

THE MIRROR

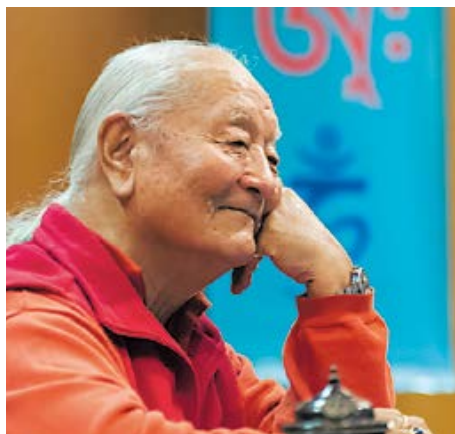
No. 133
September 2016



The Three Principles of the Teaching
Museum of Asian Art and Culture
Focus on Namgyalgar



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY



Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Photo: P. Fassoli

August 26, 2017
Public Talk at the University

Beijing
August 30, 2017
Visit to Jamyangling and Ganapuja

Japan
September 2–6, 2017
Japan Retreat

Taiwan
September 11–13, 2017
Taiwan Retreat

Malaysia
September 18–20, 2017
Kuala Lumpur Retreat

P. R. China
Samtengar
October 1–7, 2017
Longsal Longde Teaching and Practice

October 14–20, 2017
Retreat Long life practice with
Chülden of Guru Amitayus

Hong Kong
October 27–29, 2017
Initiation of Shitro Korde Rangdrol
of Changchub Dorje

Singapore
November 3–5, 2017
Singapore Retreat

Australia
Namgyalgar
November 10–14, 2017
Namgyalgar Retreat

Argentina
Tashigar Sur
November 24–28, 2017
Tashigar Sur Retreat

Colombia
December 15–17, 2017
Bogota Retreat

Spain, Tenerife
December 18, 2017
Leave for Tenerife

2016

Spain, Tenerife
Dzamling Gar
November 11–15, 2016
Teachers Training for SMS, Vajra
Dance and Yantra

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

Worldwide Transmission
November 23–24, 2016
Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa

November 29–30, 2015
S.M.S. 3rd Level Exam
December 1–7, 2016
S.M.S. Fourth level Training

Italy
Merigar West
December 9, 2016
Intensive Practice
of Naggon

December 10–11, 2016
Inauguration of the Asian Art
Museum in Arcidosso and
Celebration of the 35th Anniversary
of Merigar West

Spain, Tenerife
Dzamling Gar
December 28–January 3, 2017
Yangtig Retreat

Front cover:
Some of the ornamental tiles made to embellish the
Museum of Asian Art and Culture in Arcidosso.
Photo by Liz Granger
Back cover: Painting one of the ornaments for the
Museum.

2017

January 27–February 3, 2017
Longsal Rushan

February 27–March 12, 2017
Losar – Mandarava Drubchen

April 3, 2017
SMS Base Exam starts
April 7–14, 2017
Santi Maha Sangha First Level
Training

France
Reunion Island
June 2–4, 2017
Africa Retreat – Ati Yoga Teaching

Paris
June 9–11, 2017
Paris Retreat

Italy
Merigar West
June 30–July 4, 2017
Merigar West Retreat

Germany
July 14–16, 2017
Munich Retreat

Austria
July 28–30, 2017
Vienna Retreat

P. R. China, Chengdu
August 11, 2017
Travel to Chengdu and meeting with
Tibetan dancers and singers

August 18–20, 2017
Chengdu Retreat

Editorial

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's
projects for the future of the
Dzogchen Community

Enrico Dell'Angelo

Rinpoche's tireless work is aimed at ensuring the transmission of the authentic Dzogchen teaching for the benefit of future generations.

In 2012 Rinpoche launched two important initiatives that in some way share the same purpose: the creation of Dzamling Gar and the establishment of the IDC.

The purpose of these two challenging projects is to guarantee the continuity of the Dzogchen Community.

Dzamling Gar is the place where all Gars of the Dzogchen Community are represented. They will have their own house in the Gar and they will be able to directly collaborate in the development of the Global Gar and of the initiatives that will be implemented there.

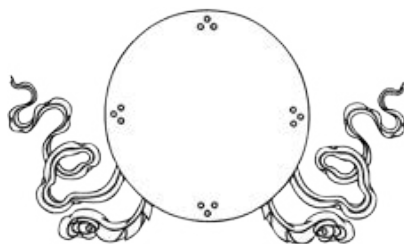
Dzamling Gar is the place where all members of the Dzogchen Community meet and collaborate together. It is the global-family meeting-place where all practitioners have the possibility to collaborate together and enjoy the happiness of being together on the path.

The organizational and legal work related to the establishment and development of the IDC has the same aims: to bring together the different realities of the Dzogchen Community that, up to now, had no formal connection between themselves, to improve communication, and to create the possibility to implement and coordinate the initiatives of the Dzogchen Community in a harmonious and consistent way.

This project is coordinated by the International Gakyil in collaboration with all Gar and Ling Gakyils of the world.

About the International Gakyil, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu says:

"People from the Gakyils often write to me that they are doing this and that and that they want to do this and that, but the important thing is to work in coordination with the International Gakyil, otherwise there is nothing clear, and once things take the wrong direction then it becomes difficult to fix them.



For this reason I'm asking everyone to work together very well with the IG. The IG is responsible for connecting things in the Dzogchen Community, because the Dzogchen Community is like a family. You have to see it that way and it must become like that. If each one is separate, on his or her own, we are no longer a Community, and there is danger of creating situations that are different from what they should be, and this is not good. I wanted to say this as a general introduction."

Our Master has given a clear explanation of his vision in the Dzamling Gar song that he composed in January 2013 on the occasion of the birth of Dzamling Gar:

Dzogchen Communities of the
whole world,
Dzogchen Communities of the
whole world,
As soon as possible, in a relaxed
manner,
Come to Dzamling Gar!
Happiness is present,
All is perfected,
Come to enjoy happiness,
Let's enjoy this happiness together!
May all manifest auspiciously!
May our desires be fulfilled!
With fortune arising self-perfected,
May victory manifest in all
directions!
Let's unite our strength and
capacity,
Let's unite our strength and
capacity,
Dzogchen Communities, unite all
your strength and capacity,
Dzogchen Communities, unite all
your strength and capacity,
Happiness is present,
Unite your strength and capacity!
Happiness is present,
All is manifesting self-perfected.
Live in the knowledge of the
primordial state,

And happiness will arise in the
world.
May all manifest auspiciously!
May our desires be fulfilled!
Developing the knowledge of our
authentic condition,
The entire world will enjoy peace.
Integrate in your state the principle
of Ati!
Integrate in your state the principle
of Ati!
Through the knowledge and
application of one's authentic
condition
The world will be established in
peace!
Through the knowledge and
application of one's authentic
condition
The world will be established in
peace!
Happiness is present,
The world will be established in
peace.
Happiness is present,
Joy is developing,
Integrate in your state the authentic
condition,
And the sun of Samanthabhadra
will arise.
May all manifest auspiciously!
May our desires be fulfilled!
May all beings have joy
And enjoy the splendor of ultimate
happiness!

If we understand the message of this song, there is no further need to explain what Dzamling Gar and the IDC project are about and what Rinpoche's students are supposed to do.

We would like nonetheless to remind all our vajra brothers and sisters that time is running fast and that we should take advantage of the present favorable circumstances.

Let's happily collaborate together for the realization of the Dzamling Gar project and for the establishment of the IDC by supporting the construction of the Dzamling Gar Gönpa and by aligning and bringing together all Gars and Lings of the Dzogchen Community!

For more in-depth information regarding both the International Dzogchen Community and the International Gakyil, readers can go to the website of the International Gakyil at: <http://dzogchencommunity.org/general/> and particularly helpful is

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The Three Principles of the Teaching

An excerpt from teaching given by
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar West
on July 10, 2016

When we follow any kind of teaching, we must understand that there are always three principles, otherwise we won't be able to understand what kind of teaching it is, and which kind of benefit we can have. This is not for judging that one teaching is better than another. But it is very important because if we are following a teaching, we must understand the characteristics of that teaching. The characteristics are related to the situation. The teaching goes according to the capacity of the individual, just like a medicine: for example, some individuals are more interested in the teaching, some have more capacity or less, others have more or less knowledge, etc. When we are ill we can't take any kind of medicine. In order to know what medicine to take, we have to go to a doctor who checks and then gives us advice. That means that it is related to the situation and condition of the individual. It is the same thing with the teaching.

In the teaching there are three principles that we must understand. In general, in the Dzogchen teaching, we call these three the base, the path, and the fruit. They may not use the same terms in all teaching traditions, but even if they do not, there are always three principles.

I'll give you the example of the Sutra teaching. The Sutra teaching is the teaching of the Buddha at the more physical level. In this teaching there are two vehicles that are called Hinayana and Mahayana. Hinayana means 'minor vehicle' while Mahayana means 'greater vehicle'. Why is one considered 'minor' and the other 'greater'? When we judge with our minds in an ordinary way, we immediately think that 'minor' is less important and that 'greater' is much better. But it doesn't mean that. It is related to the condition of the individual. Many people do not have the capacity to open themselves. You can understand this in ordinary life. Many people always remain closed and don't even manage to communicate with other people. Some people are always open so we can understand that there is a difference.

In the same way, in the teaching, Mahayana means more open. The Hinayana or 'minor vehicle' means more closed, not open. They listened to what Buddha said, and whatever he said they considered perfect. But Buddha can manifest in different ways, in different circumstances, and teach in different ways. Buddha was an



Photo by Ralf Pluschke

enlightened being, not just someone who lived in India for some years, manifested *parinirvana*, death, and then it was finished. We cannot limit the teaching of the Buddha in that way. When you think like that it means you are closed, not open. Buddha, for example, gave teachings to human beings, divinities, *nagas*, and different classes of sentient beings, in different forms and in different circumstances. It wasn't that Buddha taught only in India to a few students. So you can understand what closed and open means.

The Hinayana are a bit like that and for that reason when they follow teaching they receive a vow. What does receiving a vow mean? It means controlling your existence: your body, your speech, and your mind. Among the teachings of the Buddha there are some that say you can do this but you cannot do that, and so you follow this with a vow, considering that you should behave in this way, insisting that the vow is the only way to realization.

Mahayana is not that way, even though they also pay respect to vows because they are necessary for people who have no capacity. In our ordinary lives a lot of people say that they don't want to drink too much, or that they don't want to smoke because they have discovered that these things are very negative for them. They try to stop many times, but they never succeed. This is the weak point of human beings. For people who have this condition, the only way is to take a vow and respect it. In this way they have some possibility [to stop]. So in the Hinayana system, you control your body, speech and mind and don't commit negative actions. So when you receive a vow, there is a rule that you should follow. If you break the rule, you feel bad.

In the Mahayana the principle is not that. If you do not have the capacity and need to take a vow, you can take it and apply it. But the principle of the Mahayana is related to your intentions. What kind of intention do you have? Good or bad? For example, if you have a good intention, you continue with that and accumulate good actions. If you are a Mahayana practitioner and have a bad intention, you discover that you have a bad intention. If you follow



a bad intention, you can commit negative actions. So you don't need any vows. You can control yourself. When you know that you have a negative intention, you get rid of it and cultivate a good intention instead. Going ahead that way there is no problem.

What is the difference between Mahayana and Hinayana? In a very simple way it is because one is called a 'minor' vehicle and the other a 'greater' one. It doesn't mean that Mahayana is more important and even if it were more important, the principle of the names 'Mahayana' and 'Hinayana' is not based on that. When some people explain the difference between the two they say that Mahayana has more compassion and Hinayana less. This is not correct. You cannot say that Hinayana doesn't have enough compassion. In Hinayana there is the realization of the Arhats who know very well about the condition of *samsara*. They know very well how heavy the suffering of sentient beings is. Then how is it possible that they have no compassion. This is not true.

In Hinayana and Mahayana there are three principles: the first is called the base, which is the consideration of the condition of the individual, the real nature of sentient beings. In different traditions they have different considerations of this. How is this explained, for example, in Mahayana? They say གཞི་བདེན་གཉིས་ཟུང་འཇུག་ (*gzhi bden gnyis zung 'jug*) which means that the base is the Two Truths. It is the union between these two because they are interdependent. When good and bad exist they are always interdependent: if there is no good, bad does not exist. If there is no bad, good does not exist. That means that they are interdependent. When we say 'Two Truths', it means that the truth of the real nature is emptiness. In the Sutra teaching it is called *shunyata*, emptiness, the real nature of everything. This is called Absolute Truth, the real nature of emptiness.

The Relative Truth means everything that we are, that we see and hear, the relative condition. Even an enlightened being like Buddha Shakyamuni, whose real nature is Dharmakaya, the state of emptiness, had all the qualifications and for that reason manifested as a human being. When Buddha was a human being, he was in the relative condition, not in the absolute condition. For that reason, if today Buddha Shakyamuni was somewhere in India, we could go there and see him, just like in ancient times, when Buddha's students had contact with him. This is called the relative condition.

They say that the base is the relative condition and the condition of the real truth. In the condition of the real truth they explain that all sentient beings have Buddha seed or Buddha nature. That means that even though they are in *samsara*, suffering and transmigrating, if they follow the teaching of the Buddha, the Path, they have the possibility to be realized. Just like having a National Lottery ticket, they have the possibility of winning. But there is no guarantee. In the same way, everybody has Buddha nature, and there is this possibility. This is the consideration of the Mahayana.

Hinayana does not consider that. Hinayana says that there are sentient beings who have Buddha nature when they are fortunate and meet the teaching of the Buddha, although most beings do not have it and transmigrate infinitely. In Tibetan we call this རིགས་ཆད་ (*rigs chad*) which [literally] means missing that family, generation. The Hinayana and Mahayana have many discussions about this. In any case, in the Sutra teaching, the base considers that we have Buddha nature. It doesn't mean that we have the potentiality or the

qualification of realization, only the possibility of Buddha nature. This is the Sutra point of view of the base. It doesn't mean only for human beings but for all sentient beings. Even a small ant walking on the street also has Buddha nature. So this is the path of Sutra.

The Vajrayana teaching was not taught directly or physically by the Buddha. The Buddha manifested in different manifestations; sometimes he even manifested as Buddha in the human dimension or that of the Devas. What he transmitted was the Vajrayana teaching. However, most of the time he manifested in different ways called Sambhogakaya, the pure dimension with the essence of the five elements. Think about the manifestation of Kalachakra. We say that the Kalachakra teaching is the teaching of Buddha Shakyamuni, but it doesn't mean that he taught it somewhere in India. Some histories of Kalachakra say that three years before his Parinirvana, Buddha manifested as Kalachakra somewhere in south India. But this is very much linked to our human ideas. A Sambhogakaya manifestation cannot exist in time. If there is a Sambhogakaya manifestation in time, it is not Sambhogakaya. Sambhogakaya manifestation is beyond time and space. It is in the pure dimension. So who is Kalachakra? Buddhists think that it is Buddha Shakyamuni. In an ordinary way, Buddha Shakyamuni was a monk. Kalachakra is the union of *yab* and *yum* so how can it physically be Buddha Shakyamuni? This is a manifestation, otherwise it is a complete contradiction.

There is no contradiction when Enlightened Beings manifest in the Sambhogakaya. It depends on the type of experience, and through that experience they transmit that knowledge and manifest that way.

The teaching of Tantrism or Vajrayana we call Vajra teaching. Why is it called Vajrayana? The teaching that Buddha gave in Bodhgaya and other places is called Sutrayana. *Yana* means vehicle, a vehicle for travelling towards total realization. All the different vehicles are called '*yana*' in Sanskrit.

This is a symbol of the *vajra* [Rinpoche holds up a *vajral*. Most people think that this is a *vajra*, but it is not. It is a symbol of the *vajra* and it is presented in the Vajrayana or the vehicle of the *vajra*. What does *vajra* mean? In the centre there is a kind of sphere or ball which represents our real nature of Dharmakaya, beyond any kind of concepts or limitations. This is the real nature when we say Absolute Truth. The Vajrayana also considers that.

In the Sutra the relative condition is only what we see and hear. In Vajrayana practices and knowledge, the relative condition is divided into two types: the pure dimension and the impure. The pure dimension is related to manifestations of Enlightened Beings in the pure dimension. The impure dimension is the samsaric situation that we are in. For that reason there are two levels: on the top of the *vajra* there are five points, on the lower part there are five points. Both the pure and the impure dimensions are related to the center, because this is the nature of all sentient beings.

Most sentient beings are ignorant of their real nature. Not only this, they are also ignorant of this higher level of the pure dimension. They believe in what they see and hear with their sense organs. This is their capacity. When we close our eyes we don't see anything. When we open our eyes we can see something. What

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do we see? Everything that is produced by our karmic dimension. This is our impure dimension: everything that has contact with our senses when we see, hear, and think. We have contact with subject and object continually, and transmigrate day after day that way. And we believe in that very much.

The Vajrayana makes us understand. For example, there are the manifestations of the five Dhyani Buddhas in the pure dimension. In Vajrayana, we have different kinds of manifestations, but even though there are infinite manifestations, they all belong to these five families, just as they are presented in the *mandala*. At the center of the *mandala* there is the Buddha family, which is more related to the Dharmakaya and the real condition. Then in the east of the *mandala* there is the Vajra family, in the south the Ratna family, in the west the Padma family, and in the north the Karma family. All manifestations are included within these five families. This is the way to learn how to go to the essence.

When we are ignorant of our real nature, which is just like the five Dhyani Buddhas in the pure dimension, then we see and hear everything in an ordinary way with our karmic vision. In our karmic vision in the base we have the five aggregations: aggregations of form, of sensation, perception, mental formation, and consciousness. These are similar to the five Dhyani Buddhas in the pure dimension. When we develop them, we have all aspects of *samsara*. For that reason, in the Vajrayana, the symbol of the *vajra* is presented because they say that everybody has the potentiality of the *vajra* in their real nature. All Vajrayana teachings have this knowledge, although some may be more direct, while others may be less. Even the lower tantras recognize the nature of the *vajra*. The nature of the *vajra* means much more than Buddha seed.

How is Buddha nature explained in Vajrayana? Buddha nature is considered to be a very powerful potentiality. Nobody can destroy it. Nobody can change it. It cannot be cut. It is always stable in its own condition etc. There are explanations of its seven qualifications or aspects. This is the base, the condition of the individual as it is presented in Vajrayana. What do we need when we have this base? We need to receive initiation to empower the development stage and accomplishment stage to get in that state. So the base and the path are presented that way.

In Dzogchen the presentation is not like that of the *vajra*. In the Dzogchen teaching and the Vajrayana there are two systems. For example, the principal practice of Vajrayana is transformation, transforming our impure dimension into a pure one, like in the *mandala*. Our individual condition transforms into a deity.

After receiving initiation, there are two systems to apply that. One way is to develop [the visualization] slowly step by step. Another way is when we receive initiation, knowing the condition of our real nature we can be directly, instantly, in that transformation.

When we go ahead with this gradual transformation, it is called the Anuttara Tantra system, in Sanskrit. When we transform instantly this method is called Anuyoga. In the Anuttara Tantra there is also the name 'Anu' as in Anuyoga. 'Anu' means 'superior' which means we can have this transformation into a divinity. Both of these methods were originally taught by Guru Padmasambhava in Tibet in the 8th century. Then that knowledge developed in

the Buddhist tradition, in particular the method of Anuyoga, not transforming gradually but instantly. But today this tradition and method has only continued in the Nyingmapa school.

In Tibet, in the Vajrayana tradition we have four official schools: firstly the Nyingmapa which means the more ancient, then later on the Sakyapa, Kagyupa and Gelugpa traditions developed. All these traditions follow Vajrayana teaching. Of course people also apply and follow all Buddhist traditions in Tibet, including Hinayana and Mahayana, and have this knowledge of the base. When we go to a high level of the teaching, we should not be closed. We should understand all the lower traditions and be expert in them. We should not stop and think that we don't want to learn about the others because we consider that we are following a high path and remain ignorant of the existence of other teachings at a high level. For this reason, in Vajrayana they know very well about Hinayana and Mahayana and apply and use them although the principle is Vajrayana practice.

Vajrayana practices in the Sakyapa, Gelugpa and Kagyupa traditions are called Anuttara Tantra, or the way of gradual transformation. For example, if you receive an initiation of the Anuttara Tantra system, such as Kalachakra, and you are interested in doing the practice, there is a small book called *sadhana* to learn how to do it. It starts with refuge and *bodhicitta* at the beginning, then explains how you should transform in the development stage, then the accomplishment stage etc. When you read this book step by step and do all these things, then slowly you construct the manifestation. This is called the gradual way.

Anuyoga doesn't need that because Anuyoga doesn't consider that the real nature of an individual practitioner is only *vajra*. In Anuyoga the base is the same as Dzogchen: since the beginning we have a perfected state, we have all qualifications. When we have that, in Anuyoga when we receive an initiation from a master, the teacher giving the initiation introduces you and you have total potentiality. Now that you know that you have this potentiality, why do you need to construct something? You don't need to. You only need a secondary cause and this is the initiation you already received and the instructions to know how you have to transform, for example, what Kalachakra looks like. Instantly when you use that seed syllable you are Kalachakra. This is just the same as reflections manifesting in the mirror. The mirror has infinite potentiality of reflecting. In the same way in our condition we have the infinite potentiality of self-perfected qualifications. When we know that, we are just in that state; there is no reason to construct or create something. This is the difference between Anuyoga and Anuttara Tantra.

In Dzogchen, when we do any kind of practice if we use transformation we use more the Anuyoga system because it is easier. When we talk about the Base in Dzogchen teaching, it means that we are talking about the self-perfected state from the very beginning. What is Dzogchen? It is the non-duality of *kadag* and *lhundrub*. The non-duality of emptiness and its infinite qualifications, this is the real nature. And even though we use something like transformation or being in the state of contemplation, we are being directly in that state because this is our condition. It is presented in the Dzogchen teaching that way. ❀

Transcribed and edited by L. Granger

Khaita is Dancing with Tibetan Songs. How Did it Develop?

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gives a brief presentation of Khaita Joyful Dances at a retreat in Bratislava, the Slovak Republic, on August 21, 2016, just before retreat participants begin a session.

I was listening to Tibetan songs. In Tibet the official language is now Chinese. The Tibetans cannot use the Tibetan language and it is gradually disappearing. The new generations do not know the Tibetan language very well because they speak Chinese.

The Tibetan language is very important in this world because we have the collection of all the teachings of the Buddha – more than three hundred volumes of the *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* – in Tibetan. Although the teachings originated in India, they no longer exist there. The complete original *Kangyur* and *Tengyur* do not exist anywhere in the world, only in the Tibetan language. The ancient translators prepared them very well so when we want to translate them back to the Sanskrit it is very easy. So, if we lose the Tibetan language, we lose all of this, and all the Tibetan books will just end up in a museum.

There are many Tibetan songs supporting Tibetan culture and language so that it can continue. This is very important particularly for ordinary Tibetan people: they like to dance and sing, but then little by little they also study the meaning of the songs. For that reason, first of all I prepared and selected 108 Tibetan songs. These songs have already been transcribed and translated for Westerners. This is one volume we have.



Photo by Ralf Plüschke

After that I prepared 180 songs. The translations and transcriptions of these songs are almost ready. From all of these songs we have more than 160 dances and many of our dancers already know these dances. So, we are using those.

On one hand Khaita is for supporting Tibetan culture and continuing to keep it alive. Another reason is that in Dzogchen practices, as I have explained, after contemplation it is very important to be present. In order to train to be present with our physical body, our movements, and our energy, dancing is very good. I consider that Khaita dances are also part of the practice, not just dancing. It is important that you know all these things. ❁

Khaita Joyful Dances – Bridge to the Teaching

During a recent course for instructors of Khaita Joyful Dances held at Merigar West at the beginning of September 2016, *The Mirror* interviewed the Khaita Committee (five instructors for Khaita Joyful Dances) about their role and the type of training they are undertaking.

The Mirror: Can you tell us about this group of five people who are the reference point for the instructors of Khaita Joyful Dances: who they are, what they are doing, and how this group came about.

Adriana Dal Borgo: After the first Khaita exam that was held at Dzamling Gar at the end of March 2016 [see 'Culture and Khaita Dances', *The Mirror* issue 132, p.17], 60 people received diplomas. However, Rinpoche saw that not all of them were ready to teach –

some needed more experience and to work a bit more – also not so many people had been expected to come for the exam.

Rinpoche decided that there should be a committee of five individuals to take care of helping people develop their skills to teach. So five people were chosen for the committee, myself (Adriana Dal Borgo) Ludmila Lislichenko, Andrea Bucaioni, Salima Celeri, and Lena Dumcheva, according to our different capacities, as each of us has different qualities. For example, as a Vajra Dance instructor I have more experience in teaching and preparing instructors and I've also been involved with Khaita from the very beginning. Luda is also a Vajra Dance teacher and has a lot of experience in teaching. In addition she is a professional dancer and knows very well how to move, how to teach movement and also about music. Lena has dedicated herself a lot to Khaita dances and is very good at learning and explaining. Salima is also very committed to Khaita and is the main instructor at Merigar West. Andrea has more of a cultural and historical background

and is involved in the didactic approach to Khaita. He's also the only man in the group so he balances the energy a bit. We are also all living quite close to each other and it is easy to meet.

We work with those people who are already instructors, although later on we will work to form new Khaita instructors. At the moment we have 60 official instructors. 58 of them came to Dzamling Gar for the exam, and Topgyal Gontse and Tsering Dolker are two instructors living in Australia.

Lena Dumcheva: The role of our committee is that we coordinate the training courses. It is not only us teaching something to somebody. Our function is to organize and we try to work with circumstances and our Khaita dancers' capacities.

The Mirror: You have already had several meetings as a group of five instructors. What are you doing and what is your point of arrival?

Lena Dumcheva: Of course even before the exam, even before starting these trainings, we already had the idea that Khaita is

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Khaita Joyful Dances at the retreat in Prague August 2016.

Photo by Iulian Lucian Maidanuc

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a very multi-dimensional practice. That it is not only singing and dancing, but involves many aspects. During these trainings it became very clear: we work on movements, on music, on public presentation, on Tibetan culture, on language, on the voice, etc., so we are gradually realizing how complex it is and how much we need to study.

Our point of arrival is, I think, to improve our capacities and those of our instructors in a way that we can represent Khaita in a dignified way, especially to the Community but also to the general public, in this multi-dimensional way and in a proper way. In other words becoming people capable of representing Khaita corresponding to and being worthy of the trust that Rinpoche gave us when he authorized all the instructors to be his representatives.

One of our instructors, Pancho Company, said that whatever Rinpoche does, he is always 'brilliant and impeccable'. This is a very challenging arrival point but we are pointing ourselves in this direction in representing Khaita.

The Mirror: With this multi-functional view to Khaita, how are the instructors' courses structured?

Andrea Bucaioni: I think it's important to say that this supervision/training is not just an explanation of the 50 dances for the Khaita examination or just an advanced course. It's more a course to go into Khaita in general more in-depth and also to study some technical aspects.

Salima Celeri: We are working on timing, music, geography, history, language, *dra-jor* [the system of transcribing Tibetan developed by ChNN]. All these aspects. For

example, we had two-hour sessions with Prof. Fabian Sanders on Tibetan history, geography, culture etc. With Pancho Company and Luda Lislichenko we had three sessions on musical theory and practice. With Stoffelina Verdonk we had sessions on bodywork in order to understand our bodies better and the fluidity of movement etc. We also had sessions with Adriana Dal Borgo about what it means to be an in-



Khaita instructors training, June 2016, Dzamling Gar.

structor, and teaching techniques.

At Dzamling Gar earlier in the year we had sessions on the use of voice with Elisa Koppensteiner who is a voice training professional. With Ilaria Faccioli we had a session about how to work with children, as you need a different approach when you work with them.

Adriana: Every day our training is divided into a few sessions, each lasting an hour and a half. We also do group work, divid-

ing our people into different groups each of which prepares a different presentation of Khaita and then we share our work and thoughts. We also consider how we can do presentations of Khaita in different contexts, considering which dances we should demonstrate and what we should say about them. For example, what we say and dance at a presentation at a university would be quite different from a presentation at a school, or a local village festival. So we are working on these types of things.

We are also collecting material, such as Rinpoche's words on Khaita and about being an instructor and what it means.

Salima: We usually close the last session with an explanation of a dance by our instructors. Every day at 5 pm one of our instructors explains a dance to people who wish to learn it. Afterwards we give the instructor some feedback on how they did and how to improve.

Adriana: On the last day of the course we taught the Dzamling Gar song and dance because automatically instructors have to know how to teach this. However, it is not that easy because it is a teaching so we study the meaning and the movements very precisely.

Ludmila Lislichenko: Today we tried to create a glossary, the language of the dance, in order to explain movements more easily to people. We put together some key words. The glossary means that instead of telling people to do like this and that, demonstrating the movement, you tell them to do a 'lateral step' or to do a 'chasse' or side step, instead of using 'right' 'left' 'left' 'right' all the time. For example, the glossary includes words such as basic step, lateral step, and

chasse, a kind of step where we slide with the right or left foot in different directions.

We are also studying how to have maps of some of the very simple dances. The whole dance is written down and the structure of the dance can be easily explained.

Lena: Adriana found a very nice metaphor, saying that when we teach we work on the level of body, voice and mind, so on this course we are trying to cover all those aspects of body, voice, and mind of Khaita practice.

Adriana: Teaching Khaita is not only showing the steps, because this is very easy. It is not only this. For us as instructors of the Dzogchen Community, teaching is something else. It also goes through our energy and through our minds. It is more complete, so we try to work on these three levels.

Khaita is really the bridge for people who are outside the Dzogchen Community. We have Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga and, of course, there are some parts that you can present to the general public, but with Khaita you can bring the teaching outside the Community without saying a single word about meditation, practice, or spirituality. You can reach many people with Khaita and pass along the messages that

slow movements in our state. In Khaita practice we learn how to work with more joyful and quick movements and integrate them.

The Mirror: Your first training course took place at Dzamling Gar in June, and this course at Merigar is the second. Are you planning to do more training courses?

Adriana: Yes, there will be the next one at Dzamling Gar at the beginning of 2017. The first courses were for the instructors but now we will be starting to open up to those who already know or who have quite a strong base of Khaita Joyful Dances and wish to become instructors. This third course will be held after the Yangtig retreat, in January, at Dzamling Gar. On January 5–6, 2017, there will be course on the Dzamling Song and Dance, learning how to read, sing, and dance it, open to all. Then January 8–15 there will be a training course for instructors or for those preparing to become instructors. People who would like to participate should prepare the 50 dances like for the Khaita examination, studying the dances with the tutorials, the training videos, so that they have a base. Then we will have courses to deepen

some of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's explanations, and original videos of the Tibetan songs. There are also 98 demonstration videos of different dances being performed by different groups that you can watch and study.

Then we have some very good tutorial videos explaining the dances step by step that can be downloaded for one euro each from the Shang Shung Foundation online shop. At the moment we have 35 tutorials available, while the remaining 15 tutorials will be available in a few months.

In addition, we have a google drive folder where we upload all the material that we sing with Rinpoche. Here you can find the *drajor* (transcription of the Tibetan words) text of each song, the words of the songs in Tibetan, and the original Tibetan video. You can find all 180 songs in this folder which is freely available.

We also have a Facebook page of Khaita Joyful Dances and often if people have questions they can post them there.

At the moment we don't have a website but we are preparing one which should be published soon. However, we have a page on the Dzamling Gar website with a transcription of Rinpoche's words on Khaita and a direct link to download the three *Mekhor* (the three sections that the 180 songs are divided into).

About projects, I think it's useful to mention that at the moment we have a book with the translations of 108 Tibetan songs which is the first collection that Rinpoche put together and is called "Message from Tibet" and is available in printed form and also as an e-book from Shang Shung online shop.

Now we are working with Adriano Clemente and other Tibetologists to translate the entire 180 songs that will be published in three volumes, each corresponding to a *metreng* (Tibetan cycle of time equal to 60 years), each song with its translation.

Another publication I think is very important will be a book with all Rinpoche's commentaries on the songs, because since the beginning of Khaita Rinpoche has been translating these songs and each of his translations is very rich, very profound and connected with the teaching. So we are collecting this material and hope to be able to publish it in the next months.

The Mirror: Thank you everyone.

©



Second course for instructors of Khaita Joyful Dances held in September 2016 at Merigar West.

are in the songs: messages of peace, evolution, and collaboration. We can pass along all these messages through dance.

For some years now we have been learning all of these things by dancing with Rinpoche for several hours every day. So for us Khaita is the bridge to take all of these things outside and this is what we have to do through our instructors.

Ludmila: For us practitioners, with Vajra Dance we learn how to integrate peaceful

the understanding of these 50 dances to be sure that everyone is moving in the same way, that the movements are correct and so on. This will be advanced training on those 50 dances.

The Mirror: Is there a website where anyone can access the training videos?

Adriana: We have a channel on Youtube called 'Harmony in the Space' where you can find videos of presentations, shows,



2.1.1 lá-sòg gĩ dröd-kol The Warmth of Our Life Force

Rinpoche explains that this song is important because it reminds Tibetans not to forget their language and culture. He gave these comments at Merigar West in July 2016 during a session of Khaita Joyful Dances. The Tibetan text and the drajor or phonetics of the song are on the following page.

It's a really beautiful song. If I had to leave a testament to the Tibetans I would leave this particular song. It means that people should remember their culture. They should not abandon it.

It starts with *ga, ka, gā, nga*, which is the Tibetan alphabet. *ga, ka, gā, nga majéd amai bū*: children of your mother, do not forget! It also says not to forget Tibetan culture, not to forget our homeland. People who were born and have lived in a country should have this feeling. It is very important, otherwise who has it? Then it will end up just as happened in the Western world. Today they say: "Oh, in the old days there were the Vikings". Who were the Vikings? Maybe they show you some films with people who were a little wild, with beards, and they say that these were the Vikings. But in reality they were an ancient civilization with its own history, weren't they? Then, when there is no continuation, when there is nobody who *loves* his culture, etc., it ends up like the Vikings.

I'm very worried about this aspect for the Tibetans. This is why I have chosen all the songs, firstly to help maintain Tibetan culture a little bit. Secondly, also for the melody, to dance well, to feel good, even to relax. Those who want to help the Tibetans a little bit can

understand what they are saying, the meaning: this is very important indeed. Here, the meaning of this song is very wonderful, really wonderful, and then also the dance is very beautiful, and I really like the movements. Also it relaxes your mind a little bit. Not only relaxes, but it coordinates the mind a little bit.

Many dancers watch those who know how to do [the dances], watch which hand to move, which foot to move. They only look at these things and repeat them. This is not good. It is necessary but when we dance once or twice we should think, for example, about how many steps we did? And where? To the right or to the left? Where did we move our hands? Once, twice and we remember, no? We coordinate. We have to think a little and use our heads. This is very important. In the Western world we really do not use the brain much. Because everyone thinks "I have to go to study" and when a person studies and reads, he says: "I have to do this and that" and memorizes "I must do it like this."

When I do something, for example, many people ask me where I learned it. I learned it in the brain, right? We use, we work with circumstances, with what we can do, with what the possibility is. The new generations do not do this, many of them really do not. They always ask "Where did you learn that, where do you study these things?" This is really not good. You have to use the brain a little.

So, even when you dance, use your brain a little, not only looking at what those who know the dances do. If you only repeat, repeat today, repeat tomorrow, repeat the day after tomorrow, repeat all your life, you'll never learn. If you think a little, for example, about what we said, "How many times did we clap our hands?" We said eleven times. It's true. And then when you clap you can also count, and arrive at eleven: "Ah, now I have to dance." This means using your brain. When you don't use it and you only look – today, tomorrow, next month, next year – we grow old and we have not learned anything. ❁

2.1.1 The Warmth of Our Life Force

Tibetans of the land of snow!
Learn the KA KHA GA NGA,
The warmth of our life force!
Our ancestor is the king Songtsen
Gampo.
The opener of the door of knowledge
is the teacher Thonmi.
The language and letters are the
jewel of our family generations.
Do not forget KA KHA GA NGA,
offspring of the snow mountain!
Do not forget them, sons of the
snow mountain!

Tibetans of the land of snow!
Speak the pure paternal language
That shines on the summit of the
world!
The thirty-four consonants and
vowels are the bone of our hearts.
The pure language is the warmth of
our life,
The sunlight that shines on the top
of the world.
Do not forget Tibetan culture,
offspring of your mothers!
Do not forget it, offspring of your
mothers!

Tibetans of the land of snow,
Preserve your glorious fatherland
That formed naturally untainted.
The red fort is the ancestral castle of
the Tibetans,
The military strength of the armies
of the early kings,
The trace left behind by our
ancestors.
Do not forget our strong fatherland,
offspring of the land of snow!
Do not forget it, offspring of the land
of snow!
It is the trace left behind by our
ancestors.

ལྷ་སྒྲུབ་གི་རྩོད་ཁོལ།



གཞུས་ཚོགས་ བྱ་མདོ་རིན་པམ་དང་།
གཞུས་གདངས་ ཨ་མཚོག་མགོན་པོ་དོན་འགྲུབ།
གཞུས་མ་ རྟོང་གཙང་ལྷ་ཡུང་མཚོ།

ཁ་~འབ་ བོད་~ཕད་པ་ ཚོ~མེ~ |
ར་~ཚོ་འི་ ལྷ་~སྒྲུབ་གི་ རྩོད་~ཁོལ་ ཁོལ་ |
ཀ་~འཁ་ ག་~འར་ སྒྲོབས་~མེ~ |
ཡབ་~མེས་~འམ་ མི་~དབང་ སྲོང་~བཅན་ སྐུ་མ་~འམ་ བོ་~འོ ཡིན་~ནི་ |
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སྐད་~དང་~འར་ ཡི་~འི་ གེ་~འི་ བྱིས་~བརྒྱད་ རོར་~བུ་ ཡིན་~ནི་ |
ཀ་~ཁ་ ག་~ར་ མ་~འབརྩེད་ གངས་~རིའི་ བུ་ བུ་ |
མ་~འབརྩེད་ གངས་~འར་ རིའི་ བུ་ བུ་ ~ |



ཁ་~འབ་ བོད་~ཕད་པ་ ཚོ~མེ~ |
སྲིད་~པའི་ སྒྲི་~གཙུག་ན་ འཚོར་~འོ བའི་~འོ |
པ་~འཔ་ གཙང་~འར་ བོད་~མེ~ |
དབྱངས་~གསལ་~འོ སོ་~བཞི་ སྒྲིང་~གི་ བུས་~པ་~འོ ཡིན་~ནི་ |
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ཁ་~འབ་ བོད་~ཕད་པ་ ཚོ~མེ~ |
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མ་~འབརྩེད་ ཁ་~འོ བའི་ བུ་ བུ་ ~ |



lá-sòg gǐ dröd-kol



lha-lung cò

ka~ ä-va böd~ öd-ba co~ye~ ~ !
na~coi lá~sòg-gǐ dröd~ öd- kol~ öl-,
ga~ ä-ka gǎ~ ä-ŋa lòb~ ye~!
yab~mes~ ẽs~ mi~wán sòŋ~zan
gám~ ăm~ bo~ ô~ yin~ n
rig~i-bai gó~jyèd lòb~ô-bon
ton~mi yin~ ne-
gad~dǎŋ~ǎŋ- yi~ĩ gě~ě kyim~gyúd-gyi
nor~bũ yin~ ne

ga~ka ä~ gǎ~ŋa ǎĩ
ma~ ä-jéd gǎŋ~rii bũ~ bu~!
ma~ ä-jed gǎŋ~ rii bũ~ bu~!



ka~ ä-va böd~ öd-ba co~ye~ ~ !
sìd~bai jyi~zug-na cèr~ ẽ~ vai~ ĩ~ĩ
pa~ ä-gad zaŋ~ ǎŋ-ma xod~ ye~!
yán~sàl~ ä~ so~xí ñìŋ~gǐ rus~ ős~ pa~ ä~
gad~ ä-rig zaŋ~ma sòg~òg-gǐ dröd~kol
sìd~bai~ĩ~ zug~ũg na~ ä bàr~vai
ñi~öd yin~ ne~!
böd~bai ĩ~ rig~xún ǔŋĩ ma~ ä-jéd a~mai
ma~ ä-jyéed a~ ä-mai bũ~ ũ~ ~ !



ka~ ä-va böd~ öd-ba co~ye~ ~ !
làd~med raŋ~xìs-gyis xéŋ~ ẽn~ bai~ ĩ~,
pa~ ä-sa zan~ ǎn-bo sũŋ~ ye~!
zan~zòŋ~ òŋ~ már~bo böd~gyi pa~ ä~ kàr
ŋòn~òn-jyõn zan~poi bun~ũŋ-gǐ dob~xu
mes~bos~òs~ xul~ũ dü~ũ xág~bai xǎb~jés
pa~sa ä~ zan~bo ǎĩ ma~ ä-jéd ka~vai t
ma~ ä-jéd ka~ ä~ vai bũ~ ũ~!
mes~bos~òs~ xul~ũ dü~ũ xág~bai xǎb~jés
pa~sa ä~ zan~bo ǎĩ ma~ ä-jéd ka~vai t
ma~ ä-jéd ka~ ä~ vai bũ~ ũ~ ~ !
ma~ ä-jéd ka~ ä~ vai bũ~ ũ~ ~ !
ma~ ä-jéd ka~ ä~ vai bũ~ ũ~ ~ !





14th Classical Tibetan Translation Course

Antonio Lallo

To acquire the necessary skills for the comprehension and translation of texts written in classical Tibetan, the 'language of the Dharma' codified at the height of the Tibetan Empire and since then used for more than a millennium to transmit the Buddhist teachings of Liberation in verbal form. This was the aim of the 14th Classical Tibetan Translation Course for Intermediate and Advanced Students, organized by the Shang Shung Institute Austria and held in the Merigar West Library from the 16th to the 31st of July. The course was under the guidance of professor Fabian Sanders, teacher of Tibetan Language at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and author of the first Classical Tibetan Language grammar published in Italian, with Margherita Pansa, the Merigar West librarian, providing technical assistance.

The students, who came from all over the world, were divided into two groups, according to their ability in the use of the language.

The students of the Intermediate group, who had a basic knowledge of the language, exercised in sessions of translating different kinds of texts, ranging from a biography to the meditation manual of a philosophical text on the Great Perfection. The translations were then checked by professor Sanders, who gave explanations on the translation techniques and on the particularities of the grammar and the use of language found in the texts.

The students of the Advanced course, fully autonomous regarding language comprehension, worked on translations of complete texts together with the professor. This method of working, which focused on collaboration between the students, allowed the students to compare different opinions and proved to be particularly useful in dealing with the complexity of interpretation that characterises the Tibetan Language.



Tibetan Language Weekends

Guided translation of practice text with Prof. Fabian Sanders

September 17–18, October 8–9,
November 12–13, December 3–4, 2016
Skype/screen sharing conference
(can be followed from anywhere)

Topic and purpose.

During these four courses we will read practice texts of the DC and translate word by word, extensively explaining the terminology, the grammar, the syntax and the structure of the text. Students will

The collaboration between the students also helped in creating a relaxed atmosphere throughout the course.

After the course, the training process will continue for the whole year with a series of translation weekends on Skype during which there will be a collective review of translations previously made by the students, in order to strengthen both individual translation skills and the working ability of the team. ☺

increase their knowledge of Tibetan texts and learn important terminology. Those who wish can attempt to read, analyse and translate sentences. In the next weekends we will study Samantabhadra's invocation (*kun tu bzang po'i smon lam*) and SMS Base Level practice texts.

Who can participate.

Not only beginner students can join these Tibetan Language Weekends. We will emphasize more guided translation. The focus will be on practice texts and not on the level of participants.

In order to be able to participate

- one needs to have received the transmission of the practice from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- one should know how to read and write Tibetan and have a basic knowledge of classical Tibetan grammar

Schedule: Saturday 10.00–12.30 and 14.00–16.30, Sunday 10.00–12.30

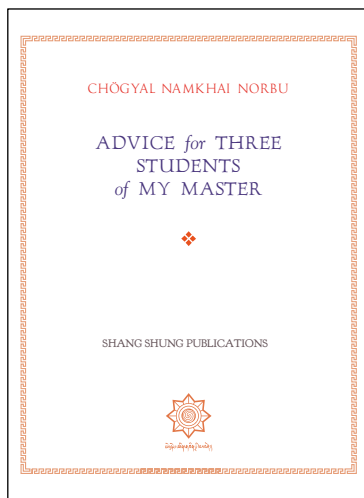
Costs.

All four Tibetan Language Weekends for members of the SSI Austria: 160.- Euro
One Tibetan Language Weekend for members of the SSI Austria: 49.- Euro
One Tibetan Language Weekend for non-members of the SSI Austria: 95.- Euro

Advice for Three Students of My Master

“With nothing to abandon by means of
the antidotes of the Sutra path,
With nothing to transform through
methods as in the Mantra path,
Whatever vision of the six sense
consciousnesses arises
Self-liberates in the very state of instant
presence: this is the Ati way.”

– from Advice to Lama Tsega



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with Garwan Rinpoche, one of three
sons of Atha Lhamo – Rigdzin Chanchub Dorje's daughter
who realized Rainbow Body. Photo © Andrea Dell'Angelo

Advice for Three Students of My Master is a revised translation of the book previously published as *Three Songs for the Disciples of Changchub Dorje*. Written in poetic form, it contains advice given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to three students of Changchub Dorje during

His visit to Khamdo Gar in 1988. The three songs express the essence of Dzogchen, the principle of instant presence, as well as the quintessence of view, meditation, and behavior. In addition to the translation and original Tibetan manuscript in Umed and Uchen characters, the book contains rare

photographs from Rinpoche's visit to the Gar of His root master.

It is now available from the webshop of Shang Shung Publications: <http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com/en/books/602-advice-for-three-students-of-my-master-9788878341524.html> ©

Contact:

The instructor: fsanders@unive.it
To know how to join: ghita.pansa@gmail.com
Membership/payment: office@ssi-austria.at

The Tibetan language weekends are an initiative of the Ka-Ter translation project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

Three online weekends course on Tibetan Language for intermediate and advanced students

with Prof. Fabian Sanders
for members of the Shang Shung Institute

*Join us and learn to translate ancient texts
from the Tibetan tradition!*

October 15–16, October 29–30,
October 19–20, 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:

These trainings are for students with a good knowledge of Tibetan grammar who are members of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

Costs:

All three Tibetan Language Weekends for members of the SSI Austria: 120.- Euro
One Tibetan Language Weekend for members of the Shang SSI Austria: 49.- Euro
Special Offer: Advanced students get a discount of 50 %

The Tibetan language weekends are an initiative of the Ka-Ter translation project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

Contact:

The instructor: fsanders@unive.it
To know how to join: ghita.pansa@gmail.com
Membership/payment: office@ssi-austria.at

Special Offer:

Package of seven online weekends
course on Tibetan language

for members of the SSI Austria in 2016
with Prof. Fabian Sanders

*Join us and learn to translate ancient texts
from the Tibetan tradition!*

October 8–9, 15–16, 29–30, November 12–13,
29–20; December 3–4, 2016

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

Topic and purpose:

These weekends are intended to all students who want to read and understand the prac-

» continued on the following page



» continued from previous page

tice texts used within the International Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as to students who want to deepen their comprehension of Classical Tibetan language and who want to become autonomous in understanding the grammar and in the use of the different tools to translate.

In order to be able to participate

- one needs to have received the transmission of the practice from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,
- one should know how to read and write Tibetan
- one should have at least a basic knowledge of classical Tibetan grammar
- one has to be member of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

Costs: Special Price

All seven Tibetan Language Weekends for members of the Shang Shung Institute Austria: 210.- Euro

The Tibetan Language Weekends are an initiative of the Ka-Ter translation project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

Contact:

The instructor: fsanders@unive.it

To know how to join: ghita.pansa@gmail.com

Membership/payment: office@ssi-austria.at



Shang Shung Institute Russia

Dear friends!

We are happy to announce that in February 2016 the Shang Shung Institute, Russia obtained a state license for educational activities. Thus, the Institute "Shang Shung" is a recognized organization engaged in education, in accordance with the law "On Education in the Russian Federation." Two applications for licensing are currently registered: the teaching programs of additional education and further professional education, with the right to issue relevant documents at

the end of training on particular educational modules.

Prior to this, the Institute passed accreditation in the Federal Migration Service, which will allow the Shang Shung Institute to invite teachers and trainers from other countries to conduct educational activities.

Obtaining an educational license is an important step in creating legal education opportunities in the field of Tibetan culture and Tibetan medicine, in accordance with the objectives of the Shang Shung Institute, formulated by our Teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

This long-awaited event was preceded by some difficult but interesting work, which would not have been so successful without all the team members. We thank all collaborators who made this possible.

We will inform you about the results of the further and immediate enrollment in schools of Tibetan medicine!

Shang Shung Foundation · International Institute for Tibetan Culture

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Open House Mindfulness and Meditation with Lynn Newdome.



Open House Khaite demonstration with Bret Bourman.



Open House of the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings with Carisa O'Kelly and Bodhi Krause.

Update Spring, Summer & Autumn 2016

Open House

About 60 participants and volunteers joined Shang Shung Institute's First Open House on July 2, 2016 at the Schoolhouse in Conway, MA. Participants from as far away as Buffalo NY and New Jersey and as near as Conway and literally next door, came together to learn about mindfulness and meditation, Yantra Yoga, the Dance of the Vajra that Benefits Beings, and Khaite Joyful Dance. They were also invited to enjoy a lunch of traditional Tibetan food prepared by Yeshe Tsomo. This event, graciously managed by Lauri Denyer with her bevy of helpers, launched a series of summer and early autumn activities.

Follow up public programs:
Open Workshop in the Vajra Dance which Benefits Beings
with Bodhi Krause
July 16-17, 2016 Conway

Introductory Yantra Yoga Courses
with Naomi Zeitz
July 23 & 24, 2016; October 1 & 2, 2016
Conway

Ongoing Introduction to Yantra Yoga
with Martina Kacurova
September 15-November 3, 2016
Northampton MA

Khaite Course
with Salima Celeri and Yangcen
July 28th-August 16th, 2016, Conway

Tibetan Medical School Practical Intensives

March and April 2016
Diagnostic and External Therapy
KuNye Massage I
with Gen Phuntsog Wangmo

August and September 2016
Herbology; Astrology II
Tibetan Language – Professor Tenzin Norbu Nangsal, formerly of Columbia University, taught Tibetan Language to students from a range of Tibetan Medicine classes.
KuNye Massage I – Yeshe Tsomo

Shang Shung was also pleased to welcome visiting scholars Gen Lobsang Namkha and Gen Namgyal this summer.

There is more activity on the horizon with public programming of Tibetan Cultural activities and the Tibetan Medical School. You can find out about our programs and keep in touch with us at:
Tel: 413 369 4928
secretary@shangshung.org
Facebook: [Shang Shung Institute of America](https://www.facebook.com/ShangShungInstituteofAmerica)
www.shangshung.org ©



Performance in Northampton.

Photo by F Dallorto



Khaite Course at the Mandala Hall, Buckland.



Khaite Dancers prepare for the parade at the Festival of the Hills, Conway, October 2, 2016.



Australia

Shang Shung Institute

The School of Tibetan Medicine of Shang Shung Institute Australia (SSIA)

Bruno Irmici

on behalf of the SSIA Board of Directors

The Shang Shung Institute Australia has a new Board of Directors since last Annual General Meeting. The aim of the new Board is certainly to continue to develop the work of the previous directors to fulfill the mission of the Shang Shung Institute and the vision of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the future of Tibetan culture.

With this message we want in particular to draw your attention to the exciting project of Shang Shung Institute Australia involving The School of Tibetan Medicine. We are in fact working towards the accreditation for an Advanced Diploma of Tibetan Medicine. This will be a first for Australia and only the second or third fully accredited course of its kind in the world.

In the past two years the Tibetan Medicine Department of SSIA directed by Carey Idle and his team, with the support of Julian King-Salter, previous SSIA president, has produced a great deal of work to design the Tibetan Medicine course. They have been consulting with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo (Tibetan doctor and director of the first School of Tibetan Medicine of SSI in USA), ATMA (Australian Tibetan Medicine Association) as well as other representatives of SSI USA, to initiate the process of course accreditation. This is a complex task as we have to comply with many government regulations and requirements before the accreditation can be granted.

At the last SSIA Annual General Meeting in Namgyalgar it was evident to me the pleasant reaction of surprise of some people attending the meeting that, after listening to the overview of the project from Carey, were quite astonished to realize for the first time the importance of this project. I

then realized that, as perhaps the project was going to reach an important milestone (all the documentation for the accreditation has been recently submitted) and more funds are needed to move the project forward, it is important first to raise more awareness within the Community in regard to the significance of this project, as it seemed to me that most people didn't know much about it.

Basically, for the first time there will be a course that will qualify students to officially practice Tibetan Medicine in Australia, as already happens with traditional Chinese medicine, naturopathy and other complimentary therapies. Accreditation means that our course will stand beside other Advanced Diploma courses and go some way to cement the tradition of Tibetan Medicine in this country. The training institution we have chosen to host the course is a Registered Training Organization (RTO).

The first School of Tibetan Medicine of the Shang Shung Institute was founded ten and more years ago by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the US and is successfully directed by Tibetan doctor Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo.

The Australian course is based on the US course and will be delivered mostly online with two intensives each year with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo and Australian resident Dr. Ani Nyidon, on the Sunshine Coast of Queensland.

So, thanks to the work of Carey and his team, and to Britta Finnigan who this year acted as Project Manager for six months, this project is now progressed to an advanced stage. And it is encouraging that expressions of interest have already been received by more than fifteen students, the minimum number required to start the first course.

Last year, through the generosity of others, we successfully raised funds to enable us to pay for the Advanced Diploma to be submitted as a course for accreditation in this country. Still much more is needed to be able to run the School and allow students in Australia (and the surrounding region), to benefit from training in the precious tradition of Tibetan Medicine, there-

fore also supporting both Tibetan Culture and the activities of SSI.

Market potentiality for this course is large and can involve the world of complimentary and preventative medicine and those doctors and therapists interested to add to their practice a qualification in Tibetan Medicine. So, the next steps for us will be to advertise the school and the course targeting those audiences.

In this regard it's worthwhile also considering that the activities of SSIA, such as the School of Tibetan Medicine, have a great potentiality to draw the attention of a new public toward the Dzogchen Community and contribute to generate public outreach that we acknowledge is needed for the continuation of our community.

To know more details regarding the School of Tibetan Medicine project please visit : www.tibetanmedicine.org.au

or contact us via email: ssistm.aus@gmail.com

For information about Shang Shung Institute Australia visit: www.shangshunginstitute.org/australia

Shang Shung Institute Australia's Board of Directors:

Bruno Irmici	<i>President</i>
Mathew Long	<i>Vice president</i>
Sally Price	<i>Secretary</i>
Ben Pearsall	<i>Treasurer</i>

©

Safeguarding Galingteng Tibetan Spiritual Legacy

In the year 1997 when I traveled in East and Central Tibet, I received many requests to help to build some Colleges of Study (*Shedra*) and Colleges of Practice (*Drudra*). I would like to ask the following Dzogchen Communities to collaborate on these projects. It is not at all easy to get permission to go into these places to work on the projects. The only possibility is that you connect with our ASIA Organization and in that way you can have direct contact with your project place or Gonpas. For the future, I really hope you can go to these places to see the real situation. When you make contact with ASIA, you can have more of a clear idea of how you should work with these Gonpas.

Galengon or Galenteng Monastery is one of the oldest monasteries of East Tibet and was originally founded by Lhalung Palgi Dorje; the student of Padmasambhava and Sogpo Palgyi Yeshe's student.

Later there was a very important Sakyapa teacher called Ga Anan Dampa and since then Galengon has mainly followed the Sakyapa Tradition.

It is the main residence monastery of my Uncle Khyentse Choekyi Wangchuk's teacher Grubwang Kung Paldan and, for that reason, it later became the residence of my Uncle Khyentse Choekyi Wangchuk.

We have a project of building a College of Study and later a small College of Practice there. I would like to ask to the Dzogchen Community of Merigar to take care and sponsor Galengon so that these colleges can be realized in a concrete way."

From "Tibetan Gonpas in need of support.
Sponsorship through Dzogchen Community Collaboration"
by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Realization of the retreat center of Galingteng Monastery

Galingteng is a village inhabited by 3000 nomads who are mostly living on yak herding and small businesses. It is located in Derge County, in the Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Ganze, in



Sichuan Province. ASIA has been working in this area since 1993. In the village of Galingteng, due to its cultural and historical importance, we have carried out several projects aimed at protecting traditional Tibetan culture. We rebuilt the college where young monks are studying Tibetan culture, spiritual tradition and language, renovated the mural paintings of an old temple from the 14th century, and renovated ancient stupas and monuments.

During our last mission, in December 2015, the local people, the monks, and abbots of the monastery submitted a proposal to rebuild the old college for spiritual practices on the sacred mountain of Shub lung. When students at the college complete their 7 years of studies, they go into retreat for four years to put into practice the knowledge acquired during their studies.

The construction of this college will be the last step to complete the traditional course of studies and train future teachers qualified to maintain and transmit the spiritual and cultural heritage of Tibet.

The college will host 16 students, one teacher and his assistant for a total of 18 people.

It will consist of a small temple to be used as the main classroom for lessons and communal practices and 18 small rooms where the students will spend 4 years without coming out of the college. The whole college will be built using only local materials such as wood, stones, and earth, and will be constructed by local Tibetan carpenters following the ancient architectural tradition. The buildings will be painted in Tibetan style and furnished with

tables, beds, stoves, bookshelves, kitchen tools, and books.

To realize the retreat center, we need your help too:

- with 50€ you can give a set of Tibetan texts to a young student
- with 250€ you can build a square meter at the ongoing retreat center
- Make a donation at <http://asia-ngo.org/en/what-you-can-do/donate/>
- with 150€ (each semester) you can sponsor a monk

Sponsor a monk at <http://www.adoptibet.org/wp/en/>

Watch the video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ht85wgo6cto>

Support Galingteng monks, the custodians of a heritage that could disappear forever. ☺

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Dzamling Gar Project Update

Giovanni Boni

At Merigar West August 28, 2017

The Houses

This is a brief update on the situation with the work at Dzamling Gar. The houses are being painted in various colors. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's house will have a different color. The houses 8 and 9 are the houses for the doctors and those being assisted by the doctors. Houses 7 and 3 will be the last ones to be finished because they are part of a later phase of the project, together with the Gönpa and these will be the last constructions that we will do.

At the moment the houses belonging to Merigar, Tsegylgar, and Kunsangar have been completed and are in the stage of being furnished. The houses of Tashigar, Samtengar, and Namgyalgar will be finished at the end of October, then they will be furnished and should be ready by December 2016. This is the current situation of the houses.

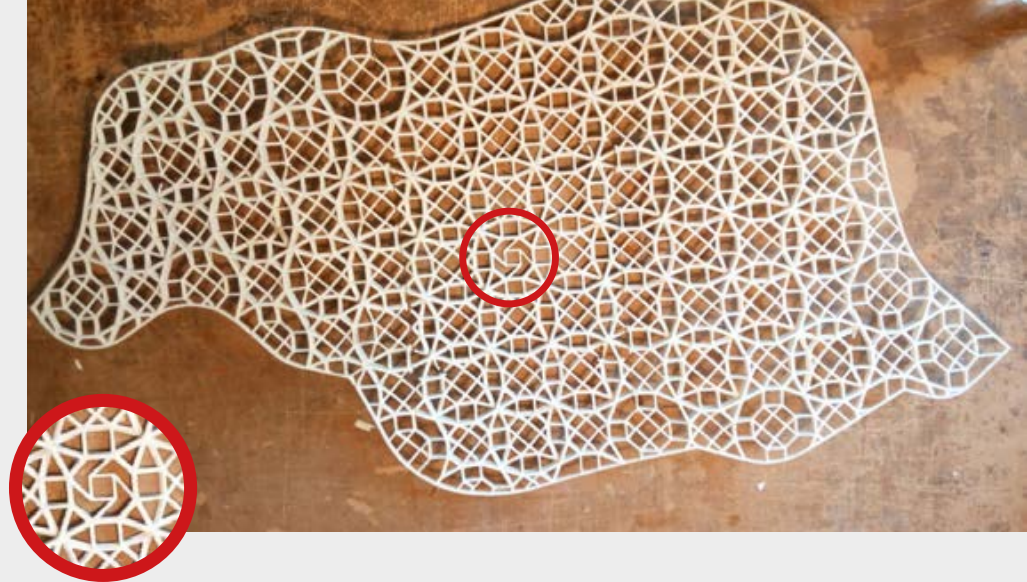
The Gönpa

We are starting to have an idea of what the center will look like and the roof covering that will be placed on top of the Gönpa so that we can have an idea of the area that will be covered. It is a very beautiful but quite complex structure. There will be a different pattern that will identify the centre of the roof.

The whole complex was already approved by local planning authorities two years ago, although each single phase needs to have further approval before it can be carried out. Now we have finally received authorization for the final phase of the project.

To have an idea of the volume of the Gönpa, the roof covering will be 2,100 square meters. Just to have an idea of how big that is, the Merigar Gönpa covers 400 square meters! In the plan that shows the structure of the building, we made an addition to the original project in which there is an area on the right that will be dedicated to children.

The big central hall directly under the Gönpa can be reached by a path, with another access from the back of the building. The hall is about 32 meters by 24 m. This is the top floor where we have 14 rooms on



the left to be used for guests. On the right there are the therapy rooms, particularly for moxibustion, balneotherapy, etc.

On the terrace you can see the perimeter of the Gönpa, which will be closed. At the beginning of the project, we planned simply to cover the Gönpa leaving the sides open. But later on, even though it was more expensive, we decided to have an enclosed hall. It's a big area, around 900 square meters. The length of the roof is 80 meters.

placed. Alix De Fermor has already started this work and we'd like to thank her for all the work she continues to do. So we have a clear idea of how the center should become.

Regarding the time frame, we are now working on the foundations of the center, then we have to reinforce the existing structural part, after which we will start the actual construction of the central part. We have estimated that this part will take around a year and a half's work so we



The front of the Gönpa will face southwest towards the ocean with stairs leading there. On the opposite side, the northeast, we have another access leading to the basement and the therapy rooms. There will also be two more separate accesses to the Gönpa from the back of the building. These are accesses on the northeast road and from these two, people will be able to enter the Gönpa from the road. On the southwest side there will be stairs allowing access from the houses in the Gar.

Then we have the gardens all around the houses and around the center. We have a plan of where different plants will be

hope that we will be able to use the Gönpa around mid-2018.

The center will be realized in two different phases: the first one will focus on utilizing the Gönpa and the terrace. In the second phase we will concentrate on finishing the rest of the building with its therapy rooms, guest rooms, etc. The first phase will be the most expensive one because before we can obtain authorization from the local authorities for safe and secure use of the building, we must ensure that it is all enclosed and all the walls of the perimeter are finished. The second phase will be a

» continued on the following page

Life at Dzamling Gar

Yanchi Kompis

Dzamling Gar blue gakyil

The fast rhythm at Dzamling Gar slowed down a bit during the summer months. There was more time for formal practices. People who did not go on holiday enjoyed the more relaxed atmosphere, doing practices, swimming and, of course, Khaita every day – not just because it is Rinpoche's wish, but because people enjoy it spontaneously more and more.

These days are very busy again. Activities are directed towards Rinpoche's arrival, which is planned for October. Meriling is building a new room in Rinpoche's house so that the Master has a bit more space for his work. Then there will also be some changes in the furniture so the house is more comfortable.

Meriling is also starting to reinforce the old construction of the future Gönpa so there is a good base for further building. Most of the houses of the Gars should be basically finished in October and then they are waiting to be furnished by their owners. There is a nice view of the Gar with the different colors of the houses that will soon be filled by activities of practitioners from all over the world. This will bring more life to Dzamling Gar, and this change is already noticeable now.

From October on, Dzamling Gar will have a new secretary, Agnieszka Zebrowska. Guionmar Dohnalek who has been secretary up to now, is following her life's circumstances.

» continued from previous page

kind of restructuration of the internal part of what has already been built.

Regarding the roof, it will be made of a network of small pieces of wood that will all be fitted together and then covered with a layer of sound insulation and then the final roof covering. So the internal part will be insulated for sound, then the area that doesn't have a closed building underneath will simply have a covering to preserve the supporting wooden structure.

We do not have any contracts yet for this structure because we are still waiting for the specifications and blueprints to be finalized and also the financial situation. Hence the project may still undergo some changes. ©



We would like to thank her for all her hard work for many months. She did a huge job.

Finally we've got permission by local authorities for the first phase of the Gar's development. It brings some limitations to the original plans but it is an important step for the next activities.

There's going to be changes to the wooden floor in the cafeteria, changes in the *Jyagyip* to make the space more cozy, and a project for a small children's playground as there are more and more children coming to the Gar. This will be done according to time and possibilities we will have.

Dzamling Gar Full Schedule October 2016–January 2017

October 22–26

Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Retreat with Alexander Pubants

October 28–November 2

Seventh Lojong Course with Maxim Lechshenko

November 4–6

The Dance of the Three Vajras – Supervision Course with Adriana dal Borgo

November 11–15

Teachers Training for SMS, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga

November 16

Diploma's Delivery including I.D.C. Diplomas

November 16–17

Vajra Dance Instructor Meeting

November 18–24

Vajra Dance 2nd level Teacher Training with Adriana dal Borgo and Prima Mai

November 23

Worldwide Guruyoga Transmission (Adzom Drugpa)

November 28

Santi Maha Sangha 3rd level Exam preparation with Adriano Clemente

There are beginners' lessons of scuba diving in the pool, which brings a little income to the Gar and the possibility for our practitioners to participate in some of these lessons for free.

Alix De Fermor and her team are tirelessly continuing to develop the Dzamling Gar gardens, which make a beautiful atmosphere at the Gar. Many people come to the Gar for the first time to admire it as a small paradise oasis.

From the beginning of October an interesting schedule of events starts at Dzamling Gar. Apart from the main retreats with Rinpoche there will be many courses of different practices to choose. And, of course, Khaita every day. Everybody is welcome to come to practice, to do karmayoga or just to relax in presence.

We feel how the Gar is becoming more alive every day and it is so exciting to be part of this important period of development at the Global gar. All of us are connected with that, and are very fortunate. ©

November 29–30

Santi Maha Sangha 3rd level Exam

December 1–7

S.M.S. Fourth level Training

December 11–17

Dance of the Song of the Vajra (part 2) with Ludmila Kislichenko

December 19–23

Santi Maha Sangha 1st level Retreat with Elio Guarisco

December 28 to January 3, 2017

Yangtig Retreat

January 5–6

Dzamling Gar Song Course with Adriana dal Borgo

January 7–11

Santi Maha Sangha 1st level Retreat with Elio Guarisco

January 8–15

Khaita Instructor Training

January 19–24

Yantra Yoga 1st level Supervision – Supervised by Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti

January 27–February 3

Longsal Rushan Retreat ©

Culture is Evolution



Il Museo di Arte e Cultura Orientale di Arcidosso

• CASTELLO ALDOBRANDESCO •

INAUGURATION 10 | 11 DECEMBER 2016



Culture is Evolution

The Inauguration of the Museum of Asian Art and Culture in Arcidosso

We are pleased to announce the inauguration of the Arcidosso Museum of Asian Art and Culture to be held 11–12 December 2016 in the presence of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Rosa Namkhai, and numerous guests and representatives of the various centers of the International Dzogchen Community, as well as international political figures and institutional representatives. The events, collectively entitled "Culture is Evolution" being planned for the inauguration include various presentations of our future projects, lectures by our curators, workshops for the local schools led by craftspeople from around the world, guided tours by our curators for the public and a conference for museum professionals presenting the documentation standards for museum collections, being promoted by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), a UNESCO partner.

The Museum of Asian Art and Culture, which is located in the "Ex-Chancery", an eighteenth century two story structure, is part of the Aldobrandesco Castle Complex. The building, which has been very kindly provided to us by the Town Hall of Arcidosso, is the result of over 35 years of collaboration between the Dzogchen Community of Merigar and the municipality of Arcidosso.

The Museum of Asian Art and Culture is a project envisaged by Prof. Namkhai Norbu, internationally renowned scholar, president of the Dzogchen Community, the Shang Shung Foundation, ASIA Onlus, and author of over 250 publications. With his family he has assembled a private collec-

tion of over five thousand artifacts including works of art, handmade objects and costumes, votive objects of great cultural and ethnographic value and important document collections concerning his research and studies on the Himalayan and central Asian culture.

The museum is divided into 10 thematic galleries:

Gallery 1 **Environment:** geology, geography, biology

Gallery 2 **Prehistory** and Nomadic culture

Gallery 3 **Language and Literature**

Gallery 4 **Music and Dance**

Gallery 5 **Architecture**

Gallery 6 **History**

Gallery 7 **Medicine and Astrology**

Gallery 8 **Visual Arts**

Gallery 9 **Tibetan Buddhism**

Gallery 10 **Tibet Today:** a Living Cultural Heritage – Gönpa exhibit

The museum's logo shows the Tibetan terms for the five traditional Tibetan Sciences, starting at the top and moving clockwise:

The Arts: which are exhibited in Galleries 4, 5 and 8.

Medicine: which are exhibited in Gallery 7

Language and Literature: which are exhibited in Galleries 2 and 3.

Logic: this aspect of the 5 Sciences is reflected in the museological approach to the project we have adopted and as a framework for our digital repository.

Inner Sciences: is being exhibited in Gallery 9.

The Museum has as its mission the development of the Namkhai Collection, the conservation and documentation related to the artifacts contained in the Namkhai Collection and finally, to the communication of the significance of the rich cultural heritage of the Himalayas and Asia, which the objects in the Collection embody. Our aim is to contribute to cross cultural understanding through the exchange of knowl-

edge and research to promotion of intercultural understanding. An international team of consultants and curators, artists, composers, craftsmen and women, as well as, many, many volunteers have come together during the last year to help make this mission a reality.

The museological approach, we have adopted in the planning of the exhibition for the Museum, has tried to interpret the idea of interdependence as a principle for our installations. This approach, we hope, will offer the visitor multiple points of access, in a sort of non-linear narrative, where each artifact on display can become a key that reveals relationships with other artifact on display.

Summary:

Program December 10–11, 2016

Arcidosso Castle, Conference room, ground floor

In the presence of the Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Museum Project presentation reserved for guests and authorities followed by a guided tour

Afternoon: Official Opening to the public and guided tour

Short presentation of Merigar and other centers around the world.

Guided tour of Merigar

Program December 12–18, 2016

During the week of December 12 to December 18 there will be workshops, conferences that are free, open to the public, and designed to involve primarily schools of all kinds and levels.

We are planning a workshop of traditional Bhutanese masks given by Urgyen Dorje, a skilled Bhutanese craftsman, and a demonstration of traditional Bhutanese weaving.

In addition there will be two conferences entitled: Zorig Chusum: The 13 traditional arts of Bhutan held by Choki Dorje, director of the Choki School of Traditional Arts, Bhutan.

©

Completing the Jowo Sakyamuni Statue

In 2014, with initial funding for the museum project provided by the European Union, we began the first phase of the renovation of the new home of the Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO). The renovation gave us the opportunity to transform the larger of the two rooms of the museum into an installation inspired by traditional Tibetan monastic architecture, creating a representation of the interior of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa.

As a centerpiece of this installation we will exhibit a copy of the Jowo Sakyamuni statue, considered to be the most venerated image of Tibet. This will be installed under a wooden portal inspired by the portal located in the central shrine of the Jokhang temple.

The Jowo Sakyamuni, which represents the Buddha (Siddhartha) at the age of twelve, is believed to depict an "authentic portrait of the living Buddha" or "real icon". Legend has it that the king of craftsmen, Visvakarman, carved this statue in the likeness of the Buddha. During the reign of



the Indian king Dharmapala, this image of the Jowo was given as a gift to the Emperor of China. Later, in the year 641 AD, the Chinese princess Wen Cheng-Konjo, daughter of the Emperor, brought this sacred image as a dowry to the Tibetan king Songtsen Gampo, when she became his second wife.

In September 2015, a student of Rinpoche's, the young Tibetan *trulku*, Gyurmed Tshewang, when he learned of the Jokhang installation for the museum project, of-

fered to commission a copy of the Jowo, statue from one of the best Tibetan sculptors of Chengdu, as a gift dedicated to the long life of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The final step to finishing the statue consists in the faithful reproduction of the ornaments that adorn the crown, and the breastplate of the Jowo of Jokhang, embedding jewels and then gilding with gold and entire statue, which stands 70 cm high.

The museum, is currently carrying out a fund raising drive to provide the needed gold and jewels to embellish the statue. Rosa Namkhai and Rinpoche, as always with generosity that knows no limits, have already offered gold and jewels to help accomplish this essential, final phase, which is to be carried out in Rajasthan under the cure of David Surricchio, a well known jeweler in our Community.

According to tradition, offering gold to embellish the Jowo statue, is considered to be a highly meritorious act.

Anyone wishing to contribute, even a small donation, to the completion of the statue, which to our knowledge will be the only one of its kind in Europe, is invited to contact the Merigar Dzogchen Community – Project Museum: Jowo.

Contact: office@dzogchen.it

©

Decorating in Tibetan Style

Migmar Tsering, Merigar's resident Tibetan craftsman, talks about making the ornaments in Tibetan style for decorating the Museum of Asian Art and Culture in Arcidosso.

We are making these ornaments for the Museum of Asian Art and Culture that will open in mid-December. They will be used on the roof beams and the pillars in the central part of the museum which is being transformed into a representation of the interior of the Jokhang Temple in Lhasa, with traditional Tibetan monastic architecture.

In Tibet these kinds of ornaments are traditionally sculpted in wood, but that takes a lot of time, needs skilled workers, and is very expensive. In India, some Tibetan temples use this type of ornamentation in real plaster, but this is quite delicate. We



are making these ornaments using products that when mixed together form a special type of material which is harder than plaster. This is not something that is done in Tibet. We have invented this kind of system and have had to do a lot of experimentation to see if we could get the products to do what we wanted. At the beginning we

had quite a few doubts, including whether the colors we are using would adhere to the decorative forms, but after trying out different methods we have found one that works well.

We start by creating different decorative designs in Tibetan style on paper. After

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Migmar preparing clay to make a mould.

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this, we create a wooden model with the design and then sculpt the design in clay. This is painstaking work and done very carefully by hand. The clay model is rubbed smooth and then a silicon mould is created from it. We have made quite a few different moulds and with each one we are creating a number of identical decorations.

When the mould is ready we mix the materials that form this type of plaster and then press it into the mould. Once it has hardened after about half an hour, we remove the form and then clean it either by hand or by machine. Then it is washed and treated, painted in white and then it is ready for coloring. The coloring takes time and is fine work and we have many people helping with this. We are using acrylic colors because the color lasts longer and won't be affected by water or humidity.

All the decorative designs are original, some of them are purely decorative with flowers and swirls, others are symbols such as the flaming jewel, a symbol of wealth, the gakyil, the wheel of the dharma, then we are preparing a mould of a Buddha figure.

We haven't yet calculated how many pieces we are going to need to finish decorating the museum but there will be a great many. Some of the finished pieces have already been mounted at the Museum and they really look as if they have been made in wood. When they are mounted, some of them, such as the pieces on the corners of columns, need to have a little more plaster work so that the join doesn't show.

A lot of people are helping us with this work, both in the workshop here at Meri-



Some of the painters who are helping to decorate the museum.



Working on the clay designs.

gar Two and at the Museum, although the people are continually changing as people come and go to and from Merigar. On average there are about three people here full time. We hope to be finished in time for the opening of the Museum early in December but the room representing the Temple is very large and it won't be easy to finish it all in time.

If you are artistic and would like to donate some time to helping with these decorations, contact Migmar for more information: migmar.tsering@yahoo.it or the Merigar office: office@dzogchen.it. ©

Merigar Gakyil Report

At the Annual Meeting of members on September 2, 2016, the Merigar Gakyil presented their report for the year 2015/16.

Activities

Over the summer of 2016, there were **two retreats** with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The Upadesha of the Introduction to the State of Ati in July, and a Retreat on Shitro at the end of August.

In addition to **activities for practitioners** which include deepening courses and intensive practice courses on various aspect of the teaching transmitted by the Master, over the year Merigar presents a variety of **public activities** that primarily address people who are approaching the community for the first time or who are interested in specific aspects. These include 'Welcome to Merigar', scheduled two-hour guided tours introducing the structures at Merigar and explaining the activities that take place there, weekly Yantra Yoga lessons, courses on Meditation and Yoga, Meditation in Movement, Khaite Joyful Dances and the annual Yoga Vacation.

Over the summer months an area at the Gar was **dedicated to children** and a trained playgroup leader led the children in various creative and play activities there.

As a Gar, Merigar is at the center of a network of Lings located throughout Europe. Merigar has requested the Lings to organize **public activities**, in particular the Lings that are based in major cities where there is a possibility to work with important institutions such as universities, museums, and ministries. An event entitled "The Door of Dreams" was recently held in Rome with international known scholars, and another event in Naples, "Contemporaneamente" will take place early December in collaboration with the Oriental University of Naples and the Association of Psychologists.

The Museum of Asian Art and Culture

This project is the result of more than 35 years of collaboration between the Dzogchen Community of Merigar and the Municipality of Arcidosso. More details on pages 20–21 of this issue of The Mirror.

The Victory Stupa

Merigar has two stupas of enlightenment. The smaller was constructed in 1983 and the larger in 1998. On the occasion of the current Fire Monkey year, a new stupa is being prepared based on the Complete Victory style.

It will be located on a small hill near the Gönpa and will be made of white marble, cut and worked in the quarries and studios of Massa Carrara. The blocks of marble that will form the stupa were delivered to the site in early August and on August 13 the base of the stupa was filled with four layers of sacred substances and objects, including precious material and objects such as rolled mantra scrolls and *tsatsas* prepared by many practitioners.

Once the vase is inserted into the center of the base, the next step will be to install the central pole, add additional sacred and precious material, and complete the assembly of the stupa.

Restoration and Renovation of the Gönpa

During the spring months many people contributed Karma Yoga for **restoring the paintings** inside the Gönpa. The sections

The maintenance work at the Gönpa needs to continue: the interior and exterior paintwork needs to be restored, the steps need to be repaired, and structural aspects of the exterior need to be improved.

General Maintenance

The Zikhang, the building housing the Mandala Hall and Library, has been renovated. A new veranda was added on the east side to make access to the bathroom easier and protected from the cold and rain.

The west veranda, at the entrance to the Mandala Hall, was reconstructed to overcome the problems from infiltration of water. The entire Zikhang was plastered and painted.

In the area outside Zikhang, an old wooden platform was replaced with a new platform, large enough for the solar mandala of the dance of the Vajra.

The Great Stupa of Enlightenment was restored with a special plaster that is resistant to atmospheric corrosion and was repainted.

In early summer, **the access roads to Merigar** were improved.



The marble for the Victory Stupa.

complete include the mantras in *phagpa* script on the vault, the decorations on the ribs, the Kagyüpa panel, and part of the Gelugpa panel.

The **external wooden balustrade** was completely reconstructed and replaced.

An efficient **sound system** was installed, new speakers and new microphones were purchased.

Merigar House at Dzamling Gar

House 10 of the 13 houses was assigned to Merigar west and East. The house consists of four apartments on the group floor and a more spacious apartment on the upper floor. The Merigar house has been completed and furnished and the four apartments will be available for occupancy starting October 15. Each apartment has twin bedroom,

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Photo by Liz Granger

Yoga Holiday – Just Right for Children

Constance Soehnlen

Vacanza Yoga" week for the attending adults was a series of long, intense yantra yoga sessions and an afternoon course on meditation. There was also a chance to join the Khaita singing and dancing group that met every afternoon in the Gönpa

For the 20 children who participated each day, the elements were rich; it included Kumar-Kumari yoga for children, followed by art and theatre work on exploration of the senses and afternoons of music and rhythm. Add to this making friends, climbing trees, basking in the sun and eating wonderful food and you have a full week for children in Merigar's beautiful surrounding of green countryside and fresh air.

Each day began with an hour lesson of kumar kumari yoga in the mandala hall. Twenty children from five to thirteen years of age, practiced together under the attentive instruction of Fabiana Esca and Constance Soehnlen. There were mornings in which the children were observant and tireless, but also times when lying down and resting on the yoga mat and chatting with a friend nearby became part of the lesson. Afterwards, a pause with fresh fruit, biscuits, juice and water was happy-

ly welcomed by the children and teachers! During free time, the younger children played and discussed seriously if Spiderman and superheroes could really die. The older boys and girls hung out and checked out the latest music and games on their cellphones and ipads.

Before lunch, there was theatre work on exploring senses led by Fabiana while the younger children painted, drew and sculpted. After a delicious lunch with the parents, children and instructors all to-

gether, the children had a 'rest period' if you could call an hour and half of a self-initiated parkour 'resting'! Jumps over and on benches and stones with somersaults kept

the older children entertained and a bit aching the next day.
The final day's presentation included a demonstration of kumar kumari yoga, followed by a great 'concertina' that reflected the music and rhythm workshop developed over the week by Nicol Bana and Niccolo' Pozzi. Creating and using recycled instruments, the children accompanied Nicol's guitar playing and singing. Of course, a 'bis' followed the performance. A video was also created as part of the afternoon's course, which was sent out to happy parents and children. All the art work created over the week, both group and individual pieces became an 'art happening' at the Gönpa entrance on the last day.

The week ended with lunch all together and a cake and prosecco. Many thanks to Fabio Tomassoni who acted as project manager, and also to the adult instructors, Laura Evangelisti, Tiziana Gottardi, Stoffelina Verdonk and Marco Bassegio.



Yoga holiday. Kumar Kumari

Photo by Daniela Monaci

See you next summer!



>> continued from previous page

bathroom, living area with kitchenette and sofa bed, and private terrace. The minimum stay is one week, the maximum one month.

Requests to stay in the house should only be addressed to: dzamling.house@dzogchen.it and will be considered on a first come, first served basis.

Merirooms

Last year the Gakyil decided to take advantage of the potential income from the apartment in Arcidosso belonging to the Dzogchen Community. In the autumn it was renovated to make it suitable for short-term rental and the required permits were obtained. Since January 2016, the apartment, consisting of four bedrooms with two bathrooms that can also be rented separately,

has been operating as a legally authorized guesthouse under the name MeriRooms. For reservations: merirooms@gmail.com

For detailed information on membership, the Gar, IDC and Lings, and the balance sheet, please refer to our website: www.dzogchen.it.





The First Summer Retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

“Longsal Ati Gongpa Ngotrod, Introduction to the State of Ati”

Gino Vitiello

From July 9th to the 15th Chögyal Namkhai Norbu held the first of two summer retreats at Merigar West, which celebrates its 35th anniversary this year. The topic of the retreat was “Longsal Ati Gongpa Ngotrod, Introduction to the State of Ati”, a teaching contained in the second volume of Rinpoche’s Longsal series.

It is difficult to find adjectives to describe everything that our Teacher taught. We can only say that once again he transmitted all the knowledge of Dzogchen through this text with extreme clarity. This allowed those who had come to teachings for the first time to understand the essence of Ati Yoga, and those who have followed these

teachings for years to understand them more deeply.

The organization was impeccable thanks to the commitment of about 40 “karmayogis” who saw to everything needed to help more than 700 people comfortably follow the teachings in the Gönpa as well as all the other retreat activities. This was also the result a well-established organizational experience.

After the teaching finished there were ritual offerings to the Master which this year included those of the children who had prepared some decorations with flour and salt during the child-minding sessions.

There is a whole new generation of children of practitioners who are starting to make contact with the Community. Many of those who were very young in the early years of Merigar and grew up with Merigar are now adults who follow the teaching and actively participate in the life of this Gar. A very good sign. ©

‘Looking Beyond: Spirituality in the Face of Death in Various Religions’

Gino Vitiello

On Sunday, July 3, 2016, a meeting between different religions on the subject of death entitled ‘Looking Beyond: Spirituality in the Face of Death in Various Religions’ was held at Merigar West in Tuscany, Italy. I believe it was the first time an event of this type has been held at our Gar.

One may, often rightly, have many doubts about the usefulness meetings between different religions may have, but the feeling at the end of the morning’s work was very positive.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu opened the meeting with a short speech that immediately touched on an essential aspect: all beings want the same thing, to be happy. The basis of happiness and peace cannot, however, be found in relationship to any ideology or religion, but only through evolution of the individual.

Then the different speakers gave their speeches, following an order starting from the Far East and moving to those closest to us, and according to the chronological development of the various religions.

Svamin Shuddananda Giri, a young Hindu nun, was the first to speak, and with great simplicity and freshness explained how, in the complex universe of this religion, death is still seen as a fundamental tool to recognize the meaning and the strength of the life cycle of creation and destruction.

This was followed by a speech by Silvia Bianchi, teacher of Buddhism and Mindfulness at the Lama Tsong Kapa Institute in Pomaia. Her talk was centered on how Buddhism offers extremely effective tools to work on our self, and how this is just an aggregate that is inseparable from the world in which we live. According to this view, for a practitioner, the death of the material body allows consciousness to “return home”, not easy as long as we are conditioned by the material dimension.

The word then passed to the representatives of the three great monotheistic religions, beginning with the oldest, the Jewish one.

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Photo by Emanuele Assini

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Joseph Levi, Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community of Florence, gave a speech ranging from Talmudic doctrine to Greek philosophy, emphasizing that every life is a unique opportunity to learn about the divine, outside and within oneself. His explanation of how the deep meaning of the

Jewish Sabbath is the silence of human action in order to fully devote oneself to listening to God was very interesting.

Guidalberto Bormolini, monk and professor of master 'End Life' studies at the University of Padua spoke for Christianity. In his report he highlighted how close Christian teaching is with the Buddhist view and

how both of these paths have a common foundation of love and compassion towards all beings. From his intervention we learned that the concept of the "body of light" also exists in Christian doctrine.

Finally Mustafa Cenap Aydin, a researcher at the Gregorian University engaged in intercultural and interfaith dialogue, spoke for Islam. His talk was centered mainly on Sufism and on the vision of an open and tolerant Islam, where death emerges as an opportunity to remind us not dwell on material aspects and to turn our minds to the divine.

The impression felt during the talks and after, in the informal situations among the speakers, was that all of them seemed really interested in finding the points of affinity with others and not in asserting their own separate identity.

The opening words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu were auspicious and he seemed so pleased that he proposed a continuation of these meetings in the next few years. ©

Summer's End at Merigar West – the Shitro Retreat

Liz Granger

The second summer retreat at Merigar West with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu took place over seven days, from August 26 to September 1. The topic of his Teaching was the *Shitro* of Mingyur Dorje, an important 17th century tertön or "treasure revealer" who received his pure vision revelations called *Namchö* at a very early age.

During the teaching sessions Rinpoche gave a clear overview of the different paths in Buddhism, dwelling on the importance of learning to be fully present. He spoke at length about this particular form of the *Shitro*, talking about the history of Mingyur Dorje and recounting his own fascinating dream with this *tertön*.

On Sunday, the Teacher kindly explained in detail and then gave the *don dbang* or introduction to the *Shitro* practice to the many students who were gathered there in the Gönpa as well as outside under the welcome shade of the brightly colored canopies.

On another day Rinpoche spoke about and led the *Shitro* practice, explaining how



Photo by Edith Casadei

to help those who have died through it. Another day was dedicated to the *Chang Chog* ritual of purification for the deceased, by now an almost regular annual event at the Gar during which Rinpoche burns the names of the deceased to purify negative karma or obstacles.

During the week long event, the very full daily schedule also included activities such as Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance as well as afternoon presentations of the Gar and upcoming projects, the new Museum of Asian Art and Culture, the Dzamling Gar

project, and recent publications by Shang Shung Publications, the Dzogchen Community publishing house. And, of course, starting punctually at 5 pm each day the Gönpa reverberated to the sounds of Tibetan music and the pounding feet of dancers as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presided over Khaita Joyful Dances!

An international group of more than 750 people attended the event, held under a clear blue sky and a hot summer sun that was only interrupted for an afternoon by a sudden and violent storm that drenched



From left to right: Elio Guarisco, Raimondo Bultrini, Michael Katz, Charlie Morley, Philippe Cornu.

The Door of Dreams

Gabriella Dalesio

On September 18, a totally red room at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Rome (MACRO) hosted a special event entitled 'The door of Dreams', organized by Merigar and Zhenphenling, the Dzogchen center in Rome. Several speakers, both Western and Tibetan, presented the theme of dreams from different perspectives.

The first round-table, held in the morning and chaired by Raymond Bultrini, saw the presence of an expert in neuroscience (Della Rocca), a neuro-psychiatrist (Chianese), an artist (Baruchello), a composer (Cisternino), and an art historian (Imponente). The discussion, followed with interest by a large audience, saw the merging of recent scientific information on that part of life spent sleeping and dreaming: from experimentation in flotation chambers that leads to a condition that precedes birth, in a dreamlike state, to self-reflection and self-healing that each of us can do in deep sleep and in dreams.

In addition, the story of the dream has been a contributing factor to the artist's

the Gar with rain and bombarded it with an angry flurry of hailstones that thundered down for 10 minutes.

The summer events at Merigar West officially drew to a close on September 2 with the Annual General Meeting in the morning followed by a highly enjoyable afternoon party, complete with a wonderful and ample buffet lunch with exotic cocktails, then an afternoon of entertainment, fun, and games with the Teacher. A great and fitting way to bring the summer activities to a close and spend some relaxing moments together with our Teacher. ©

inner vision. Anna Imponente, head of Campania Polo Museum and the composer Nicholas Cisternino spoke about how sound models words and signs drawn on sand by Aboriginal mothers tells the story of their ancestors, and songs represented by natural colors. In this framework Alex Siedlecki presented the Museum of Asian Art in Arcidosso which will be inaugurated in December with the Namkhair family collection and in the presence of the Master.

The crowded audience followed with interest both the first and the second round-table that took place in the afternoon in which the theme of the dream was analyzed in the context of Tibetan culture. Donatella Rossi spoke of the dream in the Bon culture, Philippe Cornu of the similarity of the dream to the condition of the *Bardo*, and Elio Guarisco of the supreme medicine of dreams, stating that ancient Tibetan culture had anticipated that which

neuroscience explains today. Michael Katz and Charlie Morley spoke about lucid dreaming, anticipating the direction of their workshops that took place the next day, at Zhenphenling and at the Alessandra Bonomo Gallery.

This is a time of growing awareness of the illusory nature of human life, which maintains a continuity between the dream state of day and that of the night. The magnificent conclusion of an extraordinary event, followed with interest all day by a full audience, saw twelve dancers, bearers of the profound meaning of the door of the dreams, dancing the Dance of the Vajra that Liberates Beings on the *mandala*.

The theme of the dream was addressed in a natural and spontaneous way by offering many people the opportunity to come in contact indirectly with the teaching and with our Master and to develop this possibility with joy and relaxation. ©



First Level Yantra Yoga Teacher Training

The First Level Yantra Yoga Teacher Training, instructed by Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, was held at Merigar West between 2 and 10 August 2016. Gianfranco Brero gave a short presentation on communication. The course drew over 40 participants from all over the world including: Argentina, Armenia, Brazil, Canada, Estonia, France, Germany, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Mexico, the Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Slovakia, Sweden, Tajikistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, and United States.

Photo by Adriane Boscardin

Essential Mahamudra-Dzogchen in the Shangpa Tradition

Giorgio Dallorto

Around 70 people both from the Dzogchen Community and the Shangpa Rimay Community participated in a short weekend retreat on October 1–2 led by Shangpa Master Denys at the Temple of Great Contemplation at Merigar.

Master Denys began by presenting himself and talking about the special spiritual relationship or damtrog between him and our teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and their two Communities, the Dzogchen Community and the Shangpa Rimay Community.

He went on to talk about the Kagyu Shangpa tradition founded by Khyungpo Naljor, and a concise synthesis of the teaching called the 'Five Golden Teachings'. After this he commented on a section of Padma-



sambhava's 'Prayer in Seven Chapters' (Le'u Dünma, Chapter 4: The Prayer Requested by Namkhai Nyingpo). This short text communicates the essence of the Mahamudra and Dzogchen teaching. He chose to comment on and share this text following the spiritual advice of his root master, Kalu Rangjung Kunkhyab (Kalu Rinpoche).

The retreat concluded with a collective meditation with related transmission

(lung) of a practice of Chenrezig attributed to Thangton Gyalpo and led by Shangpa Master Denys. A practice dedicated to developing compassion and bringing all six classes of sentient beings to total realization through visualization of the divinity and mantra recitation. ©

Bardo, Death and Impermanence Retreat with Zoli Cser at Merigar East

Alexandru Anton
for the Merigar East Blue Gakyil

Between 1–23 July the Gar on the Black Sea hosted a unique retreat with Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga, and Vajra Dance instructor Zoli Cser from Budapest. As we all know, Rinpoche is not travelling much this year and we were looking for ways to keep our lovely Merigar East alive and vibrant.

What better way to keep it alive than immerse ourselves in all-day-long impermanence and death practices, gathering from many corners of the world to come here and practice in the Gönpa or at the beach. We were very happy to have this 6-day long retreat with Zoli and our other Vajra sisters and brothers from Hungary, Bulgaria, Israel, the Czech Republic and Romania. The very young children who were there do not appear in the retreat photo, probably because they were outside run-



ning or playing, but they served all of us mind-blowing examples with their manifestations of spontaneity and joy.

For those practitioners that received transmission via webcast, this was the first Dzogchen retreat with a relatively large number of people. For others, this was the first time they stepped on the mandala during our daily Vajra Dance at sunset. In any case, time flew and, with the exception of a selected few, we had the immediate chance

to return to our daily lives with freshly purified Six Lokas and see how that is.

May we meet again soon and practice together!

Thank you, Rinpoche! Thank you, Zoli! Thank you, Vajra brothers and sisters! ©

Mandarava and Tsalung Practices

Merigar East Retreat
with Elio Guarisco

Alexandru Anton for Merigar East Gakyil

It has been an intense 6-days for the participants at this retreat in Romania, born out of our Gar's thirst for enlightened activity and Elio's desire to meet Merigar East for the first time. Considering the time of the year, we were lucky to enjoy mostly warm days, with some dakinis even daring to plunge into the Black Sea waves for a short experience of bliss – if only there were an easy shortcut to developing inner heat!

There were not that many of us as we were hoping, but we were supported by our dedicated Bulgarian Vajra brothers and

sisters who drove all the way from and to Sofia during the night. The Courage Prize goes to Sabra from Belgium, who travelled all the way to the unknown land of Romania in search of the thigles.

Last, but not least, the few Vajra kin that connected through webcast were a real pleasure to practice with and we hope to meet them in flesh next time.

Also for me this retreat was a first: every morning we had a practice session from 6 to 8 and then between 19:30 and 8 o'clock the next day we would have a no-talking time, to deepen the experiences and also provide support for the dream practice. I can say I missed the usual MultiFun house evening parties, and this elongated my time perception of the whole retreat, but then every evening we enjoyed the silent interaction of the Vajra Dances on the man-

dala and this felt like the biggest blessing after so many hours of sitting, massaging the knees and trying different postures with the meditation belt (if only some practice stability could be realized!).

Now we are returning to our ordinary lives with amplified life force, capacity, fortune and good memories to share with those who couldn't join us.

Thank you, Elio, for providing a practice-oriented retreat, for letting us discover our limitations as regards the quality and quantity of practice and for sharing your wisdom to inspire us and realize the value of the Mandarava terma Teaching.

Thanks to everybody for collaborating, for taking turns in cooking delicious vegetarian food for everybody, for being present.

Long life to Rinpoche and all of us on this boat! ☺

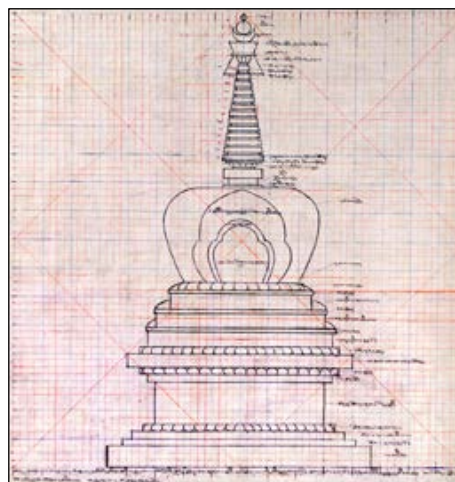


The Stupa of Complete Victory in Estonia

The Estonian Dzogchen Community Thadralling is happy to announce the building of a Stupa of Complete Victory in Estonia!

The location for the Stupa is on the land of members of the Estonian Dzogchen Community, 34 km east of Tallinn, in a quiet and beautiful village called Kaberla, which is full of junipers. This place was recognized as special 10–15 years ago when Venerable Nyichang Khentru Rinpoche, a Nyingma master, taught Longchen Nyingthig Ngöndro several times there. Rinpoche liked the place so much that he said it would be great to build a gönpa in the field. Near the farm house there is birch tree with 3 trunks growing from a single base. It was Rinpoche's favourite and he called it the "Buddha-Dharma-Sangha tree" and gave Dharma teaching sitting under it. Our future stupa will be right behind this tree and our precious teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has approved this place.

The idea of building a stupa in Estonia first arose in the summer of 2014 after the Dorje Sempa Namkhache retreat at Kunsangar North, probably as a blessing of the marvelous local Namgyal Chorten. When



our precious teacher was asked which kind of stupa would be better to build he suggested the Namgyal Chorten (Stupa of Complete Victory). The place of the future stupa was found pretty soon when a vajra brother and sister offered their field in Kaberla. The location of the future stupa was clearly established only in the summer of 2016 – not in the field, but near the farm house.

There are six stupas in Estonia already. Four were built in 1983–1985 by members of the Taola Estonian Buddhist Brotherhood (they follow the Nyingma tradition). These four stupas were the first in northern Europe and the only stupas that were built in the territory of the Soviet Union during Soviet times. The fifth was built in Paakisma village in 1991 by Erik Arro. The sixth

was built in 2008 by Vello Väärtnõu. So, our stupa will be the 7th.

The Stupa of Complete Victory commemorates Buddha's victory over an epidemic in Vaishali and was successful in prolonging his life by three months at the request of his students. This stupa suppresses epidemics, diseases, negative mental states, and prolongs life. Stupas in general eliminate all negativities in the world, are auspicious for the land where they are built and for all the Universe. They create a connection with the Dharma for all sentient beings who have contact with them.

We believe that building of the stupa will help to make a 15 year old dream come true – to turn the farm house into the Dzogchen Community retreat center!

Donations are welcome to:

Eesti Dzogtšeni Ühing Thadralling

Reg. Nr. 80353149

Metsa tn 60, Tallinna linn,

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Bank: EE452200221056916998

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Questions and offers please send to stupa@dzogchen.ee

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The Thadralling Estonian
Dzogchen Community ☺

Direct Introduction to the State of Knowledge

Happened in Prague

Libor Maly

It was the year 2002, 14 years ago, when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to Prague for the first time. I did not know anything about Dzogchen then, but I received the direct transmission and my life started to change from its deepest roots.

It was the beginning of the year 2016, when Rinpoche finally agreed to come to the Czech (and also the Slovak) Republic. When we finally learned the date of the retreat, huge emotions started to spread around the Czech community. It was really like a dream. People were screaming, on-line forums were full of emotions and I thought that something would soon explode. Fortunately we all managed our emotions, the project team was quickly established and the long journey of retreat preparation started.

So how did we manage to prepare what some people have called the biggest and best-organized retreat ever?

We started to meet every Wednesday evening. I thought we should follow the principles of the teaching and so we started with mind level preparation – to create a common shared vision of what we wanted to achieve, what our most important priorities were, and what the structure of our task was. We started to use mind-mapping tools to visualize what we needed to do and who was responsible for which part of our tasks. Blue, Red, and Yellow structures of our project started to emerge with responsible “managers” together with project management and problem solution functions.



Photo by Ralf Pluschke

First we started to learn as many best practices as we could find from within the Community. We received a lot of help from Merigar West (thank you Nikol), from the Polish Community (they organized a very successful retreat a year ago) and also from the Dzamling Gar gakyil. Our mind-map started to become more and more realistic with every meeting. Also we arranged a very professional, two-day fundraising training for selected people from the local Community as we decided to use the generosity-based approach, so that anybody interested would be able to attend the teaching. It became one of the sources of our success as we managed to work with all levels of donors.

But soon deep divisions and some nasty discussions started. I was in shock, as I was not used to such behavior from my previous work experiences. Sometimes it was so tense that I offered my resignation several times as the project manager. Fortunately, other team members succeeded in changing my mind and I also realized that the teaching of Rinpoche has already happened to all of us, even while preparing the retreat. So we continued.

We did many wonderful things. We agreed with Czech national TV to broadcast the “My Reincarnation” film, so more than 50,000 people saw it. We arranged the new publication and successful distribution of all of Rinpoche’s public books so a lot of people were able to buy them and get the information that Rinpoche was coming. We made a very professional, but sensitive, marketing campaign so that all relevant people in the country with the potential to be interested in the Dzogchen Teaching received the information. We found a very beautiful venue in the heart of the city, big enough to host several thousand people. We also arranged a perfect presentation of our meditation centre, Phendeling, for Rinpoche.

I truly felt that all the guardians were helping us. We overcame all quarrels and miracles started to happen on a daily basis. We were working day and night, everybody spent all the time and energy that they could offer – and we did it. We all truly did our best as a team during the final preparation of the retreat. There were around 80 people helping us during the retreat with the organisation.

It was amazing. Around 2,300 people attended the retreat, we had no problems and no accidents, and Rinpoche seemed to be happy and enjoying himself. All references and comments were positive. What more can you ask for?

And so direct introduction to the state of knowledge happened in Prague.

Thank you, dearest Master!

©



Visit of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to Slovakia

A practitioner from Slovakia

Our precious Master visited Slovakia after his visit to the Czech Republic, arriving by train on 16th August 2018 in Bratislava, accompanied by Rosa Namkhai and Adriana Dal Borgo. Rinpoche rested for a day, having a short site-seeing tour of the city center with a cup of cappuccino together with a small group of practitioners and the organizing team.

On the full moon day, 18th of August, Rinpoche visited the seat of the Slovak Dzogchen Community, Wangdenling, located in the mountains about a 90 minute drive from Bratislava. This visit was one of his main reasons for coming to Slovakia. Around 160 community members came to participate in Rinpoche's visit to Wangdenling, mainly from the Czech republic, Slovakia, Italy, France, Poland etc.

After his arrival Rinpoche gave transmission of the *Sang* and *Serkyem* practices followed by an explanation of the meaning. After that we did these practices collectively and at the end, the consecration ceremony (Tib. *rabne*) of the new Gönpa was performed very essentially.

A short cultural program by community musicians was followed by a collective short *ganapuja* with *namkha* and *lungta*. After the *ganapuja*, lunch was served to Rinpoche and Rosa and small refreshments for practitioners, followed by a continuation of the cultural program.

At the end of Rinpoche's auspicious visit to Wangdenling there were collective Khaita dances on the meadow and around the *Stupa*.

Regarding Wangdenling Rinpoche said: "It is a very nice place and can also be a powerful place. So it is very important that sometimes you try to organize some small retreats for people who are interested, also people from the country. Many people live in the city. When they have a little time it is nice if these kinds of people can relax and also do practice. This is what you should do."

Then the weekend retreat entitled 'Discovering Nature of Mind' started in Bratislava on Friday 19th of August at 5pm. The retreat was attended by around 850 fortunate participants and was webcasted worldwide. Rinpoche started by introducing different paths to liberation. Rinpoche



talked about the need to apply and integrate teachings in our lives particularly in the four moments of sitting, walking, eating and sleeping, as mentioned by Lord Buddha in the *sutras*.

On the second day Rinpoche explained the state of Dzogchen and the method to discover it by practicing *Ati Guruyoga*. He went on to teach on the four *chogzhag*, an essential practice of Dzogchen *upadesha*, as well as the practice of Song of the Vajra. Rinpoche also explained his personal encounter with the Song of the Vajra through his dreams, when in his dream, together with uncle Khyentse Rinpoche Chokyi Wangchug, he met the great master Longchenpa performing *ganachakra* with *dakas* and *dakinis*. Rinpoche further shared his dreams of encountering Gomadevi and having his first contact with the Dance of the Vajra.

From the audience's side, by merely hearing Rinpoche's narrations of his profound experiences, there was no choice but to feel profound inspiration and joy, at the same time feeling very fortunate to have direct connection with these profound teachings from the great Master himself. At the end of the retreat as usual Rinpoche gave *tri lungs* of different secondary practices.

The Slovak Dzogchen Community was extremely grateful for Rinpoche's kind visit to such a small and insignificant country as Slovakia.

After the retreat Rinpoche rested for two days and then left on the 24th by the night train from Vienna, Austria to Florence and then to Merigar.

We would like to thank, first of all, Rinpoche for paying this visit, giving his teachings, blessings, performing consecration and collective practices, meeting people, giving advice to people, preparing protection cords, and presiding over collective

Khaita practice. This created a cause for people from Slovakia and other countries to have a chance of awakening their true nature, strengthening their connection with him and his teaching, and accumulating merits by supporting the event and by collaboration. Secondly, we give many thanks to project manager Marek Riesz and to the organizing team of both the Bratislava retreat and the visit to Wangdenling as well as all the many karmayogis and helpers, who dedicated their effort, time and energy to this very meaningful and beneficial event. May it bring benefit to many people and become a cause of liberation for all sentient beings from the ocean of samsara!

If you feel like supporting Wangdenling and its many projects of development such as finishing the works at the Gönpa, retreat cabins / houses or the necessary purchase of neighboring property, we will be very grateful for any support and help!

Especially *sanghas* from nearby countries such as the Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, Hungary and Ukraine are most welcome to come to Wangdenling and feel at home, do personal retreat, study and practice the teaching, rest, etc. We will keep you updated on future projects and the development of the center.

For further information about Wangdenling contact:

geko.wangdenling@gmail.com.

For general information about the Dzogchen Community Slovakia:

blue@dzogchen.sk, see also

www.dzogchen.sk and www.wangdenling.sk

Bank account info:

Account name: Dzogchen

Bank name: UniCredit Bank Slovakia a. s.

IBAN: SK2511110000001018129026

SWIFT/BIC: UNCRSKBX



Kunsangar South News Update

Here at Kunsangar South we have a Dark Retreat cabin, which has started to function very actively since it was completed and many people are coming to do short retreats. We would like to welcome everybody to come for Dark retreat practice to Kunsangar South.

We are also working on finishing the inside of Rinpoche's house, at the moment working on the walls and bathrooms.

More than 100 people participated with karma yoga and donations for finishing the construction of the Longsal Stupa at Kunsangar South! The Stupa only needs a few finishing touches now.

We had a lot of new people come for the Worldwide Transmission last summer from Crimea and are very happy about it.

Many people participated and did a lot of karma yoga at the Gar like cutting the grass and taking care of the trees that are growing, as well fixing and repairing different things.

During the warm season starting more or less from April-May, the Gar hosted several retreats with Grisha Mokhin on SMS training, Zhenya Rud on Yantra Yoga, and Ruslan Kim on Dance of the Vajra. In October we are having retreats with Zhenya Rud on Kumbhaka and the 7th Lojong with Tummo, in November a Vajra Dance retreat with Ruslan Kim.

A new Gakyil and Geko was elected for 2016-2017 and has been approved by Rinpoche. This year we have a lot of Gakyil members from Crimea so it's a very good sign.

Contact: kunsangar.blue@gmail.com
<http://kunsangar.org/en/development-kunsangar-south/>



Rinpoche's house is on the left, the dark retreat cabin on the right,



Grisha Mokhin led the SMS training in May at Kunsangar South.



Zhenya Rud and participants in the Yantra Yoga course,

Kunsangar North News

Roman Grachev

Geko of Kunsangar North

Dear Sangha,

It's rainy autumn in Kunsangar North, but above the gloomy clouds and thunderstorms the sun of the primordial awareness keeps shining. It's time to do some internal works in order to get the Gar and property into perfect shape according to our circumstances.

In 2016 the Gakyil of Kunsangar North together with the local authorities found a possibility to resolve one important task that has been a source of problems for many years and would cause more problems in the future. Since the time that the Gar was a 'pioneer camp', the canalization system has been arranged in a way that wastewater was discharged into the Klyazma River many times a month. With time the whole system has started to deteriorate and leak and it could cause much harm to the environment and living beings.

This question was raised by different Gakyils over the many years that Kunsangar North has been operating, but only this year have circumstances matured to resolve this problem.

Hooray! Now the drainage system flows to the north and is connected to the sewage network of Bolshiye Dvory and Pavlovskiy Posad. So we have freed ourselves and the surrounding countryside from a very strong constant provocation that contaminated the surrounding space. Now we have even more circumstances for harmonious and complete abiding in the condition of our transmission.

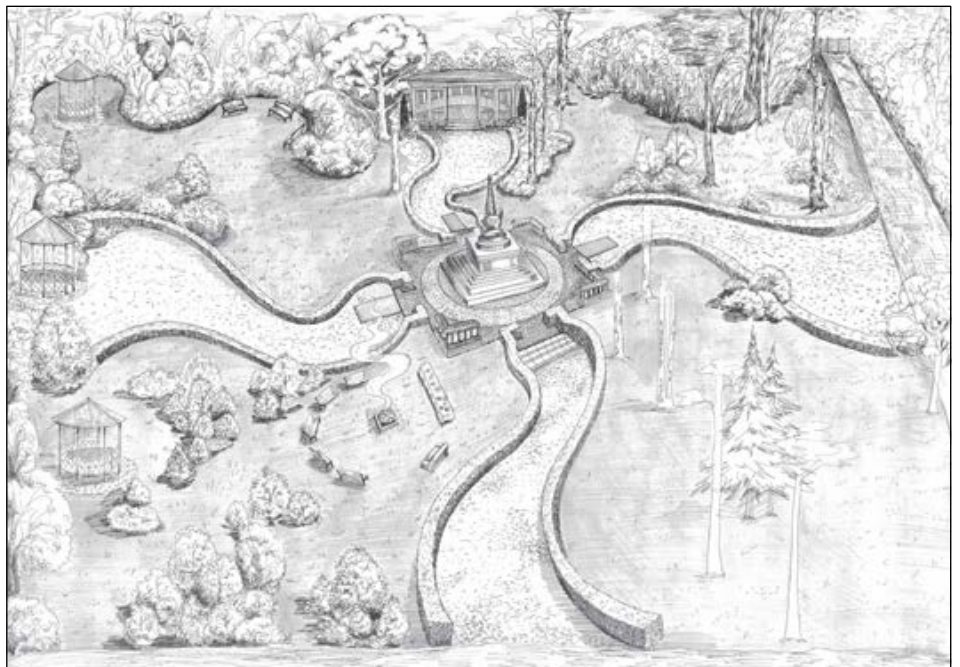
The construction of the Perfect Victory Stupa is continuing. At the moment we are filling in the *Ushnisha Vijaya* statue according to all perfect standards for this process. We are polishing all internal surfaces and putting inside of all necessary elements for stable abiding of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas' circles and fields of all times and directions. In parallel with this we are preparing for the finishing of the Stupa's body itself and, the main event of this season, gold-plating and installing the metallic top which weights 3000 kg and consists of 13 rings, the victory umbrella, the sun and the moon and the indestructible *bindu* of primordial awareness. At the last Gakyil



Stupa statue.



Stupa metallic top.



stupa landscape.

meeting we adopted the project of landscape design around the Stupa.

Upon many requests from our practitioners we have started a project on construction of a new dark retreat cabin at Kunsangar North. In general, we have a lot of work to do in order to take away garbage and an old accumulation of different things on the second floor of our cafeteria, strengthen the roof, and reconstruct the toilet facilities. On 24 September we made a volunteer clean up fitting all the garbage into several 27 cub. m. containers.

Many things have already been done and many things still have to be done for perseverance and development of this place where our Master and his disciples have put their energy and blessed it with nu-

merous collective practices as well as other teachers and *sanghas* from all schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

Dear Sangha, we invite you to come to Kunsangar North, and do Karma Yoga acting in the state of knowledge for the benefit of all sentient beings. You are welcome to come to do personal retreats and participate in the collective practices of Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, medium *thun* and Ganapuja that are regularly held at Kunsangar North. Together we are one indestructible force of full, aware, clear and constant collaboration with all others. ©



Samtengar

New Building Renovation Started

In August 2016, Samtengar started the renovation of a new building. This building was purchased according to the instructions of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Rosa Namkhai. It will be the place

where Rinpoche will stay during the 2017 retreats in Samtengar. Each floor is about 160 square meters. Rinpoche and Rosa will stay on the first floor, with their attendants on the second floor. The rest of the building will be for the Gar personnel and Shangshung Institute China in the future.

So far, the project is progressing smoothly and is supposed to finish early 2017. ©

Singapore New Gakyil

After receiving confirmation from our beloved Master, we are pleased to announce the Gakyil of Namdrolling for the period Aug 2016–July 2017:

Red: Carol Tan, Yan Tee Tan

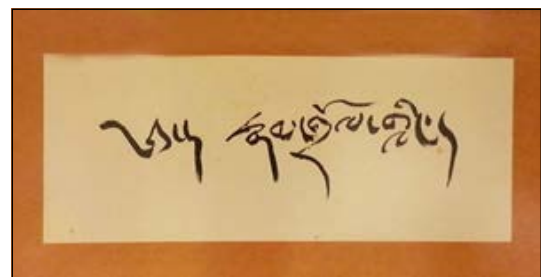
Yellow: Kum Har Yan, Choon Beng Lim

Blue: Chee Teong Lee, Yi Hui Tan

Thank you!
Gakyil of Namdrolling



New Gakyil of Namdrolling. From left to right: Choon Beng, Yan Tee, Kum Har, Carol and Yi Hui. Our President Chee Teong was absent.



Dzogchen Community Singapore
Unit 03-08, No 7 Lorong 29 Geylang Road
Hui Ann Association, Singapore 388063
blue.namdrolling@gmail.com
www.dzogchen.sg ©

News from Munselling, Japan

Taka
(Blue Gakyil of Munselling)

On June 25–26, we had a Vajra Dance Weekend Refreshing course for The Song of The Vajra led by Kyu Kyuno, the 2nd level instructor in Tokyo to brush up and deepen the dance for experienced people.

In September and October, we had two Yantra Yoga retreats and courses in Kyoto and Tokyo led by Oni McKinstry, one of only two instructors who recently passed the 3rd level supervision.

For Kyoto: 17, 18, 19 and 22, 23 September / Preliminaries, 1st–5th series of Yantra and Pranayama.

For Tokyo: 1 and 2 October / 2nd and 3rd series of Yantra, Kumbhaka and the 7th Lojong.

We have also had Khaita sessions with a “Khaita Expert” in Tokyo and Kobe.

<http://dzogchencommunity.jp> ©



In Kyoto: Sept. 17–23, 2016, Preliminaries, 1st–5th series of Yantra and Pranayama with Oni McKinstry.



For Tokyo: October 1–2, 2016, 2nd and 3rd series of Yantra, Kumbhaka and the 7th Lojong.

Tsegylgar East Update

Summer–Early Autumn 2016

Tsegylgar East and Shang Shung Institute in America had a busy summer opening the season with an Open House cosponsored by Shang Shung Institute USA and the Dzogchen Communi-



Gekös Jeremy transporting friends.



Rhythmic breathing in the Mandala Hall.



Salima and Yangcen.



Vajra Dance Refresher Course with Bodhi Krause.



String Mandala Workshop with Bodhi Krause.

ty of North America. (see *Shang Shung Institute of America Update*)

The summer festivities only began there and from July 30 to August 7, 2016, the Tsegylgar East Summer Celebration, organized by the Dzogchen Community and project managed by the very efficient Anastasia Ezequelle, also assisted by a sprinkling of dedicated helpers, allowed around forty practitioners from near and far, and even internationally, to practice on the sacred land of Khandroling under the protective roof of the beautiful Mandala Hall. People camped, stayed in the dormitory at the Schoolhouse, and found various accommodations in the area. (see *article by Lori Leff*)

We were also fortunate that SSI USA hosted two international Khaita instructors, Salima Celeri and her daughter Yang-

cen, who both participated in Summer Festival, and then ran a five-day course that culminated in a performance in the local city of Northampton on the hottest day of the year.

There were various types of Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga courses and activities held between the Schoolhouse and Khandroling, including a string mandala workshop at the Library in the Schoolhouse in Conway with Bodhi Krause.

The summer activity ran into early autumn with a very successful Communication Course that has been traveling the world led by Ginafranco Brero. The course trained eleven instructors of Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga and Santi Maha Sangha in communication techniques and methods, from September 8–10, 2016.

The Tsegylgar East Dzogchen Community of America and Shang Shung Institute of America are working together to collaborate on more public events. The Dzogchen Community continues to work on developing more internal programming, managing and maintaining the various structures and properties, and looking at ways to create a sustainable Dzogchen Community for North America. DCA is also actively pursuing the road to alignment with the International Dzogchen Community and finding ways to collaborate with the wonderful dream of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and manifestation of that dream at Dzamling Gar, the international Gar, on the island of Tenerife in the Canary Islands in Spain. ©

Sangha

Lori Leff

The dawn air is cool after the prolific rains of Sunday and Monday. Above the mist that blankets the valley, the golden curves of the Longsal symbol are first to catch the sun's rays. I stop to marvel at the vista then hike down from the *Thogal* cabin (where I gratefully took refuge – in every sense of the word – from the storm after my tent pole broke), passing the Mandarava cabin, resonant with tones of the *Shi-tro* practice, over rock face and into the muddy vale where I lift my gaze to the crimson posts of the steadfast Guardian cabin. Further up the hill, the Vajra hall is already a hive of activity, preparing for early Mandarava practice, with Kathleen doing a final touch up on the mopping, Anastasia updating the schedule board, the altar being readied with candles and incense, the photos of Rinpoche overlooking the scene, and above all the A in rainbow thigles, ever-present.

The Dzogchen Community, facilitated by the Tsegvalgar East Gakyil, and ultimately, of course, by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, had a fantastic week of practice and collabora-



Enjoying company on the land of Khandroling.

tion at the beginning of August at Khandroling, the Land of the Dakinis, an event coined the *Summer Celebration*. Our days were filled from dawn to dark with practice.

Every morning first thing, Paula Barry or Naomi Zeitz led the long Mandarava practice. They clarified mudras and symbolism for the less experienced and set the tone of mindfulness and dedication, filling the Vajra hall with sacred sound. After dedicating merit, we set out our yoga mats for groups of beginning and advanced Yantra yoga, Naomi and Paula focusing on each



Happy Yogis and Yoginis at the summer festival with instructors Paula Barry and Naomi Zeitz.

individual's specific needs and the primary function of the practice, working with *lung* to promote awareness. Fifteen minutes after dedicating our Yantra practice, we were instructed in Vajra dance by Bodhi Krause. Everyone learned and practiced *Kha Long Dorje Kar* (The Vajra Dance of the 12 As) enough to do the movements with confidence and bring the dance practice with them to other locales where there is not a (readily visible) mandala on which to dance. Bodhi continually pointed out opportunities to notice our experiences, awareness that changed and didn't change with the practice and how these movements could relate to those in other Vajra dances. On alternate days, the late morning was a time when Jeremy, our esteemed and super-devoted *Geko*, would direct volunteers to the many Karma Yoga projects on the cabins and land.

Midday began with a group lunch at the pond, arranged for and delivered by Jacqueline and Lauri. Others brought their own, but lively conversation was shared by all and afterwards, some stayed to fold origami, a benefit project by the Khandroling Paper Cooperative. Back at the Vajra Hall, Lynn Newdome, in her inspired fashion, instructed and led us in various *Santi Maha Sangha* base practices: *Lojong*, *Semdzin* and *Rushen*, as well as *Prajna* awareness.

A highlight of the week, which really set the theme for the whole retreat, was the *Marme Monlam* practice, the Invocation of the Lamp, also the 25 Spaces of Samantabhadra. Every day, Michael Katz led us as we raised our candles and sang devotion to our Master, the View, each other as the Sangha, and the benefit of all beings. I could imagine the practitioners at *Adzom Gar* in Tibet of old, doing much the same

each day, and in their hearts each moment. Having the chance to be together for a week, immersed in the practices that our Master has given us, on the sacred land, life distractions at a minimum – *E MA HO!* Amazing!

In that spirit, there were moving presentations by Diane Kramer on the Gakyil's activities, and by Marit Kranmer on the history of Khandroling. We had an open-minded Community meeting and then two more impromptu Community meetings to continue the conversations begun about IDC, outreach, and Buckland Woods among other topics. And – still more – we were fortunate to be able to celebrate two *Gana pujas* together on the land.

Each day, after a short supper break, we had the opportunity to learn to dance and sing *Khaita* with Salima Celeri and Yangcen, who traveled from Italy to take part. As the sky grew red to black Michael led us in *Chod*. Then the energetic among us went down to the bonfire by the pond, where Jeremy continued the massive task of clean up after forestry project. Those filled with the day retired to rest.

I settle in to my borrowed tent, thinking about past "summer camps" at Khandroling with Jim Valby – who was sorely missed this August – among other devoted instructors. What an amazing place is the Land of the Dakinis! How I wish that all practitioners in our Community could come and practice in this place. As I close my eyes, I consider the *Chod*, what it really means to feed the demons, to rest in no-fear, connecting to every aspect of the multiverse, for a moment, aware of the depth of possibility. ©



Vajra Dance Refresher Course at Tsegyalgar East

Nancy Paris

At the Mandala Hall, the week of August 20–28th, 2016 – we enjoyed a Vajra Dance Refresher Course, led by Bodhi Krause. Scheduling three sessions; morning, afternoon and evening – allowed over 20 practitioners to attend.

The course was open to all who had received transmission and have an interest in the Vajra Dance; beginners were sometimes trying the dances for the first time, while advanced practitioners were able to refresh and deepen their experience.

We studied: The “Dance of the Song of the Vajra,” the “Dance of the Vajra that Benefits Beings,” the “Dance of the Three Vajras,” and the “Vajra Dance of the Dimension of Space (12 As),” all inseparably linked to the transmission of the Dzogchen Teaching.

Blessings and gratitude to Rinpoche for transmission of these precious dances and to our Vajra Dance teacher Bodhi for sharing his knowledge and love of the dance with us.

A special thanks to Tu-Vi Luong for teacher care; Kathleen Fekete and Lori Leff for care of the Universal Mandala; Nary Mitchell, Jerry Miller and Kim Truitt for providing rides to the Mandala Hall; to all who gave their support and participated in this refresher course; and to those who made the sacred space of the Universal Mandala and Mandala Hall possible. ©

Passages

John Nary Mitchell

Goodbye this time around, Nary. John Nary Mitchell had a very beautiful and peaceful passage around 2 pm on September 29, 2016, at Baystate Medical Center in Springfield MA. Nary was surrounded by his loving, warm and kind family: his brother Bruce, his sister Lynn, sister-in-law Nancy and nephew Drew, and many caring practitioners. We shared stories of Nary's life, his childhood, his deep relationship with the earth, trees, oranges and things that grow, and his many incarnations – more warmth and sweetness could not have been asked for. We all sang the Song of Vajra after the life support was removed. Good journey our dear Nary. We love you still.

“I have felt that my time and skills were a poor repayment for the precious teachings that I received from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu! Since when can you get such treasures, it is so rare that I have wondered many times why I have been so fortunate to be alive at this time and why it has seemed almost effortless for me to do projects for this Community... I could never repay what I have been blessed with...” Nary

Some words from friends and practitioners from the Tsegyalgar East blog:

For Nary

No! Wait! Don't go yet What about the raspberries?

Will they taste as sweet?

We will think of you

In all the summers to come,

Their juice on our lips.

– Paula Barry on Facebook

‘Uncle Nary’ was so good with kids. Our little Goma Devi also had a sweet connection with him. They would check in and chat everytime they would see each other around the Gar or Khandroling. Goma keeps the little jade buddha, that he gifted her for her 4h birthday, on her bookshelf here in Hawaii.

When we first heard Nary was in the hospital dying Goma was sad, but today when she learned that he had left his body, this was her response: “It is fine. He is going high into the sky to receive many more teachings from the Buddhas now. And maybe he will come back as a little child.” :) I love how Nary was able to enter everyones dimension – young and old. Have a safe journey.

– Laila Reiss



Reflections on Nary:

Big Mind, Big Heart

I first got to know Nary through Santi Maha Sangha Base classes, although I'm not sure why he attended them. There was probably nothing I taught that he didn't already hold in that vast mind of his, which retained all knowledge. I also appreciated his sweetness, and how, in class when I'd move to calm his effusive outflow of information, he'd smile and gently acquiesce. I eventually understood how he balanced that tremendous energy of his brain with simple physical labor, quietly and continuously contributing toward the stability of our gar.

Although I miss his presence very much, I can only imagine his big heart and mind, unleashed from the restraints of his physical body.

– Lynn Newdome

From the outset of Khandroling Paper Co-operative back in 2012, Nary was a great friend to us. He was the brawn behind our operations assisting us in numerous demos and open studios, workshops and event set-ups. Over the years, I was able to share an ongoing conversation with Nary on some of my favorite topics – everything from conspiracy theories to alien societies. He was a fountain of esoteric knowledge borne out of voracious reading. Our KPC members loved hanging out with him.

One of the last conversations I had with Nary was a consultation about an apricot seed from Tibet that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had given me over a decade ago, which Rinpoche said I should plant at Tsegyalgar. I asked Nary if that seed was still viable and

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This is a Tribute to Jim Raschick

While writing his book "Beyond the Box of Space and Time" Jim spent years trying to find the words to explain the 4th dimension. He very well may have found a shortcut to the 4th dimension thru ecstatic dance. On Sunday September 4th Jim collapsed at the ecstatic dance with a smile on his face. He went into cardiac arrest and there were a number of people there who performed CPR on him for 20 minutes or so. He began breathing on his own again and was given the best medical care over the next 10 days. Our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Anam Thubten and practitioners from all over the world practiced for Jim. Dutsi/Amrita pills were sent and the Song of the Vajra played in his room. He appeared to his beloved Kaitlyn and let her know he was very surprised, happy and would not come back to his body.



On the morning of September 14, 2016, Jim left his body.

Jim was like a brother to me, one of the most intelligent men I've ever known. We always considered him like the nutty professor. He was so bright and sometimes he would not remember to tie his shoes. As an inventor he opened the first hot tub company – Mill Valley Hot tubs where he used

ancient wooden wine barrels, where he stuffed up to twelve naked bodies into the tubs. He progressed to alternative energy and installed generating wind turbines in the front of a store in downtown Fairfax. He designed and helped build an incredible dodecagon using sacred geometry on my land in Hawaii for the Dance of the Vajra, Yantra Yoga and practices. Also, as a filmmaker and photographer he delighted many.

Jim was a deeply spiritual man that followed Chögyal Namkhai Norbu all over the world. A world explorer, inventor, architect, writer, dancer; a man who always made the best of the moment!

Dancing and smiling that huge smile we release your hand in the dance of life, keep on paving the way to the 4th dimension for us all!

Your Vajra Sister,
Melinda Sacarob



» continued from previous page

he said that it could "awaken", through a process of cooling it in the refrigerator and then peeing away the outer covering". We shall see. Nary's vision for the land was in the moment with his many creations and graceful attentions - a bent arbor supporting a fragile shoot; a huge mound of glossy edible greens; small magical edifices here and there bringing order out of a riotous New England landscape. Thank

you Nary for your proliferation of inspired seeds in our midst. — Jacqueline Gens

We only met Nary fairly recently, maybe 6 months ago. He house sat for us while we were away and took care of our dog Cooper and our plants (both inside and outside). His wisdom and tenderness with plants was astounding. While we were away he found odd and end starts around our prop-

erty and planted them in the garden just so they would have a chance. One of these is a lovely grape vine that we enjoyed tremendously all summer and we now think of as a living memorial to Nary. Of course, our dog Cooper adored him too – he bought him hot dogs for treats! We will miss him.

— Barbara & Woody Paparazzo



Introduction to Yantra Yoga at Kundrolling in NYC from September 25 & 26, 2016 with Naomi Zeitz assisted by Curzio Aloisi.



Tsegyalgar West, B.C.S., Mexico

International Dzogchen Community Retreat Fund

On September 19, at Gadeling (the house of the family of the Master close to Merigar), Chögyal Namkhai Norbu met with representatives of Tsegyalgar West and the International Gakyil to explain his ideas for the immediate future of the Gar.

People from the Gakyils often write to me that they are doing this and that and that they want to do this and that, but the important thing is to work in coordination with the International Gakyil, otherwise there is nothing clear, and once things take the wrong direction then it becomes difficult to fix them.

For this reason I'm asking everyone to work together very well with the IG. The IG is responsible for connecting things in the Dzogchen Community, because the Dzogchen Community is like a family. You have to see it that way and it must become like that. If each one is separate, on his own, we are no longer a Community, and there is danger of creating situations that are different from what they should be, and this is not good. I wanted to say this as a general introduction.

Then in particular, from the beginning I have always said that in Baja the only thing we have to organize well is that it becomes the international place for the Dzogchen Community for personal retreats, because there is a lot of land there and somehow we have to use it for Community retreats.

Everyone asks about creating a place for retreats of this and that, etc., and I am always saying that all of this has to be created in Baja. If it is a short retreat it is fine that each Gar has its own place, but for retreats that are a bit longer it is ideal to do them in Baja. For *Rushen* or any other practice, there is this place there and we have to be able to organize well. I think this is very important.

Then my hope is that this does not become a job for Tsegyalgar West alone, but that TW is able to communicate a little more at the international level of the Dzogchen Community. In this case, it is very important to create a fund for this project, a fund for retreats. Rosa and I have prepared an offering for TW-Baja on our part "for



creating an International Dzogchen Community Retreat Fund from family Namkhai".

We already have a person who wants to do a long-term retreat and wants to do it right away. I told that person that in Baja we had not done anything for this yet, that immediately there is no possibility. I suggested going to Bhutan where there are many places for retreat, but she prefers to do her retreat in Baja and is already ready to start, so I thought that maybe we could begin to create something at Baja and she said that is fine for her and wants to wait.

This is our offering to start the fund (Rinpoche gives two envelopes, one with 3,000 euro and one with 3,000 USD). Clearly is not enough, but it is to get started and also to let people understand that it is something important at the international level and not just something for Baja. This is what we need to create.

It is not just for this lady, but we have to create this place which means not just houses, but a whole system of how to provide services and how to coordinate things for people coming for retreats. This place is really suitable for this. We have to create a place where someone can do one or more months of retreat or a year or two, where there is an opportunity to do it well. This will also mean savings for all the other Gars of the Dzogchen Community instead of repeating the same thing at every Gar.

In Baja we have a big place and we have to be able to organize something and this is for personal retreats. It is the first thing to do well. And then gradually everything that is necessary for the Gar will develop. It is important that this is done in collaboration with the IG to make it clear that it is a project at the International level of the Dzogchen Community and not a private thing of Baja. ☸

New Gakyil

Dear All,

I'm pleased to inform you that Rinpoche has ratified the appointment of the new Tsegyalgar West Gakyil.

Blue: Lizabeth Morrell
Red: Lachlan Elting
Yellow: Giorgio Minuzzo
Gekö: Lol Kane

Veronica Torres has been appointed as Assistant for the Blue Gakyil and, since she is a local resident, she will also act as

Assistant Gekö. Viviana Elting will act as Red Gakyil Assistant. Gregg Johnson will collaborate with Giorgio, as Yellow Gakyil Assistant. Giorgio Minuzzo will coordinate the work of the Gakyil as Gakyil President.

Our Master has reiterated that TW should become the international center for

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Tsegyalgar West Retreat Center

Sign up now for the Annual December
Holiday Mandarava Retreat
December 20th–30th, 2016
with Nina Robinson

Dec 17th & 18th 'Dadar' Long Life Arrows
Construction
Dec 31st to January 3rd, 2017 New Years &
Chöd Practices

The Mandarava Long-life practice belongs to the Longsal series of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. To participate in this retreat you need to be a member of the Dzogchen Community and to have at least transmission of the *lung* of this practice. *Chüdülen* and *Sogtig breathing* will be included as part of the retreat. There will also be Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Dadar making. Christmas celebration and feast on the 25th!

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individual retreats for the worldwide Dzogchen Community. He has made a personal offer of USD 3000 + Euro 3000 for the establishment of a fund for the development of the retreat center.

Rinpoche has requested that the TW Gakyil works in strict coordination with the International Gakyil.

It is an important juncture in the history of Tsegyalgar West. There is a lot of work

Tsegyalgar West Current Schedule

November 2016:
Prepare Gar for Seasonal Retreats
Personal retreat casitas available

December 2016: **Holiday Retreat**
December 20th to 30th **Mandarava Retreat**
with Nina Robinson
Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance
Permaculture Projects

January 2017:
New Years Celebration
Personal retreat casitas available
Natural Building Project: Repair Oddiyana Retreat
Permaculture Projects: TBA
Work exchange on New Gardens

February 2017:
Retreat on **The Cycle of Day and Night**
with Micheal Katz Dates TBA
Deepening the recognition of the Nature of Mind

to do and the new Gakyil will have to face many challenges. It is important to be able to collaborate in a relaxed way and to keep things simple and practical.

The International Gakyil is wishing all of you all the best for your endeavors!

Enrico Dell'Angelo
For the International Gakyil
September 22, 2016

Permaculture Projects
Personal retreat casitas available
Natural Building Projects

March 2017:
Vajra Dance with Anya Neyman TBA
Yantra Yoga Practice group with Martin Fernandez TBA
Personal retreat casitas available
Natural Building Projects
Permaculture Projects

April 2017 on :
Vajra Dance Retreats with Anya Neyman TBA
Yantra Yoga Practice with Martin Fernandez TBA
Personal retreat casitas available
Natural Building Projects
Permaculture Projects

Rescheduled to later 2017: **The Seventh Lo-jon** with Steven Landsberg 'Stabilizing Clarity with Emptiness'

Tibetan Wellness Retreat – Rescheduled for late 2017!
with Matthew Schmookler & Leela Whitcomb-Hewitt

Personalized holistic health care to deeply relax and heal. Various modalities such as breathing exercises, Tibetan Kunye Therapies, Tibetan Medicine supplements and nutrition. ©

Tsegyalgar West Retreat Center
Sierra de Lagunas, S.J. del Cabo Mountains
Baja Ca Sur, México
© www.TsegyalgarWest.org



Focus on Namgyalgar



Photo by Lucy Macpherson

Sacred Space and Place in an Ancient Land

Lisa O'Connor

Namgyalgar means victory. It is located one hour's drive north of Brisbane, in the Glass House Mountains. The Glass House Mountains consist of eleven uniquely shaped and rugged volcanic peaks rising directly out of an ancient coastal plain.

The peaks are ancient remnants of volcanic activity that occurred approximately 26 million years ago. The unique and characteristic towers of rock are the result of lava cooled in the cores of volcanoes. Millions of years of erosion have left the volcanic cores exposed with some softer sandstone features. The mountains are listed on the state and National Heritage Register as a landscape of national significance and are protected within a National Park. They are noted to be of cultural significance to the Aboriginal traditional owners of the land, the Gubbi Gubbi and the Jinibara people. This country has sustained people for hundreds of thousands of years and provided many resources from a bio-diverse rich

environment with river systems, coastal wetlands and forests.

The Glasshouse Mountains region continues to be a pristine natural environment that is also enjoyed for bushwalking and climbing through eucalypt woodland and heath vegetation. Apart from the stunning views there is the opportunity to see much native wildlife.

At the recent Winter Camp 2016 at the Gar we were fortunate to have a local and traditional owner of the land, Uncle Alan, meet with our community again and perform a welcome to country ceremony. Alan told stories of healing throughout the country for the land and its entire people and his extended family connections as traditional healers. Uncle Alan has warmly accepted our invitation to travel to Merigar to attend the Tibetan Cultural Centre Opening in December 2017. Together we expressed the aspiration that Dzogchen teachings will continue to thrive not only in the Glasshouse Mountains, but also throughout Australia, the Pacific and the global community.

Our community connects across vast and wide-open space

The Dzogchen Community of Namgyalgar consists of a relatively small and widely dispersed hardy group of members (140 in

total at last count). Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been blessing Australia and our community since 1985.

Small gatherings practice together in most regional hubs, and regular practice retreats, and courses are held in both Lings – Samayasling in Melbourne, and Yandakling in New Zealand. Recent developments to increase our possibility of connection and provide opportunities for collaboration and practice together across long distances have included use of online links.

The Namgyalgar Community has a committed group of Teachers who regularly provide opportunities for SMS, Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Khaita both at the Gar and across the country. We thank all our teachers for the commitment and passion they bring to support our practice as a community.

We are fortunate indeed in our Gekös Topgyal, who, along with Tsering, teach and demonstrate Khaita in various locations, including a Tibetan Cultural Day this year. Next year there will be Khaita, Yantra Yoga and Thangka painting demonstrations and workshops at the huge national folk festivals, Wanderlust and Woodford.

Recently our local Thangka painting treasure, Damien Pascoe donated a stunning

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Photo by Lucy Macpherson



Photo by Lucy Macpherson

Namgyalgar Winter Camp, July 2016

Jan Cornall

It's hard not to feel inspired as you drive into Namgyalgar. Our gekös Topgyal and the guardian peaks rise up around each corner reminding me that this is indeed a special place have picked me up from the sleepy Glasshouse Mountains railway station.

On this occasion I am arriving for the second week of Namgyalgar Winter Camp. I'd already missed the week of Yantra Yoga with our Yantra teachers: Emily, Oni and Amare, teaching open and advanced. At the same time on the mandala, Vajra Dance teachers Nicki, Thuy and Rosemary were busy leading morning and afternoon Vajra Dance sessions. In the evenings, our gekös,

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Vajrapani Thanka, consecrated by Rinpoche, which was open to international action online for the purpose of fundraising.

Our community recently gathered to celebrate the life of Elise Stutchbury who was a foundational member and much loved friend and teacher for over 30 years in the community. A Library is to be named in her honor.

Winter camp 2016 was a success and great opportunity to gather for an intensive period over three weeks for practice from dawn to dusk, with most of our local instructors present at the gar. The recently constructed Sangkang provided an early morning offering and purification each day.

Fresh prayer flags were raised and the Gar was a hive of activity with Vajra dancing, Yantra Yoga, and Santi Maha Sangha all day and Khaita late into the evening. Winter Camp is likely to be a regular event.

Additional plans at the Gar include several Open days to showcase cultural and teaching activities.

Tsering and Topgyal were leading Khaita. And I haven't mentioned the early morning and after dinner collective practices. If that doesn't sound like a full schedule, there was still time to inaugurate the newly built Sang khang and have a bonfire party on the Saturday night! On Sunday everyone went to Brisbane to celebrate The Dalai Lama's birthday, where Topgyal and Tsering performed Tibetan Dance and joined by Rosemary and Thuy gave the audience of around 200 people, a showcase of Khaita.

When I arrived the next day, morning and afternoon sessions of Santi Maha Sangha training led by our teachers Arnaud and Amare were in full swing, Varja Dance with Nicki continued, with Rosemary popping in and the webcast with Rinpoche was being beamed in at the convenient time of 6–8pm. Beamed being the operative word, for as internet connection in the Gömpa is poor, it was decided to hold the

Future development plans.

A limited amount of affordable on site accommodation is currently available at the Gar.

Our community has been engaged in ongoing discussions, with more large group collaborative meetings planned, to refine our collective communication and vision for future development in order to plan for the provision of long term sustainable support of Rinpoche's teachings and the Dzogchen Community, as well as local development at the Gar.

The Namgyalgar Community extends a warm welcome to all members of the International Dzogchen Community to visit this vast and ancient land. Come and visit the Gar, the Lings and regional centers to collaborate and practice together.

We would love you to visit soon. Rinpoche is coming in November 2017, why not join us? ☺



Early morning Sang practice.

web cast in a tent in the forest at the top of the land, where we could be assured of unbroken transmission. So off we trooped in the dark – cushions, blankets and torches in hand, to the top of our boundary then along a bush track to our wee temporary Gömpa among the eucalypts. As we unzipped the door to the tent, it felt quite surreal, as if we were members of a secret society in a Sci Fi scenario. While winter in the tropics is surprisingly cold, we were more than warm as we jammed in together to listen to Rinpoche's words of wisdom – the only light in the tent, the flickering of his image on the small lap top screen, the only sound – the voice of the Master.

This scene goes down in my list of special Dzogchen tent moments, like in 1990, walking up the hill at Merigar with Rinpoche and HH Dalai Lama, watching them take tea in a nomad tent erected there, or listening to Rinpoche's teachings in the early days of Namgyalgar in our lamp lit shed with flapping canvas walls and a sand floor. There are many more.

After the webcast we would descend to the kitchen for soup and relaxation, and be up again early next morning before breakfast for Ozer Chenma practice or Mandar-



Namgyalgar's Regional Centers

Information and contact details available at:

www.dzogchen.org.au



Samyasling, Melbourne.



New South Wales South Coast.



Sydney.



Canberra.



Cairns.



Yangdakling, New Zealand.

ava, sitting on the side of the hill (weather permitting) or in the Gömpa, as the sun rose over the mountain sentinels.

On Thursday at the Ganapuja we blessed a new swag of *lungta*, which were erected the next day by Topgyal, Tsering, Damien and a band of helpers and now flutter brightly along the entrance road and up the hill. The timing was perfect, for soon after a light gossamer rain began to fall – dakini rain as someone had once heard Rinpoche describe it.

Saturday night was momo party time in the Gömpa with local musicians, a didgeridoo and Tibetan trumpet jam, Khaita and

general carousing. The camp ended after lunch on Sunday.

Being a small retreat, with around 30 people in attendance (not all at the one time) we were able to camp on the land or sleep in the dorm rooms in the house. It is always such a special time, sharing meals and karma yoga with Vajra brothers and sisters, a chance to catch up with old mates and get to know new friends.

Thanks for the Winter Camp must go to Topgyal, Tsering, Dekyid, our Winter Camp Coordinator, Arnaud, Namgyalgar Gakyil, Namgyalgar teachers: Arnaud, Amare, Thuy,

Rosemary, Oni, Nicki, and all the participants who helped make it such a great retreat.

Namgyalgar has a busy schedule of practice retreats happening for the rest of the year so there are plenty more opportunities to join. www.dzogchen.org.au/namgyalgar-events.html

They also have an international auction coming up of a most wonderful Vajrapani thangka painted by Damien Pascoe, created under the guidance of Rinpoche. Damien has studied under Andy Webber and at Tsering Art School in Sechen Monastery in Katmandu and lives close to Namgyalgar <http://damienpascoethangka.weebly.com>

Sydney Dzogchen Community – A Little Bit of History

Jan Cornall

Sydney Dzogchen Community has been in existence since the late 80s when Rinpoche gave a retreat at Blackheath in the Blue Mountains. I was lucky to meet CHNN for the first time when he taught at Kyneton, Victoria in 1989 after which I met up with other local practitioners and joined in Sydney activities. In those days we had quite a few members and a lot of newcomers arriving, who wanted to learn the practices.

Carmel offered her large rumpus room in Greenwich where we would gather once a month on Sundays, while Elise Stutchbury and others would explain the collective practices printed in small booklets compiled by Elise and Geoffrey Samuels.

Later Pamela Oldmeadow introduced photocopied sheets with all the visualization instructions which were most helpful (before the days of Shang Shung publications). On special days we were practicing in homes located all across Sydney, from Balmain to Coogee, Glebe to Newtown, Blue Mountains to Wat Buddha Dharma in the Hawkesbury region. Laurence Mills, a venerable monk in the Theravada tradition, abbot of the Wat, had become a student of Rinpoche and decided to gift the Wat property to The Dzogchen Community.

At the time we were searching nation-wide for land to build a retreat centre and this seemed like a perfect solution. In



Dream Yoga Sydney 2014

the end it didn't eventuate but not before we had many retreats in the remote bush location of the Wat, an hour's drive north of Sydney. Fabio came to teach yoga there and our local community flourished especially when after recovering from his serious illness, Rinpoche was visiting Australia annually and giving weekend teachings in Sydney.

In these times Rinpoche was accommodated in a variety of hotels and serviced apartments around the city and once he and Rosa even stayed at Tsewang's small apartment in Newtown. There was often a harbour cruise included in his itinerary or a barbeque at his harbourside apartment which we were all invited to. By now we had purchased land at Tilba Tilba and created Namgyalgar (South) so once his Sydney visit was over he would set off on the five hour drive, with a stop along the way to see the kangaroos at Peppy beach.

Over the years members of Sydney DC have contributed locally and nationally to Namgyalgar in a number of ways, helping out with fundraising, publicity, web design, printing prayer flags, making meditation cushions, retreat co-ordination, accommodation, driving, library, bookshop and many have served on the local and national gakyils. We have also taken part in events with the local Tibetan Community.

While some old members have drifted away, new faces have arrived. Practitioners are now spread across the city from north to south and east to west, but there is always a small but solid group holding the fort. Special days are observed collectively with some people doing gana puja by internet due to distance limitations. Regular weekly practice sessions of Yantra Yoga and Vajra dance take place in the inner west through out the year with an SMS Study group meeting on the northside.

International teachers including Adriana, Fabio, Prima Mai and Michael Katz, Jim Valby and Elio, have taught here over the years. While Rinpoche no longer gives weekend teachings in the capital cities, instead going straight to Namgyalgar in QLD, the Sydney community is now able to draw on the large pool of qualified Australian teachers (16) for weekend courses of SMS, Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Khaita with Tsering and Topgyal.

When Rinpoche visits Australia in November 2017, most of us will make the journey to the Glasshouse Mountains in Queensland to see him. In the meantime a dedicated core of members keeps the Dzogchen teachings and practices alive and well in Sydney. ©

Khaita in Sydney

Tom Fielding

A beautiful day and the market was buzzing. Organic fruits and delicious food aromas hovered under gumtrees and a clear blue sky. The audience relaxed on the grass before us, as we plugged in our sound system for a session of Khaita dances. Tsering, Topgyal and Thuy demonstrated some dances before asking the audience to join in. We whirled, twirled and stomped in rhythm to the wonderful Khaita beat. The market loved it!

Later, we held a workshop where we could focus on breaking down sections of



the dance for more thorough learning. We repeated steps over and over and ended up learning lots of dances, including the Dzamling Gar dance. Once we had down the basic patterns, we could really enjoy the energetic spirit of the dances. Many thanks to Tsering and Topgyal for visiting Sydney. ©

Samyasling Melbourne Ling

Sean Read

Level 1 Yantra Yoga Instructor

Since distances between capitals are vast in Australia, it is essential to have regional co-ordination and collaboration. Namgyalgar is a two hour jet trip from Melbourne and then some more road travel, so the presence of the Samyesling in this part of Australia is doubly welcome for Victorians. Also, people from Tasmania, for instance, are coming regularly to attend courses in Melbourne, thus we regard them as honorary Samyesling-ites!

The versatile large space of the Fleming Park Hall, which we hire hourly, allowed for great courses of Vajra Dance, with two mandala mats on the floor, as well as Yantra Yoga courses. For example, Oni Mckinsty, a candidate for third level Yantra Yoga, led a very successful Pranayama course here, and will repeat this at the end of October. We are very lucky to have Sean Read, an authorized level one Yantra Yoga teacher living locally, to insure regular weekly teachings and practice of Yantra Yoga.

We have been fortunate in the past year or two, on a continuing basis, to have Samyesling members offer their country houses for weekend retreats, for different specific practices, which have been well attended. One was held on the scenic Mornington Peninsula; more recently also one



W'dyte Mandarava Retreat.

at Warrandyte and Castlemaine. While the latter involved the collective practice for the weekend of the short Mandarava using the beautiful new book, the Castlemaine retreat was mainly Shitro although other practices were done too.

Lynne Geary, our resident Melbourne Vajra Dance teacher, recently taught a very beneficial Dance To Benefit Beings course, and once again a Tasmanian attended as well as Victorians. Two Tasmanians have mandalas and several members have their own mandalas also in Victoria, and one member can offer a Vajra Dance facility to the Melbourne Community, as they are fortunate to have the mandala permanently rolled out at their place, which is very convenient if Fleming Park Hall is unavailable for hire.

Following last November's very well attended wonderful Khaita dance workshop led by Topgyal and Tsering, we have had a weekly Khaita two-hour practice time slot.

The Melbourne Gakyil has valued input from others attending their meetings. A group of geographically widespread vajra kin is using an online weekly meeting to improve their compassionate listening and careful response, and a representative from this group gave valuable feedback by attending a Gakyil meeting.

From foregoing we can see just as we aim to be inclusive, welcoming and non-hierarchical in our collective practice retreats etc, we plan to continue with this attitude for outreach also, exemplified by, and culminating in, our open day on November 27, 2016. ©

Practice Retreat in Wellington, New Zealand

'That was fantastic! I am very grateful for the opportunity to practice and learn together in Wellington. I have met new fellow practitioners and we made plans for future courses and practice! Thank you everyone involved, but mostly Rinpoche for giving us all these true teachings for realizing our true nature!!!'

An attendant at the Yangdakling Retreat in Wellington from August 12-16, 2016 provides a glimpse of the benefits experienced by a small group

of people who traveled from Victoria and Tasmania, Australia and from six regions in New Zealand to join with local Wellingtonians for the first retreat to be held in this city.

Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga and revision of the short Mandarava were the focus of the retreat. Opportunities were created to introduce members of the public to the teachings during a viewing of "My Reincarnation" and public sessions which coincided with the Worldwide Transmission.

The retreat venue lead to interaction and interest from the public. The Home of Compassion is the site of the Sisters of Compassion headquarters and is a gathering place for the sisters. The retreat center is located on the site of a Visitors' Center

which celebrates the remarkable life and enduring legacy of Mother Mary Joseph Suzanne Aubert (1835-1926). Buildings include a conference center, a library, a museum, retreat residences and onsite accommodation which enabled practitioners to practice and be together for five days in retreat. Resident sisters and lay people responded to the opportunity to join the retreat attendants to view 'My Reincarnation'. One of the sisters, originally from Tonga, was moved to express her delight in the Vajra Dance which reminded her of her beautiful traditional dance.

Angie Gilbert, SMS Base Instructor from Geelong, Australia, provided base teachings in a manner of delightful flexibility and grace. At dusk we sang The Song of the

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Vajra around the bed of a participant who was unable to join a session due to illness. Another day we climbed high, gathering around a pou whenua, a carved wooden post that tells a story. A pou whenua is significant to the Māori people, the tanga-ta whenua (people of the land) and is an acknowledgement of the association between the people and the land. We sang The Song of the Vajra here on a hill looking out over Wellington harbor and Island Bay, the wind fierce, strong.

We danced the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings with Rosa Altamirano and practiced Yantra Yoga together.

This retreat was a continuation of the long tradition of an annual gathering together in New Zealand/Aotearoa with practitioners from Australia and New Zealand joining together to practice, be, enjoy and refresh our transmission together. We welcome others from around the world to come visit with us and join in our future retreats. ©

Khaita in Australia

Julian King-Salter

We first sang Tibetan songs with Rinpoche in the room of the house at Namgyalgar North that later became his own apartment – everyone packed in quite tightly! We began with the opening songs as later published in Message from Tibet. Being moved to tears whilst singing, I asked Rinpoche for the meaning – how can songs which seem so joyful in their melody yet evoke tears of sadness? And so he gave some detailed explanation for us!

I realised also that the sadness arose not just from the songs themselves, but from their context, a culture and language in danger of being lost...

The dancing that followed was of necessity quite free and experimental, since there were not yet instructors and choreographers clarifying the details of each dance – sometimes we just did our best to follow directly from the Tibetan video. So it also became hilarious at times, also for Rinpoche!

Such was the beginning.

Our first attempt to arrange a Khaita tour in Australia with Tsering and Topgyal did not eventuate, for lack of funds, but the second attempt was successful, and in mid October 2015, Topgyal, Tsering and Dekyid travelled to Namgyalgar, in the Glasshouse Mountains just north of Brisbane, for a 6 week visit to run workshops around the country and prepare for Rinpoche's arrival in November that year.



One year on, and they are still here, on a bridging visa allowing full working rights – Topgyal is Gekös of Namgyalgar, Dekyid is attending Glasshouse Mountains State

Primary school, and doing very well! And of course a primary focus for Tsering and Topgyal is fostering and developing Khaita Tibetan Joyful Dance in the wider community as well as for Dzogchen Community members.

At the time of writing, they are in the air from Cairns in north Queensland to Sydney, New South Wales – Khaita events and public performances in Cairns were very warmly received, and Dzogchen Community Sydney have also organised a weekend workshop there. Last year, their Melbourne trip included an open air public performance as well as workshop and evening practice sessions, and a performance at an Old People's home, (where Laurence Khantipalo is now resident).

Since then they have also performed for an Old people's home near the Gar, and have been warmly embraced by the South East Queensland Tibetan Community – as



Khaita Dances at Palm Cove Peace Day Australia

Maree Ploetz

The Peace Day in Palm Cove Australia hosted a demonstration and welcomed the public to join in Khaita Joyful Dances with Tsering Dolker and Topgyal Gontse September 18, 2016. It was wonderful to see men, women and children who had no previous experience of the Khaita dances join in so enthusiastically. It was also a little surreal to see people dancing with the tropical beach and the Coral Sea as a backdrop.

Later the Dzogchen Community in Cairns hosted a week long course for those who have danced for a long time and also



for those new to Tibetan dance. The practitioners in Cairns would like to thank Topgyal and Tsering for their infinite patience and attention when teaching, as well as for their dedication to the development of Khaita!

Alima Kirchner reported: "It has been wonderful and we have been having lots of fun. It is definitely joyful dancing. When

we are a big group we seem to learn quite quickly."

And Deiter Kirchner said that it has been a really fantastic experience mixed together with some apprehensions about can I do this. It was difficult and a bit tricky at first but when you pick up some of the basic steps it certainly is very joyful. Tsering and Topgyal have been very patient with us. ©



Participants in the week long course of Khaita dances in Cairns led by Tsering Dolker and Topgyal Gontse.

well as workshops they have performed and led Khaita dancing at various events including HH Dalai Lama Birthday celebrations in Brisbane.

They are also currently working on Khaita video tutorials to add to those already produced in Europe, also with the participation of two members of IDC Namgyalgar, Rosemary Friend and Thuy Nguyen, who were awarded instructors certificates at Dzamling Gar earlier in the year.

Topgyal and Tsering will be performing at the Wanderlust festival on the Sunshine Coast later in October, and leading workshops as well as performing at Woodford Folk Festival, Australia's premiere Music

and performing Arts Festival, between Christmas and New Year. They are well supported in their work by Shang Shung Institute Australia and by the Namgyalgar Dzogchen Community

Namgyalgar in Queensland is still a young Gar, and there is no doubt that Khaita will play a significant part in its growth and development! At the same time, Khaita is becoming another important first point of contact for many new people, making an opportunity and a cause for them to discover their connection with the Dzogchen Teaching.

Thank you Rinpoche for all the opportunities you give us! ©

Passages

Elizabeth Anne Stutchbury

(November 29, 1954–July 26, 2016)

Pamela Oldmeadow, Viki Forscutt

Elise was a deeply committed student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a founding member of the Dzogchen Community (DC) in Australia. She was a major influence in its development and in 2002 she became one of the first two Namgyalgar Base level Santi Maha Sangha teachers authorized by Rinpoche. She was the Namgyalgar SMS Coordinator responsible for the study program, helping students prepare for exams and to conduct them. She was a long-term member of the International Publications Committee (IPC).

During the ten years before the purchase of DC retreat land in Australia, Elise assisted with the organization of Rinpoche's public talks and retreats, the provision of practice materials and with recordings and transcriptions of the teachings. With Geoffrey Samuel, she ran monthly workshops in Sydney on the Tun and oth-

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er practices taught by Rinpoche. These became the "Notes on..." practice booklets, which with the set of deity photos she organised, were used by students for years before similar Shang Shung publications.

When the first Namgyalgar manifested, in 1994, on the slopes of the Aboriginal sacred mountain of Gulaga on the New South Wales south coast, she helped the early Gakyils to formulate collaborative processes in accordance with Rinpoche's principles. She advised on protocols concerning the Master and the Teachings and as an IPC member was responsible for ensuring publications, documents and notices portrayed the Master, Teachings and Community in the correct way.

Elise helped create for Namgyalgar a Reference Collection with Rinpoche's books, practice books, DVDs, and MP3s published by SS, a precious resource for all interested in Dzogchen and particularly those studying SMS. She established an archive of audio and video recordings of Rinpoche's teachings in Australia, and arranged transcriptions of these for SS Institute. She raised the money for the library and the beautiful shrine.

She supported the SMS Scholarship and assisted scholars studying in residence at Namgyalgar. She led many practice retreats and workshops around the Namgyalgar region. She gave explanations at Rinpoche's retreats and was very generous in answering questions from many practitioners by email and phone over the years, even in her last weeks of life, counseling, clarifying aspects of the practices and Teachings.

Elise also dedicated herself to serious practice and personal retreat, in particular Mandarava practice to strengthen her energy, as she was challenged by a weak

immune system and multiple food and environmental allergies for most of her life.

Whilst in India, she had done retreats, which established her dedication to the life of practice. After her return from India she undertook long retreat in a tiny rural cottage. It was during this time that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu appeared to her in her dreams to correct some errors in her practice. Then, in early 1985, when in Kings Cross, she saw a poster for Rinpoche's first public talk in Sydney, and recognized him as the teacher from her dreams. This was the start of a lifetime devoted to Rinpoche and the furtherance of his teaching and community in Australia.

When she was a young woman, doctors told Elise that she would have to live her life in a bubble. She determined to survive by meditation and clean living. She survived several near death experiences with devoted practice and meticulous attention

She was a keen student of astrology. She was a good photographer, with many photos of Rinpoche's retreats and fascinating Himalayan ones. She also painted, for example a scene of seahorses from a dream and then found a dozen skeletons of seahorses along the Rosedale shore, which she placed in her fernery and many unbroken sea anemone shells inside. A local resident said they had never in years of beachcombing managed to find either. She was also a keen gardener and grew organic vegetables and fruits at Rosedale in her beautiful garden. She was musical. She always wanted to learn the harp but her family could not afford it so she learned and played the violin. She worked after school to save up and get a good one from China, which her daughter, Erin, later learned on. She had to give up playing after a car accident that left her in hospital for several months and with permanent ver-



Elise with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Namgyalgar Vase Burial in 1996.

to controlling her environment and diet. In the late 1990's severe health problems forced her to retire from her academic career. She then bought a chemical-free timber house that she converted into what she described as an 'eco-bubble,' at Rosedale on the south coast of NSW where she lived until her death.

Elise loved life, love and partnership, entering relationships with joy and openness to their life and outcomes. She was a most collaborative person to live with, even when seriously ill. She was gorgeous, elegant, sexy, vibrant and playful. She loved dressing well and had a great collection of shoes. She knitted, sewed, added feathers to hats, made over dresses to get this elegant look on a limited pension. She created a home full of beautiful things.

tebral damage. She loved to go to the annual National Folk Festival at Easter each year, to soak up the music, meet musicians and make new friends. In the last months of her life, Erin bought her a harp that she loved, though sadly she was not able to play it much despite having a natural feel for it.

She was always deep in the teachings and mindful of helping others, generously concerned with our practice to the end. Even as she was dying she was correcting our timing or pitch as we sang the practices with her! We love her for it. ©

Tashigar South Update

January

In January 2016, our Vajra brother Daniel Simonelli, led and coordinated an open retreat of the practice of the Chöd where the dralgyor system created by our Master was also taught so as to improve the pronunciation of the practice. On this occasion Daniel also coordinated a study group where the texts of the practice were studied in depth.



Chöd with Daniel Simonelli.

February

In February 2016, our Vajra sister Griselda Galmez also led and coordinated a retreat of the practice of Six Lokas. During two days we practiced the purification with a focus on visualization and improving of the melodies of the practice.



Six Lokas retreat with Griselda Galmez.



Retreat of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen with Ricardo Sued.

March

In the month of March of the same year, a three-day retreat of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen was organized. Fifteen people from different Latin American countries and traveled especially to take part and share together with Ricardo Sued, our SMS instructor, the explanations and practices of our Master's precious teachings.



"Body, Voice and Mind" with Ricardo Sued, Carolina Mingolla and Alejandra Krasnogor.



Explanation for world wide transmission with Ricky Sued.

July

In the month of July a retreat named "Body, Voice and Mind" was held, coordinated by Ricardo Sued, Carolina Mingolla, Yantra Yoga instructor, and Alejandra Krasnogor for Khaïta. Thirty people from different Argentinian provinces participated and also shared the webcast transmission of our Master, for some of the participants for the very first time.

August

In the month of August, 12th and 13th, the activities corresponding to the Guru Yoga world wide transmission for Guru Padma-sambhava's day were organized. This time the webcast was received from the Czech Republic. Ricky Sued gave a detailed explanation of the practice to those interested in receiving the transmission the day before. During that weekend, Khaïta was danced, coordinated by Alejandra Krasnogor.



From left to right: Rubén García (Yellow Gakyil), Alejandra Martínez (Red Gakyil), Marcelo Frischknecht (Red Gakyil), Sara Hanono (Yellow Gakyil), Cristian Cabral (Blue Gakyil), Daniel Altamirano (Gekod), Martín Pissano (Blue Gakyil), Soledad Mariani (Secretary), Elena Gastaldi (Red Gakyil).
Not in the picture: Gabriela Sanchez (Yellow Gakyil) and Ulises Moreno (Blue Gakyil).

Forming of the Gakyil

This year, our beloved Tashigar South has the peculiarity of having formed a Gakyil with people not only from Argentina, but also from Uruguay. A nine member Gakyil was formed that, in spite of the distance and thanks to the communication means available at present, is finding their way to work in a coordinated and harmonious way, trying to take the best decisions possible for our Gar and community in general, working always together. ©

Artists in the Dzogchen Community

Communicating Through Emotions and Going Beyond

We interviewed Norwegian artist Wilvin Pedersen about her life as an artist and how she met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

I would like to tell the story about me being Wilvin. I was born in Norway in 1948 and spent my first seven years in an orphanage, since I came into this world as a so-called accident. Those days, my mother could not take care of me because she had to work, and the only work she got was on big ships going all over the world.

Then I moved to my aunt and uncle for a couple of years before I could live with my mother. By this time I was already used to taking care of myself and when I was fourteen nobody could tell me what to do. My mother was a very nice and different person though.

At school when I was 13 I had a very special art teacher who gave me an easel and told me to go and work in the back room. He showed me how to do a few things and I made some drawings and paintings from photos of paintings of Van Gogh and Modigliani works. This made me very happy and I just loved it.

When I was sixteen I started to study at another school with an art class but quit after half a year. I continued to roam around. Then at eighteen I went to London England to City and Guilds of London Art School where I learned a lot about classical art forms. But I only stayed 3–4 months because I couldn't stand living in a big city and missed the nature of Norway.

Back in Norway I started to hang out with different artists in Oslo and became a model for one of them. The same artist showed me how to prepare canvases, I watched him paint, washed his floor, and also became his lover. And that was how I really started to paint for real. My world was filled with classical music, red wine and painting.



Green Tara painted in 2015.

People advised me to apply to go to the State Art College in Oslo, so I did and they accepted me immediately. Even there I was still very stubborn. I didn't want to listen to anybody so instead of being a student in a normal way I started to choose whatever I wanted to learn, skipping classes when I wanted to. The headmaster would ask me to come and show him my paintings and I would show them to him from time to time and he told me that if I continued like that I would go far. He even gave me money to visit the Rembrandt museum in Holland. Anyway I spent four years there although I never did an exam but just studied what I wanted to learn, a very fruitful time.

Then, at the age of 22, I moved up into the mountains of Norway with some friends living in the wilderness far away from civilization. When I was 24 my son Marius was born. Marius' father was a very good artist but he wanted me to only do women's work like knitting and weaving but I continued to paint as well. We split after three years.

When Marius was nearly one year old, I met Ole and Hanna Nydahl from Denmark who introduced me to the Dharma. Things changed and I became less wild, everything started to make sense and I recognized that my view of life was linked to the Buddhist view. I was home. I went to Copenhagen where I met Tibetan lamas for the first time. To be able to stay there for a month, I paid my stay with a painting.

Back in Norway, I got a cabin in the forest of Oslo and started the Ngondro prac-

tice, doing it all very fast so I could receive the next initiation. That took a lot of my time because like many other young people, when you start practising, that is what you do, and not much else besides being a mother of course. I continued to paint a little and when I painted something, I kept it very private and didn't show it to anyone. I didn't consider my capacity for painting. For me it was just something ordinary.

At some point I decided to take part in a stipend exhibition in an important gallery in Oslo to show my works, where if they like the work, they support you in your studies. I hung my paintings up but totally forgot to make an application for the support so I didn't manage to get any help.

Later I participated in an exhibition with other artists in Oslo. At that time I was doing more traditional types of paintings and working with oils on canvas but also color pencils, red chalk and coal on paper. I did a lot of portraits. I was always very much engaged in expressions and space, such as big skies, and I also painted natural scenes with forests, wood, sometimes in a fairy tale style.

In autumn 1975 I decided to join a lot of Dharma people from Scandinavia on a bus ride to India and Marius was left behind with his aunt for three months.

After nearly 3 weeks we ended up in Leh-Ladakh, which is north of Kashmir, close to the Tibetan border. This was the first year tourists could enter Ladakh, and

it was incredible to meet some great Lamas and these simple, beautiful people.

Coming back to Norway I met an American writer who came to Norway when Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche visited. He saw my paintings and suggested I illustrate a book and he would write the story. So I worked on the color drawings and when we took the work to a publishing house, they said they would be happy to use the drawings but that the story was not good enough.

My son and I came to Italy in autumn 1976 and met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the first time. I was amazed meeting this community. It was a big turning point for me in understanding practice. It was so simple, loving and direct but I was still



Copenhagen 1974, Wilvin used this painting as payment to follow a retreat with HH Karmapa and stay at the Dharma-house for a month.

very conditioned so I did not see all Norbu Rinpoche's qualities. I also had the fortune to meet Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dorzong Rinpoche and Drugu Chögyal Rinpoche in Rome at the same time. The trip to Italy was like a great gift and after being there for two months, we went back to Norway where I prepared for the visit of Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dorzong Rinpoche and Drugu Chögyal Rinpoche who wanted to come to Karma Tashi Ling in the winter of 1977. They stayed for three weeks before going to England and during that time Khamtrul Rinpoche, Chögyal Rinpoche and I painted the Gönpa in Karma Tashi ling.

In May '79, my friends of the Norwegian Dzogchen Community and I invited Norbu Rinpoche. This was really a great change somehow. His way of teaching, his great



Watercolor painted in 2005, painted from mind without an external model.

compassion and his way of explaining, so people really got to understand the nature of mind and way of being, existence itself, entering into the state, was a new dimension for many practitioners. Norbu Rinpoche has the great capacity to help living beings, to let them see their unobstructed

icans, Italians and Norwegians crossing in this little boat. There was a storm and big waves but with the help of Norbu Rinpoche we all crossed safely. But time means that everything has an end, also this retreat.

Then in 1981 we invited Norbu Rinpoche for another retreat. That retreat was held



Wilvin working at Merigar in 1982.

pure nature of origin, beyond concepts of mind.

Since this is a story I must also tell you that we had a fantastic trip crossing the mountains after the retreat in Oslo. We ended up on the west coast of Norway visiting Marit and Gordon's nice place in one of the fiords. To go there we had to cross the fiord. We were about 15 people, Amer-

in my home in the forest of Oslo, a very simple little place with no modern facilities. Anyway this retreat made me see the necessity of moving to Italy, which Norbu Rinpoche approved. So at Christmas '81 my son Marius and I came to the retreat in Sardegna and afterwards we stayed in Italy for some years.

» continued on the following page



Watercolor of Tara Bhairava, a powerful place of Tara in Shivapuri outside Boudha in Nepal, painted in 2012.

>> continued from previous page

We lived in Formia, Arcidosso and Rome for some years and nobody knew that I painted. When I was on my own at home and I could really connect to that world. There was never any question and I never thought about talking about it. It was never an option for me.

We returned to Norway in 1986 and remained for five years. During that time I was working as a painter and props maker in two theatres in Oslo but also working as a helper in a home for old people for some months. As usual I was also painting in my free time still mostly in oil on canvas.

Then in the 90s after coming back to Italy, I started to paint in the Merigar Gönpa. At the beginning I was working outside. Nobody knew that I was a painter. I just said, "Look I can paint". I worked with the Buryatian painters, Batodalai Dugarov and his son, Zorick and other painters. Then I helped with the decoration inside on the ceiling. Then the Tibetans came.

Drugu Chögyal Rinpoche came about three times to work on the panel of the Primordial Masters. Tsering Wangchuk made all the lineage drawings in the rest of the Gönpa and painted the figures of the lineages of masters with his wife Sonam Palmo and we helped with the coloring and shading. Some years later I repainted outside the Gönpa with some other western painters. Then due to family reasons again I went back to Norway in 1997 and started to work at a painter in the theatre.

In 2004 my sister-in-law, who is also an artist, suggested that I start to take my painting more seriously. She was or-



Gomadevi painted in 2011.

ganizing a summer course that she called a "summer school of art" on the peninsula outside Oslo. So I decided to go there and do a weeks course with watercolor with a famous Norwegian artist who specialized in watercolor. And it just clicked with me. I had never worked with watercolor before. The work comes along as you go and you have to work fast. It's not a matter of making a drawing and then filling in colors. I had to work on the whole page at the same time when it was all wet, but discovering that there are no rules I also found other ways myself to work and express and finally started to come out as a painter, I had hidden it so long.

The next year, the same artist gave a courses using oil paint on canvas. I took the course to refresh my capacities and did four paintings in a week! After the course I continued to work on portraits and nature.

The very first Buddhist image that I painted was Mandarava and after that Gomadevi. These two paintings were the very first in the series of watercolor paintings that I started 7-8 years ago. I've never considered myself to be a *thangka* painter. Real *thangka* painters often do the practice of the divinity that they are painting and they also do the eyes at the very end. I usually paint the eyes quite early on so that I can connect to the painting, sense the deity, also with practise sometimes.

During the years my friendship with Drugu Chögyal Rinpoche has been very important. He has inspired me a lot with my personal practise but also with his arts although I have never been his art student. He has given me a lot of material like Chi-

nese brushes and different kinds of rice paper to paint on saying that to paint is my practise. I have also spent time through the years at his retreat center Tara Bhair where I have done retreats combined with painting.



Kassandra, watercolor on rice paper, painted in 2011.

I feel that I don't have a choice – this is the way I can express myself and communicate. In my life I have burned or torn up quite a few paintings instead of putting them away. Now I've learned to put them away because there may be something there that I can get out later. It's a communication with myself through paper.

Before I often used a model when painting but now I always paint whatever directly from my mind. I have always been free spirited and pretty stubborn, following my own way without considering a so-called "normal life" an option.

I see art as a medium to communicate through emotions but also as a means to go beyond and express a natural appearance of nature in presence while painting. ☺

Visionary Encounters

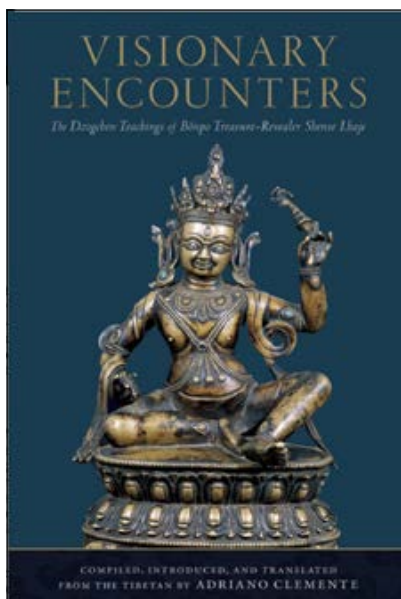
The Dzogchen Teachings of Bönpo Treasure Revealer Shense Lhaje

Compiled, introduced and translated
from Tibetan by Adriano Clemente
Snow Lion, 2016 – US\$ 29.95

Alfredo Colitto

With *Visionary Encounters*, Adriano Clemente delves into an important part of the Dzogchen literature of the Bön tradition. The book presents four texts belonging to the *Trenpa Serdam*, or “The Golden Teaching of Trenpa Namkha”, a cycle of Dzogchen teachings put in writing by Shense Lhaje (1215–1268), a great Bönpo master and *tertön*, or treasure revealer, who lived in the thirteenth century.

Shense Lhaje is traditionally considered an emanation of Trenpa Namkha, one of the foremost masters in Bön history. The title of the whole collection derives from the teachings given by Trenpa Namkha to his son Tsewang Rigdzin, and from the latter transmitted to Shense Lhaje.



The first of the four texts translated here contains autobiographical episodes of Shense Lhaje's visionary encounters and dreams. The second, belonging to the *Golden Teaching* cycle, deals with the essence of Dzogchen teachings. The third and fourth texts contain short aphorisms, transmitted to Shense Lhaje by many realized beings, male and female.

The teachings themselves are inspiring, terse and to the point, in the tradition of all authentic Dzogchen teachings, but Shense Lhaje transmits also a sense of his every-

day life as a dedicated Dzogchen practitioner in thirteenth century Tibet.

“In the first part of Shense Lhaje's stories”, writes Adriano Clemente, “we find a young Tibetan Khampa busy grazing his donkey and taking care of other ordinary duties. At the same time, he experiences a dimension beyond dualistic concepts in his encounters with various knowledge holders and dakinis (...) In the second part, we find a mature master with a following of students, to whom he bestows teaching and initiations without partiality.”

Clemente explains in the preface how he first came across these teachings and decided to translate them, and provides also a detailed introduction, helping the reader to understand the historical and cultural context in which the teachings developed. The book is complemented by a rich and very clear note apparatus, a glossary and a list of Tibetan, Sanskrit and Zhang Zhung names and terms, useful for scholars and neophytes alike.

A final note on the translation: while being very precise, the English translation of these texts is also smooth and alive, avoiding the heaviness often found in academic works. The reader is able to really enjoy the book. ©

» Editorial continued from page 3

the section on frequently asked questions: <http://dzogchencommunity.org/frequently-asked-questions-about-the-international-dzogchen-community/>

More information can also be found on The Mirror website here: <http://melong.com/category/idcg/> with an archive of various articles and discussions related to the International Gakyil.

All of this detailed documentation available openly to all interested should provide a solid understanding of the original intention of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the founding of the International Dzogchen Community, and as well inform as to the logical application of this intention in the formation of a general administrative governing body such as the International Gakyil. The Mirror recommends that all Community members and those interested in the preservation of the Dzogchen Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu take the time to read and educate themselves about the intention and implementation of the IDC and the IDCG.



The Symbol of the Dzogchen Community

In the center there is a sky-blue basis, representing the primordial condition of original purity. Inside this dimension is the “unique golden syllable”, symbolizing the ultimate condition. It represents the “Rigdzin” – the Knowledge-holder – of the Longchen Osal Nyingthig: the Knowledge-holder of the direct, oral and symbolic transmissions; the master of the whole Community, whoever he may be, the vital spirit of the Ati teachings. In the four main and the four intermediate directions are eight Gakyils decorated with eight points. These represent the Gars that have the following five qualifications. They are places where:

1. Dzogchen Knowledge-holders are masters and give teachings and instructions;
2. Members of the Community can obtain a concrete and particular knowledge of Dzogchen;
3. All members of the Community can study Dzogchen teachings;
4. They can meet to study subjects related to the teachings;
5. Where practitioners, vajra brothers and sisters, living in all directions, can meet together from time to time.

Above from the IDC website
<http://dzogchencommunity.org>

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Alexandru Anton

In 2009 I had a life crisis which led to stopping my training as a clinical psychologist and pretty much everything else. I remember I was looking for freedom, maybe without really knowing what it was, but this eventually manifested through practicing shamanism, becoming good friends with drumming and Siberian throat-singing. That was the first time I heard about Rinpoche, when reading about the masters of Vladislav Matrenitsky who was teaching throat-singing. I really enjoyed these experiences which were happening beyond the reach of my rational need to understand everything. Then in 2012 one friend asked me to organize a soundhealing workshop and I was amazed when more than 10 people appeared. That was a turning point and I started focusing on soundwork and continued to offer these workshops where people can really manifest their voice, listen to it, feel it and have experiences through it.

During all these years of exploration I was experimenting with Yoga, Zen, some basic meditation techniques, Reiki and I remember browsing through some Dzogchen books – particularly Golden Letters – The Three Statements of Garab Dorje. There was something that greatly attracted me to these texts. I especially liked the simplicity of the view and the beautiful poems on the nature of mind, like for example the metaphor of the nature of mind as the big blue sky beyond all the clouds. But I was still in much doubt, torn between looking for something very concrete and technical and enjoying the too-good-to-be-true Dzogchen metaphors.

Nothing happened and it remained somewhere in the back of my mind.

Then in 2013 I was co-leading a workshop with a friend and at some point he played some relaxation songs while we were lying on our backs. One of the songs was Rest in Natural Great Peace, with words spoken by Sogyal Rinpoche, inspired by a poem by Nyoshul Khenpo Jamyang Dorje, with beautiful chanting in the background. The words, which I remember to this day, are:



Rest in natural great peace
This exhausted mind
Beaten helplessly by karma and
neurotic thoughts
Like the relentless fury of the pounding
waves
In the infinite ocean of samsara.
Rest in natural great peace.

an experience I had no access to before in this life.

So I thought “I am very curious about Dzogchen, and it is also very strongly connected with sound. Rinpoche looks like a really nice guy, coming for a retreat here in Romania and he is quite old! I should go!”

And I went. 2013. And I had another amazing experience, attending the everyday teaching sessions with Rinpoche and feeling a great connection with him and with many of the participants. What struck me the most was the incredible atmosphere I felt during the teachings, so intense and so beyond time and space, the amazing energy that I felt through Rinpoche's presence and voice.

I was also for the first time in such an international setting, with community members coming from many countries to join the retreat at Merigar East. I remember applying for a work-exchange and landing in the Registration Team, where I was able to meet all those people! Everything was moving around me and there was this invisible “thing” going on that I could only recognize after the end of the retreat, but I remember Paula from Poland and Mira from Russia suddenly approaching me and asking “Hey, Alex, you have good communication skills and enjoy working with people. Don't you want to be an assistant for



Quality time at Wangdenling, Czech Republic,

This had such a strong effect on me, that when I went home I visited the Merigar East website, saw there was a retreat with Rinpoche and started thinking about it. It still felt a bit too good to be true, but then I watched “My Reincarnation” and one more thing clicked inside, seeing Rinpoche both as a Tibetan master and as a human being,

the Blue Gakyil?” I was cornered by the Dakinis and had no chance of escape, so I said yes and then in 2014 I went on to become one of the Blues for Merigar East.

This was a very strong experience for me because as a new practitioner in a small community there was not much contact with the international community.



Merigar East the sunflower Gar.

Starting to contribute to the gakyil work opened my eyes a little bit more, that a lot is happening in the Dzogchen community and I had no idea about it.

It might be strange, but it is true, that I discovered the community spirit outside my native country.

At this first retreat at Merigar East in 2013, touched by the magical qualities of the Black Sea, I also started a relationship with a Czech lady. We would spend time together in Romania and in Prague and so I had the chance to closely meet the Czech community and have a first-hand experience of what happens when the community is strong and people are dedicated and collaborate. It was very useful for me, an ignorant Blue assistant who otherwise didn't have much clue what the Dzogchen Community meant, and also because I could go back to Romania full of confidence and inspiration about what is possible here with our relatively very small and scattered Sangha.

This led me to visit Phendeling, the beautiful Czech Ling in the green hills, attending a retreat there with Jakob Winkler and spending more quality time with friends who also happened to be practitioners. So very quickly I started becoming more and more thirsty to meet practitioners and go to retreats and travel and I got so much out of this desire.

I met the Slovak community, went for a work-exchange program at Wangdenling in the wonderful natural reservation in the Slovak mountains and spent a lot of quality time there, finding out about the history



Czech connection.

of the Ling and about the local community and about the challenges, solutions, aspirations. This was all very fascinating for me, because in Romania there was not really a well-shaped group of practitioners that would carry on an ongoing project except for when Rinpoche came here and many people dedicated themselves to the organizing of the event.

With this came another idea, that I would like to travel to all Lings, at least in Europe, and meet the people there, get the feeling of the place and get a first-hand experience of it – and this is still "work" in

progress. I feel this is very important because no matter how good practitioners we are, we are still limited by the space-time concreteness of our lives, having no clue about the lives, challenges and solutions discovered by other practitioners in another country – and all these served for me as great examples of how the Teaching can be integrated with the most unimaginable circumstances.

So that is, in a nutshell, how I met Rinpoche and joined the community and a little bit about how it went afterwards. I am

entering my third year as a ME Blue Gakyil and I can say it can be very challenging and mind-opening, but I am grateful for all the opportunities that manifested for me in connection to this. Years are passing, retreats are coming and going and life continues to unfold. I am continuing my sound journey and becoming more and more nomadic. Next stop is Dzamling Gar, and I am very curious and excited.

Heart-felt thanks to Rinpoche and the International Dzogchen Community!

A. A.

©



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