



# THE MIRROR

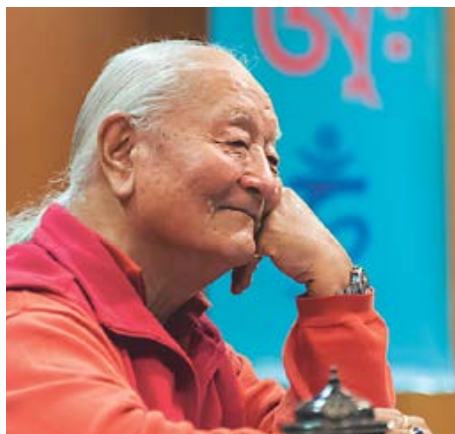
No. 134  
December 2016

The 27 Commitments  
Teaching in a Perfect Way  
Inaugurating the Museum  
of Asian Art and Culture  
Consecration of the Stupa  
of Complete Victory  
The 35th Anniversary  
of Merigar West



INTERNATIONAL  
DZOGCHEN  
COMMUNITY





## Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Photo: P. Fassoli

### 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

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  
Chüdlen 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

Front cover: A copy of the Jowo Sakyamuni statue, considered the most venerated image of Tibet and located in the central shrine of the Jokhang temple in Lhasa, is the centerpiece at the newly inaugurated Museum of Asian Art and Culture in Arcidosso. Photo © 2016 Oleksandr Zhytko / MACO

Back cover: A view of the street leading up to the Castle and the Museum in the historical center of Arcidosso, decorated with Tibetan prayer flags. Photo by Angelica Siedlecki.

# Contents

Schedule ..... 2

A Testimony to Enrico  
Dell'Angelo ..... 4

Introductory Talk  
Trainings and Authorizations ... 6

The 27 Commitments..... 10

Teaching in a Perfect Way .... 12

Shang Shung Foundation..... 15

ASIA..... 17

Update on the  
Dzamling Gar Project..... 18

Santi Maha Sangha Level IV... 19

Back from the Teachers  
Training at Dzamling Gar ..... 19

Inaugurating the Museum  
of Asian Art and Culture..... 22

The Museum of Asian Art  
and Culture (MACO) ..... 24

Consecration of the Stupa  
of Complete Victory ..... 25

The 35th Anniversary  
of Merigar West..... 26

Via Tibet Inaugurated  
in Arcidosso..... 28

Thank you from the  
Zikhang Library of Merigar ... 28

SHAR RO, a Celebratory  
Festschrift Honoring  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu..... 29

Essential Advice on  
Two Aspects of Life ..... 31

The Holy Madmen of Tibet.... 32

Buddhahood in This Life..... 34

Collaboration: Manifestation  
of our Realization ..... 35

The Illusion of  
'We' And 'They' ..... 36

All About  
Harmonious Breathing ..... 38

Artists in the  
Dzogchen  
Community..... 40

How I Met Chögyal  
Namkhai Norbu..... 42



## Help to Support The Mirror

The Mirror is the voice of the International Dzogchen Community.  
Please help us to continue and improve this invaluable service  
by supporting it with a donation! Thank you.

Paypal:  
[yellow@dzogchencommunity.org](mailto:yellow@dzogchencommunity.org)

Bank – account in Euros:  
Bank: Monte dei Paschi di Siena  
Branch: Arcidosso

Account holder:  
Comunità Dzogchen Internazionale  
IBAN: IT 22 S 01030 72160 000000 798242  
BIC/SWIFT: PASCITMIG99

# A Testimony to Enrico Dell'Angelo, the First President of the IDC

Mark Farrington  
International Gakyil

Working alongside Enrico Dell'Angelo the past five years to help bring about the realisation of Rinpoche's vision for 'One Community' has been a sublime experience in application of Dzogchen Teachings in daily life. His immense capacity for simultaneously managing multiple complex issues, and his fluency in all matters of professional organisational life – legal, financial, project planning, human resources, etc. – allowed us to maintain a steady pace of progress on a number of projects manifesting around the world. From weekly WebEx conference calls with the International Gakyil to a steady stream of emails, skype calls and



like everyone else to anticipate how Rinpoche would have us react to certain circumstances, and thanks to help from Fabio, Adriana and Adriano (amongst others) over the years, I learned my lessons. However, working with Enrico took this experience to another level. The issues of concern were always higher, more complicated,

globally – integrating and working within the culture of the Dzogchen Community – it is really something special.

If these accomplishments were not enough, Enrico managed this taxing schedule with the International Gakyil while simultaneously restructuring the Shang Shung Foundation. He personally drafted the IDC Constitution (three times), and authored numerous fundamental IDC documents that make up our procedures and protocols, such as the Membership Regulations, Code of Use IDC Logo, Protocol for Gar & Ling Affiliation, etc. His mastery of written legal English was impressive, as was his fluency in Spanish, French and Tibetan. His combination of skills made him an ideal president for the broad and diverse Community that is IDC.

It is not my place to write an over arching narrative of Enrico's life, as his oldest friends and family will surely take care of that, but I did want to contribute this piece of the story that showcases one of his lasting achievements. He really left a wonderful legacy for all our benefit, although



The Birth of IDC, September 2012.



IDC first AGM meeting, at Dzamling Gar, March 2014.



IDC 2015 AGM Meetings.

texts, there was almost no time we were not in contact during these past five years. Finding a creative partnership like the one I had with Enrico is difficult to find in any dimension of professional life. To find it with one of your Vajra Brothers and in service of your Teacher is truly something special.

Enrico had an incredible certainty about where we were going, which in this world, is rare. It is one thing to be confident and assured when provided with a well-laid out plan, but it is something quite different when you operate only from a simple, deep understanding of our Teacher's mind and how He would expect us to deal with a constantly changing set of circumstances. For many years I have worked in service of Rinpoche and learned through trial error

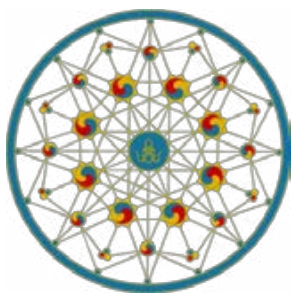
placed with legacy problems, encumbered with typical challenges of globalisation, languages, legality, etc. Applying the simple rules of 'working with circumstances' and fostering 'One Community' in an endeavour to connect 11 Gars and 50+ Lings together across 30 countries was a monumental task. Watching Enrico consistently rise to this challenge and repeatedly apply the mindfulness that we are taught by our Master was a perpetual source of joy. It mirrored so many challenges that I faced in my professional life for 30 years while simultaneously being a devoted Dzogchen student of Rinpoche's. Many new insights were gained by working on the IDC & Dzamling Gar Projects with Enrico, and for this I will always be grateful. What we all try to do

it surely feels like he was taken from us many years too soon. It seems beyond coincidence that a beautifully written editorial by Enrico appears in the latest edition of the printed Mirror (No.133), as this wonderful article sums up our 5-year mission at the International Gakyil to perfection. In particular, this excerpt below:

*"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 organisational 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."*

Although not all Gars and Lings are legally aligned, and our single web portal is not yet complete, the IDC Membership System (MMS), global registration of Longsal symbol and ownership structures of Dzamling Gar and Tsegylgar West under IDC oversight have all been completed. The essence

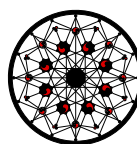


International Gakyil 2016 Annual Strategy Meeting, l-r Scott Townsend, Roberto Zamparo, Mark Farrington, Enrico, and Libor Maly.

of this connective tissue that IDC is meant to represent has now been interwoven to link Rinpoche's mandala of Gars & Lings, like the net of gold energy lines on this Dzogchen Community graphic above. For this grand achievement, to Enrico Dell'Angelo, we can all be eternally grateful.

With deep love and respect. Farewell my friend. You tightened the sails on the boat. ©

On December 26, 2016, Enrico passed away suddenly in Rome after a short illness. Enrico was one of the first practitioners in the Dzogchen Community, and from the beginning dedicated himself to the activities and development of the Dzogchen Community.



## Membership 2017

As the new year 2017 is slowly beginning, the International Gakyil (IG) conducted a survey among the Gars and Lings of the International Dzogchen Community to understand the satisfaction of gakyils with the existing membership scheme and to set membership rates for 2017.

Feedback from the survey indicated that most Gars & Lings were intending to keep local Membership tiers unchanged. Stability was everyone's primary goal for 2017, as most have now completed the transition to the MMS system (running on [www.dzogchen.net](http://www.dzogchen.net)) and feel that members would just like an unchanged routine for 2017.

Also the prices for IDC Global Membership tiers are left unchanged in 2017. The Global rates world wide are 500 € or 550 USD for Global Sustaining and 1500 € or 1650 USD for Global Meritorious. There has been a decline in Global Members in 2016, but in the IDC membership survey, all Gar & Ling Membership Coordinators reported that this was not due to price. Those that take Global Membership tiers are satisfied with the price. The main cause for the decline cited in the survey were Members having less plans for travel, or changes to their financial circumstances.

Overall, membership declined globally a bit in 2016, but this was due to Rinpoche travelling less and many Welcome Card holders not renewing to become full-time members. We expect these trends to reverse in 2017 when we expect Rinpoche to resume his travel schedule again.

To offer better training and support to all of the Gar & Ling membership coordinators (MC), from the beginning of 2017 the IG is appointing a new International MC. The IG recognises that this is its primary role – to assist on membership issues, and so it is with great happiness that we announce this new permanent role. ©



# Introductory Talk Trainings and Authorizations

November 12, 2016

Teacher Trainings and Authorizations

November 12–19, 2016, Dzamling Gar

Good day for everybody and everywhere. Here we are in Dzamling Gar. This is the start of our retreat of the Teachers' Training. You already know our program, we are going to do a teachers training of Santi Maha Sangha, and related to that we also have Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga. In this case it is very important that we know what Santi Maha Sangha means. Santi Maha Sangha is in the Oddiyana language. But in our ordinary language, particularly in the Western world, we say Dzogchen Community. This is important to know and understand. Otherwise people are thinking Santi Maha Sangha is some books, some study, something we do in an intellectual way; something we are learning and doing.

We more or less have an idea of what the Dzogchen Community is. The Community is almost arriving to a half-century old. We study, we develop, we collaborate with each other; this is the Dzogchen Community. Most people have the idea that the Dzogchen Community is a kind of dharma center. The principle of the Dzogchen Community is not a kind of dharma center.

You know what Dzogchen means. Dzogchen is what we are learning for years and trying to apply. The real nature of Dzogchen is our condition and for discovering and getting in that state we have the Dzogchen teaching. I have been trying to teach and communicate that for many years. Also most of our people are trying to learn that. The purpose of Dzogchen is for getting in our real nature, so first of all we are discovering our real nature. If we are not discovering it, then we cannot get in that state. So for that reason we are studying and applying that method and teaching. Maha Sangha means Community; Maha means total and that is the same in Oddiyana language and Sanskrit, but the way of using that word in Oddiyana language and Sanskrit is not the same. For example in Sanskrit they apply the adjective in a different way. The way they use adjectives in Oddiyana is very similar to how they use them in Tibetan.

It is not so very difficult, for example, when we are learning the Dzogchen Tantras, most of the titles are in Oddiyana language because the origin of the Dzogchen Teachings from Oddiyana, not India. Also most of the Vajrayana and high Tantric teachings come from Oddiyana. If you want to study in a more intellectual way, then you can understand in ancient times that almost all the famous mahasiddhas from India traveled to Oddiyana. Many mahasiddhas arrived in Oddiyana, received teachings, studied and



Photo by Marc Beneria

then they introduced Vajrayana in India. Some teachers never arrived to Oddiyana, but they received teachings on the way there. Oddiyana is the source of Dzogchen and Vajrayana teaching.

You know very well the history and biography of Garab Dorje. Garab Dorje is the source of the Dzogchen teachings in our epoch, in our human condition. Guru Garab Dorje was born and taught in Oddiyana. For that reason, the Oddiyana language is important for Dzogchen teachings. For example, when Guru Padmasambhava arrived in Tibet, he taught Vajrayana, higher Tantras, lower Tantras, and everything. Particularly when he taught Dzogchen, he gave the advice to his students that for the future they should go to Oddiyana to learn the Dzogchen teachings, and they should translate from the Oddiyana language into Tibetan. Then we have the very famous translator Vairocana, for example, Vairocana and his collaborators, traveled to Oddiyana. They received Dzogchen teachings in Oddiyana and they translated all Dzogchen teachings from the Oddiyana language into Tibetan. So the Oddiyana language is a very important source of the Tibetan teaching of Dzogchen and Vajrayana.

You see, for example, in Sanskrit the adjective is used before the names. When we say Mahayana for example, Maha is total and yana is vehicle, also Vajrayana, everything, they always use adjectives before the nouns. In Tibetan we use adjectives after names, not before. If we say there is a good man, a good person, for example, person in Tibetan is *mi*, good is *yagpo* – we say *mi yagpo*, *mi* is noun, *yagpo* is the adjective. Santi Maha, in Sanskrit or Oddiyana language, the adjective is after. It is not necessary we use Santi Maha Sangha but it is important to understand, so we don't have some mysterious idea. Particularly if you are learning Dzogchen teachings, everything should go in a more concrete way, not in a mysterious way. For that reason, first of all we need to know what Santi Maha Sangha means.

We started to study and learn Santi Maha Sangha when I started to make the program of Santi Maha Sangha. I know very well that in order to study Santi Maha Sangha well, we need a background of all global knowledge. We cannot stop when we learn something saying



that this is all. The ancient tradition in Tibet that is called Nyingmapa comes from what Guru Padmasambhava taught when he was in Tibet. Everything Guru Padmasambhava taught that is maintained and continuing is called the Nyingmapa school. In the Nyingmapa school, when we are talking about all teachings we say nine vehicles. That is considered global for all teachings of Buddhism related to the Tibetan tradition. For example, we are studying Hinayana and Mahayana, the vehicles that are the Sutra tradition, which means the oral teaching of the Buddha Shakyamuni. Then there is the Vajrayana tradition, with higher and lower levels, and that is also related with the teachings of the Buddha or Buddhist, but the main point of that teaching is not the oral teaching of the Buddha.

Oral teaching means that Buddha was a human being. Buddha was talking, the students were listening and they wrote something down. For example, like we are doing today, teachers explain and students listen; that is oral. But the Vajrayana principle is not that. This is Sutra, oral teaching of the Buddha. Buddha's manifestations, through manifestations, transmitted that knowledge and this is all the Vajrayana aspect. And in this case we have the lower and higher Tantras. When we say lower, in the Nyingmapa traditions, we say outer Tantras and there are three series, Kriya, Ubaya and Yoga, which are always the same in all schools. But when we are saying higher Tantras those are different schools in Tibet. Higher Tantras in the Nyingmapa tradition are the three series called *nang gyud de sum*, which means the inner Tantras. They are called inner Tantras, because Kriya, Ubaya and Yoga are outer Tantras. Inner Tantra means going more deeply into knowledge or a little higher aspect. So they are not called Tantras particularly, they are called *nang gyud de sum*, the three Yogas. Yoga means knowledge and understanding. These classifications are only in the ancient Nyingmapa tradition that was divided in that way and then became the nine vehicles.

In the higher Tantras there are Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga; the three series of the Vajrayana. But these series do not exist in the other ordinary schools. They have only the first one, which is called Mahayoga, because Guru Padmasambhava started to teach Mahayoga. For example in the time of Padmasambhava many root Tantras were translated. These Tantras were translated, like Guhyasamaja Tantra, and then later other schools said these are old translations. They called these translations old because later they went to India and searched Tantras and still there were practitioners and some experts of this knowledge of the Tantras so they had the opportunity to study directly from India and they translated the Tantras again. So these are called new translations; sometimes there is a slight difference and sometimes there is no difference.

Sometimes the translations are slightly different because the more modern scholars who translated were going in a very intellectual way. They gave too much importance to the vocabulary and what the words were saying. Ancient translators like Vairocana went into the essence and knew the real sense. For that reason, sometimes you can find little differences. But the essence of that teaching is a more authentic translation. So this is called the nine vehicles in the Nyingmapa tradition.

We are Dzogchen practitioners and we are following the Dzogchen teachings. In the Dzogchen teachings we refer to the three inner Tantras, and the last Tantra, the most essential, is Ati Yoga, the Dzogchen teaching. The second of the three inner Tantras is Anuyoga. Anu and Ati Yoga are not diffused in the modern traditions of the schools. Particularly in the Gelugpa and Sakyapa tradition, they are not diffused. In the Kagyupa school it was more diffused later because there had been many tertons and the origins of these tertons is coming from the Kagyupa. They discovered many teachings of Guru Padmasambhava and he taught many kinds of teachings that were aspects of Dzogchen, and of Anuyoga. Then, of course, they discovered that this teaching belonged to the Nyingmapa school and then it was also diffused in the Kagyupa school. In the Sakyapa there had been very little of this aspect.

There was one *terton* called Lastong Yonsa Dyatso whose *termas* became one of the three currents of the Sakyapa school. For example, Lastong Yonsa Dyatso had some visions, and a kind of *terma* teaching of Guru Padmasambhava, but even if he is considered part of the Sakyapa tradition, the Sakyapa considered these teachings part of the Sarpa tradition, which is the most essential but not officially accepted. For that reason it was not very much diffused, like the Anuyoga teaching and Dzogchen teaching. Of course that does not mean there are no practitioners of Dzogchen in the Kagyupa, Sakyapa, and Gelugpa schools, there are. Particularly in the Gelugpa tradition, they discovered the Dzogchen practitioners after they passed away. They always did these kinds of practices secretly. If they officially performed these practices openly, many Gelugpa teachers would not agree because the Gelugpas go very much in an intellectual way.

If you are trying to go into the essence of the teaching you will not find any of these kinds of problems. But we live with dualistic vision, in our society everything is completely limited. So in this case we should accept and pay respect to that, otherwise we would not be able to do very much. Then we should understand that what we are trying to do is to learn the Dzogchen teachings. For that reason, I started to prepare the Santi Maha Sangha study and practice. It is not sufficient that we study one of the Dzogchen Tantra books. We need a base of the global knowledge. I know very well this is not so easy, especially for Westerners; you don't know the Tibetan language and there are so many different books and ways of explaining. I couldn't ask you to read a book of Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa. We could not go ahead that way.

For that reason, I studied and prepared the base of Santi Maha Sangha. For years I researched, read many texts, and looked for the most important points from here and there. After that, we translated that text into the Western language. Then I transmit this for people and they are able to study and apply that. So, for today for example, we are saying we should study the base of Santi Maha Sangha. There is a book and when you study this book you will learn many important aspects of the teaching of the Buddhism in a global way. So then going ahead step by step I am doing training, first and second level, etc.

Many people say, "I am doing Santi Maha Sangha to become a teacher"; this is not correct, this is your idea. You should not think

» continued on the following page





» continued from previous page

first of all that you want to teach someone; you should think, "I want to discover my real nature first of all. I want to be in that state, and when I am familiar with that state, I can teach." If you are not in this kind of knowledge and you are only reading a book, this is an intellectual way and it is said, "You are dancing on a book." You cannot communicate anything of the real essence of the teaching. So you should learn the Santi Maha Sangha base in that way.

First of all you should construct your knowledge and your base concretely. Of course, if you have that base then you can communicate and do your best to help others. So it is very important for learning that we qualify ourselves for knowledge and then secondly that you try to giving teachings for others. In this way, we are training to be a Santi Maha Sangha teacher. First we do an exam of the base, then first level and second level, etc, and then we go ahead. We are not calling this a Teachers' Training. Teachers' Training means we did some teacher training and we should become a kind of teacher; we need to teach others.

We should observe ourselves a little. How can I teach others? We teach others through the three aspects of body, speech and mind. We have three existences and these three existences must correspond with the base. We should learn and apply what is explained in the base of the teachings. If I want to teach something for others, first of all I need to have a little sufficient knowledge for teaching that in a concrete way. Second of all, I should know I am in a relationship with this person I am talking to and communicating with. In this case, what I do must correspond with that.

At least these small things we should think about a little, our attitude and our way of being present. If you are becoming a teacher you cannot be a strange person. At least you must be a normal person. A normal person, it means you look around and see how they are. I am not asking you become monks or nuns or that you cut your hair, etc., but that you present as a normal person and you apply your attitude in a normal way. If you are doing strange things then it is very difficult to accept, really. A teacher must not be strange. I am not strange. For example, I am trying to teach the Dzogchen teachings presenting that I am a teacher, at least. I am living and doing everything in a normal way. What do you do? If my attitude is acceptable for you, then I can communicate with you.

If I am doing strange things, you could not accept me. You could not believe what I am talking about, for example. This is related to our physical level, our body. Of course, after that, we have the aspect of our voice. So teaching means we are communicating and talking, talking means we should know and communicate the real sense of the teaching; and in which way we communicate and collaborate with that person, that person's desire and their idea, etc. It is not sufficient to say I learned in a book that you should do like this and now you have to do that; everything goes in a relative condition. Working with circumstances in the Dzogchen teaching is very important. So that is also connected with our aspect of the voice. And of course with the aspect of the mind we try and do our best – first of all we know what the main point of the teaching is. We observe ourselves, how we can integrate with this and correspond with our attitude, our way of thinking, everything.

So I am very happy when you say you want to be do the Santi Maha Sangha teacher training. You are doing this seriously and of course it is very important. For years and years I am trying to make the real sense of the teachings understood for my students. I am not doing this to create myself as a teacher and so I have some students. I know very well our human condition. We have so many problems. So between all this thinking how our problems are and since the Dzogchen teachings are very precious, it is really something that can have benefit for overcoming all these problems.

You know that the first thing we learn in the Dzogchen teachings is that we observe ourselves. When we observe, what do we discover? We discover how many kinds of limitations we have. I told you many times repeatedly that when I met my teacher Changchub Dorje, before I met him I had met many teachers. I received many teachings of Sutra and Tantra, etc., I was not thinking that these teachings I already received were not important. All of these teachings are very important; and not only important but I thought I understood everything. When I studied in the college for many years I was proud, I became an expert on Buddhism; I knew all the teachings of Sutra and Tantra. But later when I met my teacher Changchub Dorje, he introduced me to the real sense of the Dzogchen teachings. I thought that I had the understanding of everything, but in the real sense I was not being in that knowledge.

For example, when we study in different schools, in each of these schools we learn *tawa*, *gonpa* and *chopa*, and then application and attitude. These are very important points in schools. When we are saying point of view, different schools have their own point of view. When I am following the Sakyapa tradition, I learn the point of view of the Sakyapas. The most important teacher of the Sakyapas is Sakyapandita. Sakyapandita explained his knowledge of the Buddha. But all the other schools, the Kagyupas and Gelugpas, they do not accept what Sakyapandita is saying. They are following their way, a different way.

So each school has their point of view. They maintain that point of view and they think it is very important. How were these points of view produced? With logic and study. There are three logics: direct, indirect and the logic of belief. They established everything with these three logics. When they established their point of view with this logic they were one hundred percent sure that this is the real condition. So you see each school has a different point of view. If it is something real and concrete, why are there differences; they are always confirming this is the teaching of the Buddha. Buddha did not create these different schools. They developed later.

When I met my teacher Changchub Dorje, I really believed I knew everything. When my teacher introduced the Dzogchen teaching, he said, "Now I introduce you to the point of view of Dzogchen. Before you receive that you must distinguish the difference of the function of the eyeglass and the mirror." The eyeglass is for looking outside. If you have very powerful and strong eyeglasses you can see even very tiny things. But in this way you concentrate outside, dualistically. *You* are looking and *you* are seeing something. This is called dualistic vision. Then he said that this kind of logic and point of view has no value. Of course relatively for maintaining schools and traditions, it is ok, but if we want to go into the essence of the real teaching of the Buddha, it has no value.





What is the value of the Dzogchen way of seeing, of that point of view. The example is the mirror. The function of the mirror is different from the function of the eyeglass. In the mirror we are looking in the mirror, we are not looking outside. You look, you think the mirror is in front of you, but what appears is your face. What you discover is your face, not the mirror. Or some object outside of you. So it is a good example of how we should observe our aspects of body, speech and mind. When we observe ourselves we discover all aspects of our body, speech and mind, and the infinite limitations that we have. All of these limitations are the source of samsara, the source of suffering.

You see also our relative human condition. Every country says, "We have government", for example, how is the government, there are the parties of the right and left side. They are always fighting. So what does this mean? This is a limitation. When we speak about the peace of the world, it is very nice when we say, "Oh we like peace very much." Everyone likes peace. But how can we have peace? We can only have peace if we are going beyond these limitations. If you are on the right, on the left, either one, there is not peace. If you have dualistic vision, I am here, they are there, there is no peace. If we want peace, we need to go beyond that. This principle is taught by the Dzogchen teaching directly. This is not only for doing meditation, but also relatively for living in our society. This knowledge is indispensable. For this reason I am trying to explain and make this knowledge understood. And I am saying what we should learn is the Dzogchen teaching, and its application, for example, we are doing Ati Guruyoga for example, so when we learn Ati Guruyoga we apply it, and when we apply it, in what state are we? We are in the state beyond limitations.

Being in the state of Ati Guruyoga, even if we are in that state for only a few seconds, we are being beyond that limitation. Of course we can do that practice very often. But we are not always in that state. We have a physical body and that body needs to move, needs to eat, needs to sleep, if we do not do all of this there is no continuation of our life. So it is indispensable we pay respect to our relative condition. So we can learn and apply Ati Guruyoga, but after a few seconds after doing the practice, we are again in dualistic vision. But if you are fortunate to learn the Dzogchen teaching, and since the beginning the teacher introduced you, this is called mental condition, the nature of mind.

When you are being beyond your limitations, you are being in the nature of mind. When you are judging and thinking you are always inside time and space. This is called mental concepts. You already learned that. Then you know, "Ah yes, now I understand, the principle of the teaching is being in the state of contemplation." Being in the state of contemplation means being beyond limitations and beyond judging and thinking. That represents being in the state of Ati Guruyoga, even if we are only being in that state for a short time. After that, then we are in dualistic vision. In this case we are thinking that this is normal life. Then we are going after mind. We believe what mind is judging and thinking and then slowly we develop and we become one hundred percent sure and we become a slave of our mind. Then we have so many problems.

That is why I am saying always, what is most important after Ati Guruyoga? Being present. So this is what we should learn and what

we should apply. For example for being present you don't need to go in a temple or do a particular position with your physical body. You don't need to chant mantra or something. You don't need to do a visualization or something you need to learn with your mind. You can be present with what is happening with your life. If you talk with someone and you are present, you know you are talking, if you are walking, you know you are walking, you are sleeping and you know you are going to sleep. Everything you are doing, you know you are doing it. This is called presence. Presence in the Dzogchen teachings means we are observing what we are doing. If you have this kind of presence you can do your best with everything.

So if you want to learn to become a Santi Maha Sangha teacher, you should have this kind of attitude. You know we live in dualistic vision. In dualistic vision everything is interdependent. So we are being present with that. And when we know that, we know how we should pay respect to others. How their dimension is. You are becoming a teacher by yourself and you know how to work with all sentient beings. This is what we should learn and what we should do.

The aim of our Santi Maha Sangha training and what we are learning is this. For example, when we are doing Santi Maha Sangha teacher training tomorrow, you will receive a question and you should answer that question based on what you have learned in the Santi Maha Sangha base book. You should explain that. But we are not only doing an examination of what you are explaining. We also need to understand your attitude and your way of thinking. We also need to understand your way of communicating to the people – your knowledge of the interdependence in your dimension. If you are missing these things, even you are very clever for repeating words and reading books, and explaining, this is not sufficient. We have also many Santi Maha Sangha teachers here and they have already had this experience, and they have done this for many years. In this exam I am not the only one judging, also they judge you, so you should know that and you try to do your best. This is our Santi Maha Sangha training. ❀

Transcribed and edited by N Zeitz



# The 27 Commitments

Namgyalgar, Third Level Training, March 31, 2000

Now I have to say something about my personal commitments. It is very important that my students, particularly in Santi Maha Sangha, know this principle. This principle is not only something I write down to say, "This is my commitment." I apply them. I wrote these commitments when I started to teach Dzogchen. In the beginning I taught Buddhist teaching in general, also Tantrism, and information in the University. Also ISMEO (Istituto Studi Medio Estremo Oriente) sometimes organized some kind of public lectures. Those subjects were no problem.

Then, later, many people asked me to teach Dzogchen teaching. So in this case, teaching means I am showing the path, and students apply and follow, and they try to have realization. So that is not only for my students, but for myself also. I am still in the human dimension. I am in samsara just like you. There is not much difference. Maybe I have a little more experience of Dzogchen teaching and knowledge. That is true. But we are all in samsara. So we need realization. To have realization we need the path. We need to apply the path, follow the path, in the correct way. Otherwise we could not have realization. So then when I am going to teach someone, "to teach," means I am working with transmission, working with my path, which is what I am following.

So it is not something easy, like how people say in America say: "we share everything". It is easy to say: "we share everything", but the teaching is something concrete for having realization. Until we really have total realization, we must respect to the path and everything. So then I felt some responsibility. That is the reason why, at the beginning when the Gyalwa Karmapa sent two or three letters to me saying, "Oh, you should teach my students; you should go here and there to teach; there are my centers", each time I replied to Gyalwa Karmapa, "Please, I have no time, I don't want to teach, I have a job; I am living an ordinary life, working and earning money, so I cannot go here and there". And I received letters again and again. I never accepted.

In the end I decided to accept because there were some conditions where there was a little confusion and danger. For example, there was a center of Karmapa in Roma, and also Milano and they invited me. They asked me with the letters of Karmapa which I always refused. But then later there had been the Lama Geshe Rabten from Switzerland. He is a very expert lama. He is a very studied one, and not an ordinary lama. I know very well. So in this case I thought, "If I don't do anything as Karmapa asked me, then of course everybody will go after Geshe Rabten. That is not so bad. Maybe they will learn a little like more Gelugpa tradition and style of Sutra and Tantra, etc. But it is quite far from Dzogchen and Mahamudra."

Then I thought, "Maybe if I refuse all, then it is not so good. I should do something. All students will become students of Geshe Rabten." So this does not mean I am jealous of Geshe Rabten, or that I am comparing myself with Geshe Rabten. I was thinking a little of the future, of how people could follow the essence of the teaching like Mahamudra and Dzogchen. So then I started. I accepted to teach in Rome when Geshe Rabten was there doing a retreat. Then I said, "OK, we do a retreat," and then people of the Karmapa in Rome organized. There were not many people; they were only a group of ten people in all. But then they organized in Subiaco where we did our first retreat. We did a long retreat, which continued for maybe two or three weeks. We had a break after about half of this retreat, and then started again, etc.

But then at that time I was thinking again and again, "Now I am teaching; I am responsible for transmission. I am really giving transmission. They are following transmission. How will I do?" Also until that point, I never felt, "I am a teacher". I always thought, "I am a student; I am a practitioner". That is all. I never wanted to become a teacher. But then when people asked me and I taught, then automatically I became a teacher. So then if I am a teacher, which kind of teacher do I want to be? Then I am thinking and thinking.

Mainly I took these nine commitments. There are nine commitments. I teach the teaching that way, I follow teaching that way and I deal with people that way. This is my *tamcha* (*dam bca*). So then here it says twenty-seven commitments. Because nine are related with me, nine of the same principles are related with my students, and nine are related with ordinary people, ordinary dharma people, friends, people who want to collaborate with me. If I collaborate with these people seriously with my confidence, they must be that kind of people. If someone is not in that condition, I never collaborate with them giving confidence concretely. So nine, nine, and nine becomes twenty-seven. These are my commitments.

So it is very important that students in general understand, particularly the Santi Maha Sangha students. They must really know how I am working, that what I take as my responsibility, is also their responsibility, and how we should work. So it is something important. I want to give you this information and also explain just a little. I wrote these commitments when I started a retreat in Subiaco. This was in 1976 or something like that.

At the beginning there is an invocation to Dharmakaya like Amitabha – that means Amitabha Samantabhadra, not Amitabha in the Sutra style – to the dimension of Sambhogakaya like Vajrasattva, to the dimension of Nirmanakaya like Garab Dorje, to Guru Padmasambhava as the union of these three kayas, and then to the real Guru Padmasambhava alive who is my unique and most important teacher Changchub Dorje. I am praying to you. I am your son, please help me. These people are holding my hand, my leg, my everything. Then I say, "Ok we do something – my best". If I don't do that and I renounce this, this is not good. Somehow I should do. This is my responsibility. But I am not thinking something like I am realized and I have total capacity. I do not have that. That is true.

So in front of you I take this with my good intention. I take these commitments in three groups of nine which makes twenty-seven. I offer these commitments something like an offering. Please take it. Something like this. Now we start with number one.





Rinpoche at the Samtengar house in Dzamling Gar.

First commitment I will never teach or do meditation or application or anything only for the interest of myself. This is very important because in general whatever we do we show that it's for the interest of people. In the real sense we have a very strong ego, and we are always going in this direction. So I will never do that. This is number one. Also I will try to make my students understand not to go in this direction. And if one of my friends goes that way, and they have this intention, when I know that, I don't deal with them in collaboration. This is one.

The second is that when I give Dzogchen teaching, my intention, the principle, is never to teach only to get some money or for some interest at the material level. And also if my students go in this direction, I do not teach them; I do not collaborate with them. And my friends, etc., who want to collaborate or be friends with me, if their aim or their intention is that, I will never collaborate with them with confidence. This is the second.

*Kurti* (*bkur sti*) means to receive honor like saying, "Oh you are becoming an important person, high teacher, high level, etc." So *kurti* in general means we receive something like this. So for that reason I will never teach even a single word of Dzogchen teaching. I don't teach for that principle. In the same way it is also for my students and my friends.

*Nyendrag* (*snyan grags*) means fame. You see, many, many people do that. Many people really. Even if they build a monastery, for example, in India or Nepal, they say, "Oh we build a monastery because we need a base of teaching, also a base for Sangha to live there, etc." But if you observe well, they are doing this to become an important person, to become famous. Most people do that. Here is an example: Many years ago I went to Nepal, and I heard there is a lama. This lama is called Lama Ralo, maybe you already know him. And everybody is saying, "Oh Lama Ralo" but I don't know who is Lama Ralo; he is not famous for anything. But then after a little while Lama Ralo is making something like mantra, and he is curing someone with mantra, etc. Then he finds some Chinese students from Malaysia and Singapore, etc. They believe very much in these kinds of things, and they become his important students. Then they invited Lama Ralo to Singapore, Malaysia, two times,

three times and he went around there. Lama Ralo became rich, and then Lama Ralo came back and built a monastery. Now you see it when passing there. Lama Ralo's monastery is very gigantic. So after that, nobody says Lama Ralo, but they say Ralo Rinpoche. Now still Ralo Rinpoche is going ahead. That is an example.

I am not saying that Ralo Rinpoche has no qualifications. Maybe he has qualifications. I don't know, but I am taking the example of building a monastery. That is the reason. When they are building a monastery, what do they do? First they build a nice temple, and in the temple there is a seat of the head lama. It is very elegant. Many monks may belong to this monastery. And even if they do not have ordinary toilets, bathrooms, for example, the room with the seat of the head lama is very elegant. And then someone receives Rinpoche, where Rinpoche is sitting, everything is honorable, and then one becomes famous. So this is an example. So my commitment means that I will never go in this direction.

Also I do not teach or do any kind of actions with Dzogchen teaching to create a kind of power, my position. Many people have this idea. A few years ago when we had a little problem with people of Dzogchen Community in England, then I didn't go for many years. And some people were saying, "Oh, Namkhai Norbu is building an imperial position in Merigar", for example. I know people can have this kind of idea. But that is not my principle. So this is also important to know, to know that we don't go in this direction. It is very easy when there are some possibilities that people easily fall in this direction. So that's why I have this commitment.

So I will never increase the Dzogchen teaching and spread it everywhere with the principle of *drensem* (*'gran sems*). *Drensem* means jealousy and comparing with some other teachers and traditions. For example, it seems that when Geshe Rabten was alone, then I decided to do this retreat. It seems something like I am jealous, etc. But in the real sense, that is not the principle. The real principle is I will feel sorry later if I didn't do anything, particularly in front of the Karmapa because the Karmapa insisted many times. I felt that nobody would have the opportunity to go into the real knowledge of Dzogchen and Mahamudra, and then later I would

» continued on the following page



# Teaching in a Perfect Way

End of Teacher Training  
and after the Diploma Ceremony  
December 19, 2016

So this is the end of the diplomas. You see how many people have received diplomas; all these people who have received these diplomas are teachers. They are teaching different aspects of the teaching. When I arrived in Italy there was no one. Today we have so many teachers; so this is very important. It means you are qualified and you are receiving diplomas. It is very important that you try and do your best.

First of all as a teacher you must be very humble. Not thinking immediately, "I am a teacher." If you have this idea it is not good at all. Not only for teachers, but for example, when we study medicine, there are many arguments in the medical Tantras about how our attitude must be for the people who have illness. Most of the ar-

» 27 commitments continued from previous page

feel really sorry. That is an example. So that is not my principle. This is the sixth.

The seventh: you know that *ngagyal* (*nga rgyal*) means pride. We think, "Now we are important. Dzogchen teaching is a superior teaching, better than this. For that reason we need more position" Also that is not the principle. So if we have this kind of intention, also that is the wrong direction.

*Tradog* (*phrag dog*) is concrete real jealousy. In general this is very easy between centers and centers, groups and groups, of teaching. Even in Buddhism, everybody is Buddhist but inside there are so many jealousies. And we apply many things with this intention and application. So I am always being aware, and I don't deal with this principle.

Then there is the last one. It means I will not act with my attachment saying, "Oh, I like Dzogchen teaching because this is what I practice. For that reason I want to also make people understand that this is a special teaching, etc." That attachment is not the principle. So these are nine principles mainly related with worldly actions in general. For worldly action we say *jigten chöchöd* (*'jig rten chos spyod*). We don't follow *jigten chöchöd*. That is always said by Buddhist practitioners, but in the real sense practitioners apply in a contrary way.

That means how it must be for myself, for dealing with my students, and also with my friends. I don't collaborate with people who are interested in these kinds of things. So this is also important. I know for example many people, even if they say, "Oh we are doing very important dharma. We want to collaborate." But then I check a little, is it really a pure intention or not?

guments related to this are coming from the *Bodhisattvachāryavātāra*, so it is very important that all teachers learn this. The purpose of the teacher is to help someone understand, not to dominate that person. We always collaborate and help.

For example, if we are parents and we have children, then good parents try to do the best way for their children, for them to have an education, that they are doing well, that they have a good education and a good life. Teachers need to be just like parents. We should not teach the same as if we are a professor at the university; when we are university professors we are thinking of our position. We are thinking of how to have more possibility to do and comment on.

A teacher must not be like that. You must be really very humble to work with these people; it is like doing service. When you are teaching etc., and you see that that person has some understanding, then you are really happy. You do not only think, "I did a wonderful thing and people are thinking I did very well." Thinking that you want to do very well, that people think you are an expert and you are doing very well is all related to position. You are communicating in any way and that person has really understood seriously what you are communicating, this is very important. Then you are happy.

It is very important for the teaching that we work this way when we work with people.

For example when I was working in the university, that was my job, so sometimes they said, "Oh you should do a conference about information about Tibetan Buddhism, or Tibetan tantrism. I

For example, once many years ago I met Chimed Rinpoche. Maybe you know Chimed Rinpoche in England from many years ago. I don't know if Chimed Rinpoche still has this idea today or not. I had never met Chimed Rinpoche before. We met for the first time in London. And at that time Chimed Rinpoche said something to me, "Oh we are Khampas." He is a Khampa from East Tibet. I am a Khampa from East Tibet. "We must do something to save Tibetan culture, to save Tibetan teaching, etc. We need to collaborate. We need to collaborate because people like lamas and lay people of Tibet like in central Tibet, and other people who have power are putting Khampas down. And Khampas cannot do very much. So we must collaborate also to spread teachings." He told me that. I said, "Yes, we do," but I think it's very strange because it has nothing much to do with teaching, because I am working with the teaching. He said also that he has a dharma center. But then I am thinking, "How can we do that way? It doesn't correspond to the teaching". That is an example.

Sometimes people also propose even though they don't say, but they manifest that kind of collaboration. In our society it is very strong. For example I spent almost thirty years in the university. I know very well the rules of the university, official rules and in particular how professors must collaborate. If we don't collaborate, we cannot have any possibility. They block everything. In Italian we say mafia, the mafia of university. So the mafia also really exists in the dharma. They do not call it mafia, but the way of collaborating and the way of applying intention is just the same. So for that reason I don't want to collaborate with any people like this.





Diplomas for all candidates, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, Santi Maha Sangha and Khaita.

Photo by Chris Cook

did this many times, and in that moment I am thinking of the arguments I learned in school and I am explaining in that way, that is all. I do not want to show that another professor does not know very well, for example. So this was my aim at that moment.

When I worked at the university people were saying oh you should teach something then I said no I am not a particular teacher. They insisted that I teach Yantra Yoga and also at the beginning .....

#### » 27 commitments continued

That means if someone does not correspond to my commitments, even if they want to be my good student, I am not confident with them. If someone wants to be a very good friend and collaborator with me, but if they have intention contrary to my commitments, I will never collaborate with them with confidence.

I will not only keep these commitments only for a few days, but until I have total realization relationships with people, relationships with students, will always exist, so I will keep them.

So this means I know I have these commitments. And sometimes maybe we can be distracted. But after a few seconds, a few minutes, a few hours, we notice that we are distracted and we are doing wrong, that this does not correspond with my commitments. When I know I did something wrong, then I am sorry and I purify because I have that commitment. If I know and I do not pay respect, then my Masters, Dakinis, and Guardians, you can break my heart. So this is my request.

After I started to teach, the dangers that this devil of *gadröd* (*dga' brod*) arises. You remember *gadröd* as one of the devils in the Chöd practice.

To remember these commitments of mine, I wrote them down in 1978. In the year of the Fire Snake I wrote this down. So these are my commitments. So it is important that you know this. And if you know this, then you also know how to collaborate with me in a correct way. And you also know how you yourself should be in the Dzogchen teaching, and in my transmission, what I transmitted. So this is something very important. ❀

when I taught Yantra Yoga I did not accept this easily, because I thought maybe Yantra Yoga should be kept secret or people need to have received Vajrayana teachings, etc.

I remember when I was seven years old I had my relationship with a monk in a monastery. When I am being in the monastery I heard that this monk was doing trulkhor, and trulkhor means just like Yantra. In the Sakyapa tradition there is a trulkhor. Then people said to me oh your relation knows Sakyapa trulkor very well and he was doing that. I asked him what is trulkhor and he said oh it is Vajrayana and Hevajra secret instruction. I asked him to show me and said no I cannot show you. Why you cannot show me? And he said if I show you, you will become blind. Then I thought maybe it is better I don't ask. That is not true but he does not know what to say and I am insisting. So you can see why I would think that to teach Yantra Yoga publicly is not good.

In Naples there was a man who came to me 2 or 3 times a week and said please teach Yantra Yoga. I said maybe I cannot teach because it is related to the teaching of Vajrayana and I cannot teach it to the public. He said, "Oh they are teaching hatha yoga, and some kind of Japanese practice, they are teaching all of this publicly, there is no problem. He invited me 2 times to a restaurant for eating and talking about this. One time he even came to Rome where I was living, for insisting.

Then I said, well I can do a kind of conference, not teach. I accepted and then one day I went to the gymnasium hall and then I did a conference. Then this man insisted again and again that I teach. I still did not accept but then one night I had a dream. I had a dream of my uncle Togden Urgyen Tenzin. Then I asked him, "Can I teach Yantra Yoga? Some people are insisting and they are asking me." Togden Urgyen Tenzin told me I could teach and that there was not much problem, because for Yantra Yoga, just like Vajrayana tserim and dzogrim, you need to receive an initiation, you transform and in your visualization then you do your visualization of channels and chakras, etc. Yantra Yoga is related to Dzogchen teaching, for that reason when we do visualization of channels and chakras we can do tonra, tonra it means our dimension is emptiness like a

» continued on the following page



» continued from previous page

crystal, not like a figure of the deity etc. So you can do this visualization and you can teach. But of course people when they wish to go deeper, they understand it is necessary to follow the Dzogchen Teachings. When we are starting, only to learn movements, etc, even if you have not learned the Dzogchen Teachings there is not much problem. This is the information I received from my uncle in a dream.

Finally I accepted and started to teach Yantra Yoga. For many years I worked at the university and also taught Yantra Yoga. Then many people said they need to receive Vajrayana teachings and practices and Buddhist practices, etc. I said I am not a teacher, I am still a student, and I never accepted. Then there were 2 old students very insistent, one was Laura Albini, Costantino's mother, and she was a student of the 16th Karmapa and a couple of other people insisting that I need to teach. When I did not accept this they had the 16th Karmapa send me letters saying I should go and teach. Once I replied to the Karmapa saying that I had no time because I was working in the university. Still he insisted. And I said I still did



not want to teach because if I teach, I teach the Dzogchen teaching. Then people are learning Dzogchen.

But the Karmapa wanted me to go to his Kagyupa dharma centers. I don't know what to teach at a Kagyupa center. If I am going there and teach, it is not anymore a Kagyupa center. That's the example. I refused to teach two times when the Karmapa asked me. Then I am seeing the situation and I accepted, otherwise the Karmapa would not have been happy.

So when I started to teach, I give you this advice and you should think a little. I wrote my commitment, 27 arguments, if you want I can give you a copy. (see page 10) I took this commitment and *then* I started to teach. You should also learn that way. If you go this way, big or small or medium, then it goes well and becomes helpful for everyone. Ok this is what I want to say to you and you do your best. I am very happy when we have many teachers. Because all teachings, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, Dzogchen Teachings, including also Khaita, everything is important.

That is why I say, when I arrived there was no single teacher and today there are so many teachers here present, and we gave so many diplomas, still there are many people who did not receive their diploma, so I am happy there are many people and they are working and diffusing knowledge etc., but still I am even happier when they teach in a perfect way. When someone creates even small problems, I am very sorry, because the root is related to me. So for that reason it is very important that you work with your

presence. When you are present, this is the second most important practice. Now you know how you should work with people, and you should pay respect to the others' dimension. How you should work with the circumstance and not only with the arguments.

Sometimes the argument can be very important. But sometimes in time and space it does not correspond. In this case, sometimes you should do that, and you should change the argument. So this means we are working with circumstance. Then it is also very important, how you present and your attitude with people. You must think a little how they like to be and you should be that way, not only your idea.

Everything is interdependent, but particularly when you are becoming a teacher, you have a very strong interdependence with students. So you always need to have this presence. And then you do your best. I am very happy and we did a very good job, and we continue in our best way, developing still more and more. And then next time we will do a kind of teachers' meeting, a teachers' training, this will not be only for qualifying teachers but we see how we should go ahead, what is working and what the problems are,



we should also check and develop. We still do not know when that will happen. There will be one day. I hope that we continue and go ahead that way.

So you are also here in Tenerife and you can enjoy. You remember, when we dance khaita at the end we dance Dzamling Gar, in the song of Dzamling Gar it says, "Please come here quickly", here all conditions and everything is very nice, I am not saying you come here for working, I am saying you come here and we enjoy together. So you do that! Thank you very much. ❀

Transcribed and edited by N Zeitz





## Ka-ter Translation Project

Dear Dzogchen Community friends,

Only a few days ago we finished an incredible retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and in few days there will be the next extraordinary retreat, the teachings on Yangtig, given by our precious master at Dzamling Gar. Many of you will be coming here to participate in that retreat and to follow these secret teachings.

In the Dzogchen Tantras it is explained that those people who are following the precious Dzogchen teachings are the fortunate ones.

Yes, we are the fortunate ones!

We not only do have the possibility to follow the most precious retreats of our Master, but we are also able to follow the teachings of Rinpoche in a language that we understand, as Rinpoche teaches in English and not in Tibetan.

Yes, we are the fortunate ones!

We have the fantastic possibility to read and study these teachings that Rinpoche is continuously transmitting to us in English language, even though all these texts of unique wisdom are written in Tibetan, none of them is written in English.

Yes, we are the fortunate ones!

We can read and study these teachings in English, because in our Sangha, in our Dzogchen Community we have skillful translators, first of all Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco. Based on their dedication, their state of presence, their experience on what is communicated in these teachings, and on their wisdom of Tibetan language and grammar, we can all participate and follow the teachings of Rinpoche in an easy and relaxed way.

We don't need to study Tibetan, although that is very helpful and recommended as it brings you an even deeper understanding of the teachings.

We really are the fortunate ones!

In 2002 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked me to take over the responsibility to collect

funds for the translators, so that they can do their translation work without disturbances. For that reason, the Shang Shung Institute Austria has been in charge of the Ka-ter translation project Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 2002.

These two activities are based on the principle of generosity: everybody can participate and in that way become part of it, and based on all your generosity we were able to proceed with these fundamental translation projects in the last years.

Thank you for all your support and your understanding of the importance of these translation works!

Please continue to support the work of the translators.

Please donate some funds for these outstanding projects.

Please send you donations to the bank account of the Shang Shung Institute Austria

Name of the bank: Raiffeisenbank Ilz

Address of bank: Hauptstr. 39; 8262 Ilz Austria

Name of account: Shang Shung Institute Austria

IBAN: AT19 3815 1000 0003 0387

BIC: RZSTAT2G151

or you can use also Paypal

Each donor who offers more than 108 Euro will receive the newest music CD of Adriano Clemente called "Havana Blue".

All the very best and thank you once more for your support, ©



Oliver Leick

Director of the

Shang Shung Institute Austria

Gersdorfberg 19; 8212 Pischelsdorf; Austria

Tel.: 0043 664 8866 2660

Mail: [office@ssi-austria.at](mailto:office@ssi-austria.at)

Web: [www.ssi-austria.at](http://www.ssi-austria.at)

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

Shang Shung Institute Italy  
Località Merigar, 58031 Arcidosso (GR, Italy)  
Phone : +39 0564-96 82 40 or -95 57 26 (no fax)  
[info@shangshungfoundation.org](mailto:info@shangshungfoundation.org)  
[www.shangshunginstitute.org](http://www.shangshunginstitute.org)  
[www.shangshungstore.org](http://www.shangshungstore.org)

Shang Shung Institute Austria  
Gschmaier 139, 8265 Gr. Steinbach, Austria  
Office: 0043 3386 83218 Fax: 0043 3386 83219  
[www.shangshunginstitute.org](http://www.shangshunginstitute.org)  
[www.ssi-austria.at](http://www.ssi-austria.at)

Shang Shung Institute UK  
The London School of Tibetan Studies  
The London Center for the Study of Traditional  
Tibetan Culture and Knowledge  
10a Chalcot Gardens, London, NW3 4YB  
[www.shangshunguk.org](http://www.shangshunguk.org)

Shang Shung Institute of America  
18 Schoolhouse Rd, P.O. Box 278  
Conway, MA 01341, USA  
Phone (main-Anna) 413 369 4928  
Fax/Bookstore 413 369 4473  
[www.shangshung.org](http://www.shangshung.org)

Shang Shung Institute Russia  
2v Mayakovskogo str.  
Bolshiye Dvory, Pavlovsky Posad district  
Russia 142541  
[info@shangshunginstitute.ru](mailto:info@shangshunginstitute.ru)  
[www.shangshunginstitute.ru](http://www.shangshunginstitute.ru)



## SSI UK Program

Check out our new Shang Shung UK program of events for 2017. As usual we are looking forward to an active year of interesting activities including our first London based Tibetan Medical Conference in March. Please visit our website at [shungshunguk.org](http://shungshunguk.org) for more information about individual events and booking. We would love to welcome you to our new super-modern city base, 'Lekdanling: Tibetan Cultural Centre'.

Jan 19th; SSIUK Lecture Series  
**'The Art of Life: Balancing our Inner Elements'**  
with John Renshaw

Feb 11th–12th  
**'Khaita: Tibetan Joyful Dances'**

Feb 12th  
**'Losar Celebration Specialty Food Workshop'**  
held at 'Yak Bites'

Feb 16th SSIUK Lecture Series  
**'Gentle Bridges between Tibetan & Western approach to Stress'**  
with Ekaterina Farrington

Feb. 17th–26th.  
*Insight Tours: Healing Journey*  
**'A Revitalizing Trip around Nepal'**  
with Tour Guide Dr. Jamyang Oliphant

Feb. 24th–26th  
**'Classical Tibetan Language Part 3'**  
with Prof. Fabian Sanders

Feb 27th  
**Losar: Tibetan New Year Celebration**

March 25–26th  
**Tibetan Medical Conference**  
**'Health & Vitality: Himalayan Approaches to Wellbeing'**  
Therapeutic theory & practice with a panel of international experts in the field of Tibetan Medicine.



Michael Katz  
teaching at  
Lekdanling

April 8–9th  
**'An Introduction to Yantra Yoga: the Yoga of Movement'**  
with John Renshaw

April 13th; SSIUK Lecture Series:  
**'Yogic Dreaming'**  
with Charlie Morley.

April 21st–23rd  
**'Thangka Mounting Introductory Workshop'**  
with Lucy Nelly

April 29th–May 1st  
**'Introduction to Sacred Dance: The Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings'**  
with Cindy Faulkner.

May 13th–21nd  
**'Kunye Massage Course Part 1'**  
at Kunselling Retreat Centre, Wales  
with Aldo Oneto.

May 12th; SSIUK Lecture Series  
**'Naropa & the Mahasiddhas'**  
with Ian Baker

May 13th–14th  
**'Illuminating the Mahasiddha Tradition'**  
with Ian Baker

May 21st–22nd  
**'Birth, Life and Death'**  
with Dr. Gino Vitiello  
(in association with the Dzogchen Community UK).

## Introduction to Meditation

*All Are Welcome To Come To These Open Sessions At Lekdanling*

We are pleased to announce that on the first Sunday of every month throughout 2017 we will be holding an open course introducing the basic principles of Buddhist meditation. Each short afternoon session will include both theory & practice plus discussion and will be led by authorized teacher Julia Lawless.

*Note: You do not need to attend the whole course in order to participate.*

There will also be an open Yantra Yoga session each same Sunday in the morning too.

### Sunday Afternoon Open Meditation Sessions

Feb 5th; March 5th; April 2nd; May 7th; June 4th; from 2.30–4 pm respectively

*Note:* All the above Courses are held at Lekdanling, Tibetan Cultural Centre Unit B,14 Collent Street, Hackney, London E9 6SG unless otherwise stated.

For further information & booking please visit our website: [shangshunguk.org](http://shangshunguk.org)  
For an online map and information about Lekdanling please visit: [lekdanling.org](http://lekdanling.org) ©



## What Do You Read In Their Eyes?

Adopt Tibet  
Adopttibtet.org

**A**lthough some children do not know how to read yet, everything is already there in their eyes. The future of an entire people is written in the eyes of each child who learns to read Tibetan. Through ASIA's long distance sponsorship we can give them a possibility not to forget their cultural roots.

Since 1988 ASIA has worked for the preservation of Tibetan culture through education and long distance sponsorship projects. Educating Tibetan children not only helps to preserve and pass on the ancient traditions of this people, but it gives the opportunity for Tibetan children to improve their economic and social conditions and to better compete in the world of work.

Together with ASIA you can give a future to Tibetan culture, which risks disappearing unless we do something now.

The schools for the children of Tibetan nomads are located in remote and inaccessible areas and welcome students from different villages sometimes far away from the school. The schools with their dormitories, canteens, kitchens, and bathrooms become real "homes" for the children.

From 1994 up to today over 3,000 children have received help through ASIA's long distance support program. Now we would like to guarantee another 450 Tibetan children the opportunity to complete their primary education and to receive from the schools that are actively involved in the project everything they need to study and live in a dignified way.

*Adopt Tibet – What Do You Read In Their Eyes?* is ASIA's long distance sponsorship campaign through which children will receive educational materials, school uniforms, medical care, bedding, reimbursement for travel expenses to and from school, and much more.



**WHAT DO YOU READ IN HER EYES?**

**SPONSOR A TIBETAN CHILD**  
**ADOPTTIBET.ORG**

 **ASIA**

The children will be assured quality education, a constantly updated scholastic program that respects their language and their cultural roots, extracurricular activities to help in all school subjects, and prepared and motivated teachers.

Once a supporter has activated their sponsorship, he/she will receive a presentation and a photograph of his or her child. And, above all, it will be the beginning of a real personal relationship between the supporter and the beneficiary through exchanges of letters, photos, gifts, and possible meetings in the country where the child lives.

*The Head teacher of one of the schools built by ASIA commented: "If the Dongche school had not been built, these children would have forgotten their language."*

### How to make a long distance sponsorship

On our website

<http://www.adopttibtet.org/en>

By bank draft to

IBAN: IT 06 F 01030 72160 000000562272

indicating "new long distance sponsorship"

By phoning 06 44340034

More information from:

[adozioni@ASIA-onlus.org](mailto:adozioni@ASIA-onlus.org)

### Who is ASIA

ASIA – Association for International Solidarity in ASIA – is an NGO founded in 1988 by Prof. Namkhair Norbu. Active in

the countries of the Himalayan area with projects to preserve identity and cultural heritage, ASIA promotes economic development, social and health activities that are focused on local populations using their human, cultural and environmental resources. In its many years of experience ASIA has helped over 500,000 people in Tibet, Western China, India, Nepal, Mongolia, Myanmar and Sri Lanka. ©

ASIA Onlus

Via San Martino della Battaglia, 31

00185 Rome

Tel. 06 44 34 00 34

Mob. 3283125925

Email: [m.valerio@ASIA-ngo.org](mailto:m.valerio@ASIA-ngo.org)

### ASIA Branches

ASIA Onlus

Via San Martino della Battaglia 31, 00185 Rome, Italy

Tel +39.06.44340034, Fax +39.06.44702620

[info@asia-ngo.org](mailto:info@asia-ngo.org) [www.asia-ngo.org](http://www.asia-ngo.org)

Association for International Solidarity in Asia, Inc. ASIA

Post Office Box 124, Conway, MA 01341-0124 USA

Phone: 413.369.4153, Fax: 413.369.4473

[andreamnasca@yahoo.com](mailto:andreamnasca@yahoo.com)

[www.asia-ngo.org/en/](http://www.asia-ngo.org/en/)

Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V.

c/o Gisela Auspurg

Königswieser Str. 2, 82131 Gauting

Tel.: 089 / 127 630 32



Panorama of Dzamling Gar by John Shane

## Update on the Dzamling Gar Project

Giovanni Boni  
December 19, 2016

### The Gönpa

In January 2017 we will start work on structural renovation and reinforcement of the existing structure at the upper part of the Gar where the Gönpa will be constructed. We have already chosen the firm that will be carrying out the work, we are preparing the contract, and in January work will begin. We are finishing calculations on the new structure. We have already done this a few times in the past because we made some changes.

The photos of the roof covering for the Gönpa that are being published with this article are the most recent ones although they are not the final ones. The roof will be in multi-layered solid wood. We have changed the dimensions of the design for sections of the roof, which rather than having a diameter of 6.5 meters will now be 8.5 meters, in order to reduce costs. A bigger dimension will mean using less material.

Then we are trying to simplify the external closing as much as possible. The closed hall will be around 800–850 square meters while the open terrace will be 2,500 square meters with a covered area of around 1,700–1,800 square meters.

We haven't made the final decision on the material for the roof covering because we have to decide on the skylights, ventilation, etc., after which we will decide on the material.

We will make the foundations bearing in mind the possibility of the most challenging conditions so that, when we have the final version of the project, we will be ready to build the final structure.

So we will begin working in January, then continue working on the structure through the summer. The structure will

actually be the union of the two previous structures. Once this is done, in the autumn we will begin preparations for the roof covering of the Gönpa. We will probably need a year to finish this work so most probably it will be completed in the summer of 2018 if we have sufficient funds.

### The Houses

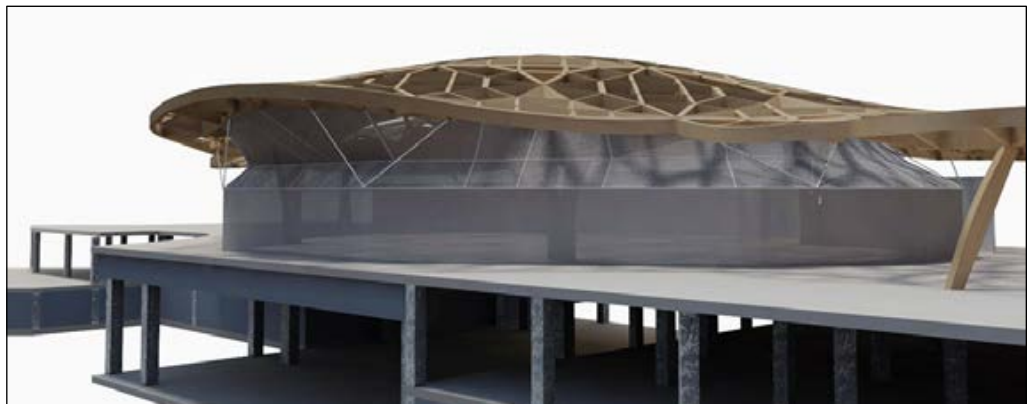
The houses of the Gars at Dzamling Gar are going ahead and during the Christmas retreat all of them will be in use. At the mo-

ment we are working on the general management of the houses.

### Funding

We have reached the halfway mark in gathering funds for the first part of the project but it is very important for us to go ahead with fundraising.

For further information on the project, people can write to Giovanni Boni [bonig1950@gmail.com](mailto:bonig1950@gmail.com) . ©



## Events Schedule (January–May 2017)

5–6 January

**Khaita Course: Dzamling Gar Song & Dance** with the Khaita Coordination Committee

7–11 January

**Santi Maha Sangha Level I Course (Part II)** with Elio Guarisco

8–15 January

**Khaita Instructors Training / Supervision** Training for Khaita instructors and also for those who wish to prepare to become instructors

19–24 January

**Yantra Yoga for Beginners** (Level I Supervision Course) supervised by Fabio Andrico

27 January–3 February

**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu** Dzogchen Teachings “Longsal Rushan”

5–13 February

**Yantra Yoga Level I Teacher Training** with Fabio Andrico & Laura Evangelisti

17–18 February

**Kumar Kumari Course** with Laura Evangelisti

17–19 February

**Chöd Retreat** with Steven Landsberg

20–24 February

**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Course (part I)** with Elias Capriles



# Santi Maha Sangha Level IV

December 1–7, 2016  
Dzamling Gar

Lynn Newdome

It was 10:00 a.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 30, and four of us from Tsegylgar East were gathered in a small room, waiting to take the Santi Maha Sangha Level III exam. We were nervous: the Master himself was conducting these, and rumor was that not everyone was passing. I'd just arrived from a full day of travel, and my mind was a total blank...

Twenty-six of us sat for the Level III examination, and fully half (13) were from Russia. Along with the 4 of us from the United States, there were practitioners from Germany (2), Japan (1), Argentina (2), Austria (1) and Italy (3). We'd applied ourselves in study and practice to prepare for this, many in retreat during preceding months. But after taking the exam, we felt quite anxious, not able to tell whether we'd passed or not.

What a relief and blessing it was then, to all to be sitting in front of Rinpoche for seven mornings as he transmitted the precious teachings of Level IV. As the week unfolded, it felt like the material we'd



Fourth Level SMS Training at Dzamling Gar, November 19, 2016.

struggled to comprehend was now clarified so that we could begin to relax and understand in a concrete way.

The experience of Santi Maha Sangha Level IV was more than receiving oral teachings, though. It was coming together and getting to know Vajra sisters and brothers from all over the world. It was enjoying the international houses and gardens of paradise that Dzamling Gar has become, through Rinpoche's marvelous vision and the contributions of many. And it was participating in Khaita, with music and singing pervading the atmosphere, as many as 50+ women, men and children performed the intricate steps of 150 Tibetan songs. Here, one could see our Master's vision start to be realized, as dancers, transformed into devas and devis, moved gracefully in unison on this sacred ground. ©

## Back from the Teachers Training at Dzamling Gar

Gino Vitiello

On the return flight from Tenerife to Rome my mood was significantly different from the way I felt on the outgoing flight – certainly more peaceful but not exactly lightweight. There was still all the joy experienced in the past days at Dzamling Gar, the relief of having passed a difficult test, the completeness that contact with the Master gives, the pleasure of having met old friends and seen the community mature, the nostalgia of leaving a beautiful place, and the sense of a new responsibility.

» continued on the following page

27 February–12 March  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Mandarava Drubchen**

14–18 March  
**Mandarava Tsalung Course**  
with Fabio Andrico & Elio Guarisco

20–23 March  
**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Course (part II)**  
with Elias Capriles

24–25 March  
**Prenatal Yantra Yoga**  
with Laura Evangelisti & Nataly Nitsche

26–31 March  
**Dance of the Song of the Vajra Deepening Course**  
with Luda Kislichenko & Stoffelina Verdonk

1–2 April  
**Drajyor Course**  
with Fabian Sanders

3–6 April  
**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Exam**

7–14 April  
**Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**  
**Santi Maha Sangha Level I Training**

16–19 April  
**Communication Course**  
with Gianfranco Brero

21–25 April  
**Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Course**  
with Elio Guarisco  
Deepening the Knowledge of The Three Lower Tantras and the Anuttaratantra  
This course is for SMS Base teachers, and all students of the Base, those who have

given the exam, and those yet to give the exam.

28–30 April  
**Tibetan Culture Event in Gran Canaria**  
with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

6 May  
**Dzamling Gar Annual General Meeting**

9–15 May  
**Santi Maha Sangha Level II Course**  
with Elio Guarisco

15–20 May  
**Dance of the Vajra: Level I Teacher Training**  
with Adriana Dal Borgo



Yantra Yoga Instructors who received Diplomas.

Photo by Chris Cook

» continued from previous page

The days of the Teachers Training had been very intense – 14 candidates for the Santi Maha Sangha had to be examined, 30 for the various levels of Yantra Yoga, and 11 for the Vajra Dance, five for the first level and six for the second.

The tests began with the aspiring teachers for the SMS base. There were two questions: one on the text of 'The Precious Vase' and another on the meaning of the SMS for each of the candidates with 15 minutes for the answers. Almost all the candidates answered the first question "more or less correctly". For the second, each person could express what the meaning of the Dzogchen Community is for him or her, and the reason why he or she had presented themselves for this training.

As we know, the words 'Santi Maha Sangha' indicate both the course of study and practice that bear this name, and the Dzogchen Community. The Community, the *Sangha*, is the third jewel, the one that is more difficult to understand and to live.

When one chooses a Path, it means that there is already recognition of the Teacher and the Teaching, of their value and their perfection, but the *Sangha* ... how can we consider of this variety of humanity, this wild flock of beings prey to the eight worldly dharmas and even worse, a jewel! Yet without this third point even the first two would not make sense and there would not be the possibility for each of us to recognize him or herself in their own kind.

Entering the Teaching means first of all confronting our own limits. Before we can discover the original nature of our mind we have to discover how we really are in everyday life, how we express ourselves in relationships with others, beyond the

complacent view that we have built of ourselves.

The study of 'The Precious Vase' (and few times has a title been more appropriate) guides us with a precise progression to knowledge of the profound meaning of the Teaching, of the Master, and ourselves. The real sense of belonging to the Community and the proper way to be part of it can only arise from this understanding.

Only two of the candidates who presented themselves did not pass the training. The first did not respond to a question on the pranayama of Yantra Yoga, and this made me think that many practitioners often underestimate the importance of Yantra Yoga.

After the Santi Maha Sangha tests there were those for instructors of Yantra Yoga first, second, and third level, and for Kumar Kumari, while in the afternoon there were tests for instructors of the Vajra Dance first and second level. Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico created a beautiful choreography with numerous candidates, which allowed them to practice almost all of Yantra Yoga and Kumar Kumari in precisely two hours, as requested by the Master. The demonstration of the latter, which concluded in the morning, left everyone with an indescribable sense of joy and lightness.

In the afternoon the first level candidates performed the Dance of the Three Vajras while those for the second level demonstrated the Dance of the Vajra, all of them trained by dedicated instructors Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo. It struck me that, while for Yantra Yoga the relationship between males and females was almost equal, for the Dance there was a high prevalence of *Pamo*.

Eventually, in the afternoon of the last day of exams, Rinpoche brought together old and new SMS teachers at his house to give them some final advice, giving us essential information needed to better understand the meaning of this new responsibility. Becoming SMS teachers also means entering more deeply into the immense river current that is the Master, and this gives a feeling of pleasure and fear at the same time, two emotions often joined as long as we remain in dualism.

In the morning of Wednesday, November 16, there was the presentation of diplomas. Even those who had previously received a certificate as a Shang Shung Institute instructor, received a new document, released by the IDC (International Dzogchen Community) this time, to emphasize the international value of this recognition.

Leaving Dzamling Gar was not easy. It has become beautiful and is continuously growing. The houses of various colors, comfortable, bright and well furnished, the gardens full of tropical flowers and plants created by the green hand of Alix de Fermor (green thumb seems like an understatement), the large pool, and the music of Khaïta in the background in the afternoons have left a deep impression.

Everything else seemed far away, the media with its depressing and often tragic news, work commitments, the small annoyances of everyday *samsara*, everything had been suspended for a week in the perfect *mandala* that arises around the Master. But coming back was also important. Studies completed and those to do, knowledge of the practice and commitment – it is most of all here that they can be applied and have their sense. ©





First Level Vajra Dance teachers.



Second Level Vajra Dance teachers.



Passages – Married

## Marriage at Dzamling Gar!

Nadia Gaggioli (<http://melong.com/nadai-gaggioli-awarded-the-om-ri/> and <http://melong.com/merigar-haven-of-peace/>) and Paolo Roberto di Sarsina were married by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on January 3, 2017 on the last day of the Yangtig retreat, in the Gönpa of Dzamling Gar, witnessed by all present and also by those on webcast. Congratulations for such an auspicious union! ©



## Samten House

The Samtengar Community of China has graciously made a beautiful Tibetan Shrineroom as part of their house at Dzamling Gar, which is also available to the Community to use for courses and practices. All the contents were shipped from China to Spain by boat. The most recent courses there have been two levels of Santi Maha Sangha with Elio Guarisco. ©





# Inaugurating the Museum of Asian Art and Culture

Liz Granger

The official inauguration of the Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO) began in the Conference Room of the Arcidosso Castle on the morning of December 10, 2016 in the presence of Prof. Namkhai Norbu, the Mayor of Arcidosso, moderators Costantino Albin and Jamyang Oliphant of Rossie, and the Director of the museum, Alex Siedlecki. Many guests attended the event including political figures such as the Mayors of Adeje (the Municipality in Tenerife where Dzamling Gar is situated) and Tanti (Tashigar South, Argentina) and representatives of international universities and research centers, as



l-r. The Mayor of Arcidosso, Jacopo Marini, Prof. Namkhai Norbu, the Director of MACO, Alex Siedlecki.

well as representatives from the Merigar Dzogchen Community Cultural Association and Dzogchen Centers around the world.

The Mayor of Arcidosso, Jacopo Marini, welcomed those present and warmly thanked Prof. Namkhai Norbu for having chosen Arcidosso as the base for one of the main centers of the Dzogchen Community and for everything he has done for the Amiata area. The Mayor spoke about this historic meeting between Eastern and Western cultures, namely a Museum of Asian Culture hosted in a medieval Italian building, and went on to say how the two Communities are building bridges while others are erecting walls.

Prof. Namkhai gave thanks to the Municipality of Arcidosso and the other Mu-



Photos by Oleksandr Zhytko

nicipalities of the Amiata area for their ongoing collaboration that had enabled them to arrive at this historic moment. He also expressed his joy and thanks to the many people who had travelled from different parts of the world to be present at the event.

MACO director Alex Siedlecki welcomed those who were present as well as those in webcast and thanked the more than 100 people, from all over the world as well as local craftsmen, who had worked to create the Museum.

After this, the official inauguration moved to the museum premises in the building opposite the Castle, where officials and guests were taken on the first guided tours of the MACO. This was followed by refreshments back in the Castle.

In the afternoon, the Museum was officially opened to the public at 3pm. In order to invite the public to the event, which was taking place in the historical center of the village, members of the Dzogchen Community from around the world formed a flash mob starting from the main square in the new part of town. Performing some of the Khaita Joyful Dances they moved along the main street and wound their way up to the little square below the castle which had been festooned with five colored Tibetan prayer flags. In the little piazza outside the Museum a group of Khaita dancers in costumes and holding *khatags* (ceremonial scarves) performed a welcoming dance for the many who were present before the





Prof. Namkhai operating one of the interactive exhibits at the Museum.



The Khaita dancers performing in front of the Museum.

doors of the Museum opened to welcome the first visitors from the public.

Later in the afternoon, the Conference Room in the castle hosted a conference entitled 'Planning a Museum: a Traditional Museum versus augmented Reality' with presentations by Alex Siedlecki, Director of MACO, Dr. Jacobella Gaetani, Curator, Giorgio Corsetti, Creative Director, Dr. Aurora Graldi, curator of the sculpture section, Prof. Pier Francesco Talamo, curator of the pre-history section, Dr. Fabian Sanders, curator of the Tibetan language and literature section, architect Lara Sani director of the renovation of the building, engineer Federico Capriuoli curator of the Virtual Reality installations, and Migmar Tsering, curator of the Tibetan interior design.

In the week following the inauguration, several free workshops given by experts were held at the castle for the schools of the area on subjects including Traditional Tibetan Painting (with Migmar Tsering and Yushan Zhong), Traditional Tibetan Folk Dances (with Salima Celeri and Yangchen Tsering), the History of Costumes and Traditional Weaving in Bhutan (with Tsering Choden), Making Traditional Bhutanese Masks (with Ugyen Dorji), an Introduction to Tibetan Astrology (with Maria Rita Leti), and Making *Lungta*, traditional Prayer Flags (with Migmar Tsering and Tanita Ferrari).

The following weekend, December 17 and 18, a series of in-depth workshops and conferences were held under the title 'Smart Museums – Semantics and Cultural

Heritage'. On Saturday these included the following topics: 'Tibetan temples: From Survey to Virtual Reality' with Federico Capriuoli and Stafano Depperu, 'Digital Preservation Applied to the Preservation and Restoration of Monuments of Cultural Heritage' with architect Donatella Cavezzali, and 'Presenting Research Space' with Prof. George Bruseker.

The 'Smart Museums' events continued on Sunday with 'Virtual Reality Applied to Cultural Heritage' with Prof. George Bruseker, 'Improving Access to Digital Collections using Spotlight and Hydra-in-a-Box' with Prof. Christopher Beer, and 'Introduction to Fedora 4 and Islandora Claw' with Dr. David Wilcox.

©



# The Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO)

On Saturday December 10, 2016, The Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO Museo di Arte e Cultura Orientale) was inaugurated in Arcidosso, in Grosseto Province, Italy. The Museum of Art and Culture is located in the "Ex-Chancery", an eighteenth century building that is part of the Aldobrandesco Castle complex, kindly provided by the Municipality of Arcidosso and is the result of over



interrelated themes and sub themes created for the nine gallery spaces is based primarily on Prof. Namkhai Norbu's research and his more than 250 publications.

The Namkhai collection links the five traditional Tibetan sciences: the arts, medi-

ni statue, considered the most sacred image of the Buddha in Tibet, at its center. This can be reached through a video installation that envelops the visitor in the atmosphere of dances, landscapes, and ancient temples.

Scholars and international academics participated as curators and consultants in the creation of the Museum of Asian Art and Culture Project, as well as multimedia developers, artists, and architects.

The museum aims to play an important role in the artistic and cultural landscape of the area by offering cultural activities also aimed at the local community such as workshops for adults and children, children's courses on arts, crafts, dance and



Photo by Oleksandr Zhytko



Photo by Angelica Siedlecki.

thirty-five years of collaboration between the Merigar Dzogchen Community and the Municipality of Arcidosso.

The Museum of Asian Art and Culture is a project envisioned by Prof. Namkhai Norbu, internationally renowned scholar, president of the International Dzogchen Community, the Shang Shung Foundation, ASIA Onlus, and author of over 250 publications and books. With his family he has assembled a private collection made up of countless artifacts: works of art, crafts and costumes, votive objects of great cultural and ethnographic value, and documentary collections and important documents concerning his research and studies on Himalayan and central Asian culture.

The theoretical and scientific framework for the development of the various

cine, language, logic, and spiritual research, which are expressed in the museum's logo. The Namkhai collection is arranged and displayed along a sensory journey through nine thematic galleries, which take visitors through different cultural and ethnographic journeys using panels, video, multimedia and interactive sound installations.

The museum explores various themes related to the environment and the preservation of this multicultural heritage, such as the preservation of the ancient Tibetan civilization by communicating its value and the history of the meeting and interaction between the West and the various Asian peoples.

In the central atrium there is a reproduction of the Portal to the Jokhang temple in Lhasa with a copy of the Jowo Sakyamu-

traditional music, and conferences for researchers and university students.

The museum will be the driving force for promoting the building to the local community through the installation of the permanent exhibition and the organization of cultural and artistic events and educational itineraries.

The opening was an important moment for all those who have helped to realize the project to meet and share, as well as a beginning of activities for the benefit of the local community and all visitors.

The renovation and refurbishment of the building, the project and construction of the Arcidosso Museum of Asian Art and Culture was funded by the European Union, by the Tuscany Region, the Municipality of Arcidosso, and private donations. ©





Photo by Marco Almici

## Consecration of the Stupa of Complete Victory

Liz Granger

The Palbar Chörten or Stupa of Complete Victory was consecrated on the morning of October 11, 2016, at Merigar West by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the presence of Rosa Namkhai and many of Rinpoche's students. It was Guru Rinpoche day, the 10th day of the Tibetan month, and the crisp weather and threatening rain clouds meant that the event took place earlier than planned before the clouds burst. In fact, after the consecration, Rinpoche commented that during the inauguration of the Gonpa and Shang Shung Institute in 1990, H.H. the Dalai Lama had come to the very same spot and drunk some tea in a Tibetan tent, saying, at the time, that he almost felt like he was in Tibet. It was also a cold day.

This will be the third Stupa to be constructed at Merigar. Two of them are Stupas of Illumination or Changchub Chörten, the earlier one being a small structure on a hill overlooking Arcidosso and the surrounding countryside not far from the yellow house, and a much larger stupa in the lower meadow. In general there are eight types of stupa with different architectonic styles representing different episodes in the life of the Buddha.

The new Stupa, built in memory of Buddha's successful prolonging of his life, is called Namgyal Chörten in Tibetan. At the pinnacle of the stupa, above the lotus, the symbol of the Longsal, surmounted by a tigle, has been sculpted, characterizing the

connection between this Stupa and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Rinpoche has also given the Stupa the name Palbar Chörten, the Blazing Splendor Stupa, possibly due to the beauty of the marble.

The Stupa, carved in sections of beautiful Carrara marble, is being built on top of a hill east of the Gönpa near the statue of Adzom Drugpa, and on completion will reach a height of around 5 meters. The foundation had been laid previously and the low-

*"This Stupa of Carrara marble is very beautiful. Also the idea of putting all these things inside it: all my teachings of almost half a century are here. In addition I prepared (on digital support) and put inside all the Kanjur and Tengyur and everything I had in my library, instead of putting books. Books get ruined and after some centuries nothing remains of them, while these things (digital support) can be preserved very well for a long time. The ink on books also disappears and becomes dust. It doesn't last long.*

*In this invocation (a short four-line verse added at the end of the Sang and Serkyem), in the second line, korva means transmigration, and sid-du means that as long as transmigration exists, these things will remain. This is the consecration. Objects often disappear, but once things have been consecrated, empowered, they remain because they are not simply objects.*

*Usually stupas are filled with tsa tsa, then they put some traditional books, and printed things, but there is no guarantee that they remain for a long time. There is only the hope."*



The pinnacle of the Palbar Chörten with the Longsal symbol.  
Photo Liz Granger

er square part of the structure erected several days earlier. During the ceremony a small yellow vase or *bumpa* was placed inside the base which was then filled with precious teachings as is the custom. In the following weeks the rest of the Stupa will be mounted.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Rinpoche spoke about the teachings that had been placed inside the Stupa (on digital support).



Photo by Liz Granger

©



# The 35th Anniversary of Merigar West

December 11, 2016

Naomi Zeitz for The Mirror

Arriving to the Tuscan winter from Spain on December 8 was somewhat of a shock of the cold, but the feeling of returning to Merigar West after a five year hiatus was far from cold, it was the warm feeling of coming home. It was a homecoming to the sensations, the smells, the tastes, the endless and bittersweet greetings, the reassuring cradle of the Temple of Great Liberation, the so familiar “yellow house”, dinner at the Lorena and of course, a soothing farewell cappuccino in Arcidosso.

Merigar West was essentially my first Gar, the “mothership” you could say, the



Rinpoche and Mayors from left to right: Federico Balocchi, the Mayor of Santa Fiora, Dr. Luis Horacio Azàr, Mayor of Tanti, Cordoba, Argentina, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Jacopo Marini, the Mayor of Arcidosso and Don José Miguel Rodríguez Fraga, the Mayor of Adeje, Tenerife, Spain.

In the past few years, Enrico took on great responsibilities, at the behest of Rinpoche, for the International Gakyil and Community, as well as the newly formed Shang Shung Foundation. We now know he was suffering a serious illness and succumbed

day after that was the very enjoyable celebration of the 35 years of Merigar West. On the Monday morning rounding up the festivities was the presentation of the Festschrift, a collection of scholarly papers offered by his students to Chögyal Namkhai



Banquet preparation.



Waiting for feast.

place where the initiation into the profound nature of the Dzogchen Teachings and the heart of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu happens for many; and also happened for me. The relationships formed with the Vajra Family of Merigar serve as a base and continue to represent the deep and abiding connection and love we all carry in the Mandala of the Master.

There was a noticeable absence of one very pivotal member of Merigar and one of Rinpoche's original group of Italian students, Enrico Dell'Angelo, who served for so many of us as a kind of beacon, a shoulder, a friend and a precious Vajra brother, over the many years and cycles at Merigar.

to it not long after the celebrations. This is a tremendous loss for Merigar and the international Community. (see page 4)

The 35th Anniversary was part of a whirlwind of activities from December 8th to the 12th, starting with Rinpoche's birthday greeting at the Serkhang (yellow house) on the evening of his birthday and arrival. Many people braved the cold and traffic up and down the mountain to greet and celebrate this joyful occasion with Rinpoche and Rosa. The next day saw a 24-hour naggon culminating with a Ganapuja in the Temple of Great Liberation. The following day was the opening of the Museum in the town of Arcidosso (see page 22) and the

Norbu in honor of his great scholarship and mastery of the teachings. (see page 29)

The anniversary celebrations held in the Temple of Great Liberation began with the gracious master of ceremonies, Fabio Andrico, welcoming everyone, as well as the honored guests, the Mayor of Adeje, Tenerife, Spain, Don José Miguel Rodríguez Fraga, Mayor of Tanti, Cordoba, Argentina, Dr. Luis Horacio Azàr, Mayor of Arcidosso Jacopo Marini, Mayor of Castel del Piano, Claudio Franci and the Mayor of Santa Fiora, Federico Balocchi, together with Parroco (Parish Priest) Don Luigi Colleoni. Other important guests were Lama Gyurmed Tsewang, Venerable Yeshe Wangpo, Pro-





Khaita in the Temple of Great Liberation.



Elegant servers.

fessors Zhang Dase, Dong Celi, Zhao Ding, all from China, Professors Urgyen Dorje and Sonam Chökyi, from Bhutan, and Indigenous Elder Alan Cedric Parsons from Australia.

Fabio also gave highly deserved special acknowledgement to Rosa Namkhai for her supreme dedication and effort to help realize the Museum in Arcidosso. There were power point presentations by representatives of each of the Gars, which demonstrated the impressive scope of Rinpoche's teaching activities around the globe.\* There was a delicious gourmet feast prepared by Lucia Splendoria and her team and served by a very elegant group of waiters and waitresses. We were offered exquisite entertainment by Fabio Tomassoni (flute) and Piotr Fedkov (oboe), as well as a spontaneous acapella serenade by three of the members of The Choir of Miners from Santa Fiora, an ensemble based there, that had most of us swooning, including Rinpoche.

As the evening descended and the crowds thinned, the joyful Khaita dancing

began in the Temple of Great Liberation with Rinpoche present and lasted for some hours. This seemed a most apropos way to culminate the day's activities reflecting the welcome presence of Tibetan culture in this small and very traditional Tuscan mountain region. Happy Anniversary Merigar West! ©

\* Merigar West (Tiziana Gottardi), Merigar East (Erika Motylova), Kunsangar North and South (Vita Adamenko), Tsegyalgar West (Monica Patiño), Tsegyalgar East (Ed Hayes), Tashigar North (Paola Civile), Tashigar South (Adriana Battisti), Namgyalgar (Sally Anne Prince – Kathy Aldwich), Samten-gar (Wesley Guo) and Dzamling Gar (Alessandra Policreti).



Guests with Rinpoche and Rosa.



# Via Tibet Inaugurated in Arcidosso

Liz Granger

On Saturday December 17th, 2016, the Mayor of Arcidosso, Jacopo Marini, and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu inaugurated the newly named 'Via Tibet' in Arcidosso. The municipal councillor for culture, Adriano Crescenzi, was also present and presented Prof. Namkhai Norbu with a plaque commemorating the naming of the street and thanking him for his contribution over the years to developing a collaborative relationship between the International Dzogchen Community of Merigar and the Municipality of Arcidosso. Several other councillors from the local municipality as well as local people gathered for the event.

Via Tibet is the venue for the weekly Arcidosso street market and borders the small park where the Peace Monument, created during the 30th anniversary of Merigar, is located.



l-r. The Mayor of Arcidosso, Jacopo Marini, Prof. Namkhai Norbu, and the Councillor for Culture, Adriano Crescenzi. On the occasion of naming the street, the town council presented a plaque to Prof. Namkhai Norbu, expressing their deep gratitude for what he stands for in the entire Amiata area.



The event was attended by a large group of Dzogchen Community people who performed several Khaita dances after the official inauguration, under a bright winter sun.

The event concluded in a relaxed manner with the Master enjoying a capuccino at the local cafe, the Bagatto. ©

# Thank you from the Zikhang Library of Merigar

The Zikhang Library of Merigar would like to express its deepest gratitude to all those who have contributed to the expansion of its collection for the benefit of all those who come and read in our beautiful reading room. Thanks to them, in the last two years we have increased our collection of Western and Tibetan books by more than four hundred books and magazines.

So thank you especially to Harald Braun for his great contribution, Donatella Rossi for the Collected works of Adzom Drugpa, Adriano Clemente, Aldo Oneto, Giorgio Dallorto, Monica Marinelli, Stefania Merzagora, and the late Antonio di Giammarco and Rochelle Hood. May your example inspire others! ©



If you wish to donate books to the library, please write to [library@shangshungfoundation.com](mailto:library@shangshungfoundation.com)



# SHAR RO, a Celebratory Festschrift Honoring Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Edited by Donatella Rossi and  
Charles Jamyang Oliphant of  
Rossie

Garuda Verlag, Switzerland, 2016  
ISBN: 978 3 906139 23 4  
Price US\$ 68.00 / € 58.00

The book titled SHAR RO, a Tibetan verb signifying “to rise or manifest”, was presented to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Monday December 12th, 2016, the 35th anniversary of the existence of Merigar, the first center of the International Dzogchen Community established by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Arcidosso, Italy. On that same festive weekend The Museum of Asian Art and Culture founded by him and his wife Rosa Namkhai Toli and located in the Aldobrandesco Castle of Arcidosso was inaugurated.

Festschrift is the term given to a book published in the world of academia in honor of a university professor whose achievements, teaching, and research in his specific field are recognized for their excellence. Generally, a volume of such kind consists of papers written by scholars who admire and/or have studied with the luminary. Our Festschrift is composed of eighteen papers focused on Tibetology written by scholars and collected and edited by Donatella Rossi and Charles Jamyang Oliphant.

This Festschrift is a beautiful book of about 400 pages with an embossed cloth hardcover, honoring Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his lifetime achievements.

All proceeds from participation in this project will go toward the construction of the Gonpa or Meditation Hall at Dzamling Gar, a major current project of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the heart of the International Dzogchen Community located in Tenerife, the Canary Islands, Spain.

The book can be ordered from any bookstore, the webshop of Shang Shung Institute, or directly from the publisher Garuda Verlag Switzerland: [info@garudabooks.ch](mailto:info@garudabooks.ch) ©



l-r Peter Eisenegger, Garuda Verlag publishing house, Prof. Namkhai Norbu, and Charles Jamyang Oliphant, one of the editors.

## Why This Book?

Charles Jamyang Oliphant, one of the editors of ‘Shar ro’, presented the volume and the reasons for producing it in the Merigar Gönpa on Monday, December 12, 2016.

The idea that gave birth to this volume is the paying of homage to the life work of Professor Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, his research into and preservation of Tibetan culture in its many aspects. We thought that a book would be an appropriate way to show our appreciation to a man who has published more than two hundred books which have been translated into more than a dozen languages and who consequently has become a highly respected figure worldwide.

There are well-established conventions for celebrating scholarly achievement. This felicitous volume – known in academic circles as a Festschrift – is such an offering.

When we sent a message to invite contributions the recipients reacted enthusiastically. Eighteen people accepted the invitation and submitted their work within the short time requested.

There are two reasons people from all over the world and from all walks of life were so keen to participate: 1) the man himself, and 2) his achievements.

Regarding the man himself,

At a young age Chögyal Namkhai Norbu started the rigorous program of traditional monastic learning, and for many years he was trained in the Five Major Sciences (arts

and crafts, healing, language, logic, and inner meaning) and in the Five Minor Sciences (astrology, poetics, metrics, lexicography, and drama). He was a brilliant student and already at a young age was renowned for his learning.

When he was twenty, he was invited by Professor Giuseppe Tucci, a celebrated Italian Tibetologist, to work with him in Rome at the ISMEO. Then in 1962 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu became Professor of Tibetan and Mongolian Language and Literature at the Oriental Institute of the University of Naples, a position that he held for thirty years. During this time he developed his research on the realm of the kingdom of Zhang Zhung and the history of ancient Tibet.

Throughout his life Rinpoche has worked tirelessly to safeguard Tibetan culture in so many ways that it is impossible to list them all here. To name just a few:

In 1983 he founded Shang Shung Publications, a publishing house which specializes in books on Tibetan religions, history, and culture.

In 1988 he established ASIA, a nonprofit organization that supports humanitarian projects in Tibet and other stricken areas of the world. ASIA provides access to modern education for children and youth, traditional Buddhist instruction for monks and nuns, and also training for young Tibetans in the fields of traditional fine arts, performing arts, and literature.

As a spiritual Master, Rinpoche has founded dozens of centers for study and meditation for the International Dzogchen Community throughout the world and

» continued on the following page

» continued from previous page

thousands of people are following his spiritual teachings.

Regarding Rinpoche's scholarly works: Not only is Rinpoche a brilliant scholar but through his great generosity and creativity he has found methods to teach his knowledge in essential ways permitting us to understand and apply this knowledge. For example, he has devised a key to Tibetan astrology, so that those interested can make use of this system in their daily life. To preserve the Tibetan medical heritage for the world he has established Tibetan medical programs in Russia and in the USA so that these ancient healing methods can continue to benefit the world. Recently he has been working to promote the songs and dances of the Tibetan people, with the aim of preserving Tibetan language, customs, and culture but also so that the world at large can benefit and be inspired from the human values expressed in the songs.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has succeeded in making learning joyful and of relevance in everyday life.

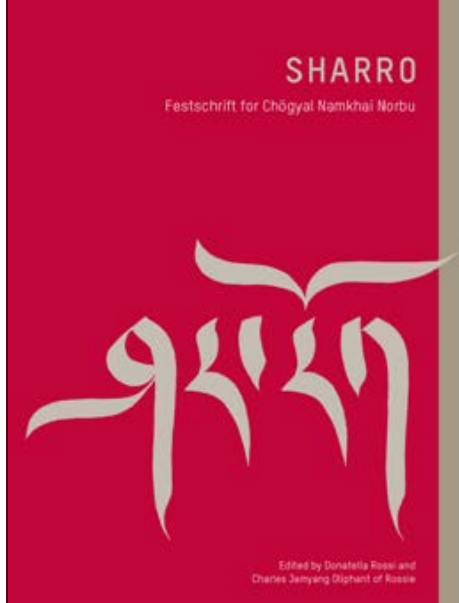
His huge body of written works covers a vast variety of topics. Most often academic researchers specialize in a narrow field of studies, and what is so remarkable about Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is that he has made so many of Tibet's fields of knowledge subjects for his research with profound results.

He has written extensively on medicine, Yantra Yoga, astrology, history, Buddhist, Bon and Dzogchen teachings, and Tibetan folklore songs. He has written and published most of his writings in the Tibetan language intended for the new generation of Tibetans who are in danger of losing their cultural heritage.

For all of these reasons we want to pay homage to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for all of his endeavors and this book is a small token of gratitude for his totally committed work.

Now let me tell you a little about this book.

The book is entitled *Shar ro*. *Shar ro* in Tibetan means to manifest or to appear. This is a collection of eighteen articles written by students of Rinpoche in which they share their scholarly research on Tibet. The articles are about Tibetan and Himalayan subject matters, with a wide range of topics on medicine, yogic practices, sacred art as well as spiritual practice manuals with commentaries.



There are some very interesting original translations from the Tibetan of works by great Tibetan masters followed by analyses of the texts. For example the first article in the book concerns a Dzogchen meditation instructional text by the great master Rigdzin Dudul Dorje. The author of this contribution, Oriol Aguilar, also provides a context for this teaching within the greater Nyingma tradition and provides little known details about the historical period in which Rigdzin Dudul Dorje lived.

There are also translations and commentaries on ancient Dzogchen texts. Adriano Clemente has translated and annotated one of the first five translations by Vairocana written in the eighth century. Another very early Dzogchen text translated by James Valby is by Sri Simha who was the Dzogchen Master of Guru Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. This teaching on view, meditation, behavior, and fruit takes us to the historic origins of Dzogchen.

Fabian Sanders offers an article about how Guru Padmasambhava consecrated particular spaces and times for the benefit of future practitioners.

However we do not have only Nyingma or Dzogchen subject matters in this book. There is an article about the Kagyupa yogic lineages which originated from Togden Shakya Shri and a fascinating article about how the Sixth Dalai Lama was a secret practitioner of Dzogchen.

There are also two articles about the Bon religion. One is about Dzogchen texts in the Bon tradition, written by Donatella Rossi. The other explores the social and religious dynamics among lay Bon practitioners in Amdo.

We find also an article about the sacred murals in the Lukhang Palace in Lhasa and

how these murals are connected to Dzogchen literature composed by the great Bhutanese master Pema Lingpa.

Another contribution to this book directs us how to conduct our lives in positive ways in a text by Patrul Rinpoche, translated by Maria Simmons, aimed at lay people living ordinary lives. Written in simple and direct language, it invites the reader to apply ethical conduct in different situations.

There are also other articles, but I do not want to say more, because I am sure that many of you will want to buy a copy and to read this book yourselves. Many aspects of Tibetan culture are covered and you can really broaden your knowledge on a variety of topics. The profits from this book will go toward the construction of the Gönpa of Dzamling Gar, and by buying a copy you are helping to make this ambitious project of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu a reality.

A special thanks to Peter Eisenegger, later assisted by Karin Koppensteiner, who had the original idea and the drive to see this project completed, following its production through every step.

I thank Donatella Rossi, the co-editor of this volume who was unable to be here with us today due to work commitments. She worked very hard to make sure that this volume is of the highest academic standard.

I also want to thank Margherita Pansa for the difficult job of compiling the Tibetan and Sanskrit indexes, and Nancy Simmons for the English editing.

And of course many thanks to the contributors who participated in this volume and made sure this publication could be completed in time.

Rinpoche, our grateful message to you through the creation of this book is to show in a concrete way that because of your extraordinary endeavors many people have been inspired to discover and research numerous aspects of Tibetan culture and history.

We wish to thank you for your lifetime of dedication to studying and communicating your knowledge of Tibetan culture. Our hope is that in a chain reaction ever more people will work to preserve the precious Tibetan culture, an inestimable gift to all of humanity.

Thank you.

©



# dPal sprul O rgyan 'Jigs med Chos kyī dBang po's

## Essential Advice on Two Aspects of Life

We present an excerpt from a text by Patrul Rinpoche translated by Maria Simmons that was published in the book. Written in simple direct language, it invites ordinary lay people to conduct their lives in positive ways.

**D**za Patrul Rinpoche (1808–1887) was a peerless Dzogchen master from East Tibet. Besides his profound teachings and numerous treatises on philosophy, poetry, ethics, and tantra he left a number of zhaldam life-advice teachings. This particular teaching, the *Zhal gdams lugs gnyis snying bcud* (*Essential Advice on Two Aspects of Life*) is a treasure of advice on ethics in daily life; it is an outstanding example of the genre, informed by Tibetan cultural values and in many instances by Buddhist principles.

It begins with a roadside encounter between an arrogant young man named Zhönu Loden (*gZhon nu Blo ldan*) and an old man. The latter responds to the youth's contemptuous taunts with such clarity that the young man feels compelled to listen to more of what his interlocutor has to say. Speaking in simple language, using proverbs and folk sayings, he leads Zhönu Loden to consider ethical conduct in a wide range of situations. Below are some excerpts from his words:

When Zhönu Loden mocks the old man's walk and appearance and demands to know where he is headed, the latter replies "Ha ha!" Your gait suggests an arrogant young man; your thoughtless joking suggests a coarse would-be wit; the way you wear your hair suggests someone with no parents but with bad friends. Even a rock gets old. Even a tiger's fur loses its sheen. Sons of the same father can turn out good or bad. When I was young and my flesh and blood were strong I was better looking than you. When my senses were clear I was even sharper than you. When I still had my homeland and family I was better off than you. I am from East

Tibet. This morning I came from the town of Samsara and tonight I am going to the Land of Liberation."

Intrigued, the youth asks the old man to sit down and talk with him. At first he is reluctant, replying "... In times like these, no one feels any need for what someone like me has to say." But then he reconsiders, "However, as the proverb goes, *One must speak because friends ask. The fox must whimper because demons keep slapping its cheeks. The dog must bark when a thief is on the prowl.* You ask and I must answer."

The old man goes on to offer succinct guidance in the ethics of daily existence;

"When it comes to human ethics: first of all, regarding paying respect to those of higher status, everyone regardless of high or low rank, good character or bad, should put their hope and trust both in this life and the next in none other than the Lama and the Three Jewels."

[...]  
*One without good qualities is prouder than others, the heads of empty grain husks rise higher than others,* the proverb states.

The person of highly developed qualities is gentle, honest, and open-minded.

In behaving with those below us in rank, do not despise or harm those weaker than yourself, the helpless, the humble, and the poor because of their inferiority. Instead, you should benefit them as much as possible with talk, food, and clothing. In circumstances where you cannot help them, speak gently and be honest. Concerning the lowly, do not manipulate them, order them around, frighten, command, or beat them, nor treat them like dirt while pretending to be strong and heroic.

[...]  
*It is rare to agree with someone you feel close to for a long time. It is rare for a rich man to be happy his whole life. It is rare for the learned not to make a mistake,* it is said.

Do not reveal all your thoughts to others, and do not act indiscriminately. Proceed stably with single-mindedness. Do not be shameless and inconsiderate but have good intentions and be in harmony with everyone around you.

[...]  
Moreover, we must all discover our personal faults. *The needle that probes for other people's faults may be sharp, but to have a mirror that shows one one's own faults is extremely rare.*

If you do not examine yourself, no one else will tell you your faults. Nothing is more base than to praise people to their

face and then insult them behind their back. If it so happens that some well-intentioned person directly tells you your own faults, instead of listening you will resent it.

[...]  
There is no spiritual master or ruler without at least one fault. Meanwhile, every beggar, bandit, or thief has at least one good quality. One must balance faults and good qualities and discover who has more of each. *A person who has qualities and no faults is rare. For a tree to grow straight without knots is rare. For iron to be flexible, sharp, and strong is rare,* it is said.

It is difficult to judge the heart of a wise person, the wiles of a deceitful one, or the character of a hypocrite. Examine people by various methods, direct and indirect, open and hidden.

[...]  
*If you do not know what to say it is best to remain silent. If you cannot finish the task it is best not to begin. If you cannot win the battle it is better not to start it.*

[...]  
Concerning relatives: do not flatter or praise them directly. Should they be to blame, consider pointing out their faults to help them improve. If they deserve it, you should express your gratitude by praising and rewarding them.

[...]  
It seems that at times witless people fail to appreciate their fine spouse or friend, treating them with contempt and quarreling with them. Later they may separate and regret will arise.

[...]  
*Associating with honorable friends one becomes better. Associating with friends with no virtues one becomes worse. Virtuous friends are more rare than gold. Even if such people are strangers you should make them friends. Despicable friends are worse than poison. Even if such people are your friends it is better to get rid of them,* it is said.

That is why it is extremely important to know both the good qualities and faults of your friends.

[...]  
*Speeches are difficult to begin. Work is difficult to carry on in the middle. In Dharma it is the end that is difficult to bring to fulfillment,* as it is said.

You must be brave and patient until you have finished whatever task you have undertaken. You must persevere methodically and not follow others' opinions and

» continued on the following page

# The Holy Madmen of Tibet

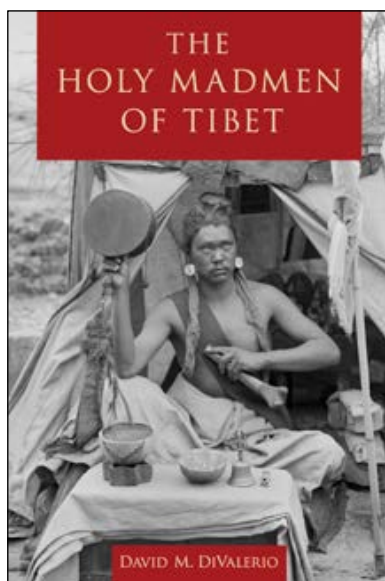
David M. DiValerio  
Oxford University Press 2015,  
368 pages  
ISBN: 9780199391219

# The Guru Drinks Bourbon?

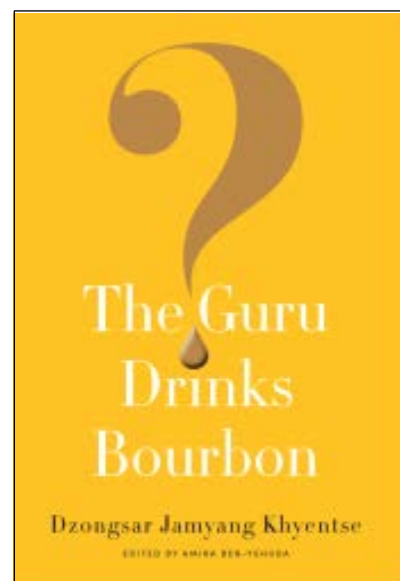
Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse  
edited by Amira Ben-Yehuda  
Shambhala Publications 2016,  
272 pages  
ISBN: 9781611803747

Alexander Studholme

**D**rukpa Kunley is firmly embedded in the popular imagination as the most famous and outrageous of all



Tibet's anarchic yogin-saints. He is a scandalously priapic and scatological figure, making love to women in public, stealing other men's wives, breaking wind in the assembly hall of monasteries and urinating on precious religious paintings. He is widely heralded as the archetype of so-called "crazy wisdom", a state of realization held to transcend all civilized propriety and social norms. It therefore comes as some surprise to see him depicted, in David Di-



Valerio's *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, as "sober, thoughtful, and in some ways rather conservative." Scholarly reappraisals do not come much more dramatic than this.

DiValerio contends that Tibetan Buddhists are so in thrall to the ideal of the *mahāsiddha*, whose behaviour is understood to be a spontaneous outpouring of their enlightened state, that they are too quick to identify eccentric or antinomi-

» continued from previous page

useless chatter. Finally, if the work is well done then consider it as positive. Even if it should go wrong one must bear with it without regret or resentment. There are only two ways of achieving success: one is by the power of merit and the other is through intelligent analysis. The way to be happy and realize benefit for oneself both in this life and the next without being greedy is the accumulation of merit through the Three Jewels. *Better to create a spark of merit rather than exert a mountain of effort*, the saying goes.

[...]

*Wealth will not be gained by accumulation alone; it will come from the accumulation of merit. Clothes are not worn out just by wearing them; they are worn out when your personal radiance has faded. A person does not die from illness but dies the day the time comes.*

For the affluent to donate as much of their personal wealth as possible to the sacred Dharma is best. Second best is benefit others as much as possible, and the worst is to use it for their own food and clothes. If not, in the end you will be too late. You will

lose all your possessions anyway when it is time to die and leave this world naked and empty-handed.

*If your mind has grown dark then even a mound of riches the size of Mount Meru will be of no help*, it has been said. In general one's character should be gentle but the ability to stand on one's own feet should not be lost. Whatever good or bad things happen do not rush to show delight or depression. Furthermore you must see the difference between those who bring you luck and those who bring you misfortune. Do not recount all the things you have heard.

[...]

*If you speak your every thought you are mad. If you eat whatever you see you are a dog or a pig. If you do whatever comes to mind you are fatuous*, it is said.

[...]

Now if we were to sum up the principles of human conduct in five points, they would be: first, a gentle character; second, a sense of balance in behavior; third, an open mind and a stable temperament; fourth, skill in examining any task before undertaking it; fifth, honesty and good will in all activities.

The old man expounds on these five points and then comments on the obstacles we encounter as we pursue them and concludes, "If you observe each of these five points, even if you adhere to no others, you are the most excellent of men."

At the end of his discourse the old man slowly stood up. *gZho nu Blo ldan* was overjoyed and prostrated to him, addressing him in the honorific form said, "Kye! Oh most fortunate being, you are like a jewel treasure of wise sayings. Good old man, kind like father and mother, you are the essence of gentle behavior. I have never before heard such a teaching, like the advice of a parent to a child. It is the essence and ambrosia of all advice stemming from the kindness of a wise old man. In the future I request that you please give me ever more advice like a father to a son. Oh precious teacher, your kindness can never be repaid. I pray that I may see your smiling face often." The old man was pleased and with a loving glance said, "Oh ya ya! Beloved son be happy." With that he slowly walked away. ©



an traits as manifestations of this kind of inspired activity. His fascinating book is, in large part, a careful drawing out of the different nuances of the Tibetan word “mad” (*smyon*) – which can be applied, for instance, to the holding of an unorthodox philosophical view of “emptiness”. He presents a close reading of the biographies of three influential “holy madmen” of the 15th/16th centuries: the Madman of U, the Madman of Tsang and Drukpa Kunley himself, sometimes known as the Madman of Bhutan.

The contemporary lama and celebrated filmmaker Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche advocates similar careful scrutiny in *The Guru Drinks Bourbon?*, his guide on how to approach a Vajrayana master. “The ‘experience of great spontaneity’ is one of the great Dzogchen terms,” he writes, “but these days many lamas, especially the younger ones, become so intoxicated by notions of ‘spontaneity’ and ‘unfabricated’ that the whole subject has become a joke. None of us really know what spontaneity is.” And he issues a warning about gurus who act as if they are beyond mundane concerns – even if they may have a degree of supernatural power. “They don’t care about benefitting sentient beings,” he advises, “They don’t care that their activities may end up harming or disillusioning someone.”

The Madmen of U and Tsang, we learn, both ate the brains from human corpses. They dressed up in the garb of wrathful deities, smearing their bodies with ashes, blood and fat, whilst wearing intestines as necklaces. Running the very real risk of being beaten up or killed, they would then go about in public and act provocatively, often deliberately cocking a snook at important people. DiValerio argues that such behaviour was specifically enjoined in tantric manuals under the rubric of the “practice of observance” (*brtul zhugs spyod pa*): part of the path of training for yogins who have “achieved heat” and often associated with the “practice of cutting” (*chod*). In other words, it was not spontaneous, but deliberate and self-conscious.

Drukpa Kunley, meanwhile, seems to have first earned the nickname of “mad” for simply abandoning monastic celibacy and taking a female partner and, later, for becoming a scabrous social critic. DiValerio distinguishes between a text known as his “dirty stories” or “secret biography” and four other volumes of his “miscellaneous writings”. The first forms the core of the influ-

ential modern biography, composed in 1966 by a Bhutanese scholar and then translated into English by Keith Dowman in 1982 as the popular *The Divine Madman: The Sublime Life and Songs of Drukpa Kunley*. The four “miscellaneous” volumes, according to DiValerio, reveal a very different sort of character: “highly astute and relatively conventional.”

Curiously, this revised version of Drukpa Kunley is uncannily reminiscent of Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche himself. Both were born into a form of *dharma* royalty. Both share the same slightly ambiguous mode of dress: Kunley describes himself as a “monastic householder” (*ser khyim pa*), just as Khyentse wears maroon robes and has a shaved head, whilst not actually being a monk. Kunley’s altercations with scholastic monks foreshadow Khyentse’s clashes with Oxford academics. Both are free-spirited wanderers – Kunley of the Himalayan regions and Khyentse of the modern, global *dharma* village of airports and internet – taking aim at hypocrisy wherever they find it and delighting us with their witty and provocative views on Tibetan Buddhist affairs.

They share similar targets: the rapaciousness of 15th century Tibetan lamas, for instance, is mirrored in the tale of a contemporary lama sending his brother to size up the assets of his western centre. Both rejoice in irony and self-deprecation: Kunley insists that he has no talent and is unqualified to teach the *dharma*; Khyentse unnerves his own students – his own “circle of groupies” – with his self-professed “fake humility”. The dedication of his book – “To all the charlatans – without you the spiritual journey would be just too boring” – is reminiscent of one of Drukpa Kunley’s proclamations: “I prostrate to those who exchange the dharma for wealth!”

Khyentse Rinpoche pays homage to Drukpa Kunley, for representing an alternative to the Buddha’s more mainstream disciples, those “serene, with bare feet and a begging bowl.” Yet, upon reflection, Khyentse seems personally less indebted to the lifestyle of the libertine rogue of popular tradition, than he is to a certain rhetorical and literary tradition represented by the more sober figure of DiValerio’s study. Khyentse’s wide-ranging and generous-spirited book should be both immensely helpful and highly stimulating to anyone negotiating the difficult route towards the outer, inner and secret guru. He is serious and passionate about devotion and truth,

whilst also being playful, teasing and contrarian: “The concept of ‘healthy’ and ‘normal’ that a therapist is trying to nurture is probably exactly what the guru is trying to eradicate.”

He relishes the ambiguity of the whole situation. “People claiming to have guru devotion often tend to be mere sycophants,” he says at one point, whilst later pointing out that the pride probably involved in making such judgments about others “will only destroy us.” He acknowledges the possibility of making an offering of sex to the lama, but also says that “the likelihood of a guru who knows how to turn desire and passion into the path meeting a disciple who can handle it is almost zero, and the chances of one of them developing attachment are very high.” Once a student has taken initiation, he writes, “if you slander the guru, or even point out negative facts about the guru, it will destroy the seed of your pure perception,” whilst later including sections on how to disagree with or withdraw from the guru.

A word, in conclusion, about Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, the contemporary “crazy wisdom” lama, *par excellence*. Khyentse admires and praises him for his effectiveness in bringing so many people to the *dharma*. “Are there any serene, gentle monastics from [his] generation who have accomplished this much in the West? I’m still looking,” he writes. DiValerio, whilst acknowledging Trungpa’s many achievements, strikes a characteristically scholarly note of caution. He is not aware of any source for the actual term “crazy wisdom” (*ye shes ’chol ba*) and quotes the Dalai Lama as saying this is “new vocabulary”. What Trungpa created, he concludes, “must be seen as his own formulation, despite his claim that he was conforming to tradition.” ©

# Buddhahood in This Life

## The Great Commentary by Vimalamitra

Translated by  
Acharya Malcolm Smith  
Foreword by  
Chogyi Nyima Rinpoche  
Edited by Michael Tweed  
and Osa Karen Manell  
Wisdom Publication, 2016

Jacqueline Gens  
Tsegylgar East  
Nearing Winter Solstice, 12.21.16

Some fifty years ago as many of us were awakening to the profound teachings of the Buddha in our youth, there were few resources to educate oneself in our own native languages – a handful of popular books here and there; then the advent of Asian trained Masters engaging the first generation of Westerners coming into contact with them. They too were often in need of translators to communicate the full transmission as they had received in their training.

Then, don't forget, there was no Internet, to research and acquire texts from online venues as today. One had to rely solely on the happenstance of finding texts and commentaries in neighborhood bookstores, libraries and academic library holdings. Beginning in 1968 for me, it seemed like following a crumb trail from book to book until I actually met a Teacher – each morsel an eye opening experience keeping the flame of my seeking alive.

Even more rare than commonly rare was an opportunity to meet with the teachings of the Great Perfection we call Dzogchen – either through publications or in person. Today, there are thousands of titles published in Western languages about Tibetan Buddhism. Amazon.Com currently lists 11,388 titles in English alone. Sophisticated translation projects and the promulgation of academic departments specializing in the entire trajectory of Buddhism from earliest Sutra to Dzogchen are flourishing. But foremost, there is the presence of authentic lineage holders to whom we can directly receive teachings from. With

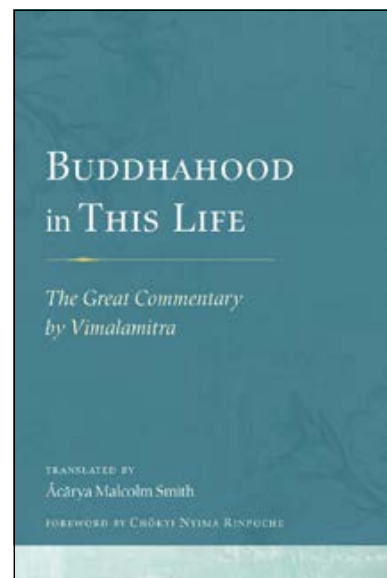


Malcolm Smith – Translator.

the continued advent of web technology, one can furthermore receive teachings from the armchair of your living room or in your pajamas, if you will, without the perilous travel of ancient times or the cost. How special is that!

I recollect once traveling with *Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* and a small group of us from Shang Shung Institute in May 2002 during his Cambridge, MA retreat to visit Gene Smith's famous archive before it moved to NYC. Rinpoche was very happy to receive digital MP3 of some texts by Mingyur Dorje. As many know, the late Gene Smith for decades collected rare Tibetan texts and created a digital archive now known as the Tibetan Resource Center. Riding in the car afterwards, Rinpoche commented that in Tibet it would have been almost impossible to receive such complete text copies. When discussing his own commentary on the *Dra Thalgyur* commentary he gave mostly in 2010, again I heard him speak of his arduous search for missing or alternate versions in order to compare the differing version and find the missing pieces while correcting many mistakes. In short, it is not so easy. Knowing this we pay homage to all (past and present) who carry the torch of rare knowledge forward unwavering in their resolve no matter what obstacles or hardships. For today we are the recipients of such a magnificent bouquet of knowledge as those who follow us will be too.

Still, a publication like *Buddhahood in This Life* is indeed a rare occurrence. It represents an important stream of treasure teachings, which for millennia were kept alive as an oral tradition embedded for later discovery as *Terma*, whose historical overview is given in the book's introduction. Largely secret, we now have direct access to these teachings in a manner un-



paralleled to previous generations. More importantly, we have direct transmission through the few living Masters linking the intellectual/historical context to our personal realization in "This" very life – the key to Vimalamitra's summation of the 17 Tantras in his great commentary. It is precisely this commentary that later inspired Longchenpa as it will, no doubt, us too.

As the world struggles in endless strife and disharmony, some refer to as the *Kali Yuga*, it seems that this moment in time presents a counterpoint for those fortunate to take an interest, let alone practice thoroughly. For individuals in the Dzogchen Community, especially those participating in Santi Maha Sangha Training, a text like *Buddhahood in This Life* will resonate with great familiarity among the many quotes and themes we have already been introduced to by our own Master, *Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* – an amazing scholar of uncommon depth and range whose Longsal teachings reveal the revivifying range of his own *Terma* in these times. Reading such a text in the mind stream of a living transmission like ours is quite different than mere intellectual or academic curiosity. We must never forget this. However, for those fortunate who have already received introduction, there is no question that one's understanding of the view will evolve. To be able to read in its entirety such an extraordinary text, which represents the earliest commentary on the 17 Upadesha Tantras organized cogently into eleven topics from the Basis to the Great Liberation, can only be considered a special circumstance.

Acharya Malcolm Smith's excellent introduction presents an important synopsis



## Collaboration: Manifestation of our Realization

Diane Kramer  
Tsegyalgar East Yellow Gakyil

In this article, we explore the importance of collaboration as both a necessary tool for the Dzogchen Community and individual evolution, and a marker pointing out our progress – or lack of it – towards realization.

As members of the International Dzogchen Community, all together we represent Rinpoche's mandala. The Community purpose is to help all members experience, stabilize and integrate with their authentic condition, the Dzogchen state, through the transmission, dissemination, preservation and practice of our Master's Dzogchen teachings. According to Rinpoche, as members realize this state, egotism, attachments and tensions subside. The ability to collaborate increases. A genuine compassion for others arises along with a particular love and respect for our Vajra brothers and sisters, in permanent relationship with us. It is as if we are all in the same boat, and all are working to get to the other side of a big body of water. In this boat, we share a common purpose and through collaboration, we can do everything needed to reach our goals.

However, all becomes difficult when our common purpose becomes background, personal problems become foreground and we stop collaborating. Rinpoche: "The aim



of traveling is arriving somewhere beyond that ocean. How then can they succeed? They must collaborate with each other, but if, after just two days of traveling on the ocean of samsara, they start fighting with each other and creating many problems, then they can never cross the ocean. **So each person is responsible for the journey of everyone else, which means that each one has his or her commitment toward all the travelers, not only toward some.**

It is understood that some of the Gars and Lings are better at collaborating to reach our common purpose than others. In those centers, members hold our common purpose as foreground. When disagreements occur, members work out their differences based on this common purpose. They are not so attached to their views. They find it easy to relax and let go of fixed positions in order to collaborate and work together toward a shared outcome.

What about those centers with more problems and more tensions? Rinpoche tells us: "Whenever there is a problem, the first thing people do is to try to find some-

one else to blame. They always say, 'I am innocent. I didn't do anything wrong. He or she is the guilty one...' If you are demonstrating that you have a problem with someone but claiming that it was created only by that other person, you should remember the famous teaching of Buddha that everything is interdependent. It is not possible that the other person is guilty and that you are innocent. ...the most important thing is to observe yourself to see what you did wrong and what you intend to do instead. There is the possibility to correct and also to change. Even if there are some difficult situations you can modify them... It is extremely important to collaborate and try to be open with each other, communicate and try to help each other."

Rinpoche goes on to state that at some centers, members discuss and argue and get angry at each other very easily. He says that after a half an hour or one hour, each of us should notice that we were not being respectful. Instead, becoming aware of our own need for respect as an example, we should find ways to pay respect to, and not create problems for, others.

*What does Rinpoche suggest as solutions when there are too many problems and tensions, instead of collaboration and increased realization?*

Keep our common interest or shared purpose in the foreground as you weigh what is better for the community. Do not take an immovable position.

Learn to relax tensions and keep an open flexible mind.

When conflict and anger intensify, do not blame. Instead, turn inward to notice your ego mind and integrate more with your real nature.

Learn to work with circumstances within the context of shared purpose instead of ego needs. Ego needs include du-

» continued on the following page

» *Buddhahood continued*

of the historical and linguistic context with great subtlety. I especially loved his exegesis on the various Sanskrit and Tibetan terms for "mind," a theme I have become increasingly interested these days, as I get older. Furthermore, with his editors he has managed to illuminate the deeper meanings for those who already have an introduction by employing language, which rises above the cursory pedantic sometimes characteristic among these Upadesha texts to a refinement waxing poetical at times.

Equally useful was the bibliography of texts quoted and a Tibetan language equivalent glossary at the end.

As I am ill informed about current trends in Translation, while reading the text, still I was so amazed at the judicious translations into English. For instance, "Dzogchen" becomes the "Great Perfection" so simple really to employ that designation rather than the cumbersome word many can not pronounce properly, especially new people. I could include many fine quotes here but I would like to respect the samaya aspects

of these teachings. If you can afford to get the book or join up with some friends and purchase it together, you won't be sorry!

The careful attention to detail is an act of loving generosity. The entire book itself is artful with excellent production value Wisdom Publications is so well known for.

In praise, I say, to quote the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas themselves, "Well Done, Well Done." ©

# The Illusion of 'We' And 'They'

Elio Guarisco

On the plane to Warsaw

On the 20th, 21st and 22nd of October 2016, the Italian city of Milan hosted the visit of H.H. the Dalai Lama. An ancient prophecy about the Dalai Lamas said that the fourteenth would be an actual manifestation of love and altruism, what Buddhists call *bodhichitta*. True to this prophecy wherever he goes this exceptional being exemplifies this principle with his behavior and speech in a way that opens the hearts of whoever has the fortune to meet him.

The following day, the 23rd, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who was invited to attend His Holiness' teachings, paid an informal visit to Dribsel Ling, the place of the Dzogchen Community in Milan. One of the very first things he said in response to various questions people posed to him was, "The Dalai Lama spoke a lot about *bodhichitta*. I have always taught about the importance of collaboration..." This parallel that Rinpoche made somewhat stroke a note in my mind, 'The term collaboration often used by Rinpoche is his way of expressing the principle of love and altruism'. Judging by our behavior, not many of us are aware of this.

In this sense the term collaboration strips off the naive and idealistic connotation the idea of love and compassion have in the religious milieu, even the Buddhist one. Often we like to feel we are loving and altruistic, especially those who isolate themselves to train with thoughts, thinking of the reasons we need to care about and be kind to all beings since all beings have been our mothers and so forth. We create the mental category 'all beings' which actually, apart from being a nice idea, means nothing when it comes to relating to others in our real daily life. In fact, we may still retain the idea 'all beings', but engage in malevolent actions to destroy the livelihood of our



neighbor, for example, without the slightest doubt that he or she is not 'all beings'. When we are in a protected environment we can entertain such ideas and feelings with a certain degree of success and feel that we are really good persons, religious, kind, caring for others and somewhat different from self-interest driven ordinary beings. But as soon as we are out of our protected environment, when we need to struggle for our livelihood, when we must discuss delicate matters with others, when it comes to sharing gains, and in the other countless situations and circumstances of our life, the nice idea of 'all beings' collapses into nothing, and our ordinary self with its egoism, aversion, pride and jealousy emerges as strong as before. Even worse, in some people this produces a sense of inadequacy and they think, "I have tried hard to be a better person, and done so much to be a kind person, now here I am in my old self."

This impasse comes about because we do not translate into concrete action the nice ideas about love and altruism we have that, in a sense, are really valuable. Collaboration is the way to test ourselves and to train concretely in love and altruism. It is the ground on which principles become lived realities.

But why it is so difficult to collaborate with others? Because we are closed in our cocoon of self-interest and self-concern. We almost never come out of that cocoon. We remain in it asserting our superiority, the priority of our needs, of our pain,

of our happiness, as if the needs of others, the pain of others, the happiness of others are less important. We spend our lives in this way and it is actually psychologically very exhausting and consumes all our energies. Our energies could be spent in a more fruitful way.

When will we come to the point of saying, "That is it! I have had enough of that self-concern," and drop it, as we would an old worn out piece of clothing? Remaining totally unconcerned about our self, our image, about other's expectations, our expectations, it would be so relieving, refreshing, relaxing, liberating. We would act spontaneously not motivated by attachment or aversion in what would be a vast dimension of space where every minute of our life is meaningful for ourselves and for others.

It is interesting and educational to watch our mind as it relates to others doing things. It often happens that when others are carrying out a task, instead of selflessly participating in contributing in any way we can, we stand aside looking and criticizing, "It could be done in a different way", "It should have been done before", "It should be done later", "It should be done in a different place", "He or she is not the right person to do that", "Things should have been done spending less money", "Things should have been done spending more money" and so on and so forth. Sometimes we even hope for the failure of their enterprise, so that at the end we can say, "You see, I was right from the beginning".

It is also interesting to watch our mind on the rare occasions we do work with others on accomplishing a task or a project. We start off with our own ideas of how things should be done. Of course others in our team also have their ideas. Inevitably we clash. This brings about endless discussions which of course cannot resolve the issue in question, because the issue is not on a real thing but on what is going on in our mind which is actually totally unrelated to that task or project we are trying to accomplish.

The endless discussions create enmity toward those who are against our points

» Our Realization continued from previous page  
ality needs for control, for approval, for importance and for security.

Learn to notice your own disrespect for someone and re-establish respect as a way of furthering the shared purpose of evolution to full realization.

At Tsegyalgar East, we are following Rinpoche's request that our entire Dzogchen Community collaborate more and reduce tensions. To this end, the Gakyil has created a five-year Strategic Plan to align all members with our common purpose and direction. The Yellow Gakyil will meet with

members in small groups to present the Plan and get feedback.

With this strategy, and others, we expect to experience and demonstrate a higher level of collaboration. We will inform the reader of the results in a later edition of the Mirror. ©



of views, and intimacy for those who agree with us. In this way we create groups and clans, and this mode expresses itself in the way we speak of 'we', 'they', 'we are right thinking...', 'they are wrong thinking...'. Instead of facilitating, this split into 'we' and 'they' makes the accomplishment of our task or project even more difficult. Such enmity can last for days, months, and even years, breeding hatred and thus making our relationships with others tense and uneasy. Sometimes proceeding in the task or project become so complicated that one does not really know anymore who is right and who is wrong, whether to take this way or the other way, ending up in total confusion.

If, trying to remain aware without letting our blood pressure rise, without letting ourselves be carried away by the distracting energy of the dispute, we examine where all the confusion and problems start, we can see that underneath our initial ideas of how things should be done, there is a lot of personal stuff, such conscious or unconscious drives of different natures, all related to liking and disliking, personal ambitions, jealousy, desire for power, desire to be acknowledged and praised and so forth. And this is true for the ideas of others, too. These are drives that clash, that create disputes and confusion. But they can be recognized at any time - at the beginning, after a while, or at the end. But we should try not to delay recognition because in the meantime tension builds up, and the more it remains, the more it is difficult to untie.

There are two ways in which we can deal with this impasse: the authoritarian way and with awareness. In the authoritarian way someone takes the lead disregarding the opinions of others, and in some cases this may even be justified when other opinions are too confused and threaten the positive outcome of our task and project. But it should not become the rule because this creates enmity, makes others feel excluded, produces resentments and enmities, and breeds destruction instead of growth, so if we really care about others we should at least try to prevent this from happening.

But by far the best way, albeit not always applicable, but a way to definitely train in is the way of awareness in which, while confronting oneself with other opinions, we keep a corner of our mind looking at itself, in a way that we can 'distance' ourselves just a little, a 'distance' sufficient to

distinguish clearly what is real from our mind creations, what is factual from our conscious and unconscious drives. When we are able to do this, when we recognize clearly the creations of our mind as if they were old friends, we are half-liberated. This is what we mean by 'clarity', not a luminous state descending from somewhere, but the clarity that comes from recognizing the cloud of our mental distortions; this recognition leaves space for clarity. With the clarity in which we see our drives, also comes an understanding of others, which is a kind of compassionate affection that, seeing how they are conditioned like us, prevents our mind from entering into passing heavy judgments on them, and even allows us to recognize qualities we hardly see in others, but that they do have.

When this happens, we experience an inner calming of the turbulence, accompa-

nied by a renewed sense of being positively related with others. And even if, in the course of our task or project, others have offended us in the past, even if others have abused us in the past, we can overcome the trace of the feeling of having been hurt.

A renewed understanding between others and us is born in a ground of confidence and trust. I believe that it is only on this ground that we can really give the opportunity to a sense of love and altruism, which is not artificially constructed by thought training, to spring forth from within, and allow it to grow day by day.

That is why Collaboration, 'catching oneself when relating to others,' is so important not only for accomplishing tasks or projects smoothly but in order to allow the mist that overshadows our real good nature to dissolve and that good nature to blossom. ©



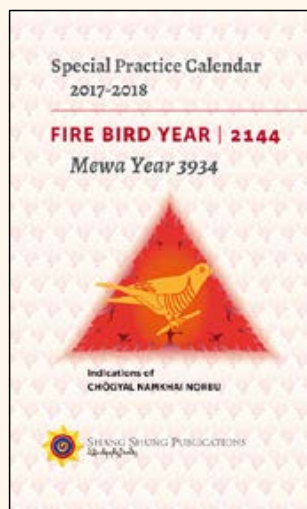
SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS  
ཤང་ཤུང་པུ་བསྒྲུབ་ཁྲིམས་ལུགས་

## Special Practice Calendar for the Fire Bird Year

The *Special Practice Calendar for the Fire Bird Year* (2017–2018) is now available from the webshop of Shang Shung Publications in two versions – a printed edition and a downloadable PDF, both available from Shang Shung Publications <http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com/en/>

The *Special Practice Calendar* was first compiled by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu many years ago and contains his indications for each special day in the lunar year. In addition to describing specific practices for Padma-sambhava Day, Dakini Day, and full and new moon, this calendar covers anniversaries of many masters from the Buddhist and Bön traditions in Tibet who are also connected with the Dzogchen transmission.

This booklet is conceived as a companion to the *Tibetan Calendar* published annually for Tibetan New Year (Losar) and containing detailed astrological aspects such as elements and major and minor combinations.



# All About Harmonious Breathing

An Interview with Fabio Andrico  
December 22, 2016



**The Mirror:** Fabio, since the system of Harmonious Breathing is essentially something you proposed, can you tell us about its origins?

**Fabio Andrico:** Yes. Sometime ago I tried to find a way to help people understand breathing more in depth and find some way to help people have an experience of what we call the fluid breathing in Yantra Yoga. For people who have absolutely no experience at all, fluid breathing is not necessarily so easy. I have seen that most people find it very difficult to have a basic understanding of how to breathe from below coming up, as it is indicated in the instructions from the text of Vairocana for the Nine Breathings. We have the example of pouring water in a bottle, meaning we should breathe in starting from below and moving up and breathe out in the reverse way.

In reality, it started some time ago in Margarita (Venezuela) when people who had no experience of Yantra Yoga at all, people who could not do Yantra Yoga, or were just new, approached me and wanted to understand what the kumbhaka was. I understood that it was essential that they needed to understand the correct way to inhale, otherwise it would be quite complicated. So for that reason, I tried to find a way for people who do not necessarily do Yantra, who have no possibility, no capacity, maybe they are too old, or their body has some obstacles, or maybe simply they do not want to do Yantra Yoga, but they still want to understand about the breathing.

For that reason I tried to find ways to have people understand and have some kind of practical help to do that. My main understanding comes from the practice and teaching of Yantra Yoga, but before that I had also practiced some other forms of yoga. I tried to look into what I had also learned from other traditions, and find some simple exercises that would help people to have some kind of experience of a complete breathing that is smooth and fluid.

Since the time when I was just trying to help people understand the basics about breathing, the training has become a little more structured. For me these exercises are warm ups for the breathing, like the warm ups for the body. Now more and more and from many fields, from medical fields, wellness, stress control, etc., more and more there is a focus on the importance of breathing correctly. There is a focus on the importance of a deep breath, of diaphragmatic breathing, and all the different action it has on our well being and our state of mind.

People have started to say that these kinds of exercises are helpful, they are nice to do, they are not difficult, and so slowly we started to structure the training because more and more people were interested. I also started to teach people to help other people to learn. After that came the idea of a website ([www.harmoniousbreathing.com](http://www.harmoniousbreathing.com)) where people can learn through the website, so now there is also this website managed by Patrizia Pearl.

The Harmonious Breathing project is still a work in progress, and we will see where it is going. I do not have a particular intention and I insist that for me it is a method to help people apply a harmonious and full breath correctly, possibly relaxed and free of tension, and this is something that is good for everyone. It can be especially useful for people who cannot do Yantra Yoga. I consider it this way: it is a method to have a more complete, fluid, harmonious, tension free breathing. In my experience it is something that can bring benefit without thinking it is such a magical thing. Breathing, we have to breathe, so instead of breathing in a strange, tense, and fragmented way, we can breathe in a normal, more coordinated and fluid way. I am sure that breathing this way is definitely better.

**M:** There are now many systems of breathing being researched and applied. In what way do you see this system as having particular benefit?

**FA:** As I said before, in terms of Yantra Yoga I see this system as something like a warm up for the breathing, the same as a warm up for the body. And if someone does not do Yantra Yoga, and breathing exercises are the only thing they can do, it can surely bring some benefit. Also when I teach the breathing I always teach some simple warm ups for the body because it is interdependent. In order to breathe correctly you always need to have a good posture, for example, of the spine, so some simple warm ups can help. My idea is that this breathing technique is something really simple. The basic routine of harmonious breathing can be done by anyone, because it can also be done with some support, and there are also some static positions that can help with tension in the back. It is not Yantra Yoga at all, but it can be useful for people who are not doing many things because they might feel it is too difficult or intimidating. Harmonious Breathing is not trying to create an alternative, not at all, it is something that gives more possibility.

Of course, my understanding of the process of the respiration comes absolutely from the practice of Yantra Yoga. What I see, and therefore really believe, is that when we apply the breathing in the way it is explained in Yantra, inhaling from below up and exhaling from top to bottom, that this is the closest thing to the spontaneous movement of respiration that I know of. Without wanting to criticize anything, since different systems have different goals, the purpose of Breathe (Harmonious Breathing) is to deconstruct the conditioning of the breath, and therefore allow it to be as spontaneous and natural as possible. That in reality is the real purpose; allowing the breath to move in a spontaneous and fluid way. And I truly believe that anyone who can do that will have some kind of benefit.





Fabio Andrico.

**M:** Have you had any feedback about how harmonious breathing impacts people's practice of Yantra Yoga?

**FA:** I don't know how to really answer that because Yantra Yoga is a complete system in itself. The point is, if you do Yantra Yoga once every six months and you think you can have some benefit, then it is complicated. I don't think Harmonious Breathing could ever be an alternative.

**M:** I did not mean as alternative, I am wondering if Harmonious Breathing enhances the practice of Yantra Yoga.

**FA:** Well I insist that if you use warm ups for the body and the breathing exercises are warm ups for the breathing, and if these two forms of warm ups help, then it can help. Every time I do a course I do this serious joke, Yantra is a fantastic system with one big flaw...if you don't do it, it doesn't work. That is very simple.

**M:** Some people are confused about the nature of harmonious breathing and if it is inside the system of Yantra Yoga, and if it is related to the transmission or not. Therefore there is some confusion as to who can be trained to become an instructor of Harmonious Breathing and how. Can you clarify that?

**FA:** No, Harmonious Breathing is not related to Yantra Yoga or the transmission. My experience of Yantra Yoga and my desire to try and help people understand how to breathe correctly in order to be able to do other things, led me to find a way to do that and that is the origin of the Harmonious Breathing.

**M:** So if someone wants to learn Harmonious Breathing or to receive training to become an instructor, can you clarify how people can access the training to do it and/or to teach it?

**FA:** I have been training people to teach Harmonious Breathing and then the instructors can apply it however they want to once they are trained. As I have said, one Teacher's Training is not really enough and it takes a little time, but in these times we are always rushing things. Once the people are trained, they are free. Of course, if the instructor is also an instructor of Yantra

Yoga, I hope they understand the reason they are applying it and that doing it is still related to the work done with Yantra Yoga, therefore they still might want to contribute to the Dzogchen Community.

For example, in the statute of the Harmonious Breathing website ([www.harmoniousbreathing.com](http://www.harmoniousbreathing.com)) where the breathing is taught on line, it is written that a certain percentage goes to the Dzogchen Community. That was the idea, that the website could be something that people from the Community could do that is something commercial and also of benefit to people. Maybe instead of going to make pizzas or selling houses, someone would prefer to teach something to help coordinate our breath and at the same time having some benefit for the person who is teaching, some benefit for the recipients and also for the Community.

**M:** Are there any other related materials available besides courses and the website?

**FA:** I have written a book which should be available soon that explains the theory and practice of Harmonious Breathing, also offering warm ups, exercises and routines. This book will be distributed by Shang Shung Editions. There will also be some routines available on the website, to use for practice purposes and, in the near future, to supplement learning on the website and through live courses.

**M:** Thank you Fabio. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**FA:** Let's breathe well!

©



## THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the  
International

Dzogchen Community of  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

US Office: [mirror@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:mirror@tsegyalgar.org) • European Office: [lizgranger.mirror@gmail.com](mailto:lizgranger.mirror@gmail.com) • Editorial Staff: Naomi Zeitz, Tsegyalgar, Conway, MA, USA • Liz Granger, Merigar West, Arcidosso, Italy • Advisor: Adriano Clemente • Special Advisor: Yuchen Namkhai • International Blue Gakyil Advisor: Libor Maly • International Publications Committee English Language Advisor: Liz Granger • Design & Layout: Thomas Eifler • Webmasters: Yuchen Namkhai and Luigi Ottaviani • Available at [melong.com](http://melong.com) • Online Mirror: [www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com) • All material © 2017 by The Mirror • Reprint by permission only • We reserve the right to edit all submissions.

# Artists in the Dzogchen Community

## Federico Herrero

**M**y name is Federico Herrero. I am from Costa Rica where I live and also practice with the Sangha in the small Dekyitling. The first time I met the teaching was when Jim Valby came to San Jose in 2004 for a retreat and that's how the beautiful journey began for me.

The first time I met Rinpoche in person was in 2007 in Argentina over December for a wonderful retreat. We celebrated New Years Eve with the Sangha. I remember being so shy and didn't know how to react to his presence in the Gönpa, I remember he made eye contact and I was very, very shy and I looked down. My friend Gloriana (Titi) told me to just be myself and that he would just be a mirror of me, and that made me relax a lot from that moment until now.

I am an artist. I do paintings on canvases and murals with abstract and colorful



Painting in my studio in Belen, Costa Rica in 2016.

perfect start for a shape to follow instead of a problem to solve. I use improvisation as a working method. In 1917 Duchamp first talked about the notion of the ready-made. I like how that's similar to the notion of direct introduction with the teaching. I love art and it has been a gift to be able to ap-

I grew up going to a Catholic school, but these types of religious institutions didn't mean a lot in terms of spirituality for me. It was in other places, especially doing my art and listening to music, that I found it, and also through developing a rich imagination and fantasy, which I exercised a lot, and still, today, this has been my gate for spirituality.

The color class was one of my favorite and where I learned a lot; I studied in New York at an art school, the Americans have developed the study and notion of color through art extremely well and this became a passion for me to explore. There is something I like about color that is always relative to the color it has next to it, it is constantly changing as its' context and surroundings are constantly changing.

The art of Matisse, for example, has been a great inspiration and resource, and one of my favorite painters is Chilean born Roberto Matta, he was one of the surrealist group together with Dali, Duchamp and Breton, among others. He starts his paintings without any plan or sketch to follow but rather waits for the forms to come out of the canvas, and one form will lead to another, and it is also like letting the painting take control and the artist listens to it – that's the method I apply in my work.

My first international art exhibition was the Venice Biennale in 2001. I was very young, 21 years old, and this was my first experience in an exhibition of this type. It was an amazing experience and my work was presented together with some of the great masters, so for me it was mind-blowing. While there, I was introduced to a gallery in Madrid and one in Germany and



With Gloriana (titi) at the opening of my exhibition at Sies + Hoeke Galerie in Düsseldorf Germany in 2009.

landscapes; I get to travel internationally and this has been a blessing to get to know different cultures and always have new experiences. My favorite painting is the Mandala by Rinpoche where we practice the dance; a painting that you can dance on, to be experienced and have experiences... it is beautiful!

When painting I try to apply the teaching. I don't have a sketch or master plan to follow, but instead I work with the circumstances and the immediate feeling for the space, a crack on the wall might be the

proach art and practice together and find connections between them.

There were no artists in my family besides my grandmother, who makes ceramics in a more decorative way. I was more interested in modern art and Cubism and abstract art. I used to read some books at my grandmother's place when we went to visit her and there was my first discovery of painters like Monet, Miro, Cezanne, Picasso and more contemporary ones and I felt connected to an art history family tree; I felt a place where I belong in this family tree.





"Landscape". Public wallpainting commission for the city of Medellín Colombia in 2008.

since then I started to show my work in many countries.

Before Venice I came back to Costa Rica from New York because I dropped the studies and at that time I had no intentions to belong to the art world. I felt more interest to isolate myself and just work without communicating with the rest of the world, that was more appealing to me at that moment, but a famous art curator saw my art and invited me to Venice and my whole life changed.

So it has been great getting to know very different cultures and meeting new people all the time. That is one of the things about my work that I love the most, always there is something new and surprises are coming all the time, there is nothing fixed, and things keep changing and shifting positions. The art world today is a wonderful accumulation of energy; it's going through a very fertile time. Some of the countries where I have done exhibitions or murals are Italy, Japan, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Singapore, Moscow, Hong Kong, Iceland, Brazil, Mexico, US, Panama, Guatemala,

la, Cuba, Alaska, Argentina among others, and I hope to get to know more places in the future. Traveling a lot and being a good

The teaching has impacted my work and my life making it possible for me to relax and enjoy everything that happens and to



"Letters and numbers"  
2005, 250 x 200 cm,  
oil, acrylic, permanent  
marker and spray  
paint on canvas.

observer of everything has impacted my art. My artwork may develop in the future related to sounds or music and a lot of telephonic paintings.

enjoy without attachment and to be happy without suffering. I feel so grateful to Rinpoche for being so kind to us and having so much love for us. ©

# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Rabjyi

Gekö of Dzamling Gar

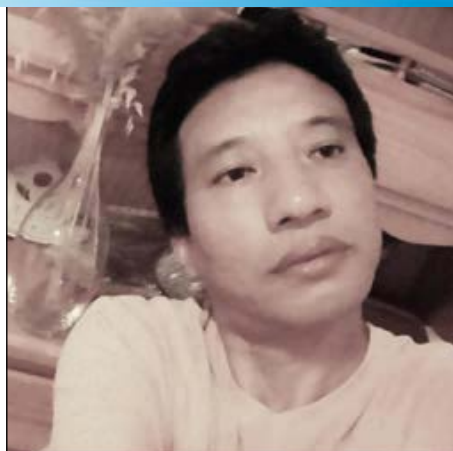
I was born in Golok. My family was very nomadic and we moved every season, four or five times a year chasing the pasture for the animals. I had 4 brothers and 3 sisters. I am the second youngest and my family chose me to be a monk and I entered a small Nyingmapa monastery in my village when I was 7 years old. I did not really have any idea how the monastery would be, but my father and mother encouraged me very much because they thought the monk's life is the best.

My mother's family were very good practitioners. My mother's brother died in a Chinese prison and when he died his body shrunk until it was very small and they took it away on some kind of plate. They thought I was connected somehow to him so my family and the monastery gave me some responsibility.

When I first went to the monastery, I didn't know Tibetan very well, but then I learned many things. They gave me this conch shell, this is the first thing you learn as a monk. After that you learn the horn, tsatong, and then they gave me the job of making *tormas*. I can make very good *tormas* because I did three years of *torma* making. Then after a while my brother wanted me to change the monastery because I was just learning ritual things, so I went to Tarthang monastery in Golok, which was a college, and I started to learn philosophy and also how to do practice.

My father died when I was very young so my older brother became more responsible for my family. My brother is a very good practitioner and very dedicated to dharma, and he disciplined me very much.

So I have a kind of broken story. I was very, very naughty. My family thought I was too wild or disturbed or whatever; I was not a good monk. So they sent me to another Dzogchen master, who has now passed away. I followed him for 6 years. I would carry a small backpack and we traveled in the mountains. He had pretty much renounced everything. He was around 60 years old, and I lived with him, sleeping in the caves and we had a small tent. He was a very special kind of person, he never slept, he never lay down, he always had a



prayer wheel and mala, chanting mantras. We only had *tsampa* to eat.

Being with him was a teaching, but I also received *ngondro* and *tsalung* practices from him. He was a *tummo* practitioner, and he was very good with *kumbhaka*. Because of this he never needed blankets, he was not cold, he did not need anything. At this time I was around 15 or 16 years old.

He was a very different kind of person than my teachers were in general. Sometimes he could be very rude. You could think, "Oh today I did something very good for my teacher, maybe he will be very happy", but he was not happy, or sometimes I would make a big mistake and he would not be so upset. He was unpredictable. If he was upset and you talked with him, he would turn away and ignore you. He was not only that way with me, but with everybody. He was also a very good doctor; he did moxa and gave many medicines. In the summertime we would go with him and collect herbs from the mountains and dry them under the shed.

After being with him for so many years and also practicing, I calmed down. I became a very soft person. Slowly I developed a dedication to the practice and I liked him very much. Then his teacher, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsog, asked him to come back and teach at the nunnery at Larung Gar Buddhist Institute so we moved there and he had only a small very old wooden house. You could see the outside through the walls. I could not stay there because of the rule of the monastery. I was in my early 20's at this point.

Then I went to college to study seriously. I was still a monk. I had taken vows when I was about 9 or 10 years old. Then I became

a good monk. My teacher, this Dzogchen master, was a very good monk, not a yogi. Then I studied and one of my other teachers gave me the gekö's job when I was 21. This was a big monastery where they collect the names of 15 or 20 monks, put them all in a vase, do *naggon* practice, and the names that come up, they are the gekö. My name came up but I really did not want to do it. So I ran away.

I went to central Tibet, to Lhasa. I went by bus and train. Then I went to Samye monastery, the first monastery Padma-sambhava built, and I went to the Samye Chimpu, where Padmasambhava did lots of meditation. I stayed there and around in the caves and did a 3-month pilgrimage. When I went back home, they still had no gekö, and they were waiting for me. Then my brother and mother were all upset with me and said I had to go to the monastery and apologize to the head of the monastery and whatever he says you should do, and you should confess. So usually a gekö does 2 years but he punished me and I had to do 4 years. I was around 25 or 26 when I finished. Then my teacher told me I had to organize and build a temple. The temple was too small for the monastery and they wanted a bigger one. I was responsible together with another two monks and I did that for almost 3 years.

Then I ran away again. This time I went to India. I walked from Lhasa to Kathmandu, Nepal. It took 59 days to walk there and 58 people went. Nobody knew where I had gone, if I was dead or alive. When we left Tibet it was incredibly cold in the mountains. Also you cannot carry food for one month on your back. Those are the problems, food and cold. Mostly food. The oldest was a 68 year-old nun and the youngest was a 7 year-old girl. She was an orphan and some relatives sent the guides, some money to take her and put her in His Holiness the Dalai Lama's school. She could not walk so we carried her on our shoulders.

So when I got to India I received so many letters because I had not finished the temple and my teachers pressured my family so much and my family sent so many letters and then I thought maybe I should go back. Then when I was getting ready to go back, I met Rinpoche in 2000.

He gave a retreat at the Vajra Hotel in Kathmandu, Nepal but I did not go. One of my friends, Narong, had met Rinpoche a long time ago and one day he came to my place. Narong said, "Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is here, and we should visit him." I



said, "No it is too hot, I don't want to go out". Narong said, "Come on, I already bought a *katak*", he had bought one for me and another friend. Then we went there, three of us: Narong, Lodoe and me. We were three monks and all Nyingmapa, from the same region of Golok.

When we entered his room we offered the *kataks* to Rinpoche. He was very kind and showed us the Santi Maha Sangha program. He had everything in his computer and he showed us all the Santi Maha Sangha teachers, and all the Yantra Yoga programs, Vajra Dance. Then he showed us pictures of all the Gars and how he gave the names, some related to history and most related to his dreams. We stayed with him for a couple of hours. Then we said this Santi Maha Sangha book is very interesting, maybe also for Tibetans because he had collected the essence of so many important Tantric and Sutric teachings together. At the end of the time he asked us individually what we were planning to do and asked if we were interested in Santi Maha Sangha. When we didn't answer he told us to go home and think about it and come back and see him the following day.

We went back home and we discussed and discussed. I thought a lot but did not come to a conclusion. Then the next day we went back and we three said that we would do the Santi Maha Sangha study program. Then he said he would make a program with us somewhere in a Western country. He said he would check with some of his students and one of them was Mark Farrington. Rinpoche sent us his email address and said he would be responsible for us. Mark sponsored us for our studies and then contacted a woman called Vicky who worked for an embassy in Nepal and she helped us rent a house and found us a place to study English and we stayed in Nepal until 2003. We waited for more than 3 years. Then in 2003 we flew to Australia. Mark met us at the airport. I was so happy to see him. So then I took a bus directly from the airport to Namgyalgar. I went to Gawaling, Rinpoche's house at Namgyalgar, and Rinpoche was there. Then we received the *lung* for the Santi Maha Sangha base level book and we promised to study for one year.

During our time there we had some problems with the Community – we were coming very fresh from Tibet so the cultures did not work together so my friends decided they did not want to stay. We had this dream that once we came to the West

everything would be great, but it was not like that. So in that way my friends left. I did not want to go because, for one thing, we had made a promise to Rinpoche and, to be honest, I did not know where to go.

Then I stayed in Namgyalgar by myself for 6 months. Then the *gekō* left and I was the only one in Namgyalgar. It was quite enjoyable. Then Jean Mackintosh came back and acted like my mother, she was very kind to me. If not for Jean, I would not have gotten Australian citizenship.

The Santi Maha Sangha scholarship finished after one year. Then Jean found some sponsors and I got a job teaching to children in a primary school that taught about all religions. I needed a translator from English to English because my accent was so strong, my pronunciation was bad and also my grammar. After 2 or 3 years of living in Australia I received a permanent visa.

In 2004 I went back to Tibet, still a monk. In Australia I stayed a pure monk but then I thought it doesn't work to be a monk in the Western world. When I was in Australia we had to work doing karma yoga and all the work was kind of the opposite of my vows, it was negative for me, cutting grass and then so many insects would die. I didn't mind the work but it was the matter of my vows. People thought I was lazy. It was not working in the West. I decided I would go back and if I remained a monk I would stay in Tibet, and if I came back to Australia I no longer wanted to be a monk. These were my two choices.

So when I got to Tibet I went to see one of my teachers who was a very good practitioner and Dzogchen teacher. This teacher did *Tra*, a method of prophecy with a mirror or *melong*. He was very famous and many lamas came to him to ask many things. I told him I had met this teacher Namkhai Norbu and now I live in his center and he seems a very good and kind person, but I want to know who this person is for me. The other question is, should I go back to the West and give up my vows or stay here and be a monk.

I told my teacher that I wanted some clarity and whatever he said, I would do. I had no doubt. He used this *melong* and said, "Oh this is wonderful, the first question about Rinpoche the om ah hum came in the mirror." Immediately all my confusions and doubts disappeared. He also told me I should go back to the West, that I could help my monastery and my family, and for my life it was better. If I stayed in Tibet I would always be here and there

and there was not much concrete benefit for me.

I went back to Australia and finally Rinpoche came back in 2009. Before Rinpoche arrived Fabio called and said he could not come for a couple of days, so they asked me to stay in the house and care for Rinpoche and Rosa. I did not feel very confident to cook and care for Rinpoche. I was quite nervous and said I would try for one week.

Then Rosa asked me to go with them to Caloundra, Queensland. We stayed there with Rinpoche for one month. From that time I have stayed with Rinpoche. Rinpoche is really a very simple person and not the person I thought he would be. Anything you cook and put on the table he enjoys and says it is perfect. Also Rosa is very simple and I like very much to be with them. It is not so difficult.

In 2012 I came to Tenerife and we lived in La Caleta and that is when Khaita started. Adriana and I danced all night in front of Rinpoche. Then we bought Dzamling Gar and they signed the contract. Then one day Rinpoche said, "Oh, we need a *gekō*, maybe Rabjyi can be the *gekō*." I did not think he was talking seriously. Then when Giovanni Boni came to the swimming pool for the key to the gate of Dzamling Gar, Rinpoche said, "Ok, now Rabjye is *gekō*, so you can give the key to him."

I have been serving Rinpoche since 2009. I don't need to receive a special teaching, because in every moment, he shows something. I tell people this really from my heart – Rinpoche is an example for us in human form, living in the world. In 2009 in Namgyalgar I offered Rinpoche my body, speech and mind and whatever he wants me to do, I will do.

I am not in Tenerife for the weather or the beaches or the *gekō* salary. I am here to serve Rinpoche and work in a simple way. I am human and sometimes my mood is off and I show that, but the bottom line is that I really care about the Community. That is why I am here and that is what I feel. Really, Rinpoche is beyond ordinary concepts, beyond this materialism, he is beyond everything. Everything is perfect for him.

So this is my story. ©

*Rabjyi's Project*  
*Ta Yang Guardians*  
*For the little monks*  
[www.tayangguardians.com](http://www.tayangguardians.com)



THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

Every <sup>1</sup> reads  
The Mirror  
[www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com)



News from the International  
Dzogchen Community  
of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Read online at  
[www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com)