

# THE MIRROR

No. 130  
December 2015



Knowledge of Our Real Condition

Focus on Tashigar

Lekdanling – New Center for UK Community

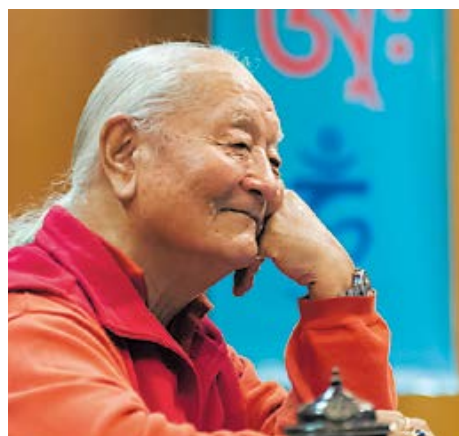
Vajra Dance Video Tutorial

A Journey to the Sacred Land of Larung Gar



INTERNATIONAL  
DZOGCHEN  
COMMUNITY





## Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Photo: P. Fassoli

## 2016

Spain, Tenerife  
Dzamlung Gar  
February 9–22, 2016  
Mandarava Drubchen Retreat

Worldwide Transmission  
February 21–22, 2016  
Anniversary of Garab Dorje

March 1–10, 2016  
Communication Skills Training with  
Gianfranco Brero

March 18–25, 2016  
Supervision plus Exams for Khaita  
Joyful Dances

March 30–April 3, 2016  
Khaita Festival and Awarding  
Diplomas

Spain  
Barcelona  
May, 2016  
Third Integrative Medicine  
Conference

Spain, Tenerife  
Dzamlung Gar  
end of April/May 2016  
Tibetan Cultural Week

June 3–7, 2016  
Tsalung Retreat

November 11–15, 2016  
Teachers Training for SMS, Vajra  
Dance and Yantra

November 16, 2016  
Awarding the Diplomas including  
I.D.C. Diplomas

November 29–30, 2015  
SMS 3rd Level Exam

December 1–7, 2016  
SMS Fourth level Training

December 28–January 3, 2017  
Yangtig Retreat

Cover photo of participants at the Longsal Ati'i Gongpa  
teaching retreat at Samtengar, China, October 2–7, 2015.

## Contents

Schedule .....	2
Editorial. ....	3
Knowledge of Our Real Condition .....	4
International Gakyil .....	7
Shang Shung Foundation .....	8
ASIA .....	10
Update on the Dzamlung Gar Project .....	13
Lekdanling – New Center for UK Community .....	14
The Stupa of Perfect Victory .....	15
Traveling the World .....	16
Vajra Dance Video Tutorial ..	18
Focus on Tashigar .....	19
Book Review .....	35
The Mantra of a Fanatic ....	36
A Journey to the Sacred Land of Larung Gar, Kham (Tibet) .....	38
Saying Farewell to Namgyalgar South .....	41
How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: Viki Forscutt .....	43



### THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the  
International  
Dzogchen Community of  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

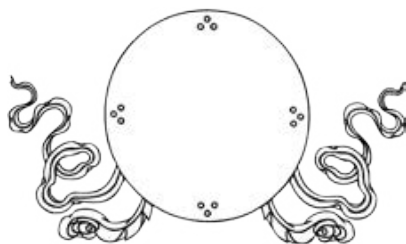
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# Editorial

Even though this issue of 'The Mirror' is the December 2015 issue, it is the first to be published in the new year, 2016, and so we would like to take this opportunity to wish all of our readers near and far a very happy New Year!

A new year brings new beginnings. From its birth in 1990 at Merigar in Italy as a black and white broadsheet newspaper, The Mirror has gone through many transitions. Early in its history it became a tabloid size newspaper, then the editorial offices made a trans Atlantic leap to become based at Tsegyalgar in Massachusetts, USA. 2005 saw the first four color pages added. Then finally after 23 years and 125 issues carrying news about the International Dzogchen Community and the activities of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu around the globe, in December 2013 the last issue of The Mirror in its by now traditional newspaper format was printed. Due to the global financial crisis that was also felt in our Community, the following year, 2014, The Mirror was only available as an online blog until December of that year when the first issue of the new smaller full color magazine size version was published in pdf format and made available for downloading and printing from our website.

2016 will bring new beginnings as well, in particular to the way in which readers can access The Mirror magazine. Members of the International Dzogchen Community who are registered on the [www.dzogchen.net](http://www.dzogchen.net) website, will soon be able to download the 2016 issues of the magazine for free after logging in. This policy will also apply to the Russian version of The Mirror magazine, Zerkalo, available on its sister website at [www.ru.melong.com](http://www.ru.melong.com). Those who are not members of the International Dzogchen Community will still be able to download the issues from our website [www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com) as usual for a small fee.



We would also like to remind our readers that The Mirror magazine, The Mirror online in English at [www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com), Zerkalo magazine and the online version at [www.ru.melong.com](http://www.ru.melong.com) in Russian, and El Espejo online at [www.es.melong.com](http://www.es.melong.com) in Spanish are all publications of the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. All these publications bring you up to date news on events in our Community around the world, keep you posted on upcoming retreats and events with Rinpoche, as well as letting you know about organizational decisions of the International Gakyil, the initiatives of ASIA Onlus and the work of the Shang Shung

Through 2015 we have also been able to publish a limited number of full color paper copies of The Mirror magazine which are available for purchase at some of the Master's retreats and at the Merigar Office and the Dzam Shop at Merigar West. The printed copies are still greatly appreciated by many of our readers and also provide a concrete archive of the activities and initiatives of our Teacher and our Community over the passage of time. If any of the Gars and Lings or even individual Community members are interested in receiving printed versions of The Mirror for 2016, they should contact the editors so that we can increase the number that are printed.

New year. New beginnings. We would also like to remind all our readers, whether Gakyil members at the Gars and Lings around our world or simply practitioners sitting at home, to send news and photos of your Community activities and initiatives to share with our ever growing global family.

Once again, we send you all our warmest wishes for the New Year. ©



Foundation and Shang Shung Publications.

In addition to keeping you posted on current activities and those planned for the future, we also host an online archive of 25 years of history of the Dzogchen Community in all the back issues of The Mirror, published from March 1990, all of which are freely available online for browsing or downloading from our Archive. You can access the Archive section from the bar running across the top of the homepage at [www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com).

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# Knowledge of Our Real Condition

An excerpt from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's public talk in Beijing, China, October 9, 2015

**G**ood day for everybody everywhere. I am very happy to be here in Beijing. I'm sorry that I don't know the Chinese language in order to explain. Most of my life has been spent in the Western world and for that reason I will talk in English.

I want to explain a little about what Atiyoga is because I have dedicated myself to that. My spiritual path, my life, my way of being, everything, is integrated with the principle of the teaching of Atiyoga. I am very convinced that it is very useful and very important to know the principle of the teaching of Atiyoga not only for people who are doing practice and following a spiritual path, but also for anyone living in our human condition. This is the reason I have followed that knowledge and teaching.

In Tibet originally we had four or five Buddhist traditions and the pre-Buddhist Bon tradition, all of which are very important. They are applied in different ways and the way they are presented is different. This is related to the individual condition, just like in medicine. When we have some problems with our health we go to an expert doctor who gives us advice about which kind of medicine and therapy we need. In a similar way we have different kinds of traditions and schools. However, there does not exist any difference between the essence of all teachings and traditions. When someone follows a teaching or something similar, that person wants to learn something in order to have some benefit. They do not concentrate mainly on the tradition and this kind of division. The most important point is the benefit. In this case, then, in my experience, I have found that Atiyoga is the most important. In a traditional way I belong basically to the Sakyapa tradition in Tibet. Atiyoga is not the principle in this tradition, but when I learned all about the Buddhist tradition I discovered that Atiyoga is really the essence.

## History of Atiyoga

When we learn about the name 'Atiyoga', we can understand its essence. The teaching of Atiyoga came originally from Oddiyana, which means it came in our epoch, in our condition. In the Buddhist tradition, Buddha Sakyamuni is considered to be the first teacher, but when we go into the history of different nations and peoples, there were many ancient histories recounted in different places before the time of Buddha Sakyamuni. We follow very much

the ancient history of teachings in India, for example, and we can understand this in the teaching of the Vajrayana in which the figures of the deities and Bodhisattvas are all like figures of princes and princesses in ancient Indian style. That means ancient tradition and history are connected.

In the history of India it says that in very ancient times the human condition was similar to that of the Devas, figures like Brahma or Krishna, and that there were many types of Devas. Originally the human condition was at a very high level, but as emotions developed the human condition became more and more subject to them and worsened. For example, in Kalpa Dzogden, which means very ancient times, human beings had no need for homes and were not dependent on food, but as they gradually developed, they became limited and dependent on objects. This history describes a really very ancient period of the human condition in general, not just the history of one nation or people. At that time there was one of the most ancient teachers of Atiyoga called Nangwa Tampa who transmitted the principle of knowledge of Atiyoga. After that, twelve different teachers appeared one by one in different epochs. The last one is considered to be Buddha Sakyamuni. In general, history is presented that way in the Atiyoga teaching.

When we think about it, then the time of Buddha Sakyamuni is not so very ancient. However, at that time the teaching of Atiyoga had mostly disappeared. We live in time and space and there are always many things that change and do not remain for a longer time. The only thing that remained were some Atiyoga teachings called Nyengyüd, or oral transmission of teachings in just a few words. At the time of Buddha Sakyamuni, some of these Nyengyüd still existed, but there was no official teaching of Atiyoga. Then the Atiyoga teaching was repeated by an emanation of Buddha Sakyamuni called Guru Garab Dorje.

Today we have the original texts of Atiyoga, not only these first texts taught by Nangwa Tampa, but many taught by these twelve teachers. All these teachings were repeated by Guru Garab Dorje because he was an omniscient enlightened being.

## Beyond Cause and Effect

What Buddha Sakyamuni taught was basically the Four Noble Truths. The first Noble Truth of Suffering means that there is no





Exhibition of Vajra Dance in Songzhuang, Beijing

sentient being that does not experience suffering. But even though we do not like suffering, we do not know how to overcome it and when we have problems, we fight and struggle with them. When Buddha explained the Noble Truth of Suffering he said that even if we fight with the problem, we can never win because suffering is an effect, a fruit. What we should do is discover the cause.

Then Buddha explained the second Noble Truth, the Cause. When we discover the cause, there is a possibility to change or modify it with the consequence that the fruit does not manifest. The Buddha's famous teaching of Cause and Effect is called karma. However, people have different capacities and conditions, and even though many people may wish to stop or modify a negative cause, some of them may not have sufficient capacity on their own. So Buddha gave this path, the third Noble Truth called Cessation, which means how to stop negative causes. Many people have the capacity to stop them by themselves, but other beings do not have that capacity. In that case, they receive a vow because when we take a vow, somehow we can overcome a negative cause. So this is another method.

In the Buddhist tradition, particularly in the Hinayana, we can receive a vow. For example, we may want to stop doing something in our ordinary lives such as smoking because we consider it very harmful for our health, our memory etc., but we may have tried four or five times without succeeding. What can we do in this type of condition? We can receive a vow, take it in a perfect way and overcome that problem. For that reason Buddha explained the Noble Truth of the Path. The Path is a different method related to the condition of the individual.

The principle of the Teaching that Buddha gave was Cause and Effect. When some of his students asked Buddha how they could go beyond Cause and Effect, he gave them advice saying that there would be a teacher just like him who would explain how to go beyond Cause and Effect. Buddha didn't directly explain or give this type of teaching, but he said that there would be a teacher just like him. That teacher was Guru Garab Dorje.

### Dra Thalgyur tantra

Guru Garab Dorje's teaching was firstly based on the teaching of Nangwa Tamba, who was the first teacher to give the teaching called the Dra Thalgyur tantra. This tantra is the root of the Dzo-

gchen teaching and so we can say that Dzogchen teaching is the essence, the final goal of all teachings. Its essence doesn't manifest very much externally, such as sutra teaching. We can understand this from the Dra Thalgyur tantra in which there is an explanation of how long the teaching of the Buddha will last on this globe. It says that the Sutra teaching that Buddha gave orally will disappear early, while the Vajrayana will still be alive for many more thousands of years because Vajrayana is not related to anything like a vow at the physical level. When the Vajrayana teaching disappears it says that the teaching of Atiyoga will continue almost until this globe disappears. This is because Atiyoga is knowledge of our condition. In Atiyoga there are no rules that we should follow or that dictate how we should be. People who are interested in Atiyoga should learn and become responsible for themselves.

### Ati - Primordial Condition

When we talk about Atiyoga, what does Ati mean? In the language of Oddiyana, it is 'ati' while in Sanskrit it is 'adhi' and it means primordial condition. Everybody has his/her primordial condition. There does not exist a unified primordial condition for all sentient beings. If there are ten people, there are also ten different kinds of primordial states. We can understand that in the way the Sutra teaching is presented. For example, if we want to do practice to increase our compassion, we should do Avalokiteshvara. If we want to have a longer life, we do Buddha Amitayus practice. If we want to become more intelligent we do Manjushri practice. We have all these kinds of concepts about Enlightened Beings. However, an Enlightened Being means a being that is totally qualified and possesses a quantity and quality of wisdom. Manjushri has compassion just like Avalokiteshvara, while Avalokiteshvara also has that capacity and knowledge of intelligence, so why do we divide them? The real state of all Enlightened Beings is the same condition but it doesn't mean becoming one. Some people have this kind of idea. This is more in the Hindu tradition.

If we are in the state of a realised being, we have no concept of separation or being only one. We are beyond that. But when we are beyond it doesn't mean that everybody becomes one. This is also related to what is called our primordial state for everybody.

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### Yoga or Naljor

'Yoga' means the condition of real knowledge. 'Yoga' is also used in the Oddiyana language and in Sanskrit, in the Indian Hindu tradition, and when we ask what the real meaning of the word 'yoga' is, they say it means 'union'. But in the Dzogchen teaching, in the Vajrayana teaching, the word 'yoga' does not mean 'union'. In ancient times, at the time of Guru Padmasambhava, when he introduced Vajrayana teaching and Dzogchen in Tibet, there were many translators who were not only good at translating the words but also knew the real sense of the teaching. They translated the word 'yoga' as 'naljor' in Tibetan. This is a very important word. 'Naljor' is two words in Tibetan. 'Nal' or nalma' means how the real condition is. Everybody has his or her primordial state: that is the real condition. If there are ten people then they have ten nalma, real conditions. If we have knowledge of our real nature, then there is no difference between my nalma or his or her nalma. But although they are the same nature it doesn't mean that we become a single entity. We are just in this same nature, same knowledge, and everybody has his or her real nature, nalma.

'Jor' means we possess that knowledge. This is something that is very important. Any kind of sentient being has his or her nalma, real condition, but we are ignorant of it and we remain in dualistic vision. What is the difference between dualistic vision and the condition of nalma? The condition of nalma means beyond time and space. In our relative condition we cannot understand what beyond time and space means. This is the reason why in the Sutra teaching the Prajnaparamita is beyond explanation. In the Vajrayana it is explained just like Mahamudra and all these states are beyond explanation because to explain them we have to think and judge, and then establish something. When we try to understand through judging and thinking with our minds in time and space, how can we understand what is beyond?

### Mind and nature of mind

For example, in an ordinary way when we learn teaching, we talk about mind and nature of mind. How is our mind? We can observe our thoughts and if we remain just a little, some kind of thoughts arise. Immediately we ask 'chung, ne, dro sum': where do thoughts come from, where are they, and where do they disappear? When we follow teachings, teachers tell us to observe our thoughts in order to discover this. When thoughts arise we try to see where they come from, but we cannot find anything and the thought disappears. When we don't find anything, then that is emptiness. But we do not remain in emptiness for long because another thought immediately arises. When I think to myself that I am searching for the thought but I haven't found anything, that is another thought. Immediately I search where this thought came from, but I cannot find anything. It is always emptiness. So we can understand that thoughts exist because if they didn't exist they wouldn't arise, even though we cannot find anything concrete.

What is the nature of the mind? Some people, particularly in the Sutra style of the teaching, say that they cannot find anything, only emptiness, and that this is the nature of the mind. This is not the nature of the mind. In the teaching this is what is called experi-

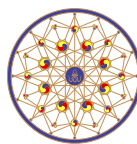
ence. We have many different kinds of experience, not only emptiness. We have learned everything in our lives through experience. If, for example, I want to know whether the taste of a certain food is sweet or sour, I don't need to do much research to discover what sweet and sour are. I already know because I have had experience of that, I have learned. If we were like newborn babies, we wouldn't have had that experience or have that knowledge and even if someone gave teaching and explained, we wouldn't understand.

In the Dzogchen Atiyoga teaching there is an example. If someone who has grown up never tasting anything sweet during their life and is curious about what sweet is, they may ask their parents and other people about it. But nobody can explain what sweet is if they have had no experience of it. We can write volumes of books explaining what sweet is, but how can we introduce a person who has never had that experience to what sweet is? The nature of mind is just like that, only a kind of concept. We know that mind exists because thought arises and is something alive. Since this mind exists then we think that there should be something like the nature of mind. We can talk about the nature of many things such as the nature of the elements, the nature of fire, etc., but to really discover we need to have experience. For example, we can give just a small piece of chocolate to a person who has never experienced sweet and he or she can taste in their mouth that it is sweet. There are different ways of presenting sweet but this is the way to discover it.

In the same way, we have learned everything in our lives through experience. For example, if a small child goes near a fire his parents will tell him not to go there because it is dangerous. However, the child cannot understand why it is dangerous; he only understands that his parents are not giving permission to go there. When the parents are not there, the child will go towards the fire and discover the problem of the heat - it isn't even necessary to touch it. We learn everything through experience. Sometimes the experience is concrete and has a material aspect, at times it may also be something related to our existence of voice at the energy level, or also be at the mental level.

When we are children as we grow up we pass through primary school, middle school, high school and university, learning many things with our minds. At the end of our studies we think that we know everything. It also means that we are qualified to do some job which is indispensable in our society, in our condition as human beings. However, when we talk about naljor, jor means we possess knowledge of how our real nature is. This is really important for everybody. We must discover and understand that a human being has the human condition. Each person has his or her condition and we pay respect to that. This is also the principle of the teaching that Buddha explained. ❁

Transcribed and edited by Liz Granger



## Membership 2016 and Using dzogchen.net

Julian King-Salter  
for the International Gakyil

**A**s we come to the end of a membership year, there are some important points for everyone to know.

We've asked the Gakyils of Gars and Lings to encourage all their members to register on dzogchen.net before the end of the year – in some cases this has meant a lot of support needed for those who feel they cannot do it for themselves. We don't have to leave this work just to membership coordinators – if you easily registered yourself and know clearly what to do, and you know people who have not registered yet and need help to do so, please go ahead and offer to help!

We've also asked the Gakyils to do their best to bring membership contributions and shares up to date (from Ling to Gar and Gar to IDC) – this depends on every individual member being up to date themselves with membership payments, whether made online or direct to Gar or Ling.

Basically, for the Gars and Lings and IDC to function, it is really important that we all renew our membership early in the year. Many people have had the tendency to wait till they go on a retreat to their Gar to renew their membership, or simply even to wait till the last moment of the year just to maintain continuity.

From 2016, there are some good practical reasons for everyone to renew in good time, at least before the end of March:

- access to Closed Webcasts, replays and associated restricted files will depend on membership being up to date and recorded online on our Membership Management System (MMS). Your dzogchen.net username and password will be what you use to access closed webcast and replays.

- continuity of membership can only be maintained by renewing before the end of March – otherwise it could be necessary to revert to being a Welcome Card Holder for 3 years

This may seem a little draconian to some, but really it is only a reflection of how things are in this world we live in – without financial resources, Gars and Lings can't be maintained, programs and activities can't be implemented and other services such as the webcast can't be provided – it is a natural consequence. So also if we want

ple, if you leave out your date of birth, you will not be registered. In case anyone still has concerns about data security, it is good to know that we are using best industry practices for data protection, encryption and user authorization.

### International Gakyil

We are also approaching the end of the first 3 year term for the **International Gakyil**. We have a date for the next Annual General Meeting, to be held at Dzamling Gar on Friday April 1st 2016. It'll be at noon to maximise the possibility of electronic

Login to membership system.

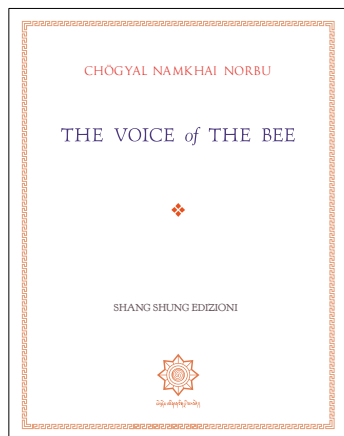
these things to continue, we should naturally want to do our best to maintain them through our membership contribution.

Also, it does not necessarily mean that you must have paid your full membership by the end of March. If you can do so, that is the ideal, but most Gars and Lings do offer a gradual payment option in some form. As long as you have entered into an arrangement to pay on a regular basis through the year, then it is considered that your membership is continuous and up to date. Gradual payment can also make it possible to be a member at a higher level – the higher financial contribution of sustaining and meritorious members remains very important. And if you have real financial difficulty, please do speak with your Gakyil to make some arrangement you can manage.

One very important point about registering on dzogchen.net – it is essential to complete all the personal information in the registration form, otherwise your registration will not be successful. For exam-

participation in all time zones. This will include an overall review of what has been undertaken and achieved over the three year period, and what remains to be done to be complete our initial mandate. Currently several existing members have indicated their willingness, or at least availability, to continue for a second three year term in order to complete the basic structural work for the organisation of the global community – such as completing alignment of Gars and Lings, completing the establishment of our web portal and overall communication strategy, and continuing the work of establishing guidelines for many areas of Community activity. However it is also agreed that we need appropriately qualified new members to spread the workload and smooth eventual transition – watch this space! ©



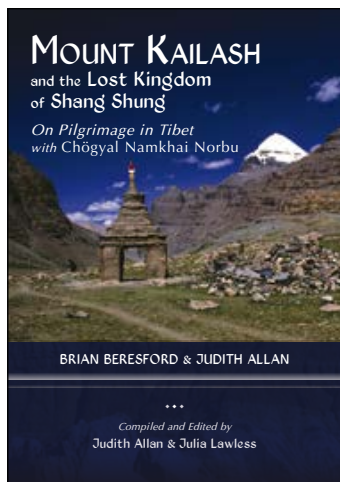


## The Voice of the Bee: A Song of Experience from a Pilgrimage to Mount Kailash

by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

**T**he Voice of the Bee: A Song of Experience from a Pilgrimage to Mount Kailash is the open and sincere expression of Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's feelings during a journey undertaken in August 1988 together with a group of people from the Dzogchen Community. The destination was Mount Kailash (gangs ti se), a place sacred to Bönpos, Buddhists, and Shaivites. Due to obstacles and unfavorable conditions, a detour had to be taken, involving several thousand miles and lasting one month. During that month of hardship and deprivation, spent almost entirely on board buses, all the emotions, limitations, and negativities of human nature came unmistakably to light. We find them expressed with extreme clarity and impartiality in this short song.

<http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com>



## Mount Kailash and the Lost Kingdom of Shang Shung: On Pilgrimage in Tibet with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

By Brian Beresford & Judith Allan  
Compiled and Edited by Judith  
Allan & Julia Lawless

**T**his book is the story of a journey to Mount Kailash under the guidance of the Tibetan Dzogchen master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It also recounts the history of the adventures that led to the

discovery of the ancient capital of the forgotten kingdom of Shang Shung. Above all, it is the account of a spiritual pilgrimage: as all pilgrims believe, the path will take them on an inner voyage of transformation from which they will return a changed person. Even when faced with obstacles, hardship, or unforeseen circumstances, there is no turning back.

Based on accurately archived notes of Brian Beresford, a professional photographer and filmmaker, the book contains the records of his many meetings, conversations, and interviews with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu regarding the history and significance of Shang Shung, providing rare and first-hand insight into Tibetan culture, as well as making for lively reading.

<http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com>

### Shang Shung Foundation · International Institute for Tibetan Culture

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## The Ka-Ter Translation Project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria

Five weekend-courses for Beginners with Prof. Fabian Sanders in 2016

**Dates:** 9–10 Jan, 13–14 Feb, 19–20 Mar, 30 Apr–1 May, 4–5 Jun 2016

**Venue:** Merigar and skype/screen sharing conference (can be followed from anywhere)

**Topic and purpose:** During these five courses we will read practice texts of the Dzogchen Community and translate word by word, extensively explaining the terminology, the grammar, the syntax and the structure of the text.

Students will increase their knowledge of Tibetan texts and learn important terminology. Those who wish can attempt to read, analyse and translate sentences.

**Who can participate:** In order to be able to participate one needs to have received the transmission of the practice from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

**Costs:**

All five weekend-courses for members of the Shang Shung Institute Austria: 210.- €.

One weekend-course for members of the Shang Shung Institute Austria: 49.- €.

One weekend-course for non-members of the Shang Shung Institute Austria: 95.- €.

Three weekend-courses for intermediate and advanced students and members of the Shang Shung Institute Austria with Prof. Fabian Sanders in 2016

**Dates:** 6–7 Feb, 16–17 Apr, 28–29 May 2016

**Venue:** Merigar and skype/screen sharing conference (can be followed from anywhere).

**Topic and purpose:** For intermediate/advanced students who are already able to

read and translate Tibetan texts at various paces.

Students will in turn read some passages from a text and attempt a translation, alternative versions and suggestions will be discussed. The texts translated are to be prepared for publications.

**Who can participate:** In order to be able to participate

· one has to be a member of the Shang Shung Institute Austria in 2016

· one must have a good knowledge of Tibetan grammar.

**Costs:** All three weekend-courses: 120.- €.

One weekend-course: 49.- €.

Please get more information about the Ka-Ter Translation Project and the activities of the Shang Shung Institute Austria on our website: [www.ssi-austria.at](http://www.ssi-austria.at) where you can book your courses and get your membership.

Prof Fabian Sanders will also hold a seminar on

Introduction to Classical Tibetan Language, parts I & II

at the Shang Shung Institute UK in London from February 22–24 & 26–28, 2016.

Get more information at [www.shangshunguk.org](http://www.shangshunguk.org)

It would be great if you could participate in the various initiatives of the Shang Shung Institute Austria in 2016 and if you could support our activities by becoming a member.

Oliver Leick

Director of the Shang Shung Institute Austria

## Thanking Donors and Translators

**D**ear supporters and friends of the Shang Shung Institute Austria, I take the occasion to say thank you from the bottom of my heart to all donors and supporters of the activities of the Shang Shung Institute Austria in 2015.

As you know, the main activity of the Shang Shung Institute Austria is related to Tibetan language, mainly the Ka-Ter translation project, the translation project Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the Dra Thalgyur Translation Project, and all seminars and courses on Tibetan language – like the courses for beginners, for intermediate and advanced students or the annual Training for Translators from Tibetan.

Due to the extraordinary and wonderful work of the translators Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco, Jim Valby and others, these books could be published in 2015 and thus are a great example of the work that results from the various translation projects:

- Secret Map of the Body
- the 2 books on The Dance of the Vajra
- the explanation and teachings on Dorje Trolöd

The translation work of many other books is already finished and the books are in the editing or publishing process, which means that these books will be published in 2016.

The translators are continuously working on several other texts.

**Dear translators,**

Thank you so much for your incredible and marvellous work. All these initiatives and results could not have been achieved without your support. It was you who have been donating over all these years since 2002, when Rinpoche founded the Ka-Ter Translation Project. It was just due to your donations that we could keep up with all our work and that we could provide the Com-

» continued on the following page

## The Earthquake in Nepal on April 25

Helping children overcome the trauma of the earthquake

I came to Nepal in early September to work within ASIA Onlus Nepal in education related programs for six weeks. Four months had passed, relief work was going on and people finally had the energy and strength to talk about the earthquake. My plan was to focus mainly on the severely hit Rasuwa district. The area suffered serious damage during the main earthquake and hundreds of aftershocks. Since I have worked with education for the greater part of my working life, I wanted to understand how the children had experienced the earthquake, and how they were recovering. I also wanted to give my concrete support in the best possible way that I could.



I did not manage to meet many children though, not to mention having conversations about the topic. Not at all. My time was too short. You need to stay with the same children for some time, get to know them well, and build up a good relationship, which is close to friendship. This did not happen, but what happened was that I

met many organizations that are involved in psycho-social activities with teachers and other school officials, with the purpose of identifying the children suffering from earthquake traumas and shocks. So this article will talk about children's reactions and feelings as told by the adults who faced the children's immediate reactions as par-

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munity with the availability of having the translation of mind-blowing Tibetan texts of wisdom in English. Thank you again.

Please make it possible for us to continue our precious work so that future generations can also benefit from it.

You can make a donation using Paypal or you can make a money order to our bank account:

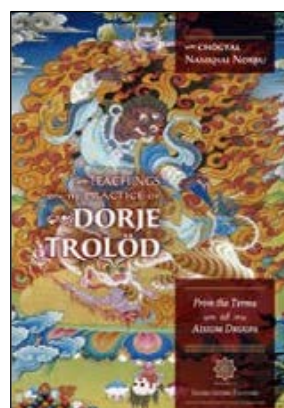
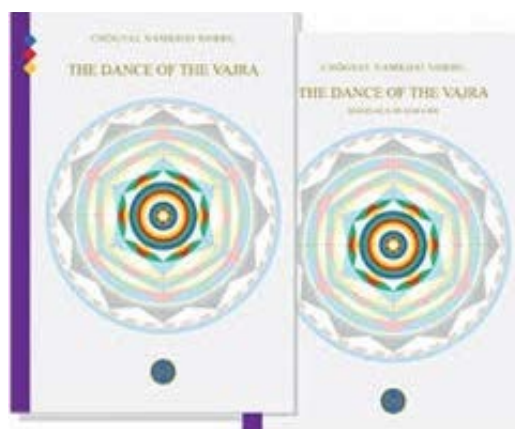
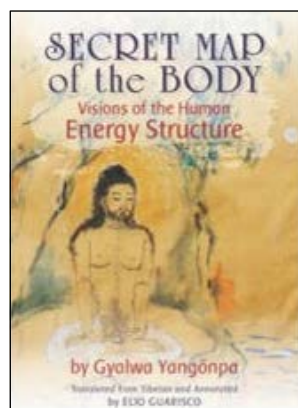
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On behalf of the Shang Shung Institute Austria team I send you my very best seasons greetings and wish you a very happy and prosperous new year.

Once more thank you and many Tashi Deleks.

Oliver Leick  
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ents, teachers and education officials. The long-standing work of ASIA in Nepal was re-focused to take into consideration the earthquake damages and the living conditions in the communities.

### **Regular ASIA activities before the earthquake**

ASIA started working in Nepal in 2008 implementing their programs mainly in two districts, Kavre and Rasuwa. Their activities have focused on improving the quality of education by building schools, delivering scholarships for children, developing water and sanitation systems and developing environmentally sustainable livelihoods.

In northern Nepal, in the VDC (Village Development Committee) of Yarsa and Saramthali (Rasuwa district), where the destruction was total and 95% of the buildings collapsed, ASIA was the first to arrive. ASIA is building 29 temporary classrooms in order for activities at 18 of the schools that collapsed to start up again and to allow 1,698 children to go to school.

In the VDC of Saramthali (Rasuwa District) ASIA has helped more than 6200 people with the distribution of materials for the construction of shelters (huts) to protect themselves from the monsoon this year, and in the VDC of Baluwa (Kavre District) ASIA is helping 11,200 people by distributing shelters (huts) and 1600 kits of seeds of local horticultural crops, tools, natural fertilizers and pesticides in order to restart the economy of this area as soon as possible. ASIA's efforts focused on post-earthquake reconstruction: the aim is to train local staff to rebuild villages and schools with traditional materials using anti-seismic techniques.

During the time I was in Nepal ASIA was organizing truck transport to bring building materials, tool kits, bamboo for building beds, blankets to survive the cold winter weather soon to come, solar panels and food to the villages which had suffered severe earthquakes. Due to political reasons Nepal is also suffering from fuel and gas shortages, which make the lives of the people in the villages even harder.

The planning of the new projects "Enhancing Livelihoods in the earthquake hit areas" focused on promoting cultivation of non-timber forest products, medicinal and aromatic plants among farming communities in the Rasuwa district. The partners preparing the project proposal include ASIA Onlus, the Nepal Agroforestry Foundation and the Non Formal Education Center.

### **Where were you during the earthquake?**

The questions asked all the time during my stay from both adults and children was, where were you during the quake? Luckily the 7.8 Richter quake took place on Saturday. The children were not at school and adults not at work. However, depending on the focus area, many children were hurt and everyone saw the consequences. The Rasuwa District Education Office Planning Officer told us about the saddest experience. There were children playing in the schoolyard when the earthquake took place. An open area is a safe place in general and those who stayed outside survived. Some children had attended training on what to do in case of an earthquake and immediately remembered that the safest place is under a table. They ran inside the school and died because the whole school collapsed. According to the Planning Officer, the children were given contradictory information by the organizers.

### **People and children need rest and support**

There are of course many children among the 8,600 dead and the 16,800 wounded after the quake. 2.8 million people have been forced to move away from their homes because of damages and most of the people in the houses that have collapsed have children. Those families were given a space to live in temporary houses in the camps prepared for internally displaced people (IDP). Those houses, as well as the temporary learning centers (TLCs) were built of iron sheets. TLCs are built to serve as schools as long as the permanent learning centers are built within the next 2-3 years. Teachers and NGO representatives agreed that it is hard for some children to study in the TLCs because they can be hot in the summer, slightly cold in the winter, and make a noise during the rainy season. Parents, children and education officials hoped that the construction work of the permanent learning centers, permanent schools, would be faster as planned.

The principal of one school in Rasuwa said that the school was closed for one month after the earthquake and another month during the rainy season. It was simply impossible for children to come to school. At this school one building with two classrooms totally collapsed, the toilets collapsed and the children's playground was damaged. The principal went on to say that even seeing the new temporary constructed buildings makes children remember the earthquake and they

get quiet and sad. We were also told that the very fact that many children saw so many dead people makes them sad and tired. Some teachers in the remote areas also travelled to their home areas, e.g. to the capital Kathmandu, to rest and get over the earth shocks and traumas. There is an obvious shortage of teachers as well, said the principal.

### **Sharing, caring and loving – teachers training in psycho-social education and counseling**

I learned that there are many organizations arranging training for teachers on psycho-social counseling. In Rasuwa ASIA has already carried out two training programs of two days in collaboration with Global Action Nepal and Langtang Area Conservation Society. The teachers for the training came from the villages where ASIA was already active before the earthquake. I was very pleased to get a chance to attend the third training session with eighteen participants from Yarsha village.

The focus of the workshop was to give tools to the teachers to carry out psycho-social counseling techniques in their own classrooms. At the beginning each participant shared important childhood memories with another member of the group and then shared the memories with the whole group. The memories made us aware of how important childhood experiences can be.

Practical exercises covered different teaching-learning methods, such as linguistic, interpersonal, spatial, intrapersonal, naturalist, logical/mathematical, bodily/sport-related and musical activities. Children can, for instance, learn by combining these methods through play, sports, dances and outdoor activities. The games which include moving in the class, finding questions and answers on small pieces of paper, allow fun and relaxation while learning. In between the practical exercises, facilitators gave theoretical background on the symptoms of disturbed and traumatized children's behavior: the children may urinate in their bed at night, suffer from regression, aggressive behavior, unwillingness to go to schools, start staring, be monotonous, be nostalgic, start weeping, isolate themselves, not go to school or have epileptic symptoms. Parents who do not know how to solve the situation often contact traditional healers in search of help. The guidance given by the facilitators

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was clear. Fear is not always bad. It is good for self-protection and awareness. Most important of all possible methods are love and care and to remember that sharing is caring.

Towards the end of the two-day training the four groups shared their own feelings about memories of peaceful, sad, angry and happy moments in life. We heard about the teachers' memories of fishing in a peaceful lake, sad feelings when they themselves were at school and were punished and even beaten by their teachers, anger when they were blamed without reason or when they quarreled with classmates and happiness when they were with friends, received nice presents and even when parents found a lifetime partner for a young man and prepared the marriage ceremonies.

### Children who lost both their parents

According to the child rights organizations there are 600 orphanages/children's homes where about 16,000 children are living. Many children have moved away from their families and communities since the civil war started over ten years ago. After the earthquake there have been a lot of cases in Nepal where parents have sent their children to children's homes on false promises. There are people in Nepal who try to benefit financially from the situation by establishing children's homes and collecting money from international supporters. Child rights organizations and UNICEF have started to inform parents about these activities by establishing so called Child Friendly Places in the area of internally displaced people camps. Parents and children's relatives are advised by the organizers not to give their children away. The organizers also ask the parents questions such as, what they think children need for growth, how parents and relatives think that can be achieved, and what the guardians see as challenges to their children's development.

ASIA is going to rebuild the schools destroyed by the earthquake in the VDC of Yarsa and Saramthali in Rasuwa District, in order to give to the children a protected place where they can start to rebuild their future.

## Make Your Gift in Solidarity with ASIA

[www.ASIA-ngo.org/new/gifts-of-solidarity](http://www.ASIA-ngo.org/new/gifts-of-solidarity)

ASIA's gifts of solidarity are a concrete gesture that unites you to the countries in the Himalayan area, in particular to Tibet and Nepal. If you also want to show everyone your proximity to this world that is so far yet so close, you can wear the **"#Namaskar4Nepal"** t-shirt and help the Association to complete their projects in this area. Or you can choose to **give yourself or another the gift of a Thokcha**: legend has it that they were not forged by human hands but fell to earth from heaven. Today according to Tibetan tradition, these "objects" are sacred, "magical" and attract good luck by protecting people wearing them from evil demons. You can treat yourself or someone else to the **ASIA 2016 calendar** dedicated to Nepal so that this emergency is not forgotten. Choosing an instant con-



nection will unite you with Nepal. **Namaskar**, the traditional Nepalese greeting. By buying the calendar you help the Association to carry out concrete actions in a country devastated by earthquake. Finally, if you want to make a really special gift, you can choose **ASIA's bracelet with the Thokcha pendant**: a lucky charm that first of all will bring your generosity to Nepal to rebuild schools destroyed by the earthquake.

With your action of solidarity you will be side by side with ASIA in constructing new schools, rebuilding monasteries, and helping those who have lost everything in the earthquake.

**Make your gift in solidarity with ASIA. This Christmas choose to give the gift of generosity, go to: [www.ASIA-ngo.org/new/gifts-of-solidarity](http://www.ASIA-ngo.org/new/gifts-of-solidarity)**

ASIA's activities support both long term and emergency education development in the districts of Rasuwa and Kavre. Children need a good and safe physical learning environment, as well as teachers and parents who can support them and give guidance when disturbing memories from the earthquake unsettle their minds.

Participate in the campaign, visit the webpage [www.namaskarfornepal.org](http://www.namaskarfornepal.org) ©

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# Update on the Dzamling Gar Project

Giovanni Boni December 6, 2015

## The Gonpa Project

The project for the Gonpa is still in the phase of being concluded. We have received approval from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu about how it will be done and already have some designs for the roof covering, however, the project has not yet been presented to the local authorities for approval. Our program is to start work on it in April 2016 but this may not be easy and we will probably have to delay the start because we won't be ready in April. We will probably start next summer, in 2016.

## The Houses

We are going ahead quite quickly with this work because we have an agreement between the international Gars and Dzamling Gar in which Dzamling Gar anticipates part of the funds that are needed for the construction of the houses. In return, when the Gars make use of the houses they will return the funds that were used for construction to Dzamling Gar. The Merigar house, the Tsegylgar house, and the Kunsangar house will be the first to be completed and I think that work on them will be finished by January 2016.

Today, December 6, one of the gakyil members from Merigar West was here to take a look at the progress of the house and to discuss how it will be furnished. There are decisions to be made by each of the Gars about different aspects of finishing the houses such as equipping them, establishing communal areas in the upper part of the houses, possibly creating a small area upstairs for a person in charge of the house, whether there should be kitchen areas in each of the apartments or just a communal kitchen, etc. We would like each Gar to send a representative here to come and see what will be needed in each house in order to make them inhabitable.

For furnishing the houses, we have found a warehouse in which several Tenerife hotels have deposited furniture that they no longer use. The representative from Merigar visited this place and was able to choose some furnishings for the house that were free.

Although the first houses will soon be ready, it will not be possible to live in them



Some of the workers involved in the Dzamling Gar project.

from a legal point of view. In order to have the permission to inhabit them, all eight houses need to be finished, and that still needs some time. We will finish some of the houses before others and we may use them, even though they won't legally have the permission to be inhabited. We will finish the others later and expect all of them to be completed before 2017. Then we can officially use all of them.

In April or May we are trying to organize a Conference at the house for the doc-

each Gar would manage the four apartments in their house for four or five months a year keeping them available for their members. The other months of the year, if the apartments are free for different periods, they could offer them to members from other Gars. This means that there would be single management that would optimize the use of all the apartments so that they can earn as much as possible. The more the apartments earn, the sooner the amount borrowed to build them can be repaid.



Some plans of the Center. Still a work in progress

tors and health workers who will start to work here. We will also try to have ready the house for those who need medical attention. Work should be finished on both these houses by the end of February 2016 although that does not mean that they can be used because they will still need to be decorated and equipped.

Regarding the regulations for use of the houses when they are all completed (in 2017), we are still a bit behind with this. We have to create a set of regulations about how each of the houses will be used with rules about the common spaces and the private ones. Each Gar will be responsible for the way their house is used but should respect the parameters of the other houses. We think that the management of the apartments should be united. For example,

At the moment, all of this is just an idea, however we have to create these regulations as soon as possible, before the houses are used. It will be a document approved and adopted by all the Gars regarding single management.

## Fundraising

Fundraising for the Gonpa is still going ahead mainly through Rinpoche's work with his Evolution Creations. The amounts coming in for the Gonpa project and are not being touched. For other donations we would like to warmly thank the donors, most of whom wished to remain anonymous. It is thanks to them and the amounts coming in from the Gars that other work is going ahead. ©

# Lekdanling – New Center for UK Community

The UK community opened a new center in London in October 2015. Lekdanling is a modern studio space in the new conversion of an old ceramic factory in Hackney, London's coolest and most exciting area. Offering excellent facilities for teaching and practice – including a dedicated therapy room – the center is also home to the UK branch of the Shang Shung Institute, which has developed an impressive and innovative program.

The center is located on a quiet street, on the ground floor of an upbeat commercial and residential development. Immediate neighbors in the building already include an art gallery and another yoga center. Within a couple of minutes' walk, visitors can be right in the heart of Hackney, a borough of East London which has seen an extraordinary transformation over the last ten years, attracting many young creatives priced out of the more established bohemian enclaves of the north and west of the city. New shops, restaurants and bars have



storage space for such things as cushions and mats for meditation and yantra yoga.

Lekdanling complements Kunselling, the UK community's retreat center in rural Wales, which has been in operation since 1998. Kunselling is in a beautiful, remote region of the countryside and perfect for residential courses and retreats. In recent years, however, numbers in the London community have grown to a degree which merited a center in the city, somewhere which can be visited during the day and in the evening. It was becoming increasingly impractical and uneconomical to hold practices and events in people's homes or in rented premises. With Rinpoche's blessing, the idea for a London center was born.

tic and out of reach. However, members of the community – including donors from abroad and help from the International Gakyil – were extraordinarily generous. Londoners, of course, showed a particular commitment to the project, making up the bulk of those who became "Friends of the London Center" by setting up a standing order financial payment.

Once contracts were complete – not without a last-minute VAT drama – work began to fit-out the space. The gakyil hired a young architect, who had a number of ethical, charity-related jobs in his portfolio and who had also done work for a member of the London community. The main contractors were a small firm headed by another member of the community. And aided by the contribution of some karma yoga, a bare, concrete shell was transformed into a state-of-the-art studio.

The UK Dzogchen Community will be sharing the space with the UK Shang Shung Institute. Since its beginning in 2010, SSI UK has collaborated with two prestigious institutions, the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A), to showcase the academic and artistic aspects of Tibetan culture. It has also launched Insight Tours, organizing trips to countries of Buddhist culture and heritage, as part of its fundraising drive.

Lekdanling's official opening event combined talks by painter Robert Beer and calligrapher Paul Antonio, with an exhibition and demonstration of their respective arts. The programme for 2016 includes a Tibetan language course with Dr Fabian Sanders, an ongoing academic lecture series featuring luminaries such as Sangseraima Ujeed, James Low, Jamyang Oliphant, Augusta Thomson, Donatella Rossi and Giorgio Dal-lorto, and a weekend workshop on dharma and psychotherapy with Nick Simmons.



The first course held at the new Ling was Dream Yoga with Michael Katz.

Photo by Raf Portas

sprung up like mushrooms; bearded hipsters abound. The local park – a green oasis with a canal running through it – has gained a new lease of life.

The main area of the center boasts a sprung wooden floor, ideal for vajra and khaita dance. To one side, beside large windows, is a book shop and reading area. Behind a sliding screen, there is a dedicated therapy room, served by its own en-suite shower room. Beside a lobby, with coat hooks and shoe storage, there are two more toilets, including one for disabled people. A small kitchen is cunningly concealed in one corner. And there is abundant

Eventually, after much searching of the commercial property market, a suitable property was found in September 2014: in a good location, big enough to contain a vajra dance mandala and realistically priced. Starting with quite a small seed capital, the UK gakyil paid enough money to take the property off the market and began fundraising in earnest, hoping to hold off for as long as possible the date the vendor demanded an exchange of contracts. By June, the optimism had paid off: the ink was dry on the contract and the purchase was complete.

Those ten months were a time of intense activity for the UK Gakyil; at times, the cost of the property seemed unrealis-

[www.dzogchencommunityuk.org](http://www.dzogchencommunityuk.org)  
[www.shangshunguk.org](http://www.shangshunguk.org)





# The Stupa of Perfect Victory

The construction of the Stupa of Perfect Victory is going on at Kunsangar North with the blessing of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

In the Buddhist tradition it is considered that a Stupa is a generator of spiritual energy, of special blessings, of a state of joy and peace, with the purpose of manifesting harmony and peace for all sentient beings, prosperity in the region and harmonization of natural forces. Everyone who sees it, circumambulates it and does offerings, accumulates great spiritual merits and receives the cause for liberation from suffering.

## Construction stages

On 6th of July, His Holiness the Dalai Lama's birthday, we did the first concrete works and laid the concrete foundation of the building.

Then in the Stupa's foundation we laid a bumpa made by Rinpoche for controlling negativities and bringing prosperity to the area. Guided by experienced Stupa constructors from Bhutan and Nepal our karma yogis made and placed all the necessary zahas, rilba, zungs, as well as the tsokshin – the stupa's tree of life and central channel, various mandalas and vases and other necessary objects and substances.

Now all the most important and hard work has already been done.

At the moment we are elaborating the project of the metallic top which after being made and covered with gold will crown the 14-meter long Stupa of Perfect Victory. After we will have to do the inner finishing of the Stupa and landscaping of the surrounding territory.

## How to support this Project

We are happy to continue this project and invite you to help us according to your possibility for this good cause! Unifying our energy for this cause we create infinite merits for the prosperity and liberation of all sentient beings!

You can make your offering through PayPal: <https://www.paypal.me/stupa> (our Paypal address is [stupa.kunsangar@gmail.com](mailto:stupa.kunsangar@gmail.com)).

To know more about the construction of the Stupa of Perfect Victory you can visit our sites:



Web-site: <http://kunsangar.ru/index.php/about-us/stupa-of-perfect-victory.html>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/stupa.su>

Facebook group: <http://www.facebook.com/groups/302357539844324/>

With best wishes,  
Kunsangar North Gakyil







## The SMS Base Level exam at Samtengar, China, September 23–24, 2015.

Chinese practitioners were enthusiastic about the Santi Maha Sangha Base exam, initiation and retreat. Two SMS teachers, Wes Guo and Che Goh, spent over 10 hours per day for 3 days and 2 nights, testing 190 candidates. Fewer questions were permitted by Rinpoche with much higher efficiency. It was a tremendous success.

## The SMS Level 1 Training at Samtengar, China, September 25–30, 2015.

The initiation and the 6 day retreat was intense. Rinpoche gave a fantastic teaching on the SMS Level 1 and students were interested and concentrated, especially when he referred to the Chinese Zen tradition from time to time.



## The Longsal Ati'i Gongpa teaching retreat at Samtengar, China, October 2–7, 2015.

The teaching title was not new, but the students were attentive and gave positive feedback. All were happy and satisfied.

## Public talk at Beijing University, China, October 9, 2015.

It has been 26 years since Rinpoche last lectured at Beijing University. There was very active interaction especially when it came to the Q&A session. It was an unprecedented event and will be a milestone in the history of the spread of the Dzogchen teachings in China.





# Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Traveling the World



Bardo Teaching Sealed with Hum at Kyoto, Japan, October 15–18, 2015.

Photo by S. Diamond



Tregchod Terma of Rigdzin Jangchub Dorje in Taiwan, October 23–27, 2015.

Guru Rinpoche Day.

Photo by S. Diamond



Retreat at Namgyalgar North, Australia, November 3–8, 2015.

Dance and cafe.

Photo by J. Cornall



Retreat at Tashigar South, Argentina, December 4–8, 2015.

.Khaita.



Ödzer Chenma Retreat at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, Spain, December 28–January 1, 2016.

Approximately 300 people attended this 5-day retreat of Ödzer Chenma at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, Spain with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Photo by Ludovit Mianovsky

# Vajra Dance Video Tutorial

In 2015, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's Root Text of the Vajra Dances, translated by Adriano Clemente, was published in English and became available to all Dzogchen Community Members. Translations and other books related to the Vajra Dances open to the general public will follow. In the years following the last Vajra Dance Video (2008), when the first drafts of the Root Text translation became available, we checked and compared the detailed, refined and incredibly inspiring descriptions

motivated to participate in intensive Vajra Dance practice retreats and Global Practice events together when the possibility arises.

The video sequences will be placed together with the related Root Text explanation, which in time will be made available in all languages. The online Video Tutorial materials will be made available through [www.dzogchen.net](http://www.dzogchen.net).

## Shooting the Video

All necessary video shooting was completed in Dzamling Gar between the 15th October and the 6th November 2015. The film set was set up in the Dzamling Gar gonpa, which was exclusively reserved for this

We target to finish the editing works of the Vajra Dance video material by September 2016. Once this is done we will be able to select the right tracks for the purpose of the first release in the form of a DVD. We will do our best to be ready with the new Vajra Dance DVD by December 2016. Perhaps the downloadable version will be available too.

In parallel we want to start developing an interactive e-learning platform to bring the VD right into practitioners' homes. Kamil Selwa of the Shang Shung Foundation at Merigar West is doing some research in that respect, investigating available software and open source solutions which we could adopt, not only for the Vajra Dance courses, but for



for each step and movement by Rinpoche with our actual Dance practice. The result is that we now have a better understanding of the timing and movements and have updates and changes to make that are not shown in the video demonstration of 2008.

For this reason, we decided to make a new tutorial video available for all Vajra Dance practitioners and instructors, and to preserve the Vajra Dances in the correct way for future generations. Beside a complete demonstration of the Vajra Dances, it will include an easy to follow and understandable animated demonstration of each of the many sequences in relation to all Vajra Dances. This Tutorial will be probably made available in an online format for the members of the International Dzogchen Community and some parts will be made available to the general public. We also plan, if possible and practical, a more interactive approach to learning and for memorising the Vajra Dances.

The Vajra Dance Tutorial will be useful for all practitioners, particularly those with no immediate access to an available Mandala as it will offer the possibility to study and memorise better at home, remaining more

purpose for more than three weeks. A professional camera team with equipment and set-up was involved.

The project team consisted of the instructors of the Vajra Dance (Prima Mai, Rita Renzi, Robert Czabanski, Zoltan Cser, Monika Lakatos) professional film makers (Izabela Jaroszevska – director/camera, Maurizio Mingotti – camera, Pieter Kiewiet de Jonge, Marc Beneria), editor (Mirella D'Angelo), sound engineer (Michal Gibowski), make-up & costume (Luda Kislichenko) and technical (Przemek Sumelka) assistants, script supervisor (Roxana Sciacca), catering service (Lilia Shashkova/Andrea & Ignazio Bernard) – all members of our Community.

## Post Production and Editing

Now that we have concluded shooting, we are getting into the post-production phase – editing that will later be followed by selection of the material for the purpose of the video tutorial and publishing.

In parallel we are investigating development of the online interactive platform for the purpose of e-learning as well as mobile applications for Android and iOS based mobile appliances.

all interactive educational projects and activities that our Community can run online.

Most likely in January 2016 we should have a pool of options to choose from. Then we will translate them into resources such as labor, timeframe, and funds.

We will come back with further news in January/February 2016.

## Fundraising

We take this opportunity to warmly thank all the donors who have been supporting this project so generously. We hope with our global Dzogchen Community fundraising approach, you may feel inspired to offer an amount to the Vajra Dance Tutorial project, large or small, according to your circumstances, so that we can complete the project.

[www.projects.dzamlinggar.net/support-the-global-gar-main/vajra-dance-tutorial-project](http://www.projects.dzamlinggar.net/support-the-global-gar-main/vajra-dance-tutorial-project)

with love and best wishes,  
The Vajra Dance Tutorial Team

For more information please contact our project manager Piotr Marcik:  
[piotr.marcik@gmail.com](mailto:piotr.marcik@gmail.com)







# Focus on Tashigar



Rinpoche and Rosa with practitioners at Rinpoche's birthday lunch.

## The Origins of Tashigar South

### The Choice of the Land

Alicia Caballero

Translation by Patricia Feldman

Tashigar South is located in the rural town of El Durazno, Tanti, in the province of Cordoba, not far from the geographical center of this country, south of Lake San Roque. It is surrounded at the West by Los Gigantes mountain range, and its peak, Champaqui (9500 ft); at its slopes, condors nest and teach their young to fly, in a place called La Quebrada del Condorito.

In the East surrounds Sierras Chicas, the Small Hills, and its peak, the Uritorco, a place where it is said flying saucers land and enter to Ears, the secret city leading to the center of the Earth. As you can see, important people have visited our land since long ago!

In fact, Tanti means in Quechua: Meeting Place. And certainly, different tribes would come down there to meet and perform their celebrations.

El Durazno creek meanders the area, offering us pools and cascades, places for our enjoyment in the summer; the stream is a branch of the Yuspe River, birthplace of rivers that feed the city of Cordoba and its nearby towns, and for it the area was declared Water Reserve.

This was the place chosen by Ramon Touceda, Spanish immigrant, back in the 50's, to create a biological park as a token of gratitude to Argentina.

He and his wife had arrived to Buenos Aires after the Great War, with nothing on except their wish to work and progress here. They established a grocery store, then a supermarket, then a chain of supermarkets and after years of hard work they reached their dream goal.

They chose El Durazno to make their dream come true, by then this place was an empty mountain, just wild vegetation was there, so with the help of agronomical engineers they started to plant one by one the trees that surround the site: eucalyptus, pines, fruit trees, and it all generously started growing with the help of man.

When the vegetation was developed enough, the fauna came, bought from a zoo in Buenos Aires: foxes, bobcats, skunks, of course horses, and anything else that would adapt to this type of terrain, and

were set in couples in order to mate, in freedom.

In the meantime, Touceda was building his house in what today is the Ashram, and the main house of Tashigar for his brothers and nephews, as he and his wife had no children.

The house held the kids in the summer, and it filled the place with their laughter and joy. All these was told to me by the eldest of them, when she was already old, upon a visit to Tashigar, and in tears told me the place was a paradise, a happy place for all.

Each New Year's eve the main house (now Tashigar) would dress for a party and all the neighbors were invited with barbecue, wine, dance and singing.

This place is the one our master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, chose in November 1989, after the first retreat in Alta Gracia, to establish the Dzogchen Community.

We were just a bunch of friends practicing together, and with love and devotion dedicated ourselves to build up the Gar there. In December 1990, the master initiated the Gar with a retreat of the "Song of Vajra". Practitioners from all over the globe accompanied us and helped us for the occasion.

The retreats were held under the trees by then, and only later a temporary Gonpa

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# The Origins of Tashigar South

## The Invitation

Jorge Stolkner

Translation Patricia Feldman

In the fortunate year of 1989, in New York (where I used to travel regularly to teach and practice my profession), as I walked one night in the streets of Tribeca with Jennifer Fox, who was my friend and at whose loft I stayed, I saw a small sign announcing that the Tibetan Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was to give a conference at the Samaya Foundation on “Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen”. I immediately told Jennifer that we had to go.

In order to make you understand the kind of impact that this conference had on me, let me say that my interest for Tibetan Buddhism dated from many years back, and that apart from the few teachings that I had received, I had read some twenty books on the subject (including an episode of hypothermia, for trying to practice tummo following a book of Alexandra David-Neel).

It all led only to a great confusion and I came to see that it was necessary that I understood the methodological basis of how that labyrinth of methods fit together, and whether or not I could find a possible order .....

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was built, the one that later on would become our now beautiful Gompa, with two mandalas for the Dance.

A dark retreat cabin was also built, a restaurant and also a guest house.

Today, 25 years later, as I watch Tashigar South develop more and more, with the coming of new generations of practitioners, one looks back and thinks: Tashigar South is the result of good intentions from the start.

A land plowed by a grateful immigrant who impregnated the field with trees, flowers and small animals, and that was waiting for the arrival of Master Namkhai Norbu to plant the seeds of the Dzogchen Teachings.

A LA LA HO We are grateful!!  
Alicia Caballero



Welcome gate.

Photo by Sarale Lizzdas

in it, before a practical application could take place in one's own life.

Michael Katz introduced Rinpoche and the next two hours changed my life: each part found its proper place according to the methods of renunciation, transformation and self-liberation and the marvelous, OH! truly marvelous, structure of Dharma appeared in front of me in the presence of this Man.

When Rinpoche came back to New York the next year I was ready for him, waiting for him; and after meeting him in person in the small apartment of Michael and following him to the retreat in Massachusetts, I bought and read the three books of teachings given in Conway so far and talked to the American disciples, that originally came from the same Gurudjieff school I had participated when I was young for three years.

The lamas I had found before had been reluctant to show the snowy peaks of the teachings, not wanting to generate confusion; but there was this master, showing with his palms open, the diamond of the ninth yana, and telling us he was hoping that some of us there present would realize rainbow body.

Less than a year later I began to talk about Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to the people who were in contact with me in Cordoba, and who had also by then become my friends in the search.

In a small group, we ceased our previous practices and started singing the Song of Vajra.

At that first retreat, I invited Rinpoche to come to teach in Cordoba, telling him

about a group of people interested for whom traveling to receive teachings from him would be difficult, and I offered myself as a translator, which I did for a few years. And Rinpoche said he would consider that possibility.



Adding outside space to the Gompa. Photo by Griselda Olivera

When I returned to Cordoba after my second retreat with Rinpoche, already three people from our small group: Marisa Alonso, Alicia Caballero and Ricardo Sued, traveled to Venezuela (where Rinpoche was to give a retreat) and reiterated the invitation once more, and Rinpoche accepted.

When Rinpoche finally came, after changing his prearranged schedule to include Cordoba, he didn't even ask us; it was implicit we were his students.

And the rest, as it goes, is history. ©





Rinpoche's birthday cake.

Photo by Caro Bossi



Rainbow Bridge.

Photo by Sarale Lizdas

## Relationship With Our Neighbors

Sergio Oliva

Translated by Patricia Feldman

The relationship with our neighbors of El Durazno and Tanti, the nearest township at less than 2 miles from the Gar, has been a process that has consolidated as time has gone by, since the 25 years Tashigar Sur was established. For the 15th birthday, we invited the Mayor and other authorities of Tanti, together with the local and regional Chiefs of Police, to a celebration that was held in the Gar presided by the Master, who was declared Guest of Honor by the Mayor of Tanti.

The Mayor was also there for the inauguration of the new Gonpa and the 20th anniversary of Tashigar Sur celebrations, in 2010.

At the beginning of 2012, the new City hall authorities invited us to take part of the summer events they had organized. That was very auspicious, since it was also our project and desire at that time to build closer relationships with our neighbors and to share with them what we have been developing along these years at the Gar. So we named our project "The Joy of Sharing".

The presentation was on Sunday, February 19th, 2012. A video of Yantra Yoga was shown, while explanations given by Fabio Andrico and an exhibition were taking place. A presentation of Kumar Kumari, supervised by Marisa Alonso and Carolina Mingolla was held, and it was followed by the Dance that Benefits Beings in the two mandalas, under the guidance of Prima Mai

and Adriana Dal Borgo. Lastly, the children of the Community sang and danced and later some Vajra brothers played some songs. It was an amazing meeting of about 300 people between the Community and the town's people, on an awesome summer night.

Next year, in the context of the celebrations of Tanti's Anniversary, we again took part, with artistic and cultural demonstrations, with brothers and sisters that came from all over the globe to assist to a retreat of our Master. That time, we again danced the Dance that Benefits All Beings, as well as an exhibition of Yantra Yoga.

The opening project was even bigger in 2014, this time organized as a cycle of activities called "The Way of Wellbeing", developed in the cities of Cordoba and Carlos Paz. In Carlos Paz a demonstration of Khaita, Dance of Vajra and Yantra Yoga took place, in a local park by the lake San Roque, while in Cordoba Fabio Andrico gave a course of Harmonious Breathing, and a well-attended Conference of the Master, where the book "Birth, Life and Death" in its Spanish version was presented, at the prestigious National University of Cordoba, one of the oldest of the continent.

The Project was reedited in 2015, this time with the title "Wellbeing and Evolution", and another conference of the Master on Ati Yoga in the same Hall of the University took place, together with the presentation of the Spanish version of the book "Tibetan Yoga of Movement, the Art and Practice of Yantra Yoga". This book was also presented in Buenos Aires, in Columbia Foundation and in the well-known bookstore and publishing house KIER. Two courses of Complete Breathing were also programmed, one at the Gar and the other in Buenos Aires, taught by Fabio Andrico.

On an institutional level, since 2001, the Government of the Province of Cordoba has declared the retreats of the Master of Cultural Interest several times. In 2010, the Municipality of Tanti declared the Master an Illustrious Citizen and dictated decrees of "Recognition of the Dzogchen Community for its invaluable contribution to the town of Tanti" and of "Declaration of Municipal Interest" on the 20th anniversary of the Dzogchen Community".

During 2014, the Province of Cordoba declared "The Cycle of Health, Wellbeing and Evolution" of Touristic Interest, and the Municipality of the capital city of Cordoba, declared Professor Namkhai Norbu "Guest of Honor of the City of Cordoba", and of "Cultural Interest" the cycle "The Path of Wellbeing". That year, the Municipality of Tanti once again honored the Master as an Illustrious Guest and included Fabio Andrico the same recognition for his dedicated work of transmitting the teachings of Yantra Yoga and Breathing in Tashigar Sur.

In the recent celebration of the 25th anniversary of Tashigar South, again our Master was declared "Illustrious Guest" and our Dzogchen Community and Tashigar South were also given recognitions through decrees of the Municipality of Tanti. Besides, the Shang Shung Foundation was declared of cultural interest due to the spreading of the Tibetan culture and medicine throughout our province and our country.

These recognitions and the integration obtained with the people around us, are but the confirmation of the reason why the Master decided to open the Dzogchen Teachings in the West: human nature is the same everywhere, and such an essential knowledge as Dzogchen is, transcends social, cultural and religious barriers. ☉



# “A Walk Through Our Gar”

Griselda Olivera

Translated by Patricia Feldman

We invite you to walk with us through our Gar. Let's pass the cattle gate, “tranquera”, the typical entrance in rural areas.

Through the main entrance we take an inside road that will lead us to the Gonpa (a few meters away). As we walk, we'll see at the left of the road, the house of the Master with its beautiful garden, an acclimatized swimming pool and a small grill for barbecues. Many hard-working hands join year round to embellish and replace plants and flowers, because animals and climate enjoy taking a ride on the place.



Tashigar South Gonpa.

en and dining hall very much used during retreats, where simple and delicious meals are prepared by a team of practitioners organized to that end.

In front of the “Main House”, we have the secretary's office and the Geko's house in one building, and a bit away the house of

Attached to this same building and in front of the external mandala, there is another facility to host yet seven more people.

Let's go back to the main internal road we took at the beginning: as we continue down heading towards the Gonpa we can see a multicolored bridge that leads us to



Tashi Park.

Photo by Griselda Olivera

Eating together.

Photo by Caro Bossi

As we continue on this road after a few meters, on the right we have the electric generator, a necessary investment, since the zone is prone to energy cuts quite often. We use it also during the retreats with the Master and it is used for the webcast, so we switch it on one hour before the Teachings and we cut it one hour later, to ensure there will be no problems in the broadcasting process.

A few meters away, you can see the “Main House”, the one we use to host practitioners or participants of the many retreats, courses and events organized year round. It has the capacity to host thirteen people.

At its side there is a small place that it is used during retreats as a Dharma bookstore.

In the same building, a few steps down on the left, we find ourselves at the kitch-

en the Gakyil. The Gakyil is formed by a group of practitioners that do not live on the premises and come, from far away sometimes, to the Gar for monthly meetings, so the Gakyil members stay in this Gakyil's house. The Gakyil is also present when retreats and courses are held, so they stay in this place also on these occasions.

On the right of these two buildings and up a few meters and a bit isolated we see the “Dark Retreat Cabin”.

As we return to the dining hall and continuing the steps down to the park, to this green area, the children's recreational area and the wonderful external mandala are receiving us: it's a place where practice and nature are joined. From here we can enjoy beautiful dawns while sweet sun rays caress our faces.

it. But before we cross it, let's take a minute to look at this area: at the left: fruit trees, a small pool and a lateral road; on the right and up: a little house, the Tashi Bar, and behind it a dining hall, a kitchen, public bathrooms and a washing area for the campers. The public bathrooms have a water heater fed on wood for showering. From the dining area of the campers we find ourselves at the green open area of the camping.

The kitchen and the dining hall offer the camper all the simple but necessary utensils, and offer shelter during cold or rainy days, but it is also a place to gather and chat around a kettle for “mates” (Argentinian drink) or coffee as people approach the place. People join to cook and share common meals, as the culinary creativity and the ingredients afford it!

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# The Way Is Done By Walking

Taking a look at Tashigar Mandala\*

\* Tashigar Mandala is the name of land where practitioners, inside the land of Tashigar South, have built residential homes.

Griselda Gálmez

Translated by Patricia Feldman

Tashigar Mandala started the day we went for a walk, back in 1996. Or perhaps a bit before, when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu told us during a morning talk about this idea he had, and this desire. He thought it was a great idea that prac-

It could also become an ideal place to continue our practices and spiritual growth. As we heard Rinpoche talking – even though very few of us had the means to carry on that pursuit, that dream – we all thought “What a magnificent idea, how much I want to have that privileged possibility!”, also because, we thought, one day the Master as well will live in Tashigar Mandala.

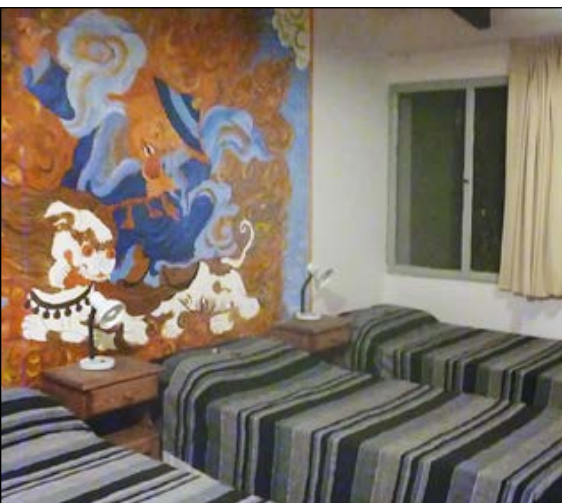
And then we went for a walk. We gathered at the front door of the main house, where the Master was staying back then, and started heading towards the dark retreat cabin, and beyond. He was leading that adventure, joyous, and we were close around him so as not to miss any of his words. We were climbing, on the stony ground on the sierra, in between the green summer grass. *Walker, there is not path ... as the poet Antonio Machado says. No, there was not path yet in this place. Rinpoche was making a path as he walked.*

render him respect. Rinpoche laughed and patted them on their neck and foreheads.

We continued our journey, and as we moved on, he would tell us where to build, where not to build: “Do not build here, because it is Dakinis’s land”, he said. And then as we moved forward: “also here is not a good place to settle, is the land of these beings called the Blue Ones”. Then, on a huge rock, on a ravine he said, “This is where the Gonpa will be in the future.”

We walked on the Highlands of Tashigar Mandala, where, among other houses, is the one Rosa Namkhai had built for Yeshe and Yuchen Namkhai and Dr. Phuntsog.

Just so you know what we are talking about, let’s remember how much land we are dealing with in Tashigar South: 60 hectares, about 150 acres. Inside the valley, in the deepest and most protected area from winds, are located the main buildings of the Gar. Then, as you climb west and



Dormitory.



Photo by Gri Olivera



Main House.

Photo by Griselda Olivera

tioners could build little houses, their retreat cabins, inside the land of Tashigar Sur. These houses would give us the chance to arrive at our old age together, away from the loneliness that affects old people nowadays.

I remember still, that as soon as we started climbing, on our right, about 50 meters away, we saw a group of horses: Horses, horses!, the Master called them. And they approached, obediently, as if they wanted to

southeast, is Tashigar Mandala’s area. It has two parts. One we called the *Happy Valley*, more populated, borders a creek and an internal road, and there is where the first

>> continued on the following page

>> A Walk continued from previous page

But let’s go back now the multicolored bridge.

As we cross it, we approach the Gonpa on the left. It was inaugurated for the 20th anniversary of Tashigar. Inside it has 2 mandalas, and outside a roofed gallery that encircles it. Huge windows of glass in all its walls allow the natural light of the sun to come in and see through the colors of the vegetation outside; there is a toolshed for things we use during the retreats, a bath-

room for the Master and for the disabled, and it has a central heating system.

Moving towards the Gonpa’s main entrance we see the parking lot, on the other side we can enter the camping area. From it, an internal pathway leads to Tashigar Mandala, where some practitioners have built their houses.

Thanks to the efforts of some of them, we have now drinking water in the Gar – we had to buy it before this.

This year we had many activities open to the public, and this has been growing continually. Some new people have come out of curiosity but become amazed at the energy of this incredible place. It used to be that people would only sparsely come, but this has changed and people are now approaching for different reasons. Many more are returning, many of us are meeting the Teachings for the first time, and all of us reunite in this “auspicious place”, Tashigar Sur.



Tashigar Mandala.

Photo by Caro Bossi

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houses were built. It is always a pleasure to walk through its gardens or enjoy the shade and the singing of the little creek.

The other area, more elevated, hence its name of *Highlands of Tashigar*, is also more extensive and wild. It was populated later, probably because it is more difficult and expensive to bring the construction tools there, and because, although the panoramic views make up for it, the inclemency's of weather are more notorious. However, some practitioners chose here from the start, since it has always been interesting to see how diverse are the criteria, in matters of where we choose the place, the style of housing, or in the different points of view we have regarding every sort of situations we face as inhabitants of Tashigar Mandala.

There are 26 houses completely finished at the moment, 4 in progress, 16 lots available that will hopefully find their practitioners. The building has to adjust to the local regulations of the Municipality of Tanti, and the plans are subject to approval depending on that. Apart from that, everyone can choose the size or the design. In some cases it depends on the budget, other times with the characteristics of the grounds, or simply, with their dreams. The practitioners who have built in Tashigar Mandala are from all over the world. So far: from Italy, USA, Chile, Venezuela, Spain, Poland, France, and Argentina; perhaps that is why you may find a typical building of the Alps next to another one California style. Or for less explicable reasons, one built on pillars above the ground or another one emerging from an excavation on the land. It is interesting that for some, these are the only houses they will ever make and build them according to their taste.

Yes, in Tashigar Mandala diversity is allowed and respected, sometimes too much as it goes against the Inner Regulations of TM,<sup>1</sup> that regulate any close neighborhood, or the forms of how to present plans and beginning of work.<sup>2</sup> Just to give you a couple of examples: a construction cannot begin before the plan is fully approved by the

Municipality, however somebody did it. No one should connect the water without first consulting with the gekö and the administrator; and it has been done which has caused problems in the future.

These attitudes are hard to understand, above all considering that in order to build there is a must that one has to be a practitioner and member associate of the Dzogchen Community for at least three years, and be recommended by their Gar to be able to acquire a lot. All the more if one thinks that in TM no one owns a property, but the usufruct,<sup>3</sup> due to the generosity of our Master.

So, in case you still didn't notice, what are the advantages to have a retreat cabin in TM?

One of the advantages we value the most is the possibility to be near the Master during the whole time Rinpoche spends in Tashigar Sur.

It also allow us to enjoy all the retreats and courses of the Dance, Yantra Yoga and Santi Maha Sangha led by the local instructors all year round and the Khaita Workshops, that gather more enthusiastic participants all the time. To be in TM is to have at our easy access to three mandalas and all the advantages of the Gar; its library, for example.

On the other hand, the countryside of El Durazno is delightful.

More advantages? Yes, even though TM is in the middle of the hills, with huge spaces of loneliness, we also enjoy electricity, TV connections, telephone and internet. And amazingly pure water...

Water is a whole story in the zone. First of all the climate is dry and cool winters and hot and rainy summers. But there were times that drought extended during the whole summer and the water we then obtained from the river started to diminish much to our worry. That's why, and after many deliberations, we decided to approve a Project proposed by Eduard Gromaches. As a first stage we would excavate on the highest place on the land where he had detected, with the old and art of the tech-

nique of dowsing, an undercurrent of water. Excavation was expensive, and there were some of us who believed in this kind of procedure but some didn't. So it was a risky enterprise.

Fortunately the Gakyil at that time (2008) took the initiative and the project was approved by the majority at the Annual Assembly of Usufructuaries. Most of us donated some money and Eduard coordinated the task. Three Sang and Serkyem were performed in the chosen place and excavations began.

The well drilled has exactly 108 meters deep, and not only it opens to a generous undercurrent spring, but, once it was analyzed, it proved to be drinking water! It can be consumed without previous treatment. The finding was a real heroic venture and we took it as yet another blessing.

Right now six tanks of 2500 liters each (about 7000 gallons each) arise in the place and a net of pipes are spread to feed all the houses in TM, the house of the Master and the central house of the Gar, with an extension for the camping area, so it can be used for the washing of groceries and cooking. The next stage of the project is still under way, to perfect the distribution net, that's why each usufructuary give a monthly fee, besides the common expenses fee.

Keeping a retreat cabin in TM is not expensive, at least much less expensive than having a place in the city or any close neighborhood. What is needed is to realize that having a house and common facilities (water, internet, roads, electricity, common green spaces), obviously presupposes monthly and annual expenses, even when one is not living there. For that reason it is important that, whoever wants to integrate to this real project of individual and collective liberation that Rinpoche has thought for us, be responsible, have a practical vision and a generous attitude. Otherwise, his desire will become a burden, another one for the Gakyil and the rest of the usufructuaries.

One of the main conditions to be a beneficiary of a place in TM is to be at minimum

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# Reforestation in Tashigar Sur

## A Five-Year Ongoing Experience

Carolina Mingolla

Translated by Patricia Feldman

Tashigar, the auspicious place, as its name indicates, is a place where nature invites us to introspection on one hand, and the Argentinian culture of barbecues and activity on the other, creating thus a rich and fun balance altogether.

It is located on the outskirts of a small town, a bit touristic and with barely any industry at all; the mining activity in the area, does not affect this region as quarries and mines are found about 50 miles away.

The ancient farms of El Durazno, were established about 100 years ago, when the native forest had been decimated by livestock and coal exploitation. The whole area was reforested with mainly European species, conifers, fruit trees and eucalyptus, which still stand as the predominant vegetation in the area. The culture of farm work was gradually lost but the fruit trees that remained are those that have provided Tashigar Sur for the past 25 years with abundant fruits that we consume fresh or prepared as jams.

In January 2011, before about 50 practitioners at the Tashigar Sur Gonpa, we presented a project to increase quantity and variety of vegetal species in the Gar. This plan, developed intuitively by Carolina



The beautiful river near Tashigar South.

Mingolla after living four years in the area, included the planting of native trees, fruit trees, and medicinal and aromatic shrubs, always using permaculture as productive and regenerative system design.

In March of that same year, and with spontaneous donations of several practitioners, we celebrated the first day of karma yoga exclusively on tree planting. There was also Ariel Ronguelet, an agricultural engineer and a university professor, interested in regenerating native forest, who offered his expertise and collaboration for a long-term project focused on reforestation with trees typical of the mountain forest of central Argentina.

Since late 2011 the South Tashigar Gakyil has invested a monthly sum for the project to continue. This has meant that, in nearly 5 years since the project started, over 400 native trees and about 70-100 fruit and

aromatic and medicinal plants have been planted. As we gained more experience, we improved our planting techniques and discovered the particularities of each microclimate of the Gar. This past year, by special request of Rosa Namkhai who urged us to "fill the Gar with flowers", the project has expanded to encompass green spaces and gardens.

As the group of contributors enlarged, the task of adding ornamental species, colors, textures and aromas in the parks continued to develop. We were able to welcome Rosa and Rinpoche with new landscaping, with new and old fruit trees pruned and sanitized. We are ready to celebrate the 25 years of the first Gar of South America that never ceases to bless us with its landscapes and beautiful skies, both to visitors and residents. ©

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a sustaining member of the Gar. I remark it, since the word sustaining comes from the verb sustain, *sustinere* in latin, and it implies not only some financial support, but *holding, encouraging, helping, protecting and keeping it strong*.

So let's go over it once more: having a house in a place of captivating beauty, always changing, with horizons so wide that the eyes get lost in the sky! A place far enough from urban agglomerations but close enough (just at 40 miles from the capital city of Cordoba, and at only 15 miles from Carlos Paz and only at less than 2 miles from Tanti), so we are able to have a job, study and get supplies. A house prepared to develop personal retreats of

all Rinpoche's Teachings that he prodigally has given us in innumerable retreats across the world.

Finally, a house where its neighbors, all of them, are practitioners just like you, students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, just like us, even authorized instructors like Fabio Andrico, Nélida Saporiti, Marisa Alonso, Ricky Sued, Patricia Ranchod, Naomi Zeitz, Leticia Recepter ...and where we can receive the support and assistance of the people who work at the Gar and of Pepe Poncio, the administrator of TM.

What else can you ask for developing Presence?

That is why, I think, in order to be ready to join this Project, one should, in a clear way, without ambivalences or doubts, with

no buts, make sure one has the feeling of being a sustainer of this amazing center of Dzogchen teachings that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has developed for the southern part of Latin America and for all those who wish to drink from it, a perfect center for the benefit of all beings. ©

In order to complete the information on some given topics, please ask the Secretary to send you the following material:

- 1 "Reglamento Interno de usufructuarios de Tashigar Mandala" Inner Regulations for Usufructuaries of TM.
- 2 "Operatoria de solicitud y adjudicación de parcelas, presentación de planos" Procedures to apply and receive a lot, plan presentation.
- 3 Contrato de Usufructo (Usufructuary Contract)



## Lhundrubling

Brazil, São Paulo

Otávio Lila

Lhundrubling was founded in 2006 and inaugurated with the presence of our beloved Master, just before a retreat in Brazil. A year before, in 2005, Rinpoche had come to São Paulo, and after that retreat, he told us: "Now you should find a place, so that people interested in the teaching can come and learn". At the time, it didn't really seem possible in the short term, because we were a community with few active practitioners, although many more people used to come during retreats. We used to meet at each others' houses for Ganapujas, webcasts and collective practices.

We were lucky that Rinpoche decided to come again in 2006, and the community was working together to organize the retreat. A few months before the retreat with the Master, we had met at a practitioner's house during a long weekend for a practice retreat of Semdzins and Rushens. It was a very nice moment, and we also practiced Ganapuja, Sang and Serkyem. We all noticed how nice it would be to have a place for regular practice, and we remembered Rinpoche's advice. But at the moment, we were concentrated in the final preparations for the upcoming retreat with the Master, only about three months ahead.

In any case, one of us was driving to work and noticed a rent sign in a very convenient building located in a central area of São Paulo. We called to ask for more information, and it turned out that the rent was affordable if everyone got together and committed to a monthly contribution. The place seemed perfect for us – almost too good



to be true – being very accessible by subway and other public transportation, and in a building which was open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. We could quickly make the arrangements to rent the place, and in record time, refurbish it and make it ready before the main retreat in November 2006.

We presented it as a surprise to the Master just a few days before the retreat. He was satisfied, and asked us to light some incense, and said some mantras. But Rinpoche waited for a favourable day to name the place Lhundrubling, and he gave us a plaque with his personal seal of the Dharmaraja to make it all official. In this way, Lhundrubling was born, almost 10 years ago, with the presence of our beloved Master.

Since that time, many retreats have been organised at Lhundrubling with international instructors of Santi Maha Sangha, as well as study groups, practice explanations, transmissions, Ganapujas in the four main days of the month, and oth-

er collective practices. Unfortunately the place is not big enough for our Vajra Dance mandala, so to practice the dance, we have to rent another room. But Lhundrubling is really perfect for all our other needs, and being central, it is very active during all weeks of the year. Ten years went by very quickly, and our ling really seemed to manifest itself spontaneously, of its own accord, well before we thought it was possible. We welcome all Dzogchen practitioners to visit it when you come to São Paulo! ©

## Lhundrubling

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<http://dzogchen.tumblr.com>





## Dzogchen Community of Chile

### Brief history

In late 2000 our Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, accepted our invitation to give Dzogchen teachings for the first time in our country. After that retreat, the first group of practitioners began to collaborate in order to follow the Dzogchen teachings. After a few years, in November 2002, Rinpoche accepted to come and visit Chile for a second time, and gave an inspiring three-day retreat in the town of Mantagua. More than one hundred people attended. Likewise, during this visit, he gave a lecture on Tibetan Medicine in Valparaíso.

In Mantagua, Fabio Andrico taught an introductory course on The Eight movements of Yantra Yoga and Nelida Saporiti taught an introductory course on the Dance of the Three Vajras.

Our sangha grew and in middle of 2007, we were able to organize as a Gakyil. We established a place of practice and study in Santiago de Chile. Here we meet until today as members of the International Dzogchen Community and we welcome anyone interested in following the Dzogchen teachings.

In 2008 we organized a retreat with our beloved Master for the third time. Later, as a result, a program of activities arose and the Sangha began to study and practice the main aspects of the Path.

In all these years, we have many activities to keep learning and practicing Dzogchen. For many years we have been visited by several instructors; we have studied and practiced Santi Maha Sangha with Jim Valby (Semdzins and Base SMS Retreat, 2006; Kumbhaka Retreat, 2013), Ricky Sued (Base SMS, Retreat, 2009), Michael Katz (Dream



Yoga, 2012) Elías Capriles (Base of SMS practice Retreat, 2013), and Steven Landsberg (Study and practice of the SMS Retreat, 2014).

We have had several collective practice retreats (Rushen, Chöd, Green Tara, etc.) in beautiful locations in our country and now we meet weekly to practice Mandarava, Chöd, Green Tara, Six Lokas, short Thun and Ganapujas, to name some of these secondary practices.

The Vajra Dance is one of the practices that is currently a growing interest, after Nelida Saporiti taught us The Dance of the Six Spaces of Samantabhadra in 2011 in Santiago de Chile. From different cities we gather to dance every two weeks on Saturdays or Sundays and welcome anyone interested in learning the practice.

The practice of Yantra Yoga has been spreading through the years, and different workshops have been given for Marisa Alonso (Yantra Yoga Course 2006 and 2009) and Carolina Mingolla (Yantra Yoga Course 2011–2014) in several cities.

In November 2014, Carolina Muñoz, is authorized by the Master Namkhai Norbu in Tashigar South, Argentina came to teach

Yantra Yoga and until today she organizes many trainings and workshops in Santiago, Valparaíso and Concepción. She teaches open and free activities for members the Community and all interested persons. She is an important person for collaboration between the Community and the arts and cultural organizations.

Our Community has grown and strengthened year after year, with the support from many practitioners and our efforts. The Gakyil is the foundation of a Ling supporting the work of preservation of the cultural heritage of Tibet and the teachings given by our precious Dzogchen master. ©

### Comunidad Dzogchen Chile

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# Norbuling

Peru

"Pepo", Luis Bacigalupo

Translation by Laura Yoffe

Our dear Master came to Peru for the first time in 1993, thanks to the invitation of a Cultural Peruvian-Tibetan Association. Rinpoche arrived in Lima, a city that lies at the feet of the Andes, and overlooks the coast of the Pacific Ocean, a city with skies that are usually grey and a sea of jade color. This is not poetry, it is like this!

I was always surprised by the immense compassion of our Master who visited us



but all the love that we put in it made it bigger! And so, we were able to maintain this place thanks to the generosity of our

maintaining our weekly practices, gathering to do *Yantra*, to dance on the *mandala*, and to dance *Khaita*, to study and practice *Dzogchen* and to welcome new practitioners. We do *Mandarava* and *Chod* practices, *Ganapujas*, seminars of *Vajra Dance* and *Yantra Yoga*, and sometimes we also invite International Teachers to give us seminars. Yes! We are very constant. We have the challenge of being responsible for the maintenance of our *Ling*. Sometimes, the challenge to grow seems difficult because we don't dare to face it, or because we are dilettante, or because we forget our commitments. But soon we regain our strength and move forward again. We are growing, we are united. We are learning to be better people and to integrate the teachings day by day.



regularly although we were a very small Community. We just need to be very grateful.

Fourteen years passed by until we were able to assume our responsibilities and organize a legal and formal non-profit Cultural Association. It took us fourteen years to find a space where we could meet; a place that would allow us to ripen the teachings, that could hold new practitioners, and where we could be all together. So, we found a space of fifty meters, located at the heart of *Miraflores*, a commercial district of Lima. Now we had a space, but we lacked its name. So we wrote to our Teacher asking for a name for our place. Meanwhile, we named it *Norbuling*, because it was his place. Rinpoche answered us: "I am very happy that you found a place, if you want, you can call it *Norbuling*."

And so, four years passed by and only a few of us gathered there to chant, to play our bells and drums, to recite *mantras* that might have frightened some of our neighbors. Sometimes, we were packed in there,

Master, who left us the offerings that we gave him after each retreat. After four years we grew as a group and felt the need of a bigger space where we could do *Yantra Yoga* and practice the *Dance* on the mandala that we painted with our own hands. Just by chance, we found a space of 180 meters located in *Barranco*, a lovely district where art and nostalgia meet. Already, there was place where our Mandala could fit, where we could dance *Khaita* and organize courses, where we could have a Library, a Dharma shop with the books of our Master, another Dharma shop with objects made by our practitioners, and a space where we could sell many things to support Asia Onlus.

Now, four years have passed by in the life of *Norbuling*. It has been growing slowly, little bit little, and has been recognized. Sometimes, we are only a few and other times we are a lot, as it usually happens in the rest of our Communities worldwide. But nothing stops us! We are very stable

I was very fortunate to see our Master in *Norbuling* and to see him smiling in his throne. When I see Rinpoche like this, it seems to me as if he was always here, as if he had never left. *Norbuling* is his home, the house of the Teachings, and a real manifestation of our heart... I feel it this way, although I may be wrong.

A *Ling*, a *Gar* with its big and challenging spaces, what are they? Why are they important? I hope we will be able to discover and recognize them fully some day. To develop *Norbuling*, to practice in Community with clarity and without fear, with everybody and for everybody!

Let it be!

©



# Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Venezuela and Tashigar Norte

## The Story of an Extreme Gar

Carlos García

Very probably, the first person that wrote the word Buddha in the territories what we now call Tashigar was the Venezuelan main hero, Simon Bolivar: "The Liberator", two hundred years ago in 1815, in his famous "Letter from Jamaica":

"The South Americans have a tradition that says when Quetzalcoatl, the Hermes or Buddha of South America, resigned his ministry and left, he promised to return after the uneven centuries had passed, and that he would restore his government and revive their happiness. This tradition is not stimulating the conviction that very soon he will reappear. Do you imagine what could be the effect produced, if an individual appeared manifesting the characteristics of Quetzalcoatl, the Buddha of the forest, or Mercury, of who have spoken other nations?"<sup>1</sup>

One day a Buddha came to Venezuela, because the conditions were auspicious, the karma was already mature. The city of Caracas became the first place where the Dzogchen teachings were propagated with simultaneous translation into Spanish. It was in 1986, and this Buddha was our precious teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and it was also His first visit to Hispanic America.<sup>2</sup> Rinpoche was invited by the Caraqueñan Elias Capriles, who, after some time, became the first Santi Maha Sangha instructor with the Spanish as mother language and the first official translator of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu into Spanish. Rinpoche returned to Caracas in 1989 and the people who in 1990 would collaborate to find Tashigar South, met Rinpoche for the first time. For this reason, we could say Caracas is the cradle of the Spanish-language Dzogchen Community. In 1992 the Dalai Lama visited Venezuela on his first tour in Latin America, invited by the Cath-



olic Church, through the Cardinals Castillo Lara and Lebrún. It gave the opportunity of a group of practitioners who were living here to meet to His Holiness Dalai Lama. During the next year Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came back to visit Caracas, Cumana, and Merida, spreading Dzogchen teachings, returning again in December of 1996, and finally, in 1999 doing a retreat teachings in the Experimental Station "Jaime Henao Jaramillo" what is part of the UCV (Central University of Venezuela) at 15 km from Caracas. We can say it closed the cycle of "Caracas Teachings", that were given to small groups of people composed mainly by Venezuelans and in direct and close contact with Rinpoche, who was called by the local community - in that moment - just "Norbu". The teachings of this cycle were more connected with the practices contained in the old *thun* book.

The next cycle started with the visit of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2001 to Margarita Island, giving a fantastic Dzogchen retreat in the Miragua Hotel, in Playa El Agua. There was already the Tashigar North project and a team was looking for the land. The Venezuelan Gilberto Parrella was the project manager. In 2002 the land of Tashi-

gar North was purchased in the Valley of Pedregonzalez. Rinpoche chose the land what now is the Gar for many different reasons. One of them was the presence of a local guardian called Beta. She is female and her territory includes part of the North of Margarita Island. She welcomed to Rinpoche in dreams offering flowers of "Nomeolvides" (*cordia sebestena*) and green stones which are commonly found in the Tashigar Norte land closer to the mountain. Rinpoche said she has an incommensurable beauty, so wonderful and charming, that is impossible to see for a normal human being without dying of bliss and happiness, and the main point: she understands the Dzogchen teachings.

On the advice of the Dakinis, Rinpoche opened the Longsal Cycle of teachings (or *The Luminous Clarity of the Universe, Heart Essence of the Dakinis*) in Tashigar North in 2002. It was necessary to write a personal letter to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and receive the approbation from the main guardian of the Dzogchen teachings, Eka-jati, to assist in the retreat and receive the initiation.

» continued on the following page

1 Simón Bolívar, *Escritos Fundamentales*. Monte Ávila Editores Latinoamericana 1ª Edición 1982 – 6ª reimpresión 1997, Caracas.

2 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu went to Spain in 1981, but not giving teachings just for a public talk.





Entrance road to the Gar.



Wall of the Gonpa.

Photo by Paolo Fassoli

» continued from previous page

Tashigar North is one of the main centers of the International Dzogchen Community. It was built to be the main residence of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Each Gar has its own national identity; something that is characteristic in our case is the internationality. Merigar West, is managed mainly by Italians, Kunsangar by Russians, Namgyalgar by Australians, and so forth. It helps to communicate better because the people use the same language, the same culture, and more or less the same values. Tashigar North is different. Historically the Venezuelans were a minority. Our Community is very small, so for that reason we never developed lings in Caracas or Mérida, maybe because we are a minority as shareholders of PCTN. The participation as Gakyil, Gekö, secretary, caretaker, etc, is the same, but this tendency is changing slowly in the last years. Another difference with the others Gars is the village inside. Only Tashigar South has something similar – but with much more space between the houses and with the Gar itself; somehow it helps to make clearer the difference between the Gar and the “The Tashigar Mandala”, which is how our brothers and sisters from the south call their village.

In Tashigar North it seems that everything is mixed, is also a Lhundrub gar, a place of movement, external and internal, our passions and circumstances are moving faster than other places. Everyone who spent enough time in Tashigar North say “karma moves faster than other places and gars”. These conditions help to push us to be present and awake to be able to

somehow integrate everything, otherwise we could be in risk to fall totally in confusion and suffering. Maybe for this reason

in another country. To be on the Gakyil in Tashigar North means almost to live permanently inside and work every day. The



Signing for the land of Tashigar North.

the Dakini Metsün Padma Paldzinma said to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that the conditions for the Dzogchen teachings in Margarita Island are perfect.<sup>3</sup>

The Gakyil works in a different way too. It is not as in other Gars where the people could live in another city and sometimes

elements are so strong too: the furious wind; the massive rain and storms; the heat and the powerful sun; the earth resisting the erosion of the others elements; and, the totally clean sky in summer, make Tashigar North a wild and furious place full of massive manifestations of wisdom! Tashigar North is an extreme Gar.

<sup>3</sup> Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. *Longsal Teachings*, Vol. 4.





Inside the Gonpa.



Enjoying at Zaragosa Beach.

In this scenario, surrounded by some of the most beautiful beaches of the Caribbean, Rinpoche gave – until now – more than



Photo by Paolo Fassoli

thirty retreats, including Thögal teachings, Tregchöd, Semdé Longdé and Upadesha, many of the main Longsal teachings, Anuyoga including the initiations of Kalachakra, Mandarava, Vajrapani and four times the Longsal Root Initiation of Jñanadakkhini.

Other interesting historic events that happened in Margarita Island, like for example: the first worldwide webcast of Rinpoche's teachings in 2001; the first teacher

training of Santi Maha Sangha; Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga in 2002; the first Drubchen of the Dzogchen Community in 2007; and in a secret place around the island, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu hid some terma teachings: this last particular event is the better sacred seal of the promise about the presence of Teachers and teachings in Venezuela's future.

But the samsara is samsara, and in 2009 during an amazing retreat, the second Drubchen of the Dzogchen Community, just when it seemed that Rinpoche would definitely live here, some heavy security problems were developing until it ended with a theft from Rinpoche's house. These events changed the destiny of everyone linked with Tashigar North, including our Master. His intention to have Margarita Island as main residence was not according with the circumstances of the moment. The idea to close or sell Tashigar North manifested as a ghost. The Dakinis in dreams advised to Rinpoche to not do that. The next year Rinpoche came back and gave a retreat, but a few months later the intensity of the rain provoked a flood what damaged part of our infrastructure, covering with a big layer of mud the floor of the Gönpa. All the local community was collaborating intensely to clean the Gönpa and repair everything that they could. Rinpoche returned at the end and gave a wonderful retreat between the last days of 2011 and the first days of 2012. His more recent retreat in Tashigar North was in March of 2013, until now when I'm writing these words.

It's necessary to say the political and economic situation in Venezuela is not

easy at all. The internal conflict has consequences in all the aspects of the life of the inhabitants. But also this situation is opening a lot of opportunities for serious practitioners. For example in Venezuela is easy to live with 100 USD per month and the Gakyil is giving facilities to accommodation for practitioners who seriously would like to come to practice and collaborate. With 1200 USD one person could come and do personal retreats for one year, finish the practices of Santi Maha Sangha, do long personal retreats of Mandarava, etc. Our Gönpa and mandala are very accessible and open 24 hours, seven days a week, it is fantastic for people who want to do retreats or intensive practices of Vajra Dance. We have had regular visits of Santi Maha Sangha instructors such as Steven Landsberg, Adriano Clemente, Elias Capriles and sometimes Jim Valby. The Vajra Dance instructors Bodhi Krause and Carmen Rivas are visiting us often, and the Yantra Yoga instructors Dina Prymak and Marisa Alonso too.

So, Tashigar North is now the place of the opportunities for serious practitioners who want to develop – with little money – their practices in a sacred place located in a beautiful and warm island in the Caribbean.

Something that we already learned here in Tashigar North is: everything could change in one day, the opportunities will not wait for you forever, the life is short and the time is passing.

Come to Tashigar North to enjoy and develop your practices with us in the hidden Longsal Paradise, where the Dakinis said the conditions are perfect to the Dzogchen practices. ©

# Vajra Dance Courses for People with Special Needs in Caracas, Venezuela

Carmen Rivas, Vajra Dance Instructor

**A**t the beginning I felt many doubts... Doubts about my ability to perfectly communicate the Teaching of my Master for people with "disabilities" or "special needs".

But, of course, no doubt that these young people would receive a great benefit by learning the Vajra Dance... This time they would learn the Dance of the Three Vajra ... as Rinpoche agrees.

I never had the opportunity to teach an organized group of people with mobility problems, motor coordination difficulties, intellectual difficulties and language difficulties before. I was studying and preparing for people with special needs before the course, including by establishing friendship with some people with special needs. This was a beautiful experience. I had taught on some occasions, two blind practitioners in Tashigar North, (the mandala in the Gonpa of TN so permitted by the type of construction) I have also taught the Dance to people with missing hands, people with difficulty hearing or moving the legs, however this new course had been organized by the Dzogchen Community of Caracas especially for these thirteen people with special needs, different needs.

The first day of the course I had many expectations ... you understand ...

But that day I became convinced that they were sincerely interested in the Vajra Dance because from the time we set out the mandala together for the first time, they started having serious questions about what the Dance is, and during class, even when they had difficulty of movement or coordination, they showed much interest and presence, certainly managing their own difficulties and doing the best within their limitations, and also being relaxed about it!!! This encouraged me a lot during the courses.

Also the collaboration of some practitioners from Caracas in the mandala was important.

I maintain that a very important aspect is to teach very patient way; discovering and deeply understanding them in



Carmen Rivas and the participants.

the sense of being respectful that each of them does not necessarily have our same space management, understand that each of them does not necessarily the same relative time management, each of them is very particular with regard to attention in explanations and in their way of communication.

I decided, according with the circumstances, to teach the Dance in two parts, respecting the dimension of my students, so the first part consisted in the boys learned the dance of the internal Pawo and the girls the external Pamo.

Then afterwards, the Gakyil of Caracas organized the second part of the course where children learned the missing part.

In conclusion: Together on the mandala, dancing, we went beyond the our relative limits as we were all practitioners of the Vajra Dance and as we were all happy dancing in the mandala.

I learned a lot from my "special" students and they also learned a lot of the Teachings of Rinpoche.

Parents, teachers and therapists reported serious improvements in various aspects of the life of "our" students: more mental clarity, more patience, more happiness because of better integration in home and classroom, less stress, and improvements in the movements of the body. Here is a poignant example: Achilles Heredia is a young man who was born with severe neuromotor disorders; he had failed to move his right arm and hand to bring food to his mouth, even though he is a Paralympic gold medalist. But during the realization of the second part, he showed us, very happily, how he could eat much more eas-

ily, moving his right arm and hand almost naturally without much effort, and with excellent coordination. He says, and also his mother says, that this is the result of his very enthusiastic practice of the Dance. Achilles can only (for now) practice the Dance of A, from his wheelchair.

Dzogchen TV: <https://youtu.be/fyBJVMvmBjI>

I cannot say that they danced perfectly in time, space, sound and movement, no, they are seriously trying to integrate the Vajra Dance in motion, in space, in time management, but we were all practitioners of the Dance of the Vajra.

I can say that in the mandala together we go beyond our limits. It was very positive for them and this is confirmed by comments from parents, teachers and therapists. This was also confirmed by the team that worked together and made this course possible: Gakyil, practitioners of the Commonwealth of Caracas who came to work, people from civil society in Caracas who donated; all made these courses possible by moving the wheel and all working in different ways.

I can say that these young people have the ability to continue to practice on their own and some of them do very well. Some of them collaborate with each other. We should not consider them as more disabled people to the dance, they are very, very capable and they have already shown that. Just take note that we all have certain characteristics that require them more patience, clarity, effective communication in our own dimension, joy in the way of teaching, and remaining relaxed and open. ☺



## Dear Rinpoche,

Infinite thanks for giving the Gakyil of Caracas the precious opportunity to organize the First Vajra Dance Course for Young People with Special Needs.

It was a World First.

The Instructor Carmen Rivas led the Course of the Dance of the Three Vajra for Young People that are part of "Ikanos", Organization of Special Inclusion, for boys and girls with intellectual, physical difficulties and motor disorders.

The Gakyil, inspired by the Principle "The Virtues of Generosity and Donors" of our beloved Master, asked the Caracas Community for their collaboration. It was a success. The Course was free of payment and we covered the entire Course.

We also received donations from people and institutions not from the Community.

The first part of the course took place in Caracas from October 13–17, 2014 and created a link between Young People with Special Needs and the Vajra Dance.

Halfway through the Course, Carmen worked with circumstances and decided that the course should have a Second Part in order to not force Young People with Special Needs beyond their capacities.

The second part took place in Caracas from May 19–22, 2015. It was also free of payment.

Tashigar Norte, Caracas Community, and Merida Community had the opportunity to collaborate, and also, people and institutions outside the Community.

We had a fantastic experience in the second part of the course as some of the people from the Community who had collaborated with donations decided to come to the course to work and help.

This second part was covered by the national media (€€, Newspaper and Radio) thanks to the donation of a high level professional person, Mrs. Angela Oraá, who works as a Communication Advisor.



Carmen Rivas (right) and Maria Octavia Campins (left) at the TV studio.



Carmen and friends.

The result was:

- An article on the first page of El Diario El Universal with an interview of Carmen Rivas. El Universal is the oldest newspaper with national circulation in Venezuela.

Three TV programs:

- El Noticiero Televen (The News of the Day).
- "Mujeres en Todo", Globovisión. (interviewed Carmen for 8 minutes)
- "Con Todo y Penzini", Globovisión. (interviewed Carmen and Maria Octavia Campins as a Blue Gakyil of Caracas)

Two Radio programs:

- Broadcasting station La Romántica 88.9 FM Placeres Urbanos.
- Broadcasting station La Nueva Mágica (99.1 FM). Casos y Cosas de Fraga

At the end of the course the evolution of the Young People with Special Needs from Ikanos was noticed by their Parents and their Teachers.

Gakyil Azul of Caracas  
Maria Octavia Campins



## Dekyitling

Costa Rica

Federico Herrero

**D**ekyitling means place of joy, and that is the name our precious Master gave to a small Ling in Costa Rica. This year we are celebrating Dekyitling's 9th Anniversary in San Jose, Costa Rica. Through these years, the Ling has been in different locations, and currently we are in the heart of downtown San Jose. It has a very easy access for everyone to reach the ling and it big enough to fit two Vajra Dance Mandalas!

Some of the activities we are doing are Yantra Yoga on Tuesdays and Fridays led by Fiorella, and on Wednesdays and Saturdays we do Vajra Dance. We are only a few practitioners, and as you can imagine, the group and the Ganapujas are sometimes bigger and sometimes smaller, but it always feels new, and very recently it feels especially stable and fresh. Since last Thursday there have been around twenty people at a small retreat with Jim Valby, who is visiting us from Massachusetts. We are so happy to have him back after two years and this is his third visit and we look forward to have him again some day.

During these nine years the most amazing thing that happened was Rinpoche's visit to Costa Rica in October 2010. The retreat was beautiful; our ling at that time was in an open place with a garden full of butterflies and humming birds. After the retreat we spent some time with Rinpoche and Rinpoche's family, swimming in

the warm lush beaches of the Caribbean beach of Puerto Viejo. We look forward to have our Maser visit us again some time, we hope!

Also during these years we had several retreats with Carmen Rivas, Adriana Dal Borgo, Elias Capriles, Steven Landsberg, Marisa Alonso, Nataly Nitsche, Anna Neyman and our local instructor Gloriana Brenes (Titi) and from January 25th until the 31st, Nina Robinson will come and of-



fer a wonderful Mandarava retreat. Thank you all for visiting, sharing the knowledge, helping and working together with us!

Everyone is welcome to come and share the joy. We look forward to continue practicing and making new friends in Dekyitling! ©



# Great Living (In the pure Encounter between Master and Disciple)

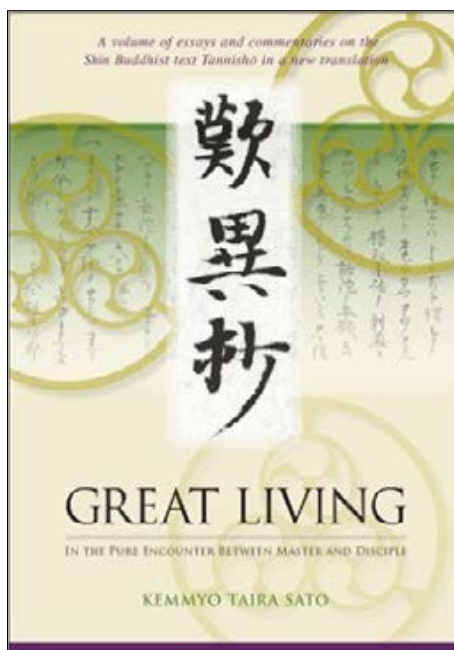
By Kemmyo Taira Sato  
American Buddhist Study Center  
Press, 2010

Andy Lukianowicz

This is a wonderful book on Japanese Shin or Pure Land Buddhism, a way of Buddhism as yet little known in the west, that essentially teaches reliance on Amida (Amitabha) Buddha's Original Vow to take into his Pure Land of Great Bliss (Sukhavati), through his grace (Other-power, Amida's unconditional love) rather than their own calculating practices (self-power), all those who recite the *nembutsu*: his Name (ten times, or once only according to other interpretations). It also addresses, in particular, those generally disregarded by Buddhist teachers and associations: poor, unlettered, and 'evil' people, unable through talent, opportunity or occupation to undertake standard accepted Buddhist teachings, practice and lifestyle.

Sato Sensei's book consists of a volume of essays and commentaries on *Tannisho*, a *Record of Lament over Divergence*, a collection of sayings of the great Japanese Pure Land Master Shinran (1173-1262) as spoken, often in response to a question, to his disciple Yuien-bo. The intent was at the time to correct some heterodox interpretations of Shinran's thought that were circulating at the time (some decades after his death) among his followers. Our author has recreated, over a period of eight centuries, the relationship (or as the subtitle has it, encounter) between master and disciple.

Switch to our own times: Sato Sensei, a Pure Land master in charge of the Three Wheels Buddhist Community in Acton, west London, is a disciple of the Lady Pure Land master Eaki-ni, and he also had the good fortune and privilege to be sent by her to study, probably the last, of the great Japanese Buddhist master, translator and commentator Daisetz T. Suzuki, the greatest promulgator of Zen, and towards the end of his life also Shin Buddhism, in the west. And in his essays and commentaries



on the *Tannisho*, based on a series of lectures delivered at London University and then the Buddhist Society, London, Sato Sensei provides readers with a broad yet at the same time comprehensive understanding of some key components of Pure Land Buddhist belief, the major one being that of Other-power (*tariki*) or reliance on Amida's original vow.

Sato Sensei acknowledges his debt to Suzuki, not least in the choice of words for his title: *Great Living*, the term Suzuki used in his translation of Shinran's masterwork *Kyogyoshinsho* to render *gyo*, usually translated as "practice, teaching, faith and realization": not ritual or meditation but the way we live our lives is our practice.

Sato Sensei also recalls a memorable teaching given by Suzuki when he compared partial reliance on self-power to total reliance on Other-power through the different ways a monkey and a cat mother (respectively) carry their young; grasped, so her young must grasp, too, in the former case, and gripping in her mouth, so the kittens need do nothing in the latter, a wonderfully homely, everyday, yet memorable image.

Sato Sensei's own careful attention to translation is evident when (in chapter 4) he discards the usual translation of *kawarime* by the static term difference, in favour of the dynamic turning point, shedding fresh light on the transition Shinran taught from the difficult (to realize) Path of the Sages – all other, conventional, Buddhist practices – to the easy (to practise, consisting only in recitation of Amida's name, and easy to enter Amida's Pure Land

where one is enlightened listening to Amida Buddha's teachings) Path of the Pure Land Buddhist, in this specific case concerning the practice of love (*hiji*).

Chapter 3, on Shinran's well-known, seemingly paradoxical statement "Even a good person can attain birth (in the Pure Land), how much more readily, then, the person with bad karma"; chapter 8, on non-practice and non-good; and chapter 10, where Shinran elucidates his own master Honen's teaching on *nembutsu* as the meaning of non-meaning, all deserve special attention. I was also entranced by his brief discussion of the *myokonin* (unworldly saint) Asahara Sai-chi (Sato Sensei has published in Japan a collection of his poems; the final chapters Suzuki's *Mysticism Christian and Buddhist* are devoted to translations of 146 of Sai-chi's poems). However I would emphasize that the whole of Sato Sensei's work merits careful reading and rereading.

There is in this book much to ponder and much to be learned, for example on the issues of motivation, practice, and realization, for according to Shin Buddhism it is precisely by giving up one's egoic pursuit of enlightenment through determined practice, relying on self-power, and instead surrendering to Amida's Other-power, that understanding and self-knowledge dawn.

A truly remarkable, engaging work by a contemporary teacher of an ancient tradition, encapsulated in a twelfth century text, making these teachings as relevant today, in the west, as eight hundred years ago in Japan.

As Sato Sensei succinctly yet eloquently puts it: "Once true faith is attained, the Name works with absolute freedom throughout the whole individual." ◎

## The Mantra of a Fanatic

“My Spiritual Path is Better”

Elio Guarisco

*In this issue Santi Maha Sangha teacher Elio Guarisco talks about spiritual organizations, the need to maintain a fine balance between the evolution of the individual and his or her outer activities, and not losing oneself in the group dynamic that may turn into fanaticism.*

Faith is essentially an individual matter. When faith is transformed into an organization, it embarks on a perilous path. There is a small story that recounts:

The devil was walking down a path with a friend. At a certain point, in front of them, a man bent down to pick up something from the ground. He looked at it and then put it in his pocket. The friend of the devil said, “I wonder what that man has picked up?” “He found a piece of truth”, answered the devil. “Ah, that is bad for you”, remarked the friend. “Oh, not at all”, answered the devil, “Now I will do something in such a way that he organizes it.”

When we try to organize faith there is the risk that it becomes crystallized, or worse, that it dies. Faith can become a belief, a sect or religion to impose on others, as has often happened in the history of religion over the centuries.

The first peril is that the organization we create becomes a cage, a weak point that paralyzes the individual and prevents him or her from evolving and discovering the unconditional truth.

How do we deal with this peril? One could say that there is no need of organizing anything. This, however, is not a feasible choice, for we do not live isolated from the rest of the world. Especially in modern society we continually make use of organized structures in every aspect of life: transport, communication, education, jobs, recreation, and payments. Almost nothing falls outside organized structures. Regret-

table as this may be for romantics, it is the inescapable reality in which we live.

Nonetheless, these structures are purely mechanical and cannot be transposed to the dimension of individual spirituality, where things don't work in a mechanical way. Organization in spirituality is acceptable only on the grounds that it allows favoring the conditions for sharing experiences and the continuation of knowledge. In order for it not to become a cage there should be a fine balance between one's internal relationship to faith as an individual and one's interaction with others. Working for a 'spiritual' organization is only balanced and personally meaningful if outer activity is matched with the evolution of the ability to examine one's motivations and mental states.

It is unwise to think that the construction of buildings, temples, ashrams and monasteries is of the utmost importance, and that the individual is the sacrificial goat for such endeavors. The individual and his or her evolution should always remain the focus. One may object and say that both endeavors can be accomplished at the same time; this is true. However, we have a strong tendency to fall into extremes, which leads us to emphasize one over the other. We either become over involved in organizational activities, neglecting our personal evolution, or retreat into the space of our room to apply different spiritual methods, ignoring the fact that, without interaction with others, these methods lead nowhere. For most people a fine balance between the two is a complicated matter, so some get lost in one way while others get lost in the other.

Thus retaining one's uniqueness as an individual is of extreme importance. This does not mean to be self-concerned individualists, like those who always want to start their own school, their own political party, or their own spiritual group. On the contrary, in finding maturity in one's uniqueness, there comes about the motivation and the space for dealing with others without losing balance.



What happens when the organization of a spiritual path becomes a cage? Somehow one's uniqueness as an individual is erased, and we feel we have become part of larger unity, a larger identity. This identity, however, is not the whole universe; it is limited only to the sum of the other members of the unity, only to the set of beliefs or non-beliefs we endorse. When this identification or sense of belonging is not matched by the understanding that one is actually part of the whole universal race, without distinctions of color, beliefs, etc., there comes about a division superimposed between ourselves and others, between our spiritual group or religion and that of others.

What happens here is that the ego dynamic of 'oneself and other', 'mine and yours', at the larger level of a group, community or religion, becomes a mob-like excitement flavoring our sense of participation. At the individual level we consider ourselves better than others; now we start to consider our spiritual group, sect or religion as better than those of the others. This, matched with uncritical zeal and obsessive enthusiasm, gives rise to fanaticism. And if the mob-like excitement of the group or religion is not well directed, it can easily turn into ugly fanaticism.

Fanaticism takes on different forms, but one that is common is the attempt to affirm the supremacy of its own beliefs, behavior and so forth, thinking that the world will be better, will have peace only and once all have embraced their fanatic faith. In the meantime however, there is the struggle of affirmation, and that struggle does not resemble at all the peace fanatics' vision for the future.

Even though the followers view the activities of the group or religion as the most important in the world, no considerable part of society cares about them, unless they become a threat to established social values. Thus, they create an imaginary



limbo separated from the rest of the world, which is their world, without understanding that such a world is a fantasy. This would be humorous, if it were not for the negative consequences that such a condition can bring about. In fact, what often happens is that the lack of integration with society leads the followers of the group to perceive society as a threat, and develop a paranoid relation with it, with the ensuing attitude of defending oneself in every way, using violence and attacking society in a violent way.

Another aspect of religious fanaticism is submission to an authority. There is no doubt that someone who has knowledge, compassion and love, spreads a beneficial influence on others; but this is not the same thing as authority. Authority does not really belong to the realm of spirituality where truth is an individual discovery and imposition cannot aid such discovery. Instead, the uncritical submission to an authority embodied in an individual, a scripture considered sacred, or a set of rules, is always part of fanaticism. Such submission can transform followers into militants, into war machines whose principles can hardly be reconciled with true spirituality.

It is important to understand that the difference between our beliefs, which maybe be very refined and advanced, and other beliefs that may be primitive and backward, does not really matter. In every group, community and religion we can find reasons and assertions why one's method, one's spiritual path, one's view and so forth are better than those of others. Strict standards and little tolerance for contrary ideas and opinions turn us into fanatics.

As we become religious fanatics we lose our dimension as good-hearted individuals. Now we need to impose our views on others so all the world will endorse them. But this cannot be easily accomplished; others have their own views that they are attached to or used to, and wanting to push our views obviously leads to clashes. Here the basic emotions that we experience at the individual level, like pride, jealousy, and anger, are fueled by the energy of being shared collectively. These emotions become powerful, more powerful than nuclear bombs, until the whole situation turns into a disaster of conflicts and war. This is where fanaticism can lead, and we can witness that nowadays in many corners of our world.

To talk and say that one should not be a fanatic is easy, but to have the spiritual maturity that does not make us a fanatic is a totally different matter, especially when faith in one's teacher, in one's spiritual techniques and views, are over emphasized and not matched with the aspect of discerning wisdom. Buddhists, for example, like to say that things are unreal, but then hold on to the very body of the teaching, which proclaims unreality, as if it were real.

Not being a fanatic does not mean ignoring the differences between beliefs, views, methods, spiritual groups and religions. To understand such differences is an exercise of intelligence and an essential part of self-discovery.

How do we deal with the peril of becoming fanatics? By examining the working of one's mind, by remaining anchored to one's own human dimension as an individual, and by acknowledging that everyone is an integral part of a whole universe.

Fanaticism breeds when ordinary emotions are not recognized and examined. In such an environment of ignorance comes the idea, "I am superior! My views are better! The others are apostate! They need to be redeemed or annihilated!" Recognition of the working of emotions and of their capacity to create illusion and fantasy leads automatically to a growth of consciousness that we can call spiritual maturity. When this occurs there is understanding of the relative nature of all methods, of all systems, of all views, and the ensuing freedom from attachment to even one's own spiritual path.

Instead of projecting a fantasy regarding a future golden age, a fantasy regarding future world peace and happiness, it is better not to fight in the present. It is better to create the conditions for collaborative and harmonious living now, by abiding in and caring about the present moment. Caring about our immediate surroundings in the first place - people and environment - as if they were one's family and one's house. We need to work with the present, and that itself will automatically set the way for the future.

Usually we regard others who are of a different race, who have different habits, beliefs etc., with suspicion and doubt, to say the least. And we adopt an aggressive stand toward all that is unknown and new to us. But in reality there are more things we share with others, than those that divide. In the first place, we are all humans; the construction of beliefs, views, and reli-

gion comes after. When we can meet others at the basic level of being human, regardless of their degrees of evolution, education, and so forth, prejudices, suspicion and doubts fall away, leaving space for real communication and understanding.

Moreover, to shun fanaticism, it is good to be aware that, on one hand, if we apply a special spiritual teaching that we find very beneficial not only for ourselves but also for the collectivity in general, it is our particular responsibility to concentrate on the preservation of that teaching. It is just normal to appreciate the value of things for what they are, so if we do not do that, it means we are ungrateful individualists.

On the other hand, the way we present, or not, that teaching in front of others is a different matter. To force our view on others just because we consider it the highest, good or very beneficial is silly. There are different kinds of people with different interests and capacities. Knowing first who is in front of oneself, one does what can be helpful. There are people for whom a bottle of whisky is all that they desire in a given circumstance, because their understanding of what is meaningful and brings happiness reaches only that far. In that case, the best teaching is to offer a bottle of whisky. ©

# A Journey to the Sacred Land of Larung Gar, Kham (Tibet)

One of the Largest Buddhist Institutes in the World

Sabina Ragaini

Text and photos

It's afternoon and the wind whips around the hill sacred to Dorje Legpa that rises towards a clear sky dotted with light clouds. We are at more than 4000m above sea level. Serthar County, Kham, East Tibet, in what is now the province of Sichuan (People's Republic of China). February. The icy air moves the many prayer flags whose bright colors break the aridity of the land, dry and hard on this side of the hill. From time to time we have to stop to catch our breath and admire the magnificent scenery in the clear light, the river below completely frozen, the dust rising from the little-used road. Up on the pass a few pilgrims have placed bottles full of stones in the midst of many *lungta*, a new way of paying tribute. On the other side of the hill the natural scenery changes, all at once light green on the hills, on the slopes. This changing color of the land in Tibet is always incredible.

Along the trail that is almost completely frozen at the base of the hill, the prayer wheels are turning and the images of Padmasambhava, Vajrasattva and, above all, Dorje Legpa appear in all their power. The hill is also sacred to the Buddha of Medicine, in certain niches along the path you can collect a little earth with medicinal properties.

The monk replies politely to our questions – he is and will be an extraordinary guide for a unique journey to a corner of the world that is unimaginable in today's troubled reality. Thanks to him, it will be possible to make a real pilgrimage to temples, monasteries and the surrounding places that are permeated with an atmosphere of profound sacredness.

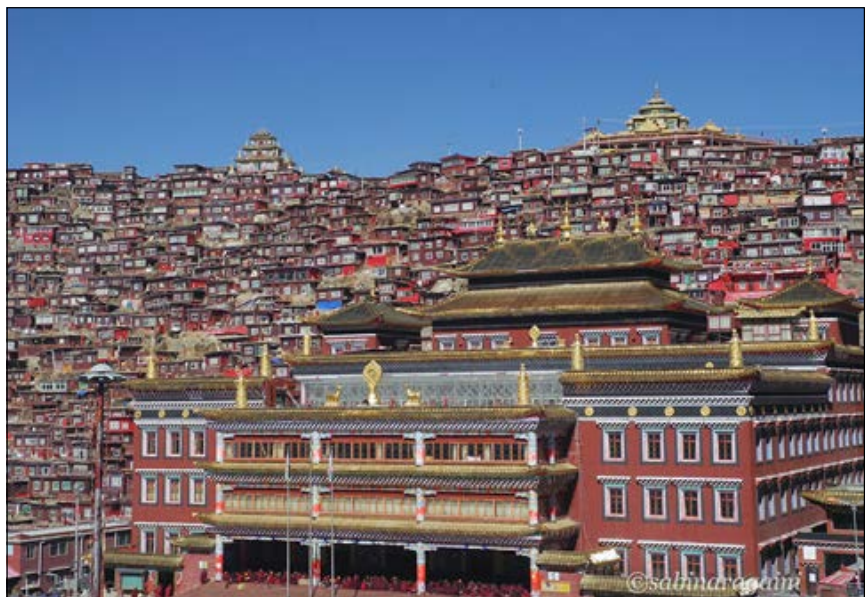
A few kilometers from the high hill appears the Buddhist center of Larung Gar, one of the largest and most influential centers for the study of Tibetan Buddhism in the world and particularly known for practicing Dzogchen. A myriad of tiny



low houses, in dark brown wood or brick, topped with painted red roofs. Seen from afar the center looks like a nest of termites, a disorderly cluster of small buildings from which a few large temples jut out in its long and troubled history.

Wumin Foyuan, in Chinese the Buddhist Institute of the Five Sciences, is an academy

an center, in which all schools of Buddhism could be represented and where devotees could come to study and meditate, even though attention was increasingly shifted towards the Nyingma school. Here the highest level of doctrinal preparation for a monk could, and still can be, achieved, rising to the title of *kenpo*. The site was cho-



founded in 1980 in an uninhabited valley by Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, an eminent lama of the Nyingma tradition, *tulku* of the great Terchen Lerab Lingpa, one of the masters of the thirteenth Dalai Lama. A highly respected Master dedicated to spreading the Dharma, Jigme Phuntsok was best known as Choje, lord of the Dharma. To give new life to Buddhism and benefit sentient beings after the end of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, Choje founded this nonsectari-

sen because for centuries it had been sacred to the Vajrayana. The autobiography of the great *terton* Terchen Lerab Lingpa, who visited the valley in 1880, describes the place as "a hermitage for liberation through the great body of light", residence in the past to thirteen practitioners who obtained the "rainbow body."

A prophecy of the first Dordrupchen Rinpoche, a great *siddha* who lived in the eighteenth century, reads: "In the Danjian Ala





Mutian Larung valley, Guru Rinpoche will appear as Jigme ... His teachings of Sutra and Tantra will shine like the illuminating sun and his activities to benefit beings will be able to hold up the heavens and sustain the earth. He will draw sentient beings from the ten directions to lead them on the path of liberation ... “.

free religious expression of the monks and nuns who lived there. The central government ordered all the students to leave the center and when they refused to leave their lives as practitioners to return to their families, most of the Academy, along with all the countless small houses and monasteries, was razed to the ground. Notwithstand-



After meeting many important representatives of Buddhism, in the 90s, Jigme Phuntsok was invited to India by the fourteenth Dalai Lama to receive and give teachings to His Holiness. In the following years he devoted himself more and more intensely to teaching and was able to bring many disciples up to the level of Kenpo.

The early part of the twenty-first century was terribly tragic for Larung Gar due to the violent campaigns directed against the

ing, teachers and students resolved never to leave the place and, with the help of many practitioners, the center rose again, bigger than before, with the approval of local government less opposed to the *dharm*a.

When Jigme Phuntsok died in 2004 following complications after a heart operation at a hospital in Chengdu, China, the Academy had more than 300 *kenpo* who, by mutual agreement with the students and attendants of Larung Gar, decided not

to interrupt the teaching of the texts of the Master and Buddhist doctrine, thus ensuring the Academy a life that is still surprising in its intensity and authenticity.

Built with the support of a hundred or so students, Larung Gar has incredibly expanded with the passing years. The fame of the Academy, the depth and the high level of the teachings that are offered has driven thousands of Tibetans to go there. The center was, and is mainly directed to monks and nuns, although there is the possibility for some ordained lay students to reside.

Today there are more than ten thousand students, with the peculiarity that more than half are women. In addition, about a third of them are Chinese from Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore as well as from other provinces of the People's Republic of China. It seems that in 1987 it was Chojé's visit to Wutaishan, the sacred mountain of the five peaks dedicated to Manjushri with more than sixty Buddhist temples in Shanxi Province, north China, that made it known to Chinese Buddhists some of whom followed him to the arid land of Kham, regardless of the prohibitive natural conditions of the center, located at over 4000 meters, with cold winters and Spartan accommodation. Today it is the Chinese monks who show their endless admiration for Tibetan practitioners, for their good karma as custodians of the teaching and for the way they express themselves with a humility worthy of being emulated.

Life within this huge "village" is dictated by the rhythms of the lessons that are held every day, morning and afternoon, divided into different classes, by study, by moments devoted to debate and, of course, by practices, some daily, other as scheduled. Classes for Tibetan monks and nuns are in the Tibetan language while those for Chinese monks and nuns are in Chinese Mandarin. Accommodation for men and women are strictly separated, as are the monasteries that house male and female students.

For decades Larung Gar has been known for the practice of *phowa* that, while the center was directed by Jigme Phuntsok, was done every day after his lesson. In those days when someone died in the area surrounding the Gar, the body was brought to the center for the final ritual. Even today, almost every day, on a hill not far away, in a building whose architecture is curiously very Chinese, sky funerals take place with the dismemberment of the corpse of the deceased.

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It is a day with a clear blue sky when my monk-guide decides to take me to observe the ritual. The families of the dead, some practitioners and some people who are just curious stand near the hill. The "butchers" perform their duties with detachment and precision on three bodies while, high up, along the ridge of the high ground, hundreds of vultures line up patiently and in an orderly way.

Once the butchers finish their task, they move away from the place of dismember-



ment. As if they had received a command, the vultures swoop down from the hill, some in flight others gliding with their talons sweeping the ground until they throw themselves on their meal. We can see nothing but the beating of wings and the beaks rising and falling, listening to the screeching of the birds. In a small cave not far away, we can hear the beat of the *damaru* of the person officiating. Another *chodpa* shortly arrives, *kangling* in one hand, in the other a *damaru* that is still covered. With his dark skin, slow gestures, he uncovers the *damaru* and begins to turn it with a rhythm accompanying the recitation of the practice. It is a sound that brings some peace.

In the highest part of Larung Gar, the Gyutrul or Portentous Temple opened in 1995, stands out for its beauty and bright colors. It has twenty-two chapels dedicated to divinities belonging to different schools. At its feet is the *kora* where starting at dawn, pilgrims follow one another turning the great prayer wheels and running their fingers over their *malas* in continuous *mantra* recitation.

At this time of year, the days before and during Losar, the Tibetan New Year, they

are particularly numerous. Of all ages and backgrounds, they have faced long arduous journeys to reach this place which is more than fifteen hours of travel from the nearest large city along a rough road because of bad weather. Even before dawn on the day of Losar the center echoes with the *mantras* recited in the monasteries. Some loudspeakers carry the sound as the sun slowly rises from behind the mountains that surround the town.

In the central hall of the *gonpa* of the *ani*, nuns huddle side by side concentrated on the reading of the texts. The space is large and there are several thousand women of very different ages: older women with skin deeply marked by their years sitting close to young girls wearing small nuns robes that the older sisters have helped



to fix. The *gonpa* has three floors, each of which has side rooms off the corridor that runs along the open central quadrangle. From the top we can admire the central hall on the ground floor where we hear the beat of the big drum. In every corner small prayer wheels are turning. Some of the rooms seem to be reserved for small groups of young students, including some male children. This year the rituals for Losar are headed by the Abbess of Ani Gompa and for this reason the female temple is the most crowded.

In the *gonpa* of the male monastery the monks are less numerous, although the room here is very full. The monks are distinguished by their yellow or reddish-pur-



ple robes. They are sitting in rows, marking the reading of the texts with a regular rhythm, then, at certain times they change their positions, turning to the side, or turning their backs on the row in front of him. Even here the recitation of the texts continues throughout the day. In the other two *gonpas* the Chinese monks and nuns are reciting.

The texts at Larung Gar are often written in two languages, the original texts in Tibetan letters which are followed on the lower part of the page by Chinese characters that are the phonetic transcription in Chinese of the pronunciation of the practice in Tibetan.

Chinese is, against all expectations, the lingua franca, as is English with us, because no one here, in my experience, speaks a Western language. Even here the Tibetans study Chinese in order not to be isolated socially and economically from the world around them beyond the mountain, while the Chinese study Tibetan as a sacred language, with great difficulty due to the radical difference of pronunciation and writing. A linguistic coexistence that is amazing but at the same time calming in a situation that is so unique, for the ease with which festivities can be celebrated bidding farewell to the Tibetan year of the horse and welcoming that of the sheep.

Out of monasteries the streets are crowded, monks and nuns moving hurriedly through the narrow alleys between the houses as they move from one place to another. In some corners and in areas where the sun never strikes ice makes every passerby step carefully; ice often makes

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# Saying Farewell to Namgyalgar South

Jan Cornall  
(Text and photos)

As you may or may not know, our Namgyalgar South property on the southern slopes of Mt Gulaga near Central Tilba, has been sold. With the flourishing of the teachings in Asia and establishment of the Chinese Gar, it was deemed no longer sustainable to have two Gars (Namgyalgar North and South) in Australia. After several months of negotiation contracts were signed on November 3, 2015. Another Dharma group, The Drogmi Institute (Sakya) will soon become custodians of its forests, paddocks, creeks and slopes, its wombats, wallabies and waterfalls, for another blink of an eyelid in this ancient Gulaga landscape.

Mt Gulaga is considered to be the place of ancestral origin for the Yuin people who have lived in this area for thousands of years. Gulaga itself symbolises the mother and provides a basis for Aboriginal spiritual identity, the mountain as well as the surrounding area holds particular significance for Aboriginal women.

A small group of us gathered at Namgyalgar South on the October long weekend to help pack up and say our goodbyes. Here are some pictures from that alternately sad and joyous time.

The Gar was looking glorious. Everything that could possibly be in bloom was blossoming. The juniper trees planted along the drive way were just reaching a good height, the road was in perfect condition, there's a new disabled parking spot next to the gonpa with many other details having been attended to. The land management committee and local members had been hard at work for months preparing the property for sale. The saddle was



green after all the good winter rains, the flame tree was flaming and wombat families seem to love hanging out at Jean's memorial seat, which looks across the saddle and up to Rinpoche's freshly painted house, built so many years ago by local and overseas members.

Before the packing up began it was time to revisit the mountaintop where over twenty-five years ago the plan to make the gar for the Asia Pacific region was hatched. The owner at that time, Mal Dibden, took Jean Macintosh and others up the mountain on his tractor. Georgia, our gekö, had recently slashed the path so we headed up on foot.

At the top boundary of the land are great boulders wrapped in the roots of ancient fig trees (reminiscent of Angkor Wat). We sang the Song of the Vajra at the spot in the rocks where Rinpoche buried sacred objects back in the 90's and sang again on the steps of the *rushan* hut built by Rabgyi, and Arnaud in recent years. Then Georgia led us to the eagles nest, a viewing point high

up on a fig boulder with a sheer drop to the valley below. It felt like we were perched in a tree half the size the mountain. We knew we had limited time there and it was hard not to have Joni Mitchell's line, 'you don't know what you've got til its gone,' ringing in our heads as we descended the mountain for lunch. Actually none of us wanted to leave. The mountainside was filled with a heady perfume as every flowering tree, bush and tiny wild orchid sighed their dakini's breath into the clear Gulaga air.

After lunch we joined the hardcore karma yoga workers, Lydia and Jilli who were sorting and packing our reference and borrowing library for transportation to Namgyalgar North. And the tireless Jenny O'Donnell (who has been a mainstay in handling all the fine detail of the handover), gave us wrapping and packing tasks. Peter Phipps was on ladder duties. It was hard not to be distracted by old photos we came across. Thankas needed to be careful-

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it dangerous simply to visit the public baths, used by a great many students who do not have toilets in their houses and also by pilgrims living in the guest house where the bathrooms are out of order because all the pipes are frozen.

In the few squares and courtyards in front of the temples lay Tibetans dressed elegantly in their best clothes stand in

groups: the girls look like princesses, the young men like knights and the women queens. The semi-precious stones in their rings enhanced by time, embedded in their earrings or forming great necklaces. After visiting the temple, some will go up to the *kora* around the Portentous Temple or to a space below prepared for prostrations, while others will go down to the festivities in the family homes built outside Larung

Gar, along the road leading to the town of Serthar, in whose main square the wheel of the dharma is prominently placed on the top of a column.

It is a quiet Losar in this corner of the world, perhaps a special Losar, not disturbed by external factors.

At Larung Gar the rituals continue in the temples as the sky darkens and night falls.



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ly rolled and bubble wrapped. Rinpoche's room had to be packed up. And a great album of photos of Namgyalgar history brought back memories of all the retreats over the years, all the hard work, hard fun and bad fashion! Meanwhile on the verandah, Asher and Miro doing research into Places of Mystery, decided Namgyalgar South could definitely be one of them.

At 4pm we met in the Gonpa for a talking circle, which we hoped would help give expression to the feelings we had about saying goodbye to this extraordinary place which has been a center of the Dzogchen Teachings and Community since



1994 (when we had our first off-land retreat with Rinpoche in the area). Passing the vajra around from person to person, we spoke whatever came to mind: a feeling, a story, a memory, anecdote, a wail, a rant, a rave, a reflection...

It was a helpful process. We kept going until we couldn't go around any more. At the end, before our last Ganapuja that evening, we were invited to jot any thoughts or feelings on pieces of paper, which we collected for next day's sang.

At 8 am we gathered on the saddle for our sangqod. Peter Phipps led us in the sang offering. Catherine Simmonds added our papers to the branches of juniper and lavender along with some mantras from old practice books, as the wind took their smoke away across the valley.

Then it was back to work dismantling the poles near the Gonpa where we collected the garden buddhas.

Soon it was time for another delish collective Gar meal in the campers kitchen,

perhaps not the last supper but definitely the last lunch! After lunch, there was some more sorting, shifting and packing. There was even time for a beach outing before meeting up for fish and chips in Bermagui.

While most of the walls of the Gonpa were now bare, the shrine was the last thing to be packed up and shipped to Namgyalgar North.

I spent my last night in the dark/light retreat cabin, going to sleep with the stars and waking up to a spectacular sunrise. After doing some practice in the dark retreat cave, I made my dedication to the next custodians wishing them all the best for their time on this glorious practice



mountainside.

As I left, I arranged the cushions thus, reminding myself, as Rinpoche always does, that wherever in the world I manage to sit in contemplation, is the most perfect and precious place to be. For the past twenty or so years Namgyalgar South has been one of those places.

Huge thanks must go to all those who over so many years have contributed their

## Ode to Namgyalgar South

Viki Forscutt

over many years  
weaving a rich, colourful tapestry of  
connectedness  
gradually growing our big vajra  
family  
through collective practice and  
karma yoga  
sharing meals and stories, laughter  
and tears  
gathering in the spirit of  
collaboration  
to create a beautiful Gar on Gulaga  
Mountain  
like an exquisite sand mandala  
fashioned by many hands, hearts  
and minds  
now dissolving and blowing away  
on the winds of change  
challenging us to accept and  
integrate  
the experience of Impermanence  
in a non-dual way  
beyond pain and pleasure and fear

in the Vajra and Samaya we remain  
connected in the Transmission  
with our beloved Master  
and with each other

A LA LA HO

generous time, energy, practice, donations, offerings, spirit, tears, sweat and goodwill to the life of Namgyalgar South in the Tilba region of New South Wales. A small local team was left to finish off the packing in readiness for the removalists and finally private caravans were moved to other locations.

As we turn our energies northward to our gar in Queensland, we trust that the Dzogchen teachings will continue to thrive not only in the Glasshouse Mountains, but in all the regions of Australia/Pacific and the global community.

As this article goes to air, Rinpoche is in residence at the Gar for Australia and the Pacific, now simply known as Namgyalgar, having lead a six day retreat on the ancient Dzogchen text, *Dorje Sempa Namka Che*. ©



# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Viki Forscutt

Reflecting back on my life it seemed like a road was mapped out for me with various indications and signs pointing me in the direction of the Teachings, though I was to take a few detours before I reached this destination.

I grew up in the far north of Australia in a region of immense natural wilderness where the European population was quite small and there were many clans of indigenous (Aboriginal) people still living in a traditional way, performing ancient rites and ceremonies. As yet there was no television thus as a child I wasn't very aware of the rest of the world or even Australia.

When I was young I used to have colorful, vivid dreams and was quite psychic and telepathic, often 'seeing' events before they occurred. I found this hard to comprehend in the context of a white, working class family. During my adolescence I made connections with indigenous people from all different places, including medicine men, ceremonial elders and singing men and had some interesting experiences. I also went into many empowered, sacred places where strong energies and spirit worlds were active. This presented a very different world-view to the one I was born into.

In the 1970's when I was a teenager, a lot of "hippies" traveled through my hometown of Darwin on their way to and from Asia. I thought they were colorful and interesting as they wore exotic clothes, jewelry and oils from India, carried Buddhist artifacts and incense and often had 'spiritual' names. They also used and sold drugs like marijuana, which I succumbed to trying. All the while I remember thinking there was something mysterious in the Asian region that they were missing and I hankered to know what it was.

It took quite a few years and several hurdles until I was to discover that.

During my young adult life I had some profound experiences, which were perplexing and gave me the sense that there was a 'higher' knowledge beyond my mundane existence and somehow I would find the key to this.

In my late teens in Darwin I found myself spontaneously visiting an old Chinese 'joss house' (temple), with a large Bodhi tree

outside and a tall Kuan Yin statue inside, where I would offer flowers and incense and sit for a while. It felt very familiar and comfortable to me as if I had done this in a time past.

For a period of time I was going out to disco's, taking drugs and so on and began to realize I was treading a meaningless path. At that time I was fortunate to meet someone who had received Teachings from H.E. Kalu Rinpoche in India during the 1970's. Instantly we felt a strong recognition and connection and subsequently went off traveling together for two years into the remote Australian outback and desert, which completely changed my life's direction. During this time I came to read books on Buddhism and meditation such as *'The Opening of the Wisdom Eye'* by H.H. Dalai Lama and *'Tibetan Yoga and other Secret Doctrines'* by WY Evans-Wentz. I also started to practice meditation following instructions from various books.

Following these travels I developed a strange illness affecting my eyes and nervous system, but doctors couldn't determine what it was or the cause. My body and mind were very imbalanced and I was desperate to find a 'cure' but to this day I still experience a variety of debilitating symptoms.

It was an immense blessing that at this time I discovered my first Teacher, Venerable Khantipalo, an Englishman who ordained as a Theravadin monk and trained in Thai monasteries for 11 years, then helped establish Buddhism in Australia. For five years I lived and volunteered as the secretary at the retreat center (Wat Buddha Dhamma) he established in bush land near Sydney. Here I undertook austere meditation training, developing insight and mindfulness and gradually became more calm and stable. Karma Yoga and practicing generosity was a significant aspect of the training and I helped with the running of the center, organizing meditation retreats and so on.

The center eventually became more eclectic and hosted several retreats lead by teachers of various Tibetan traditions, including Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, and so I discovered methods using mantras and visualization. At this time Khantipalo was secretly doing Dzogchen practices intro-



duced to him by one of his students who had been to a retreat with Rinpoche. When we started singing the Song of Vajra at the end of our calm meditation, I was strongly drawn to the Dzogchen practices and wanted to know more about them.

Then some practitioners from the Dzogchen Community in Australia came and did some retreats at the Wat and I began to learn the practices. I was very eager and borrowed books and audiotapes and started practicing alone, always having the intention to meet the Master and receive transmission. Then Fabio Andrico came and taught Yantra Yoga at the Wat and also demonstrated the OM A HUM Dance on a mandala Jean Mackintosh painted on a shed floor.

Khantipalo declared himself a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and in 1991 announced he'd be disrobing so I returned home to Darwin where I enrolled in a computer course. Unfortunately I soon became bed bound as my health deteriorated and yet again doctors couldn't explain the cause of my condition.

A few years later in 1994, thanks to the kindness of a friend who assisted me to travel to Singapore, I finally met the Master and received transmission! Thereafter I applied the practices diligently and slowly my health improved somewhat. Then in 1995 I traveled to southern Australia to attend the first retreat with Rinpoche at the newly established Namgyalgar (later known as 'Namgyalgar South') where I've remained ever since, volunteering in an administration capacity for the Dzogchen Community in Australasia until now.

Words cannot express my deep gratitude for our Master and his Teachings! ☺





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