table in my office.

Giovanni Boni: This is the real difference between this project and normal ones because in this case we have a general idea about the project, but it has not been defined in all its aspects because those are yet to come. Up to the time of the inauguration of Dzamling Gar [November 15–18] we had no idea of what was to come.

After the inauguration we understood. The Master said to go ahead with assigning houses to the Gars, to give the responsibility to the Gars to work on the internal part of their houses while Dzamling Gar will be in charge of the external part. So although we've started to understand how to work in some parts of the Gar, we haven't defined all the aspects of the project yet. We haven't worked out how the center will be managed, who will manage it, what will take place there. We

know that there will be a center for medicine and culture but when you are working on a final design for a project, you need to know things such as if a room needs sockets for audio, etc. We have a general idea but not a precise one.

So when we find ourselves facing this problem together with the IDC and the people providing the capital for the project, and they ask us for a final project so that they have some idea, we have a little difficulty in telling them that it will be like this or that. We are going ahead slowly as the Master says so this will be a project that develops slowly with a general idea but which could change.

The Mirror: What is the immediate short-term plan for the Gar?

Benedetta: We have a kind of definition, one of which is the fact that we bought a property that was already half-built, so we have a situation that is already in place. And because we really think that we have to adapt to circumstances – and in reality it is actually very convenient because we have something which is really valuable, which is already here – we are kind of re-using what is already in place, trying to transform little by little a place that was not so fantastic – it was done for tourists, it was unfinished – into a fantastic place.

The place itself is already giving some direction. We have, for example, thirteen houses that are almost totally built, although they

are not in good condition because they were left abandoned in the year 2000.

Then we have this area in the south that was the very first place that we put into function and that we can partially use now. This place was an esplanade that could be transformed into a very big area with a tent that serves as a Gonpa for the present.

We also have this strange underground area in front of the tent that is very big and totally rough at the moment because it is how we found it. Above it there is a cafeteria with a provisional roof for now, but there will be a bigger roof over it. Underneath here there is also space to make a lot of rooms on different levels, and next to this area we have a swimming pool. So just this south part is very big and this is a first phase that we are thinking to put into place.

Then a little more to the north there are thirteen houses. The purpose of some of these houses was only determined less than one month ago during the inauguration of Dzamling Gar when our Master specified that some of them would be used and shared by the Gars of the same name [Merigar, Kunsangar, Tsegylgar, Tashigar and Namgyalgar], another house by Shang Shung Institute and so on.

Then in the very north of the property, in a place which is higher because it is on a bit of a slope and you can see the sea, we have an abandoned concrete structure

so big that this is the reason why the property was abandoned several years ago because it is really expensive to put it into place. But that structure will definitely be the center of Dzamling Gar. We imagine, and Giovanni has this very clear sub-division, that the Gonpa will be there, and, if we have a health center, it will be there. At the beginning, the original project was started by someone else to make a health center for tourists, so probably it might be nice to transform it once again into a health center but of a very different kind.

So this is how things will go ahead, from south to north. We may need, depending on the energy of people and on the amount of money coming in, from five to seven years to complete it. This is the idea.

I would like to say that the way of working here is in a more collaborative way. Usually the architect has an office, and the architect produces drawings etc. and that is it. But here it will be very beautiful to have this place as a sort of learning project so that people from the Community and maybe people from outside can have the possibility to help us with part of the construction and also the conception of the project by offering different workshops or by teaching about how to make a place sustainable. At the moment we have Saviana Parodi, a permaculture expert, here at Dzamling Gar, and it would be nice to hear what she has to say. [ed. See the interview with Saviana on page 15] I would like to start a type of collaboration with her organizing different workshops about how to have sustainable way of doing the verandas on the houses, how to treat a house in a hot climate so that it is comfortable, how to take all the advantages of this place so that the construction can fit the place and can be sustainable.

Saviana is also very enthusiastic about this and the workshops should start very soon. We will be announcing them on Norbunet, in The Mirror and on the Dzamling Gar website. The workshops will explain the theory of permaculture in houses or gardens and then those participating will apply it, doing, for example, one room in one of the thirteen houses. So this could become an example that people can participate in.

Then perhaps we could do something similar with the swimming pool – calling someone who is an expert in this in making natural energy-saving ecological swimming pools, having theoretical seminars and then applying them.

Giovanni: Our immediate plans for the project include finishing the house for the Master as soon as possible. When we started the project we decided to keep one of the houses for Rinpoche until we are able to find him a suitable house outside the Gar because the idea is that he will not always live at the Gar. This is a temporary solution while we are waiting to find a permanent and bet-

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Interview with Saviana Parodi

Permaculture Designer and Teacher

The Mirror: I understand that you have been invited to introduce permaculture design into the Dzamling Gar project. Can you tell us what you will be doing during your stay at the Gar?

Saviana Parodi: I think I am here because of the last experience at Tashigar North in Margerita Island, Venezuela, where we started the first permaculture project six years ago. Later after a serious flood they suffered they called me back again and we did quite a big project because the water had gone into the Gonpa. And from that moment, because Rinpoche was not going there so often, they thought, especially Rolo, that Tashigar North might also become a permaculture center and start to work with local people, especially schools and universities. So I went back to organize a 72 hr course on design in Permaculture with some workshops that worked out quite well.

I think that here at Dzamling Gar, because we are at the beginning of the project, it is very important not to make big mistakes and to try to design the place without too much waste. By waste I mean waste of energy, our major waste, such as tensions, limitations and all this connected with relationships with ourselves and other people.



Benedetta, the architect of the project at the Gar, had this idea about organizing workshops. She has always wanted to work with other architects, other people, and because I'm a builder in natural buildings using local materials such as earth, lime, stone, straw, etc. she suggested the workshops.

Looking at the houses that are here at the Gar, they are actually very unhealthy houses. They are totally built of concrete, which is toxic, they cannot breathe, and they are not insulated from the weather so they can be a bit too cold (at least relatively) in winter and too hot in summer.

So I suggested that although we could not do a workshop on natural building because of the amount of cement, we could do a workshop to allow this area of concrete to be transformed into healthy houses with aeration, earth plastering to improve the houses acoustically and make them thermally insulated and other things. This is the idea.

We've just had the first workshop which was an introduction to permaculture, then in January there will be two workshops, one on building and the other on how to have an edible garden using a small amount of water.

The Mirror: Could you explain what exactly permaculture is.
Saviana: Permaculture is environmental design: the environment within us, so observing ourselves and trying to behave in a very respectful and aware way, and the environment outside. It is design related to where we live, how we live, how we relate to other people, our food, our building, our

children. It is actually dealing with all the science, knowledge, traditions and intuitions that human beings have developed since they have been on this planet, so dealing with connection between elements, from a energy point of view that also includes finances, economy, not just food production, building and education.

It is design so it means that first of all you observe without judgment. Then you think about what you would like to change within yourself, or outside, what is not flowing. And you try to change as life does, with the least amount of waste. You allow things to flow exactly like Rinpoche describes in the Dzamling Gar Song. When I read the Song I thought to myself, this is the perfect base to build our design project on. A design system could give a very good infrastructure for Dzogchen teaching, which is on a very high spiritual level, while permaculture deals with the material level. Basically you transform something such as a house, a farm, a school, a vegetable garden keeping maintenance as low as possible so you don't have to work so much and you have more time to enjoy. You try to avoid waste, basically knowing that anything, especially waste, is an energy to be used properly and transformed. This is permaculture: the problem is the solution.

The Mirror: Will you be staying and working at Dzamling Gar for long?
Saviana: I'll be here for three months. That is the deal. The first month has almost gone. For me it is to observe so I am actually not doing very much. I'm just doing

little things to understand people first of all, and I have interviewed Yuchen, Benedetta, Giovanni, and all the people with the main responsibility for this place and I have read the explanation of the Dzamling Gar Song. The Song by Rinpoche is actually the essence of what we are doing and it is perfect because we don't have to have an aim. Just doing this we are already happy and fine. Permaculture says the same – if there is no fun, the design is wrong. Following Rinpoche's suggestion and the essence of the song, I will try to design this place hopefully with the cooperation of Will. And then the people who are in charge will choose what they think is the best to be done.

The Mirror: At the moment you are working with small plants and busy transplanting them.
Saviana: I am working with Alix trying to implement what is native to southern Tenerife, which is



very dry. It has a dry sub-tropical climate so we are trying to use native plants that can grow without water, without human help. They include medicinal plants, herbs, etc., in order to give more bio-diversity within the Gar. It's going to be quite a long job but soon we hope to have the help of birds and animals. Birds bring a lot of seeds of native plants so as soon as we have a few trees we are going to have a lot of them. In particular we have this little garden that Will made and many birds come here in the morning.

As soon as we have some trees water will come predominantly through dew and air.
We have some plants from the nursery, some are ornamental, some are edible, some others are soil builders and dew catchers. We are trying to make beautiful harmonious gardens but that are more edible and low maintenance. Then we are seeding a lot of plants and planting cuttings, trying to do as much as possible with a tiny amount of money.

The Mirror: You said that you are also a builder. What do you think about this place which actually has a lot of cement buildings? Do you have any suggestions?
Saviana: Yes, there is a lot of cement here but it doesn't bother me too much. I think we should really integrate all these houses with beautiful edible gardens all around and a lot of plants on the walls because there are a lot of vertical surfaces that are not being used, create micro climates that will give us a lot of comfort. If you look at the other houses in this area you can see that normally are not connected with the space outside. So we could start to cover them with fruit plants such as passion fruit, kiwi, beans, beautiful bougainvillea, etc.

Then we can try to recover the 'grey waters', the water coming from the kitchens and showers so that we can re-use it. This is perfect for gardening. We can use this directly, so you can have a long shower and the water goes into your garden and accumulates in the fruit there and eventually comes back to you.

Permaculture connects the human elements such as the house, food, garden, children, teaching, swimming pool and so on as much as possible so that when any kind of energy, for example sun, water, ideas, love, comes inside the system it will stay and be used avoiding tension and therefore waste. There is no waste like, for example, the other day, when we wasted all the rainwater from the storm. Water should be accumulated in the plants and soil to create micro climates. Thank you!!! ©



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ter solution outside, with more privacy. Rinpoche calls it his 'storage closet' where he can keep his suitcase and he doesn't want anything more than that. So one of the houses will be for the Master for now but in the future it will have another use.

Our first objective was organizing a way so that we would be able to hold retreats on the land which was the most important objective that Rinpoche had asked for. Now that this has been accomplished our second objective is to give a finished house to the Master, to finish one of the communal house,

house number four which is next to the tent, so that Dzamling Gar and the International Gakyil can have their offices there, and finish the cafeteria and the underground area. This is part of the project called phase 1.
Phase 2 includes all the houses above and is sub-divided into two phases. There are the six houses that have been assigned to the Gars. Originally there were five that were selected during the inauguration [house 5 Tashigar, house 10 Merigar, house 11 Tsegvalgar, house 12 Kunsangar, house 13 Namgyalgar] but now Samtenling in China has also been assigned a house for Asia, number 6. This is the first part of phase 2. The second part will involve the other houses that are situated higher up. The final phase will involve the center.



So these are the plans for the immediate future – making the swimming pool useable, finishing the Master's house as soon as possible and then gradually going ahead working our way up the property.

I think that once a month we could organize and give out some kind of information to The Mirror with an update on how the work of the project is progressing, with photos and details. This could be very useful for everyone. ©



The Opening of Dzamling Gar

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s talk on the opening day, November 15, 2013

Good day to everybody and everywhere. We are here in Tenerife. You already know that we have a program for opening and preparing Dzamling Gar and that is happening on this island. Two years ago was my first time on this island and when I arrived I discovered this place and that there are nice people here. I also discovered that the authorities and everybody are very open. I am working that way everywhere. Where people are more open and less limited, there is a possibility to do something. So we are starting here and today is the opening of Dzamling Gar. I say thank you very much to the local people who came here and particularly the local authorities of this country. They are present here and I am very happy.

You should know a little what Dzamling Gar means. In general the Dzogchen Community is not only a kind of organization. The Community people are learning what I am teaching. I am not teaching religion or philosophy; I am teaching what I have learned and that is that it is necessary that there is evolution of the individual. This is what develops nations and also peace in the world. Evolution starts with the individual and it means that we are not only making revolution. This is what I learned from my teaching and I am also teaching that everywhere.

In all continents, everywhere, there are so many of my students. They are learning and applying that. I hope very



much this is becoming a kind of contribution for future generations. I do not care for my position or if we have a big group of followers, this is relative. But we must think very much of our future generations. We are living for only a few years and then we disappear from this globe. But our generations continue. So we must think and be responsible for that.

For that reason there are many groups in our Community called Gars in different places. Gar does not mean only a small group of people. You see, for example, in the Dzogchen Community there is a small group of people who are collaborating and this is called a Gakyil; many Gakyils together are called a Ling, and for many Lings in a continent, there is

a Gar. For example we have two Gars in North America, one is Tsegyalgar East in Massachusetts and one is called Tsegyalgar West in Baja, Mexico. There are two Gars for Russian speaking people, one near Moscow and one in Ukraine. For Europe the main Gars are in Italy and Romania for the European people. And in Australia we have two Gars, one in the North and one in the South called Namgyalgar North and South. There are many other Lings; there is particularly a very big Ling in China called Samtenling, for example, and also in South Asia.

Dzamling Gar means all people are collaborating; here we are creating a base. That could be very important for us, but I believe it is also important in *this* place. For that reason I am very happy when there is real collaboration. We should all work together. We should integrate everywhere and not separate saying, “Only the Dzogchen Community”. When there is a tradition many people think, “This is some Buddhist group and they are converting these people.” We are not following that principle. We try to become a little aware of our life, knowing how we are passing time, and how our situation is in general. This is something very important.

Later when you want to know a little more about the new Gar, our engineer and a very famous architect can explain because they are working and they know not only about this place, but the condition of the entire Dzogchen Community.

We do our best. That is what I want to say and thank you to all our guests for coming.

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz

Rinpoche’s Closing Remarks on November 18, 2013

Good day to everybody and everywhere. Today is the last day of the inauguration of Dzamling Gar. I want to give you a little information on how we are finishing the inauguration. Here there are the representatives of the different Gars and Dzogchen Community people and in these days they have been observing and looking at how we should go ahead with the Dzamling Gar program. Also for the concluding talks this morning, maybe you had a connection with the Webcast. I also received information and they informed me because I was not present. I am satisfied and I am thinking I did a very good job; everything is in front of us, what we should do, apply and how we should go ahead.

We know that this is very important and that all the people of the Dzogchen Community who are interested can collaborate and move this program ahead. I am presenting more or less as a teacher of the Dzogchen Community. I am taking care in that way always, day and night, and every day. Because the Dzogchen Community is not only a kind of organization, the Dzogchen Community means people who apply and follow the Dzogchen teachings. We know the Dzogchen teachings; we know that the characteristic of the Dzogchen teachings is something very useful and important for all sentient beings, particularly for human beings.

Human beings, of all sentient beings, have the characteristic of the human being. For example, even if we have a very clever dog or cat, they can be intelligent but can never have the capacity like a human being. We know very well human beings can have different levels. Even a human being who is a little stupid still has the characteristic of being human. When we study Buddhist philosophy we ask what are the characteristics of human beings and we say human beings are *ma chig den po*, which means they can speak and judge.

So all sentient human beings have that capacity. Even if we have this kind of capacity, we are living in a very limited and egoistic condition. It is not sufficient that we can talk and understand and read and write to discover how our ego is. This is our problem, for everybody, even if someone is says, “Oh, that person is very studied”, but everybody has a very strong ego. For that reason we have so many limitations in our human dimension.

Dzogchen teaching is not just sitting and doing what you call meditation or chanting mantras or praying. The most important principle in the Dzogchen teachings and is that we are discovering our ego. Firstly we are discovering it and secondly we are freeing it. So we are following

this kind of teaching; firstly we ourselves are discovering our limitations, and we are freeing them. Secondly we are maintaining that precious teaching in this human dimension. Even if we have this kind of knowledge, our lives are still very limited.

In one hundred years not one of us will be alive on this earth. We know that and it is something concrete, so it is a pity if this precious knowledge dies when we die. When we have this kind of very deep knowledge of course we also have knowledge and understanding of how to continue [this knowledge] and keep it alive for the future generations.

When I do service for the Dzogchen Community and the people who are interested in the Dzogchen teachings, I am not doing service only for those people but for the entire human condition and particularly for all sentient beings. It is not sufficient to repeat some nice words. Sometimes when we do a practice like the cultivation of *bodhicitta*, we say we do benefit for all sentient beings...but there is not much benefit only with words. Application is what creates benefit. So through application we know and we are in that concrete knowledge. We all have this kind of responsibility particularly as Dzogchen practitioners.

Everybody needs to understand that and be present in that and for that reason we need to collaborate. The Dzogchen Community exists in different places and there are places like Lings and main places like different kinds of Gars. Their responsibility and purpose is something important related to the teaching of Dzogchen. We know that and we collaborate. We started Dzamling Gar with the principle being that the way of collaborating is alive.

For that reason I also prepared the Song of Dzamling Gar and we sing and dance the Dzamling Gar song and dance. You try and study well what this song says. If you are learning and observing the song well, then you will definitely understand the purpose of Dzamling Gar. So this is very important, not that you think, “Oh there is a kind of Gar they are creating called Dzamling Gar.” Everyone who understands the principle of the Dzogchen teachings should know how it should work, also how collaboration works. When I am asking people to do some kind of project, some people think I am asking for money. I am not asking you to bring money to Gars, Gakyils and Lings. I am asking you to collaborate and apply something concrete. Money is relative.

If there is a program, there is a possibility to make money somehow. I already said at the meeting of the inauguration of the Dzogchen Community (Dzamling Gar) that not everyone in our Dzogchen Community is poor; there are also rich people. They don’t know how to spend their money and they are spending a lot of money on useless things. If they know how important the Dzogchen Community is, the teachings, the transmission and the future and its continuation, they can also collaborate and contribute.

One day when we are dying, we cannot bring what we had when we were living into the *bardo*. So we know that

and we use our money in a useful way. It is very important, also in a teaching of the Buddha, to know that if you want to become wealthy you must be generous. This is very true. If you are more generous then you become wealthy and manifest prosperity.

For example, there are many people who really have a good heart and they want to do something, but they cannot even participate for a small retreat. If there is a possibility to help these kinds of people this is fantastic, and very, very important. Collaboration does not mean I am only asking for money for the Gakyil or the Dzogchen Community. There are many ways to collaborate. People who have no money have a tent and physical force and can also contribute something. There are different ways we participate, help and collaborate.

When you become older like me, I cannot move like before, and when we started the Dzogchen Community in Merigar, Italy, I worked together with normal people who worked. Even today I have this wish, but I cannot do it physically. Even when we are dancing, I am dancing inwardly. I cannot dance with everyone, but I am participating. That is an example of how we should participate in the Dzogchen Community to go ahead for the future. So I hope very much everyone does their best and I can say we do our best.

In Dzamling Gar today, you see there is only a big tent. After a few years Dzamling Gar will manifest how it must be. For that reason I am asking please, everybody, you try and collaborate in different ways. If you have some skill, some work, also you can contribute. But communication is very important for working and for everything. In general we human beings have a very strong ego, with our ego we want to communicate but many times we do not. When we do not communicate problems arise because others do not know what is going on and they are living in their own dimension. For that reason, communication is important and everybody should try and do their best.

You remember the principle of the Dzogchen Community is teachings, spiritual path, knowledge, not rules or only organization. Organization is indispensable because we live in a limited society. If we are not organizing or accepting how it is in the relative condition, with limitations, then we cannot do anything. For that reason we should apply [our understanding], but practitioners’ way of applying dualistic and relative limitation is different from ordinary people. Practitioners know very well that everything is the relative condition.

You remember, Buddha said everything is unreal. Unreal means empty – this is if we see our real nature as *dharmakaya*, and *dharmakaya* is emptiness, not an object. But we live in dualistic vision, and that is the production of ignoring our real nature. If we are really in our real nature then we are not falling into dualistic vision – I am here and there is something there. When we follow the Dzogchen

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Changes to the Statute

On 9 December 2013 the Merigar West sangha met in Rome in the presence of a notary and approved changes to the statute which the Merigar West Gakyil had worked on for several months in close collaboration with the International Gakyil by means of a public document. These changes are very important mainly because they are the ones that align Merigar West to the International Dzogchen Community so that members of Merigar West will be automatically be members of the International Dzogchen Community.

All Gars and Lings and will soon be doing the same procedure and this will mean that the International Dzogchen Community will no longer be just a symbol, but a real world organization. All of us will be members of a single large organization.

The new statute was greatly inspired by what Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote about the Dzogchen Community. For this reason we are very pleased to announce this step that we have made as Merigar West.

It is, especially for Merigar, a big step. Up to now Merigar, as the first Gar that was established, has fulfilled many of the tasks that more aptly should belong to a body that coordinates all the Gars. For the future of the Community it is very important that all the Gars are actively involved in the issues that pertain to all members. This will be important collective growth.

Merigar West remains, of course, committed to continue to do its part .

Long life to our Master! ©



The walls of the cinerium in place.



Working on the dark retreat cabin.

Donating to the MW Projects

In the last weeks we have been working hard at Merigar West to carry out two major projects announced months ago:

- the construction of the cinerarium, the foundations of which were laid a few months ago. Now the walls are up and in the coming weeks the
- an important renovation of the retreat cabins, of which two are for

dark retreat. In the spring they will be useable and all members will be able to start using them once again.

the construction of the cinerarium, the foundations of which were laid a few months ago. Now the walls are up and in the coming weeks the

construction will be finished, then we must start the finishing touches.

These are two major projects funded by fundraising of various types.

For both we still need funds, so visit our website and, if you can, help in completing them.

www.dzogchen.it/donations/ ©

Communication and Contact

By Camilla Cappuccini

Last August Merigar started a new initiative for the local community, the practitioners resident in the area, and all those who work in various capacities or provide karma yoga in the offices at Merigar. The initiative was divided into a series of group meetings once a month and entitled “Communication and Contact”. The team of professionals who cur-

rently collaborate include Nick Simons, who has been conducting the meetings in recent months, Franca Fubini, Renata Chiesa, Sicilia D’Arista with Camilla Cappuccini coordinating the project.

In a nutshell it is a valuable opportunity to meet Vajra brothers and sisters in a situation without judgment and to take advantage of the expert and loving words of some students and practitioners of Dzogchen who are professionals in interpersonal commu-

nication. It is a valuable opportunity for us to listen to those we did not have the time (or the way) to listen to, and to say what we did not have the time (or the way) to say, to notice tensions that are implied and not expressed, to be able to express and relax them. It is not meant as “therapy” but simply an area of contact. It is, in few words, an opportunity for exchange that goes beyond the routine of daily life.

The title of the project “Communication and Contact” emphasizes the

decisive role that having a real sincere contact with oneself – essential in order to sustain a true and sincere contact with others – has on the success of interpersonal communication.

In the coming months there are other group meetings with Nick planned that will soon be linked with brief theoretical training sessions on effective communication.

Anyone interested to know more about it can contact the Merigar Gakyil.

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Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Lama Tsaltrim Allione sign the Dam Trog agreement November 13, 2013 in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain. Photo: P. Fassoli



Café Delek

Café Delek, a new Tibetan Tapas Restaurant and Bar has just opened across the road from Dzamling Gar in Playa Paraiso, Tenerife. Set up by Community people, one of them, Matt Schmookler, tells us how it came to be.

Last year many people were talking about opening a restaurant here to support people having a more stable life here near Dzamling Gar. Then my own experience is that we always like to get together, to enjoy together, as the Dzogchen Community, and we are always going to different people’s houses, different places, but it’s nice if we can have a place all together, where we can enjoy together. So that was my own inspira-

tion in general in wanting to have a place near the Gar. And also to have some employment opportunities for Community members who want to live nearby.

Then somehow very spontaneously this place just happened to be for rent right across from the Gar. We hadn’t made a business plan, we just saw that the location was there. As soon as we came to see the place we saw that many things were already set up and we had to put very little investment into making it possible so we used pretty much everything that was already here.

Then we started to talk to Rinpoche about it and he immediately gave us the name and the menu concept for the place. So the name Delek was given by Rinpoche and the idea to have different foods from around

the world because it is the same as Dzamling Gar, representing the whole world in food.

We have three people who are helping to run the place: myself, Katya Borisenko and Ricardo Kogel. We also thought it was auspicious because there were three of us and the number three is significant in the Community. We each have a different complimentary role: I’ve worked in restaurant management so I know about the operational side, Katya is in marketing, she’s a copywriter, and she is very good with presentation, Ricardo has a lot of administrative management experience so it works out well.

Then we have chefs Javier Fornas and David Carreras helping to cook and their food is phenomenal. They just spontaneously manifested; in fact we went from concept to actualization in less than two weeks, without even looking for employees. I was doing Yantra Yoga with David, told him about the café and he told me that he already had lots of experience. Javier has run the cafeteria at Tashigar Norte for more than a year.

Our idea is not really for ourselves. It’s more of an offering, just to do something here and to enjoy together. Restaurant work is very hard work, in general, long hours etc., but we said we’re doing this together, it’s not like we make lots of money, but at least we have a good time. And that’s more important here at Dzamling Gar – to enjoy and have a good time together. ©



An Introduction to Sustainable Design Systems – a Permaculture Project for Dzamling Gar with Saviana Parodi, December 16–17, 2013. Transforming the Gar, without effort, into a very pleasant and harmonious place with micro-climates, low maintenance edible gardens and healthy living houses, reducing waste!



MerigarEast

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Merigar East News

In November the construction of the basement of the multifunctional building was completed!

Now we have the foundations ready and in spring the works can continue. The first step in realizing the whole project has been made!

According to the permits we should complete it within two years with the possibility to prolong the works for another year. It is a huge development but also a huge challenge for the Gar. The multifunctional building will provide accommodation for local retreats during the year, an office, living space for the Geko (who is now living in a temporary home in the barn; living conditions there are making his merits for the Community even higher), a kitchen, canteen, bathrooms and so on.

You can imagine the difference it will make in the functioning of the Gar and the comfort of visiting practitioners. However to be able to complete such a huge project we need the support of the Community. Please remember ME in your practice so that we find financial solutions to make it work!

In addition to the works on the basement, our Geko Anatoli Karp took care of planting the next part of trees in the Gar – this time adding maple trees (already 3m high) between junipers around the Gonpa. During hot days they will give much needed shade. Maple trees become yellow and red in the autumn and they are really late to drop their leaves. They look beautiful.

Piotr Marcik represented the Merigar East Gakyil during the inauguration of Dzamling Gar. We are happy to learn that we share the house number 10 with Merigar West, which will give us more opportunities for collaboration while preparing



The completed foundation of the multifunctional building at Merigar East.

the building for use. Piotr will also be our ongoing contact person when it comes to cooperation between Merigar East and Dzamling Gar.

The Bucharest sangha is still small but starting to thrive, meeting regularly for Ganapujas and other practices, becoming active and taking initiative. The next step they want to undertake is translating Mirror articles of the online edition into Romanian. This way a group of Romanian practitioners who are not so fluent in English will be able to benefit from it as well.

Our invaluable translator Gabriella Schneider has prepared the translation of the Mandarava practice into Romanian and now we are working on details with the SSI to publish it as soon as possible. More translations will follow and we are very happy that there is a lot of joyful energy around the translating projects!

We have started to cooperate more closely with all the Merigar East Lings to exchange information about the local retreats and schedules of the local instructors. Our idea is to strengthen collaboration and make information about all events in the Merigar East area available in one easily accessible place online.

Since the end of the year is approaching fast, it is time we start the

preparations for the May retreat with Rinpoche. If anyone is interested in joining the karma yoga teams before and during the retreat please contact us at red@dzogchen.ro. See you all in May at Merigar East!

Letter from Dargaeling

On November 3, 2013 a new Ling in Bulgaria named Dargaeling (Increasing Virtue) by our precious Teacher Chögyal Namkai Norbu was born in our International Dzogchen Community. Some of us from the Bulgarian sangha were waiting to officially become a Ling. And now it has happened and we are so grateful to our Teacher! This fact also brought about a lot of different reactions and ideas between us, but we understood that receiving a name means evolving, growing, learning how to communicate and collaborate. And this is a process that is not so easy in some moments, but we realized that we should stay with it and continue trying to understand each other's point of view, showing respect to every individual and trying to do our best. Our Teacher's piece of advice sounds simple and clear but in our everyday life we need to call our attention to it regularly.

In the context of our joy and inspiration from having already a name we organized a Vajra Dance Course

with Zoltan Cser from Hungary. After 3-days intensively learning the dance and practicing Mandarava together through the Webcast with Rinpoche we felt really shaken internally and very much impressed by the Dance of the Six Spaces Practice. Thanks to the explanations of Zoltan our understanding about Vajra Dance deepened and at the end all of the participants learned the Dance. And while we are under the influence of this practice we decided to gather once a week for doing the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra.

Thank you to our Teacher Chögyal Namkai Norbu for the possibility to learn and practice!

Letter from the Stupas Building Team

It is big honor for us to construct the stupas and be part of this project.

The process of building such a sacred construction is not as easy as it appears. It is a kind of practice, in

giving us the stupas "for free", but our joy from every little completed part of the stupas was so much greater. The support of the sangha practicing to support the construction helped us a lot. We could not have managed without it and some days we couldn't even get out of bed for lack of strength. The guys from the team are not practitioners but during the construction they showed capacities which normally they would not have. Their enthusiasm was so admirable and I would like to thank them and express my huge respect!

We didn't only have bad times but we also felt a lot of joy and blessings from participating in the project which has great meaning for the future.

When I arrived home it made me very happy to know how many people have been participating in this project. It is marvelous and unbelievable that so many people are collaborating together.



The Dzogchen Sangha in Romania.

which we are encountering things from deep within us and from the outer world as well. There were times, when we thought that everything was going against us. Obstacles were so heavy that we had the impression that someone did not want us to build the stupas. The space was not

But up to now the construction is not finished and next year in the spring we are looking forward to continuing this building story.

With devotion to the Master, Teaching and Sangha
Josef Vintr, Jakub and Tomáš ©

Czech Republic

New Gakyil

We are happy to announce that we have a new gakyil for the year 2014 at Kunkyabling in the Czech Republic.

Blue: Lubomir Solek, Jirka Bim
Martin Malec
Red: Jirka Trnka (director),
Lenka Topinkova, Ales Slama
Yellow: Magda Ourecka (vice director),
Jirina Vlckova, Pavel Rusinko

www.dzogchen.cz

Slovakia >>Wangdenling

Stupa Construction and Consecration at Wangdenling

On the 23rd of October our vajra brother Migmar arrived at Wangdenling in order to oversee the completion of our stupa of Enlightenment. Migmar also brought some more relics for the stupa. On the 26th of October the actual construction of the stupa started. The atmosphere during the whole weekend of construction works was very joyous and also people from other sanghas participated and helped us build.

On Saturday 23rd November Samdong Rinpoche, a great scholar and a master of the Gelug lineage,



visited Wangdenling and consecrated the stupa. Rinpoche firstly made three circumambulations and then

began the prayers and invocations of *rabne* or the blessing-consecration ceremony, inviting wisdom beings to

enter and stay forever in the stupa – a representation of the Mind of the Enlightened Ones.

After the ceremony he gave a short talk about the meaning of the stupa and the history of stupas since the time of Buddha Shakyamuni, at the end expressing his wish that the Buddha dharma will quickly spread.

During the consecration ritual a great *thigle* of rainbow color could be seen around the sun rising from behind the gonpa. ©

THE MIRROR



Newspaper of the International
Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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KunsangarSouth

Kunsangar South
kunsangar.blue@gmail.com
<http://kunsangar.org>



Works on the foundations of Rinpoche's house started with Sang and Serkyem at Kunsangar South. As soon as the work had been completed, the rare Crimean snow started and the temperature dropped to -10C.



The Longsal Stupa has been assembled, and only the finishing and landscaping works around it need to be completed. Everything will be ready for the inauguration by Rinpoche in the summer of 2014.

China »Samtenling

Important Letter about the 2014 retreat

Dear practitioners,

I am glad that many Community people liked the video of Samtenling (see the link at melong.com News section). I'd like to take this opportunity to explain more about Samtenling and the retreat in 2014 of the Longsal Root Initiation, because many people are asking about the same things.

Right now we are building a 3 storey building in the Ling, to be able

to accommodate around 300 people. It is not just for the coming retreat in October 2014 (people need to stay at the Ling because too many entrances and exits will arouse unnecessary attention, which is not safe in a country like China), but also serves as a retreat center, hopefully for Dzogchen practitioners worldwide in the future, because not only the living expenses are low here, but also we have good facilities at the Ling as you can see from the video, and probably the best but cheapest massage and the best

selenium hot spring in the world (as both Prima and Elio have said).

For example, accommodation in the dorm here is about 5 euro per day (including quilt and sheets etc.), and 3 meals made by a good cook (again both Prima and Elio can confirm) for 5 euro. We will also offer good prices for private rooms as retreat rooms.

The hotels in the city are also cheap, from 15 euro to 25 euro on average. A taxi from the city to the Ling is only 10 minutes, for a cost of about 2.5 euro. There is also a bus that only

costs 0.12 euro, but you need to walk about 20 minutes to get to the Ling.

In any case, I believe the current conditions and future prospect of Samtenling, the biggest Ling in the Dzogchen Community (already over 400 paid members), will correspond to Rinpoche's visions in his dreams, that this country will have lots and lots of Dzogchen practitioners.

The only issue now is that the **retreat in 2014 of Longsal Root Initiation will not be available to Westerners** (unless with special permission) because their presence here may

draw the attention of the local people or government, which is a risk we cannot take for the first teaching retreat of Rinpoche in China. So we will do it very carefully, trying to make the best conditions and preparations in every possible way. But we believe the new generation of Chinese Government is proceeding to a more open and reasonable direction, which can be positive for us in the long run.

All the best,
Wes



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The Santi Maha Sangha Scholarship at Namgyalgar South

Interview with Paul Medi on December 10th 2013

Arnaud: Hi Paul, could you remind me when you started your SMS scholarship and how long you were on the Scholarship?

Paul: It was in 2006, after having spent 6 months living at the Namgyalgar South. My Scholarship lasted for a year, so I was actually living at the Gar for about 18 months.

Arnaud: What was your intention when starting this Scholarship?

Paul: So, in December 2004 I had a talk with our SMS teacher Elise Stutchbury about my wish to study Santi Maha Sangha. She then advised me to apply for the SMS Scholarship. I said, "I will!" But in January 2005 Georgia and I got together and I wished to give our relationship a chance, so I postponed my intention to apply for the Scholarship. A few months later, Georgia and I decided to go and live at Namgyalgar for a couple of months, to support the Gar and also our practice. So we left our jobs and packed our everything, and arrived at the Gar in June 2005. After few months, I reconsidered applying for the SMS Scholarship, and Georgia and I were very pleased to be able to stay longer due to this financial help. We then stayed at the Gar for another year until the beginning of 2007.

Arnaud: In a few words, how was the time you spent at Namgyalgar South during this year?

Paul: Oh, this is an impossible question to answer briefly... I think mostly it was being with people who were



there at that time. To be with this lovely Community was really enjoyable. We shared so much and even though we had some struggling moments to achieve some projects, doing Karma Yoga, we also spent time hanging out, and also practicing together. Of course it was also very good for personal practice, but when I look back, living with the Community is what touched me the most – really being part of the Sangha.

Arnaud: What level did you study at that time?

Paul: Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 and Base.

Arnaud: When did you do your Base and First level examination?

Paul: I had done the Base examination in 2003, in Tashigar Sur. I did the First Level exam and Level 2 training in 2007, immediately after the year at Namgyalgar South.

Arnaud: What would you say to anyone who wishes to do the SMS Scholarship or to donate to this program?

Paul: For those who wish to do it, I would say that you really need to be flexible. At the Gar things happen outside of what we usually plan. For instance, being in the middle of the bush, things take more time to happen and to resolve than in the city. If you have a phone problem, it can take days to be resolved. It was really difficult for me to have such concrete plans, because of the unexpected happenings all the time. Being flexible and going with the flow are probably what seems to me important to bear in mind for anyone who wishes to do it. Apart from that, I would say just do it.

For those who wish to financially participate, it is very worthy. It has been going for so long, and so many people benefited from it, it would be a shame if it couldn't continue. It is the only existing program in our Community to support Dzogchen practitioners in their study and their practice of SMS, to my knowledge, so it is also important for the preservation of the Teaching for the future.

Namgyalgar South Rental Project

In 2013, with the development of Namgyalgar North progressing well, at Namgyalgar South a small renovation project has been undertaken to improve the appearance, comfortability and safety of facilities, helping to make the Gar more attractive for rental by private groups.

In particular the accommodation has been vibrantly transformed with several caravans being painted, curtains and mattresses replaced and sturdy entrance steps installed. The dormitories have also undergone some improvements, as have the kitchen and showers. A few more renovations are planned for other areas of the Gar which will make them more functional.

.....

Arnaud: Do you sometimes look back to your year of SMS Scholarship and have some feedback from it?

Paul: Yes, yes... but also I think quite a lot of how it would be if I was doing it again now. I've changed a lot since that time. I had to learn to be really flexible, and work with circumstances, and it took a lot of my time to understand this, and be able to do it. If I was doing it again now, I wonder what would be the new thing to learn?

Arnaud: Thank you Paul.

Paul: You are welcome.

Paul and Georgia now have two children, and Paul has been a consistent and active member of the Community since then. He has been recently on the Gakyil of Samyasling in Melbourne.

The renovation project accords with Rinpoche's advice that Namgyalgar South be used in a secondary way as a rental facility, thereby generating income to help maintain the Gar. This is proving to be a success thus far with Namgyalgar South being rented by groups for vipassana meditation retreats, breathework workshops, and a yoga/art therapy course. Private groups can now obtain information and make bookings via the 'Retreat Centre Rentals' page on the Namgyalgar website and there are bookings for a vipassana retreat, Qigong workshop, and a Lightworkers meditation retreat in 2014.

Namgyalgar South continues its life as a centre for the Dzogchen Community with a yearly program of practice retreats, courses, SMS study and regular weekly practice, with flexibility which allows for private rental groups events.

As well dark and light cabins at the Gar are available to all international members for personal retreats. There is also a weekly calm abiding meditation session at the Gar led by experienced practitioners attended by 15 people.

Events at the Gar in 2014 include a Dream Yoga workshop with Michael Katz, followed by a Yantra Yoga retreat, in January and a Chöd retreat at Easter.

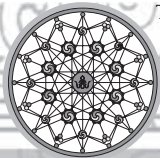
The program of activities at Namgyalgar South is available on the Namgyalgar website at: www.dzogchen.org.au

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Namgyalgar North News

New Blog: <http://namgyalgarnorth.com/>





Tsegyalgar East

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A Message from Prima Mai about Khandroling Paper Cooperative's Festschrift* Project

Dear Creatives of the Dzogchen Community,

In Tsegyalgar East, Jacqueline Gens, representing Khandroling Paper Cooperative, is organizing with the participation of all of us a very nice gift for Rinpoche related to artworks,

poems, calligraphy, dreams etc., in connection to the Vajra Dance for the inauguration of the Mandala Hall during the Tsegyalgar East's 30th Anniversary Celebration – Come Join the Dance, July 11–13, 2014 in Khandroling. Everyone has one or two pages available. Visit the Tsegyalgar Community Blog with more info about this project and send your contributions by the end of February 2014.

http://tsegyalgar.blogspot.it/2013/11/khandroling-paper-cooperative-invites_30.html
Please circulate this information in your local Community and among Vajra Dancers, via also your local Gakyil for help.
Love,
Prima Mai

*A *Festschrift* is a book by many people honoring the work of a great scholar. Festschrift literally means "Celebration Writing." ©

Mexico, Baja California



Married: Martin Erhardt and Gabriela Parra were married on December 8, 2013, in Punta Gorda Este, Baja California Sur, in front of the Sea of Cortez at 12:00 pm.

Courses

France >>Karmaling



Kunye with Aldo Oneto in Karmaling, France November 4–10, 2013 – thirteen students received a Shang Shung Institute certificate.

Germany



Kumbhaka Course in Munich

Munich Gaykil

On the weekend of the 25th–27th of October, Zhenya Rud led a Kumbhaka course in Munich/ Germany. We enjoyed the opportunity to become a bit more familiar with our breathing and our prana, as well as the possibility of developing our capacity for Kumbhaka. May we all benefit greatly from applying this profound and special method of Yantra Yoga into our practice and our lives. ©

Greece >>Garabling



The Hellenic Dzogchen Community – Garabling

The first supervision of Yantra Yoga in Athens with Laura Evangelisti (November 12–17) was a wonderful experience! We spend a lot of time practicing and improving our yantra yoga skills, and not only that. It was a unique experience and we would like to share – with all of you – some photos from this event. ©

Italy, Bologna >>Desalling



Upon invitation of Desalling Gakyil, Tiziana Gottardi taught the first Yantra Yoga Course for Beginners ever held in Bologna. The course was hosted in the newly inaugurated "The Spine Centre" in Bologna. After the four weekends, thanks to the success and the request of the attendees, Tiziana Gottardi has accepted to hold a second course beginning in the mid January and ending in mid April 2014 lasting five weekends. ©

Dzamling Gar



Yantra Yoga course for beginners with Laura Evangelisti December 14–15, 2013.

Right after the Mandarava Chudlen retreat, the first retreat with Rinpoche held in Dzamling Gar in early December 2013, the first course in our newly inaugurated Gar took place.

The Vajra Dance of the Three Vajras course, from December 10th to 12th, was led by Lorraine Gaultier and Sandor Dani from France under the supervision of Adriana Dal Borgo.

About 25 people followed the course, showing strong motivation by coming every day to the course in spite of the heavy rain as there was a hurricane during these three days. The last day, Catherine Diamond from the USA taught the special form of the Vajra Dance of the Three Vajras to complete her supervision as a teacher of the first level of Vajra Dance and everybody had a strong experience of dancing it for an hour and a half.

Rinpoche said that the storm during the inauguration of the Gar was a blessing so these circumstances during the course were certainly also very auspicious for Vajra Dance in Dzamling Gar in the future. ©



Kumbhaka and Tsalung course with Fabio Andrico at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, December 19–23, 2013.



Bulgaria >>Dargaeling



Dance of the Six Spaces with Zoltan Cser at Dargaeling in Sofia, Bulgaria.

Czech Republic, Prague >>Kunkyabing



First “Mama Meeting” at Kunkyabing (Prague)

By Tereza Starkova

In the middle of November there was very nice and crowded meeting of Community mothers and their children in the Prague gonpa. We started by preparing lunch which we ate together and then we spent the afternoon playing with the children, talking and sharing mother’s state of mind and enjoying see each other after a long time.

We decided to meet regularly every 14 days and besides babysitting we wish to manage to do some short practice. ©

Czech Republic, Prague >>Kunkyabing



Tibetan Medicine and Astrology

October 2013

by Tereza Starkova

On the last weekend of October, the Czech Dzogchen Community and the Center of Tibetan Medicine, organized Tibetan Medical and Astrological consultations and lectures on Tibetan Medicine and Astrology.

Dr. Tsultrim Kalsang, a doctor at the Men-Tsee-Khang Institute in Dharamsala, India, who established The Center of External Treatment (Mild Therapy Center), taught on

Tibetan Medicine. He also offered traditional medical consultations and treatment with appropriate traditional Tibetan Medicine.

Tsering Choezom, the head of the Astrological and Astronomy Department of Men-Tsee-Khang, led the astrology and also offered consultations for personal horoscopes.

Both kinds of consultations were open to the public and were completely full. This showed a growing interest in the Czech Republic to use ancient methods for illness prevention, treatment of health problems, and also for personal development.

Public Presentation of the Vajra Dance at the Ezotera Festival in Prague

By Eleonora Folegnani

On the occasion of the Ezotera Festival, the Czech Community gave its first public demonstration of the Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra. It took fifteen minutes to prepare everything, open the Mandala, position the camera, and insure the correct functioning of the sound system. A simple movement to warm up, looks

of understanding, smiles full of emotion. New faces seated around us and curious about us. Good morning to everyone and welcome! A moment of silence, followed by a whisper “guys, let’s go together!”

Done. A good experience, beautiful union, and the power of the practice!

The people were interested. We opened a dialogue and exchanged information on the general principles of the Vajra Dance. Then, all standing, singing A, united to the movement of the arms. And then, after some brief information, we all moved to the Man-

dala to try simple steps. Open senses, availability to observe the experience of moving the body on the colors of the Mandala, using the vibration of the voice all together, observing the mind in this new experience.

A wonderful experience that has remained as joy in our hearts and we hope that these opportunities will be more and more numerous for the benefit of all beings!

Many thanks to our beloved Master. ©

Kunsangar North



Complete breathing, Kumbhaka, Mandarava Tsa-lung, Yantra Yoga retreat with Fabio Andrico, November 5–11, Kunsangar North.

Complete Breathing, Kumbhaka and Tsa-lung of Mandarava

Retreat with Fabio Andrico at Kunsangar North, November 5–11, 2013

In Russia practitioners are usually extremely interested in such special breathing methods as kumbhaka and tsa-lung and for this retreat there were more than 130 participants from different places in Russia and Ukraine.

Actually this number could have been even bigger, but unfortunately the size of the hall was limited. With two sessions a day, step by step we came closer to discovering kumbhaka through mastering the full breathing. Far from

urban fuss, in a pine tree forest, in a wonderful atmosphere created by our Vajra family, the energy of Kunsangar North and Fabio’s charisma, we relaxed more and more – and finally kumbhaka manifested very easily and naturally.

In addition each day tireless Russian practitioners did Mandarava practice in the morning, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance practice in the daytime, and Tibetan dances in the evenings – so the program was really intensive! ©

China >>Samtenling



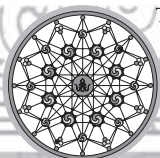
Open course: Yantra Yoga and the Principles of Tibetan Medicine, led by Tracy Ni and Elio Guarisco, Hongkong, Nov. 23–24, 2013.



Song of Vajra Dance course, 2nd half, led by Tracy Ni and Wes Guo, Zhuhai, Nov. 27–Dec. 1, 2013.



Inner Practice of Gomadevi course, led by Wes Guo, Dec. 2–3, 2013.



Singapore



Namdrolling's Invocations of Samanthabhadra

Solar Eclipse Retreat (Conducted by SMS Base Teacher Cheh Goh)

By Kym Ng

Nansid Kordas Tamjad Gun

All that appears and exists, samsara and nirvana

Xi Jig Lam Nis Drasbu Nis

Have the same base but two paths and two fruits

Rig Dan Marig Qotrul De

Due to the miracle of knowledge and ignorance

Gundu Sanboi Monlam Gyis

Through the invocation of Samanthabhadra

Tamjad Qosyin Podransdu

May all achieve perfect enlightenment

Nonbar Zogde Can Gya Xog

In the abode of the ultimate dimension of phenomenal

Our beloved master was in Singapore last year in May 2012, for a five day retreat during which he taught our community The Invocations of Samanthabhadra.

He taught the same precious teachings again this year, in July 2013 but at Kunsangar South in Crimea. With great merits, via webcast, we were then treated to Rinpoche's special unique melodious Samanthabhadra invocations practice. It was a special way of singing that was experienced in the clarity of Rinpoche's dreams. The distinct character of this unique melody is its heart-rending style, as if sung by a loving mother, beseeching her sleeping babies to wake up. The tune is an emotional yet patient appeal, to her precious babes, to please wake up, wake up; to pay attention and to reflect and understand what it means by "...one base two fruits..." in her oh-so ever loving voice.

It's a completely inviting way to contemplate as one chant this universal invocation, so different from other stoic styles of chanting.

Many vajra brothers were touched by Rinpoche's unique loving rendition of the profound invocations. We finally managed to gather together at Namdrolling in Singapore over two weekends (1-3, 9-10th November 2013), to listen to our guru's webcast replay MP3, and to learn the melody and meditate on the precious significance of the invocations. We managed to practice well enough to chant collectively on the conspicuous Solar Eclipse day of 3rd November.

To prepare ourselves for this retreat, on Friday 1 November, our SMS Base teacher, Cheh Goh, led us in an hour of Long Tun collective practice. With great reverence, we all knew of the many obstacles to practice and participation. In order to spend the weekends together to learn this invocation well, we knew we needed all the help we could get, so why not beseech for the guardians' blessings?

With due devotion to the Maestro and diligence, we all settled ourselves down (committing our body to calmly sit), determinedly switched off our mobile phones (putting worldly concerns on hold) and bravely kept our minds open (by "emptying" our busy thoughts and expectations) for the weekend with Rinpoche's webcast replay of teachings.

Bright and early from Saturday, 2nd November morning at 730 am, the retreat began with the Guru yoga of the White A practice. It put us into a pristine clear state to listen with devotion and centered focus, to Rinpoche's teachings on the invocations teachings.

Gungyi Xini Dus Majyas

The base of all is uncreated

Ranjyun Longyan Joddu Med

A self-arisen and ineffable expanse

Denid Rigna Sangyas De

By recognizing it, enlightenment is attained

Marig Semjan Korvas Kyam

By not recognizing it, beings wander in samsara

Kamsum Semjan Tamjadgyis

May all beings of the three realms

Jodmed Xi Don Rigbar Xog

Recognise the real meaning of the ineffable base!

The base, path and fruit

We have listened to these Dzogchen teachings so many times. Those who have been in the community for decades could be all the more numbed from hearing the same words. For newcomers who have listened faithfully in the past few years, they could already mouth the next word, right after the first few words that Rinpoche speaks. "We have 3 primordial wisdoms ... *kadag* (since the beginning pure) ... *lhundrub* (self perfected since the beginning)..."

Yet many of such teachings have gone over most heads and washed over our ears, instead of entering our minds to be experienced.

The base is uncreated. Ever changing and uncreated.

The invocations of Samanthabhadra state again.

The real meaning of the base is without cause and conditions, free from the flaw which affirms or negates outside or inside. (Quoted from Invocations of Samanthabhadra)

Empty, pure, clear and self-perfected. What do these really mean to our daily lives? How many of us really recognize this state of ever changing, uncreated base and know the meaning, real meaning of the primordial state, while grappling in our daily lives, in the midst of passionate emotions?

How many really recognize this state and relax the tension? In the midst of passion, with hope and fear, we are supposed to be able to recognize the state and integrate with it.

In the invocations text, it is stated that with the ever arising energy, which is our own manifestation, we are supposed to transcend and recognize our own state, which is the state of Guru Yoga. The passions that project the karmic dualistic visions, arousing attachment and aversion, are nothing but our own deluded state. Hope and fear are grandmothers of our many anguished states, samsaric existence and transmigration.

With this lamp of knowledge, in the invocations of Samanthabhadra, the Dhamakayan Buddha, may the illusions from co-emergent ignorance and conceptual ignorance be eliminated. May we purify our dualistic perceptions and put an end to our dualistic actions, without accepting or rejecting, with instant presence settled and consciousness relaxed in our real nature.

These are the profound knowledge that one can derive from meditating on this invocation.

Rinpoche stated that it is mandatory that we meditate upon this text as we sing it with Rinpoche's new melody, for any wisdom to arise.

This important text and teachings come with a tiny but astounding footnote, that states how when it is chanted by any powerful practitioner (ahem), in the clarity of the guru yoga state, especially during change of seasons, earthquake, or earth rumbling time and during solar or lunar eclipse, many beings of the three worlds who hear it, will gradually free themselves from suffering and obtain enlightenment at last.

Blessed are we, to know such a meritorious practice! Thank you, dearest Rinpoche.

©

India, Hyderabad



From November 21-24, 2013, Fabio Andrico taught an introduction to Yantra Yoga sponsored by the World Buddhist Culture Trust, an organization founded by Lama Doboom Tulku, in Saptaparni, Hyderabad India.

USA, Berkeley >>Dondrubling



Harmonious Breathing with Fabio Andrico November 26, 2013 at Dondrubling, Berkeley, California.

USA, Glendale



Open Course in the Vajra Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra with Carisa O'Kelly, November 8-10, 2013 in Glendale, California.

Chile



Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat in Chile with Jim Valby, November 30-December 4, 2013 and Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level Retreat, December 2-4, 2013.

Peru, Lima



Santi Maha Sangha with Jim Valby in Peru. SMS Base: Nov 30-Dec 4; SMS 1st Level: Dec2-Dec 4. SMS Base level was focused specifically on Dzogchen teachings and explaining the Base, Path and Fruit of Dzogchen Atiyoga. It was combined with different practices and an explanation of Shitro Ganapuja. It was a 30-hour retreat. SMS Level 1 was focused on the corresponding teachings of SMS level. It was a 9-hour retreat.

Peru, Lima



Course on Semzin with Steve Landsberg October 2-4, 2013 in Lima Peru.

Programs

Germany		Kunsangar		
Vajra Dance, Song of the Vajra Part 1 with Lenka Kroh January 10–12, Dödjongling, Berlin Registration: rot@dodjungling.de	Vajra Dance, Song of the Vajra Part 2 with Lenka Kroh March 21–23, Dödjongling, Berlin Registration: rot@dodjungling.de	Base of SMS with Igor Berkhin January 4–7, 2014, Donetsk	Retreat of base of SMS with Igor Berkhin March 8–10, 2014, Kunsangar North	Supervision Yantra Yoga with Laura Evangelisti June 1–5, 2014, Kunsangar South
Santi Maha Sangha Base with Dr. Jim Valby March 7–11, Dödjongling, Berlin Registration: rot@dodjungling.de	Mandarava Tsalung and Yantra Yoga with Nina Robinson and Marc van Westreenen, Continuation course 2013 May 1–4, Dargyaling, Cologne Registration: leapabst@gmx.de	Open course of Yantra Yoga for Beginners with Nadejda Kopaneva January 4–7, 2014, Perm	Base of SMS-Weekend with Oleg Troyanovskiy April 18–20, 2014, Kunsangar North	Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Teaching Retreat June 6–14, 2014, Kunsangar South
Santi Maha Sangha Level II with Dr. Jim Valby March 14–18, Dargyaling, Cologne Registration: christianpogoda@gmx.net		Open course of Yantra Yoga for Beginners with Mira Mironova January 9–12, 2014, Izhevsk	Open course of Yantra Yoga with Viktor Krachkovskiy May 1–5, 2014, Kunsangar South	Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Teaching Retreat June 20–28, 2014, Kunsangar North
		Base of SMS-Weekend with Oleg Troyanovskiy February 14–16, 2014, Kunsangar North	Base of SMS With Igor Berkhin May 1–5, 2014, Kunsangar South	Yantra Yoga Retreat with Fabio Andrico July 18–28, 2014, Kunsangar North
		Losar March 2, 2014, Kunsangar South	Training course of Dance of Song of Vajra with Tatyana Pronicheva May 7–11, 2014, Kunsangar South	

Tashigar South				
3rd–7th January 2014 Intensive Training of Yantra Yoga Aimed for expert practitioners, principally those who have done the Teacher’s Trainings and would like to prepare for a supervision. Also open to practitioners with experience of at list the second series of Yantras, who would like to deepen their practice and like to learn the basic Yantras of the other series. All preliminaries will be covered, the basic Yantras of the five series,	Tsadul Pranayamas and first two series Pranayamas, Vajra Wave. Instructors: Marisa Alonso and Carolina Mingolla	Activities: Introduction to the practice of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and contemplative meditation practice. Recreation Activities: Modern Tibetan dances, games and learning how to cook traditional food. Instructors: Ricky Sued, Nélide Saporiti, Marisa Alonso, Carolina Mingolla	16th–19th January 2014 Meting for members of the Dzogchen Community-Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha. A daily session of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha Practices. Also Modern Tibetan dances, games, and Argentinean music. Yantra Yoga: We will work especially on the second series of Yantra, Pranayama and rhythmic breathing. Vajra Dance: We will focus on the timing, the coordination and “dancing with others” of some of the dances, decided according with the level of	experience and knowledge of the practitioners. Santi Maha Sangha: We will do Semdzin and Rushen Practices in a way to create the conditions for contemplation to arise. Instructors: Carolina Mingolla, Marisa Alonso, Nélide Saporiti, Ricky Sued.

Passages

Died

Tsegyalgar East	
<p>Kathy McGrane as many of you know, was a long time practitioner in the lineage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1982. For decades she was an active participant in the lives of Tsegyalgar East and the Berkeley and New York Lings where she lived at various times. In recent years she moved to be near the Gar following her bout with leukemia where she served on the red gakyil through Rinpoche’s last two retreats here as well as becoming active in local book and theater groups.</p> <p>An intrepid traveller, Kathy spent time in Thailand doing retreat and traveled to Tibet. She was a dedicated practitioner and 3rd Level Santi Maha Sangha student. For those who knew her, she had a wicked sense of humor permeated by an elegant sensibility. Kathy contributed to many graphic arts publications and community newsletters over the years and was very proud of her artistic newsletters which are bound together in the Tsegyalgar East library. In the Fall of 2013 Kathy attended the Shang Shung Publications Editorial Training in Merigar with support from the Teachers Training Fund at Tsegyalgar East.</p>	<div></div> <p>In my own experience, Kathy had an innate Irish gift for language which often manifested in memorable stories and vivid language. Two stories stand out in my mind with their hair raising details regarding her trips to Mt. Kailash and another one returning from Merigar to Rome – ribald tales of braving extreme adversity and obstacles with great belly laughs of humor and wisdom.</p> <p>Kathy was an excellent practitioner and well loved by many. She often led Shitros for others including Nina Paparazzo which I remember well for her presence. At that time decades ago, I remember telling her I hope she would be there for me. In a way she</p>

was as her final transition brought us all together.

May her liberation be swift, her final journey one of great joy. Many thanks to the local practitioners here at Tsegyalgar East who provided support for Kathy’s final transition. We are so blessed to have each other.

Jacqueline Gens ©

Reprinted from the Tsegyalgar East Community Blog
www.tsegyalgar.blogspot.com

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Errata

The photo captions for the light and dark cabins at Namgyalgar South in the last issue, Mirror 125, page 12, are reversed.

Apologies.
Mirror Staff

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How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Piotr Marcik

My story starts with Star Wars when I was about eight years old. It was the first time I had ever come across this type of energy, these supernatural powers, and Master Yoda speaking of luminous creatures, supernatural powers, and I got caught up.

What is even more important was that it was not just all about this power and these light sabres. In the sequel, the Empire Strikes Back, the conflict between father and son, when eventually Darth Vader turns out not to be as evil as he appeared at the beginning, somehow really triggered something in me, an urge to search for what this is really about. It was the very heart of myself so there was something in it. That was the beginning.

The next step was a big jump into spirituality, into Buddhism before my graduation when I fell in love with a girl who had already taken refuge with the Karma Kagyu at Lama Ole's Sangha community which was my first encounter with Tibetan Buddhism.

Then somehow we went to a retreat in Poland and I was very fortunate because there was an initiation by Lopon Tsechu Rinpoche. I now really believe that he was like John the Baptist was to Christ in that he opened the doors within me for me to experience something very strange because when I came back home I started to experience lucid dreaming and out of the body experiences.

In the same period of time I also came across Dzogchen teachings. My girlfriend brought me a book called 'Dzogchen the Self-Perfected State' and when I read it, I knew that this was it. Of course, I could only judge it intellectually but I somehow understood that this is what I had been looking for my entire life – an explanation of what is actually going on actually arises from oneself. I didn't know the mechanics of it yet but I felt that this was it.

This was followed by Tenzin Wangyal's book 'Wonders of the Natural Mind', so again

Dzogchen teachings, different transmission but still from the same background. I wasn't following any particular teacher at this time because I had met a person in Lodz, Poland, a therapist, who had some experience with Tibetan Buddhism, and he was treating his patients, those who were heavy cases like drug addicts and alcoholics, with energy, as I understood it then. Somehow the Tibetan Buddhist practice helped him to cure them.

Then we used to meet in this meditation circle once a week, doing some strange positions. Apparently he also had something to do with Dzogchen and presented dream yoga and other books from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. And I got even more into it because my experience at night. So I immediately jumped into very deep water and started to do some practice although I didn't really know what it was. It was my first contact with anything to do with meditation. And I followed his explanations during these meetings. He had some contact with a Dzogchen group but when I asked him about the community and the teacher, he said that he didn't want to have anything to do with the Sangha in Lodz or in Poland because they were drunkards and drug addicts. This was in 2000 or 2001. So I actually believed him and I didn't feel personally like having anything to do with a group of followers. I had this idea that I could do it on my own. It would be enough.

So I just carried on with what we did during our meditation circles and I also did it at home. Then one day I had an experience of a strong energy flow, and then another experience during the night of leaving my body and that someone was coming to meet me. It was too much for me and I called Tsechu Rinpoche about this lucid conscious dreaming and asked him for help and immediately came back to my body.

Then I said to myself, stop this spiritual practice, stop the meditation, because I wasn't prepared for what I was experiencing. I didn't know what it was and where



it was taking me and I felt like I was going bananas. And so I stopped for twelve years, more or less.

The only thing that remained connecting me was an image of Guru Rinpoche that the therapist had brought me from Tibet. When I saw this image of Padmasambhava again it was just like after Star Wars, I knew it, and I kept it with me always. I slept with it and always kept it close to me. But anyway I stopped with the practice and then it took me about 12 years, passing through a lot of turmoil at work, living the corporate environment, striving for being self-employed or being independent from these kind of companies. It was always at the back of my heart, not my head, that I needed to come back.

Then one day I was in Krakow in a bookstore with books on spirituality and magic, and I felt a strange flow of energy and when I looked up I saw some *thangkas* – I recognized Green Tara and Guru Rinpoche – and I felt very weird, uneasy, and I felt like leaving the place immediately. So I walked around Krakow trying to calm down and when I returned to my hostel room, I found myself in one of the most difficult states I have ever been in, mentally, physically, emotionally, because I really didn't know what was going on. And somehow I thought that what I had felt in the bookstore – which didn't appear to be a positive feeling – was related to those *thangkas*. I felt that this path of Tibetan Buddhism was perhaps not the right direction for me. Do I actually know

who I am addressing through my prayers and meditation?

So what I did then was I put the image of Guru Padmasambhava in front of me and with the strongest feeling of devotion ever I asked him that if he was real, not imaginary or fake, to give me a sign. And one minute after, the phone rang in the hostel and a female voice asked for somebody in a very joyful voice. The name wasn't important but what was important is how it affected me because all of a sudden my bad mood, my negative feeling turned into a joyful state of mind in just the snap of a finger. I felt as if Guru Rinpoche had called for me or given me a ring and everything changed. And all of a sudden I made the decision and googled the Dzogchen Community and called the contact person in Lodz. I knew I had to do it. This is my path. I had no doubt. No Karma Kagyu or Bon.

And this was my first serious contact with Buddhism and so my whole life went directly into that.

The first retreat when I met Rinpoche physically was the Yangtig retreat at Merigar West followed by the Thögal retreat in Tenerife. Then I realized that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche appeared to me like the embodiment of Guru Rinpoche Himself. Somehow I had no doubts about that. It was like a wish come true. When I returned from the Yangtig retreat I also felt something changed, perhaps through the energy of this retreat, but also our group of practitioners in Lodz changed and was rejuvenated with new people coming and it started to grow.

Then the following year one of our Polish practitioners rang and told me about the Gonpa painting project at Merigar East in Romania and asked me if I'd like to be the project manager and assistant to Migmar who would be supervising the painting. It was a call from my regional Gar, Merigar East, and I gladly accepted and went there. The project was followed by the retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and half way through it some people asked me if I would like to apply for the Merigar East gakyil. It was only my second year in the Community and I thought it was too early but I fell in love with the Gar and so I went for the red Gakyil and now it is my second year. If circumstances permit and Rinpoche agrees I will go for a third term.

This is basically my story. ©

» *Closing Talk continued from page 16*

Teachings, we need to integrate. We are slowly learning how we integrate. Because we have lost that knowledge we are in dualistic vision, otherwise we would not have this problem. When we are in dualistic vision, we produce the potentiality of negative karma. This production produces negative karma, something concrete. Then we need to accept and reject.

If we have knowledge of the teachings, even if we accept or reject we know that this is a relative condition. Many times we should apply in that way because we live in dualistic vision. Maybe we practitioners have that knowledge, but non-practitioners do not. For that reason we need to apply respecting others. So it is very important that we know what the relative condition is and what absolute truth is. When we are Dzogchen practitioners in the state of *guruyoga*, even if we are only in this state for 1 second or 10 seconds, in that moment we are being in absolute truth. But we are not in that state forever. We are in that state for a few seconds and then again we are in dualistic vision. So then we know what the absolute real condition is and what is relative. In the relative condition, it is necessary to apply something like organizations. But, of course, we do not think organizations are the most important and are the real condition. We organize and that is necessary in the relative condition.

In the Dzogchen teaching, at the conclusion of the teaching, I always ask all practitioners to try and learn to be in a state of *guruyoga*. That represents our real nature. Now

we are in dualistic vision. Why do we need to be in dualistic vision? Because we have a physical body and we need to eat and sleep, we need to work and make money for living. All these are relative conditions. So for that, it is necessary that we are present. So I say firstly, do *guruyoga* and secondly, be present. You can be present and not distracted. That is very important for integration; it is the starting point for integration.

But then in circumstances, there are many situations. What is most important is that you respect others. Paying respect for others means that you know how the circumstances are. When you are doing these things, you are called a Dzogchen practitioner. Even if you are not doing a *pauja*, chanting mantras or doing complicated visualizations, you are always a Dzogchen practitioner. If you are thinking being a Dzogchen practitioner means you are chanting mantras or doing a *pauja*, you do not understand the essence and you are no longer a Dzogchen practitioner. So you try and go in the essence of the teaching and integrate with that. Then seriously, we will all become good practitioners. This is my hope. That is the reason I am always working in different ways. Sometimes I am working for the present, sometimes I am working for the future, particularly for my students so that they can develop their knowledge and understanding, etc. This is not only how I do, but also how you should do, everybody. Then we are becoming good Dzogchen practitioners. This is what I want to say. ☸

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz



Photo: P. Fassoli