



# THE MIRROR

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SMS 1 Level Training  
The Dzogchen Community Is Like A Family  
The Dzamling Gar Houses  
Paradise At Our Fingertips  
Interview with Chinese Rock Star Zheng Jun



INTERNATIONAL  
DZOGCHEN  
COMMUNITY





## Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Photo: P. Fassoli

### 2017

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  
Chülden of Guru Amitayus

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

Singapore  
November 3–5, 2017  
Singapore Retreat

Australia  
Namgyalgar  
November 10–14, 2017  
Namgyalgar Retreat

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

Colombia  
December 15–17, 2017  
Bogota Retreat

Spain, Tenerife  
December 18, 2017  
Leave for Tenerife

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Front cover: A detail from Rinpoche's garden at  
Dzamling Gar, Tenerife.

Back cover: *We do dig holes!* Igor from the garden  
team helping to dig a hole for tree planting at  
Dzamling Gar. Photos by Alix de Fermor

# Editorial

## The New Gönpa at Dzamling Gar – Let's Finish by 2018!

*"We have many things to do at Dzamling Gar, retreats, etc., and also I have many things to do, so it is very important that when we are together we do not forget and we remember that here in Dzamling Gar we say, 'It is very nice in Dzamling Gar, you should come here in a relaxed way', and we enjoy. We can enjoy, but at the same time we should remember there are many things to do here in order to develop Dzamling Gar. So we must take responsibility for that in the Dzogchen Community, basically, in each place. We have many Gars and Lings and they have their Gakyils; these Gakyils are responsible for these places."*

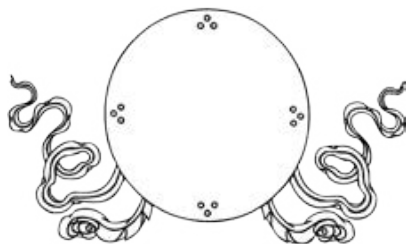
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Mirror. From a talk to the new Dzamling Gar gakyil, March 4, 2014.

It seems that more than ever, there is a certain urgency behind the construction of the new Gönpa at the seat of the international Dzogchen Community at Dzamling Gar. As the gardens flourish and the Gar houses near completion, a most pivotal structure still needs to rise up from the concrete slabs and offer a much needed space for all practitioners.

*"As you know, we need to build a Gönpa so we do not have to remain in a temporary structure like this tent for many years. Two years have already passed like this. So we are trying to build a Gönpa."*

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Mirror website. 'The Garland of Jewels That Connect Us'. August 11, 2016.

Giovanni Boni, Benedetta Tagliabue and a team of architects have been working and



reworking designs for the new Gönpa based on financial concerns and local building codes. [see page 41] There have been some bureaucratic obstacles, but they feel hopeful these will soon be resolved and the new Gönpa will be ready by 2018.

In a recent issue of the Mirror, # 133, Enrico Dell'Angelo reminded us that time is going quickly and we should act now while the conditions are favorable.

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

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

Rinpoche established the main Gars as centers of practice, a refuge for the practitioner, a place where we can study, work, practice, dance and enjoy together in a world that is increasingly more challenging to navigate.

In the same editorial Enrico summarizes:

*"These [in the symbol of the international Dzogchen Community] represent the Gars that have the following five qualifications. They are places where:*

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

There are many ways to contribute to the realization of the Dzamling Gar Gönpa: through donations, Evolution Creations, creating collaborative financial activities and actual hands on labor, as well as practice.

The hope is that the Gönpa will be completed by 2018. In the Dzamling Gar Update on page 41, Benedetta Tagliabue, one of the main architects of the project, declares:

*"I really hope the process will not stop and that this permission will arrive very soon, and then we will be able to go directly from preparing the existing structure towards reinforcing and then going on with the construction. So we hope in 2018 to inhabit the new Gönpa, and we go on to make the new Gönpa as fantastic as it can be!"*

The Mirror also holds the great hope that by 2018 we will be reporting on the glorious inauguration of a new international practice temple at Dzamling Gar, Playa Paraiso, Tenerife, Spain. ©

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Photo by Ralf Plüschke

# SMS I Level Training

Day 1 (SMS First Level Training)  
Introduction  
July 13–17, 2012, Tsegylgar East

Good evening everybody. This is the first day of the Santi Maha Sangha training, but today everybody is participating. I am only giving an introduction, not a particular teaching of Santi Maha Sangha. This is also the Day of the Dakini, so we also need to do a Ganapuja. Before we do a Ganapuja, I want to introduce what doing a retreat of Santi Maha Sangha means.

Many of you don't know what Santi Maha Sangha is. Why do many people want to do Santi Maha Sangha? Many people say it is because they want to be a teacher. Some people have this idea, but Santi Maha Sangha training or learning is not for becoming a teacher. If you have the intention to be a teacher from the beginning, that is very bad. That means you have less qualification. For example, many years after I arrived in Italy, many people asked me to teach. I told them I was a student, because I did not feel I was a teacher. I felt that I still wanted to learn and do practice, at least to realize something. So if you have that idea from the beginning, it is not good and it is better you don't do Santi Maha Sangha at all.

So it is better you have a little of the sense of what Santi Maha Sangha is. Santi Maha Sangha is the language of Oddiyana, not even Sanskrit. If we translate it, it means Dzogchen Community. Now you

can understand how the Dzogchen Community must be. How the people who are in Dzogchen Community must be. What the people should learn. This is why we are doing Santi Maha Sangha.

Basically, the Dzogchen Community is not any kind of organization, it is not a social organization, but we are living in society and society is limited. Social organizations exist, so dealing with that we also need to organize something. Then it seems that the Dzogchen Community is a kind of organization, but that is very relative.

You know very well when you follow Dzogchen Teachings, even if you are not doing Santi Maha Sangha, each time we do retreat I am explaining very well what Dzogchen is. Dzogchen means our real nature. The Dzogchen Teaching is for discovering that, for being in that state. How is our real nature? Our real nature is beyond limitations. Intellectually, when we are explaining, we say *khadag* and *lhundrub*; the non-dual state is the state of Dzogchen. That is the intellectual way.

Khadag means emptiness. Lhundrub means all its qualifications, movement and energy, because only emptiness has no value. Emptiness has infinite potentiality, that is our real nature. Even if it has infinite potentiality, it is not a mental concept or limited in time and space. That is beyond. So we are following that. We are trying to do that practice, trying to get in that state. If someone tries to be in that state, on that path for having that realization, then they are interested in the Dzogchen Community. Community means practitioners together; working together and collaborating with each other. They are not preparing a position thinking they have this position and someone else has that position. If you are interested in having positions, it is much better that you do something else. In our society there are so many ways to prepare a position.

But Dzogchen teachings are not a way to prepare a position. We should go beyond that. Even if we are not going beyond that kind of limitation concretely, we know that and we try to be mentally in the real sense in that state. That is our address and we know that. Relatively, of course, we need to respect all different kinds of dimensions and conditions, and that is called working with circumstances. I give many examples and explanations of that many times; not only in the base of Santi Maha Sangha. Each time we do a retreat and you are at the retreat or you are connected with the webcast, how many times have I explained that?

Last year when I did a retreat in Tenerife, the retreat of Dzogchen *thögal*, that was the 500th retreat I have done. I have a list, one by





one, of each retreat, on what date, in which place, and what I taught. So sometimes I remember how many retreats we did and how many times I have explained. Many times I am repeating again and again, and it seems that some people still do not know or listen. Sometimes I feel very surprised at how they cannot understand. I am thinking that. When I repeat many times even small children can understand. And some people say they are an old student, but if you are an old student you need to have that knowledge, that understanding. Old only has value like an old, good Brunello wine in Italy.

Brunello wine that is twenty or thirty years old is very expensive. But if you have followed the Dzogchen Teaching for twenty or thirty years and you are still not integrated or manifesting the real sense of Dzogchen, it is not good. For that reason we are doing Santi Maha Sangha. It is very important that people who already did Santi Maha Sangha manifest as if they did. It is not sufficient that you say that you did Santi Maha Sangha and your name is on the list. That has no benefit. If you did Santi Maha Sangha, you must manifest that. Santi Maha Sangha means the practitioner behaves in a perfect way in the Dzogchen teaching. They know the sense of the Dzogchen Teaching and have integrated that knowledge into their existence. That is what they should manifest; also in our daily life. I am trying to do that with Santi Maha Sangha. Santi Maha Sangha is for developing. Even if someone does not succeed completely, but they go ahead year after year, maybe something concrete develops.

I have already taught the Dzogchen teachings for more than thirty years in the Western world. So it is very important to understand the value of Santi Maha Sangha and then you try to follow. Some people say they did a very good examination. Even children can do an examination when they learn something in memory. That is good, it is much better than if you didn't learn at all. But that is not the main point. This is relative, very relative. The main point is that you integrate what Dzogchen is, what the knowledge of Dzogchen is, and then you manifest that with your body, speech and mind in daily life.

We can see, for example, that we have a Dzogchen Community. The Dzogchen Community means that many practitioners are collaborating with each other. You observe yourself, for example, how you collaborate with the Dzogchen Community. What you do? Which kind of idea do you have? What did you do? Observe a little.

For example, I feel I am teacher, but not only a teacher. I always feel part of the Dzogchen Community. For that reason I'm doing benefit for all, trying to do my best. Collaboration. Day and night, if it is necessary. I do that because I know that we are in the same boat in the Dzogchen Community. We are traveling to get final realization. If you belong to a family, for example, three sisters and three brothers, for example, and you are all living in a house together with parents, you collaborate. While you are in this family you need to eat and you need to live there. You need to respect each other. The Community is just like a family. You should feel that and you should help each other and collaborate.

But many people do not have this idea. They say they did Santi Maha Sangha but when the Community needs help or someone to take responsibility on the Gakyil, everyone says no. How are we collaborating now? Who is collaborating then? So sometimes

it is very sad that we have this kind of situation. If there is a new Dzogchen Community, only a few years, two or three years old, we think they do not yet know, they have still not learned. But if it has already been thirty years, almost thirty years, and still people are not collaborating, then what do we do? We only we have a little time in life. Today I am still alive, I give Dzogchen Teachings and I give to the Dzogchen Community.

I am alive now, but if we are still missing collaboration, what will happen when I disappear – will the Dzogchen Community still exist and how will the Dzogchen Teaching continue? When we know the Dzogchen Teaching then we know that it is very important, not only for Dzogchen practitioners, but for all sentient beings. Particularly for human beings. We have so many conflicts and so many problems. Dzogchen Teaching makes us understand we should liberate those tensions and that conflict. The unique way is to go beyond our mental limitations. This is the teaching and practice of Dzogchen. That is the unique way. Nothing else really exists. We always develop our tensions and problems.

The Dzogchen teaching has universal value. We know that and we need to protect it. We should develop. So for that reason I am sacrificing always. Some people say that I like to travel, for example. I do not really like traveling at all, but I know it is necessary. I cannot go everywhere but I can go to some main places, like a Dzogchen Community Gar. I always try to go. Today we also have the possibility of connecting with webcast. That is something very useful and very good for many people. But even with this kind of possibility, I still try to go around. Of course, when I'm not feeling well, or I have some problem on the physical level, I cannot go. But when I feel a little better, then I do my best for traveling, giving teachings, doing retreats, etc. So people who are interested must understand that. We don't know how many times we can repeat that. Our life is very short, but we do our best. We must know and think how important it is for our continuation into the future.

You see how many children we have in our Community! Not only our children, but also other people who are not participating in the teaching, somehow they must discover. They must wake up. No one likes to suffer and be limited continually. Remember how Buddha gave teaching. The First Noble Truth is the Truth of Suffering. That is normal. Everybody suffers. No one likes to suffer, but they don't know what the solution is. To overcome that, Buddha taught that suffering is an effect and has its cause, if you discover the cause and work with cause, there is the possibility to overcome. That is what Buddha taught.

In the same way, we know how our situation in society is. We are learning and we have that knowledge, the value of the Dzogchen teaching, etc. for that reason, we try to do our best for learning, if there is the possibility, just like with Santi Maha Sangha. Santi Maha Sangha is global. There is something we can learn and understand a little from the teaching of the Buddha Shakyamuni until Dzogchen. There is Vajrayana, there is Sutra teaching, for having a little concrete idea. Then we can understand what we can do in our life and which is the best direction to follow.

Some people like to read very much, for example, like romantic books, big books like this. Then they are for doing retreat for one

» continued on the following page



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week, two weeks, three weeks, giving very much importance day and night, and they are reading these books. Instead of reading these books, it is much better you read a Santi Maha Sangha book. You can learn at least few things. It's very useful for your life, for understanding.

When you start to have a little more understanding of the base of Santi Maha Sangha, it becomes a background for all the teaching. Then when you follow the Dzogchen teaching, you can have more concrete understanding of what the difference is. I think it's very important, seriously, that people understand the value of Santi Maha Sangha. It is not something done in a traditional way. Traditionally something called Santi Maha Sangha does not exist. It is based on my experience in the Western world, how we are going in the teaching, particularly applying and learning the Dzogchen Teaching.

I understood that first of all it is indispensable to have something like a base. If we want to construct a house, a big, good house, we should prepare the base very well. If you don't prepare the base, even if you prepare a nice house, it cannot remain for a long time. In the same way, in the teaching, it is very important that the base is precise. The base means knowledge like Sutra, what it means, which is the main point of Sutra, how to apply Sutra, and what is the difference between Sutra, Tantra and Vajrayana. Also Vajrayana; Vajrayana is a general name. In Vajrayana, we need to know the differences. You can also understand Anuyoga, and in Dzogchen, the teaching of Atiyoga, the higher level teachings. When we have this kind of idea, that means that we have a base. Now we are learning Vajrayana or Dzogchen. We can understand the differences and we have no confusion.

Of course, someone who comes to the teaching completely new, and goes directly to the teaching of Dzogchen, that means that person has a good connection with these teachings. Even if you have a good connection but you have no base, you can also have confusion. For example, some people say that until now they are following another kind of tradition, teachings, etc. They are worried now that they are following Dzogchen teaching, what will happen? I say that when we do *guruyoga*, we unify all teachings and teachers together, but still they are worried and they say their teacher says they cannot mix this tradition and that tradition. So it means that even if I am saying that you can unify in the Dzogchen teachings and that is the best way to have realization, maybe they listened to that but they are thinking that it may be a problem for them because their teacher said something different. That means they have no confidence in my teaching.

There is no reason not to have confidence, the principle of unification was not invented by me. Guru Padmasambhava and the Dzogchen teachings, all *tantras*, *lungs*, *upadeshas*, are all explained in that way. If we have no confidence then we cannot do anything concrete. If some teachers, instead of teaching you to go beyond limitations, teach you to develop limitations, it is better you don't follow that teacher. That not a perfect teaching. Realization has nothing to do with limitation. Limitation is source of the transmigration, of suffering. Why do we need to develop that? For that reason we say always we should go beyond limitation. Some people

say that they understood limitation is not so good and now they will go beyond that and then they do strange things. They think that going outside with clothes is a limitation. If you do not wear clothes and you go in the street, a policeman will take you and put you in jail. That is your realization.

We live in a limited society and for that reason, the Dzogchen teaching always says to respect our circumstances. This is the rule of the Dzogchen. Dzogchen teachings are not teaching that you should do this and not do that. There are no books of rules in the Dzogchen teaching. If someone says this is a Dzogchen rule, that is not really Dzogchen. We have traditions in our relative condition; there are some things of this kind. But that doesn't correspond.

I remember when I did my first retreat. The first retreat was organized by an older Italian lady called Laura Albini. She was a student of the 16th Karmapa. She told me many times that she had a dharma center of the Karmapa and that I should come to teach there. I said I had no time and I was working at the university. I told her I am an ordinary person, living, working, and eating, in the normal way. So then later she asked the Karmapa and he sent me a letter saying I should go and teach at this dharma center. I wrote again to the Karmapa saying I was sorry but I couldn't go because I had work at the university. I said, *I have no free time, firstly. Secondly, if I go to teach in your dharma center, I will not teach your traditional teaching, because I don't know it. Maybe I teach Dzogchen. That is what I am convinced of and what I practice. And if I am teaching Dzogchen teaching it will no longer be your dharma center.* So I refused again.

Later the Karmapa sent me another letter saying that there are two dharma centers, one is in Milano in the north, and one is this lady's; but in the real sense there were no dharma centers, it was that only Laura received the name of the dharma center for her house. Sometimes some people were going there when some lamas were invited for a few days and they received some teachings. It was the same way in Milano. But then I repeated again that I did not want to go and teach.

I remember that I really did not feel in that period that I wanted to be a teacher or give teachings. I was a teacher of Tibetan culture, Tibetan history, and Mongolian language and literature at the university. This is what I was teaching. Sometimes I would give many seminars about Tibetan Buddhism, also Vajrayana, Tibetan medicine, Tibetan astrology, Tibetan history, instead of only language. I was also doing service, and many kind of seminars. I did this because my title was Professor of Tibetan Language and Literature, and in literature we have all these aspects. So this is what I did. But I was not a spiritual teacher or something like that.

Sometimes some professors like Professor Tucci and others would ask me to give lectures of the Tibetan and Vajrayana teaching and yoga, etc. I also did that sometimes, but those were conferences, not really teaching. That is all. Some people came to me and asked me to teach. Some people went to India where they met lamas and the lamas sent them to Namkhai Norbu. Then they came to me to ask for teachings and I said I am not a teacher and I am not giving teaching. I always refused. Then finally, once when I was going on a holiday in Switzerland, in that period they again invited me to teach. In Rome there was a very scholarly Gelugpa lama who was



teaching in the Sutra style and all these people who were following the Karmapa and some Nyingmapa lamas were going there for receiving this kind of teaching. Then I thought it might be better to do something, otherwise all the people will join that group which is very limited and it was not so good for ordinary people.

When I was leaving for Switzerland I told Laura Albini that if she wanted to organize a retreat, when I returned from my holiday we could do. Then she organized that retreat and we did that retreat. In that retreat there were many people, including some people who were following the Gelugpa tradition, etc. I give some Dzogchen teaching and we studied there. This was first teaching I gave. But I already knew that I did not want to create a kind of a tradition, monasteries, etc., because all dharma activities were all going that way.

About thirty people arrived to the retreat. I came from Napoli, south Italy, with one of my friends who was also my student of Yantra Yoga. He was interested in the teaching and wanted to come to the retreat. We passed through a town called Monte Ragone where there is very good wine. I bought a very good big bottle of wine and we brought it to the retreat. When I entered there were all these students and some were outside with khadags and incense, welcoming us in a very nice way. I arrived like a normal person bringing this big bottle of wine. Inside there was a big temple and I put the wine there. I said, *This is for you*. This is how I started. And later, the next day, I already saw that Laura Albini had posted outside five rules, five things that we couldn't do and that were forbidden in this tradition. Wine is always forbidden. I didn't say anything.

So limitation is not good. For that reason in the teaching it says that even if we are drinking alcohol, alcohol is not always negative. If we have *samaya*, commitment, that means we know what our capacity is, and then we empower, like a Ganapuja, and then if you drink a glass of wine you will not have any problem. Of course, if you drink one or two bottles you become drunk you have problems and that means you have no capacity to control yourself. So people already consider that no one has the capacity to control themselves, so there is this kind of rule. But the high teaching always considers the capacity of individual. Nobody knows another's capacity, so we cannot limit capacity.

Some Westerners come to the teacher and ask which kind of capacity they have. They cannot understand by themselves. If you are fortunate and you meet a good teacher, you are interested in the teaching and you participate, then you already have a capacity. Then you try to do, to learn, and you can discover your capacity by yourself. Maybe if you are missing some capacities, you can also construct.

But not all people are fortunate. Some people are unfortunate and maybe they meet a false teacher, someone not serious. First of all these teachers observe this person, looking well how this person is; if the person is very noble, handsome, rich, powerful, also maybe they know a little history of that person and they say, *Oh you have really very high capacity*. Or someone recognizes immediately that that person is a reincarnation of an uncle or father or someone. Then that person is very happy, no? Immediately these people offer land, money, etc. The teacher can open many dharma

centers. For two or three years they are successful and then later it all disappears.

So it is better we open our eyes and try to understand, if someone is really giving teaching. You can listen and try to understand if that teaching really corresponds or not; does it correspond or not to how Buddha taught. How it is explained in Sutra, Tantra, Vajrayana, if you read something, and you compare. Also does it correspond to your real nature or not. If the important teacher is only commenting on some words, it's not so easy to understand. Maybe this book is saying something interesting and the teacher is commenting on that, but you couldn't understand the real condition of the capacity of the teacher from that. In any case, it is very important to follow the teaching and a teacher with open eyes, not in a blind way. Following blindly is not good. Then when you are getting some important teaching, you can have some confidence, not only that you are constructing in an intellectual way. Then, if the teacher gave you such kind of advice, you can see if you are able to discover the real sense. If we have to change or modify something, we can understand if the teacher and teaching are serious or not.

The Dzogchen teaching is a very precious teaching. You can understand how the sense of Dzogchen teaching is presented and how it corresponds to our real condition. We are in confusion with our mental concepts, etc. We understand how we can liberate all these things with the Dzogchen teaching; we can also understand intellectually. So we should go that way and try to learn, therefore the base of Santi Maha Sangha is useful for everybody.

It doesn't mean you cannot read the base of Santi Maha Sangha if you didn't do an examination. It is not like that. The examination is for checking if you have a base or not, if you learned or not, if you did some basic practices or not or if you have integrated or not. You did all that so then we can go a little into the teaching of Dzogchen. For that reason we are doing an examination.

So it is not necessary you do an examination. If you read and study the base of Santi Maha Sangha, it is very useful. In general most of the time when we are doing retreats I explain most things, not each argument one by one, but I give explanations of these things. You listen well and you can understand. If you read the Santi Maha Sangha base book, you can find everything very precisely. If you have studied that a little, you can understand other traditions, how they are presenting different kinds of teachings, what is the value of the teaching, etc. That is very important. So you do your best and that is what I want to say. ❀

Transcribed by Martha Tack and Larry Howe

Edited by Naomi Zeitz





# The Dzogchen Community Is Like A Family

On the last day, January 3, 2017, of the Yangtig retreat at Dzamling Gar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked that his words be webcast publicly. This is the first part of that webcast.

**G**ood day for everybody and everywhere! This is the last day of the retreat of Yangtig. That means that we have already spoken about the principle of the Yangtig teaching. What we should do now and what is important is how we apply and deal with the teaching in daily life.

In our lives we have many specific practices linked to the teaching, but the most important thing is to concentrate on daily life. Daily life doesn't mean we are like those in retreat on a mountain, or like monks and nuns in monasteries. Teaching is for everybody, and everybody lives in society and has a daily life. In society what we do is make money and work for a living. In this case then how do we deal with practice? It is very important. It is not sufficient that we have very nice idea and fantasise because time is passing. One day a surprise arrives and in that moment we cannot do very much. In Tibetan we have a saying which means that someone arrives at the moment of the death and very quickly chants 'Om Mani Padme Hung', but it is too late. What is important is that we are present in our time. It is the same for everybody in our condition, not only a few people who are dedicated to doing practice.

So in daily life most important is that you try to remember the Ati Guruyoga that you learned in the Dzogchen teaching. Even though you may not remember the principal practices like Yangtig – and they are important – they are not really the main point in daily life. It is very easy for everybody to understand how to do Ati Guruyoga and if you do that, everything is included, because doing practice is for having realisation, and the base of realisation is being in the state of contemplation, not chanting mantras or doing rituals etc. When you have time, when you feel to do something specific, of course you can always do those things, but you shouldn't concentrate on them because there is not much benefit.

So you start your day with Ati Guruyoga and should also remember to do it when you go to bed because night is half of our lives. Try to remember these two moments. Many old practitioners think that they know what night practice means, but they are indifferent. That is very bad. You should be as much as possible in the state of contemplation, and when you are not in that state, try to be present. I'm only asking two things of people who are following my teaching: doing Ati Guruyoga trying to be in the state of contemplation, and being present. I am not asking you to chant some mantras or do some rituals etc. Even though I am not asking, you don't

need to do those things but to remember what I am asking. This is beneficial for you for having realisation and also for living in our confused society in a relaxed way. So this is the aim of the Dzogchen Community which I started to teach Dzogchen teaching to.

Since the beginning I have been continually teaching Dzogchen teaching because I understood that people are interested in having realisation and want to be in the essence of the teaching. I have dedicated myself to that. I inform and I transmit [the teaching] to my students. When I started to teach Dzogchen teaching then we said that now we practitioners should collaborate. The Dzogchen Community means those people who are collaborating. The Dzogchen Community is not a Dharma center where there is only an organisation and where you go to do something. The Dzogchen Community is people who are interested in Dzogchen Teaching, who want to learn how to be beyond mind and also relatively how to be present.

This teaching I taught, the Dra Thalgyur tantra, explains that since the beginning we must be beyond limitations. We cannot easily be beyond limitations because we are living in a limited society, but there is the possibility to learn how to apply that. This is the Dzogchen Teaching that I am trying to teach and have done retreats about since the beginning up to today. This Yangtig retreat is the 606th retreat I have done.

I do not enjoy only teaching and explaining. My aim is to try to make people understand the real sense of the teaching. When people understand and collaborate, doing something in a correct way that corresponds with the Dzogchen teaching, I am very happy. If someone has followed [teachings] for many years and then does things in a contrary way I feel very sorry. Sometimes I think that there is really no way that people can be helped.

This is very important for everybody following Dzogchen Teaching from me to understand. I am not asking everybody to follow what I am teaching. You can follow any kind of teaching and any kind of tradition. We are all free. But if you want to follow my teaching, then I ask you to please do it in a correct way.

For example, in our Dzogchen Community there are many Gars, there are many Lings, there are many gakyils. The symbol of the gakyil organisation is not for creating a hierarchy, because this would be a very heavy limitation. When we live in society, somehow we should collaborate to organise, otherwise we cannot do anything. In this case we created the gakyil [organisation], with three colors, just like a symbol corresponding to body, speech, and mind. It doesn't mean that the gakyil is giving orders, or being a policeman, or becoming the head. The gakyil means people who seriously want to contribute, to serve, and to help other people. So we are working in that way at the global level.

We have many gakyils among the people who are following my teaching. This kind of organisation [the gakyil] is not at all connected with hierarchy. The gakyil must be the root of learning, of how we can be free and not create problems, and of how we can pay respect to each other because we are present and we know how we should work with circumstances. Then sometimes it does not correspond because human beings are very full of ego.

For example, in this moment we have many problems with the the Dzogchen Community gakyil of Singapore. Yesterday we had a meeting with the Singapore people. Last year I went to Singapore,





I did a retreat, and after, when we had a meeting I saw that they were arguing a lot, like fighting for political power in the style of the cultural revolution. What could I do? I couldn't do very much and I went away feeling very sad. And since that time up to today I have been continually receiving e-mails from them fighting each other and arguing.

The only thing I could do was to ask Enrico Dell'Angelo, when he was alive, and the International Gakyil to try to do something about coordinating the Singapore people. They also did not succeed at all because when the International Gakyil tried to do something then they said they had their own rules in their country. We know very well that there are rules everywhere. There is not a single country without rules. But if we are the Dzogchen Community we have that knowledge and there is always a possibility to collaborate. It is not necessary to refuse. But when I asked Enrico, he said that he had not succeeded in doing anything.

A few days ago Enrico passed away but there are other people in the International Gakyil. Yesterday when we had a meeting together, I was present as the teacher of the International Dzogchen Community. I thought that if I gave a little advice they would reflect on it. But even though I was there they did not pay respect and were fighting in the usual way.

I went to Singapore for so many years and did so many retreats. All the teachings that I gave they received together. In the Dzogchen Teaching what is most important? Samaya. You must keep samaya with the teacher and students. If you do not keep it, if you break it, you cannot have any realisation. Not only this but you have the suffering of hell. In this case it is much better that you do not follow that teaching together. So you see [that it is important] not only for the student to pay respect to the teacher, but student and student. This is called vajra brother and sister. Last time I was there, they also did not pay respect to the relationship between vajra brothers and sisters, yet I still really hoped that somehow they would reflect on this by themselves.

Yesterday then it was concrete. I am the teacher but in front of me instead of paying respect they were fighting. This is not only for the Singapore Community. When you are in the Dzogchen Community, then [this behavior] becomes a poison, just like someone who has the illness of cancer.

We do not need this poison so I want to dissolve the Dzogchen Community of Singapore. I am very sorry but we should do that. From today the Dzogchen Community of Singapore no longer exists. But it doesn't mean there are no practitioners or Dzogchen teaching. There is not any organisation, there is also no Ling in Singapore. It is cancelled. People who want to follow my teaching, please come and try to do your best.

This is also a good example for all the places in this world where we have the Dzogchen Community. Try to remember this. Otherwise we are only creating problems and then it doesn't work in the Dzogchen Community. I don't want to create any problems in this world but benefits. So this is what I wanted to inform you about.

It is very important that each person tries to do their best to be present, concentrating on the real sense of the teaching. For example, when I give transmissions of some of the *lungs* then everybody brings books [for transmission]. If you are doing practice I

give sufficient teachings for having realisation. It is not necessary that you search here and there and collect. If you don't like what I am teaching, and it is not sufficient for you, try to go somewhere else to find these teachings.

I am convinced that I have communicated knowledge to you of the base and path and fruit of the Dzogchen teachings for having total realisation. For example, in the Dzogchen Community for years I have been trying to create Santi Maha Sangha. We are doing the base level, first level, second level and now we have arrived at the fourth level. People who are participating in that are doing practice, are studying and learning everything. We check these people and then they are qualified for Santi Maha Sangha. In particular we are training teachers of the Santi Maha Sangha.

In Singapore, for example, we have one of the Santi Maha Sangha teachers. However, he has no function because people do not pay respect, or learn, or consider it something positive. I am very sorry that we are in a situation like this. I am happy that we did a very nice retreat and many people came here in person and I hope they understood something. At least they really learned very well how to do Ati Guruyoga, be present and work with circumstances. This is very important in our lives.

So we should think that there are practitioners throughout this globe and when we say Dzogchen Community, we should feel just like people in the same family. If there is a problem in the family, since we are all part of that family and have our responsibility, we should do our best. We should not destroy the family. This is the way you should work. And I hope very much that everybody tries to do things in a better way. ☸

Edited by Liz Granger

## Information Related to Singapore

Dear all,

The Singapore Dzogchen Community was dissolved by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at the beginning of January 2017. On Sunday, March 26, 2017, an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) was called by the president of the Singapore society used to support the Dzogchen Community. The EGM voted to constitutionally dissolve the society, pending government approval.

Currently the Vajra Dance practitioners continue to rent a hall to do the dance regularly. On special days, there will be a combination of the Dance with Ganapuja to try to purify the condition here.

Anyone interested to collaborate with other students of Rinpoche in Singapore, either to do practice or any other activities, is welcome to contact me at my email address, [namkhagazer@gmail.com](mailto:namkhagazer@gmail.com). I will try to coordinate.

Thank you, Cheh Goh

☺



## Updates to Khaita Joyful Dances 2017

Between November 2016 and February 2017, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu made quite a radical change to the songs in the *Mekhor* collection (the three sections that the 180 songs are divided into). He removed all the songs that were already present in the book 'Message from Tibet Through Songs and Dances', except for Denba because of its special meaning, and substituted them with new songs. In this section you can find Rinpoche's commentary on 'Denba', the Tibetan text of the song, and the *Drayig* or phonetics of the Tibetan.

Among these new songs, there are many *kordros* (circle) dances. Rinpoche asked us to prepare all the dances in advance so we could present them at the moment of singing. It was quite an intense job as we had to prepare 28 dances!

In order to make the transition simpler, as it is a critical moment and takes time to update all the material in circulation (training videos, tutorials, material in Google drive) we are still keeping the numeration of the previous version, *Mekhor* 2016.

For material that has already been uploaded to our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/user/HarmonyInTheSpace>) we are also providing the numbers from 'Message from Tibet' for those songs that have been replaced. i.e. M 1.2.03 Payul (MfT 2.2)

This means that we now have two main collections of songs from Rinpoche:

1) **'Message from Tibet'** that contains 108 songs, which has already been published as a book by Shang Shung Publication with translations of all the songs, and there is also an ebook version of it.

We plan to come out with a new revised version, which will hopefully be ready towards the end of summer.

A book with a collection of transcriptions of all Rinpoche's commentaries will also be available very soon. It will be a precious tool to understand more deeply, through Rinpoche's words, the meaning of each song and the message that our Master wants to give us through Khaita.

2) **The *Mekhor* collection** (the last updated version is called *Mekhor* 2017), which contains 180 songs.

Material will soon be available online on the drive. We are still updating and checking the last files. Rinpoche himself is doing it while he is singing.

In order to have all the translations, we need a little more time.

### Future program

The next time there will be an exam to qualify new Khaita instructors, the procedure will be a bit different. Before the exam candidates should attend some training courses such as:

**the "Khaita instructors training"**, a multi dimensional course that touches on different topics, such as what we think ideally an instructor should have a basic knowledge of (reading *drayig* or the phonetics of the Tibetan words of the songs, / the history-geography of Tibet / rhythm/methodology of teaching / etc.),

**the "Training on the 50 dances for the exam"**. We are ready to introduce this new course that provides the possibility to study in detail the program of the exam, which, up to now, consists of 50 dances. Next summer Merigar West will host this course for the first time (Part 1: June 16–22, part two: July 17–23. More details on this page). Some of our most expert instructors will lead these courses. ©

## First Khaita Training for Instructors at Merigar West

The Merigar Dzogchen Community is happy to announce the first Khaita training on the 50 dances requested for the exam for Khaita instructors.

Salima Celeri and other expert dancers will lead the sessions and work on the details of each dance, explain the lyrics and choreography, and teach the steps.

The training will be divided into two parts, each dedicated to 25 dances and lasting a week.

The course is open to those who already know the basics of these 50 dances and wish to learn more, to study the details of the movements and the mudras, and to get into the deeper sense of khaita.

Below you will find a document – Khaita Material for the Exam – with guidance about getting a basic understanding of the required dances and then being able to apply for the course.

The course is a must for those who want to prepare for and / to take the next exam to become an instructor.

Date:

First part: 16–22 June 2017

Second part: 17–23 July 2017

Schedule: every day 10–13 and 14.30–16.30

Cost: € 140 (each part) with the usual discounts for members of the Dzogchen Community

Contact: [office@merigar.org](mailto:office@merigar.org) ©





Since 2011, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been compiling and transcribing modern songs from and about Tibet, many of which have been published in his book 'Message from Tibet Through Songs and Dances'. He comments on a Tibetan song entitled 'Denba' that he considers to be very important. The Tibetan text and the *drajor* or phonetics of the song are on the following pages.

## བདེན་པ། Dénba 5/10

(M1.1.1)

ཤེར་བསྐྱེད་དང་ཆོད་བཅའ་ལྟ་མོ།

**Xerdan, Cewánj Lhamo**

The title: 'Reality, the true situation'.

This song is very poetic. It's wonderful! Of all of the songs, this is the most elegant. Fantastic!

This song is very important. I started to be interested in the songs last year (2011) after hearing this one. I thought, "Oh, I should listen to them a little". Before I had never been interested in the songs and the singers. I was more interested in the Dzogchen teaching, and in the practice. But when I heard this song, I understood, 'Ah, it is very important!' because communicating through music is very powerful. The meaning of this song shows the reason why they are singing: to communicate to people about how the situation is in Tibet. That is why it is a wonderful song and the music is also very nice. It is a poem specifically written with a double meaning. One mean-

ing is combined with the sound of water, such as the sound of the Yarlung Zangpo (Brahmaputra), the Jomo Langma (Everest), and other mountains, the sources of all of these rivers, from where these waters come. Then it is combined with the feelings of people, just as the song is matched to the melody, and to the movement of the mind. It is all like this, combined a bit.

མཁའ་~ནས་~འཛོཾ་~བའི་བདུད་~ཚི་ཟེགས་~མ་གཅིག་  
**kà nas jò ~vai dúd ~zi sěg ~ma jig**

kà-nas jòvai: that which descends from space

That is, the rain etc., and with this comes snow, and this water always remains on Kailash.

dúdzi: nectar, but it is a figure of speech

sěgma: small, small, accumulated

So it becomes like a mountain.

jig: this is one, it says

སེམས་~ན་འབབ་~པའི་གཙང་~ཆུ་དངས་~མོ་གཉིས།  
**sem ~na bàb ~bai zan ~qu dāñ ~mo ñís,**

This snow that falls becomes water, rivers.

There is a continuation of water, and in the same way in our minds, there is a continuation of movement: ideas, thoughts that come out continually without interruption. And the way in which the water is combined with this 'semna bàb', means that everything that comes out of the mind, melts.

It is an example of how pure water comes from snow.

ñís: this is the second

Each time it says one, two, three.

» continued on the following page

## Khaita Material for the Exam

1) General folder in Google drive.

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/oBzg7WoaoLsgUTXR3p5SiNSR1k?usp=sharing>

The folder contains:

- lists of the 50 dances for the exam from Rinpoche, in Tibetan and in *drajor*.
- the same list with references to the old dances with numbers as in "Message from Tibet", the first book published with translations of the songs.

Note: some songs/dances were already published in the first collection, "Message from Tibet", the book and e-book published by Shang Shung Publications. The other songs/dances are part of new collection called "Mekhor", currently being translated.

- lists of *Kordros*, circle dances, divided on the basis of geographical regions,
- "Words about KJD" folder with: Rinpoche's words on Khaita, an interview with Adriana Dal Borgo on the beginning and meaning, different articles and presentations.
- "The 50 song and dance" folder with all the material for each dance, including updated training videos and notes.

2) "Message from Tibet" book and e-book are available from Shang Shung Publications webstore:

[shop.shangshungfoundation.com/en/](http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com/en/)

3) **Khaita Joyful Dances Video Tutorials** are very clear explanations of each dance with relative steps, movements and *mudras*. They are useful not only for precisely checking the details of the dances, but also to have examples of how to explain them. At the

moment we have 35 tutorials available from Shang Shung Publications webstore.

4) **Other on line resources:**

Khaita Joyful Dances on YouTube: *Harmony in the Space*

Facebook Page: *Khaita Joyful Dances*

**Work in progress:**

We're working on collecting all Rinpoche's commentaries on the songs. The first edition of the book, in Italian, will be ready at the beginning of 2017. The English translation will follow.

It is very precious material. Rinpoche's explanations give a special flavor to each song, opening our horizons to a deeper understanding of the meaning in connection with the Teaching.

The first book will be a collection of commentaries on 108 songs as in "Message from Tibet". ©



» continued from previous page

རུས་~ ར་~ ཟུག་~པའི་ ཕ་~སྐད་ དག་~མ་ གསུམ།

**rus na sūg ~bai pa ~gad dāg ~ma sūm**

rusna sūgbai: all people who live in this dimension have been bound to their ancestors for generations and generations through their language, through that which we use to communicate when we start to grow. Sound, like a melody, comes from there. Therefore it gives importance to our language, which cannot be ignored. pagad: language of the homeland dāgma: pure, authentic sūm: this is the third

གངས་~ཆབ་ དྲངས་~མའི་ འབྱུར་~ཁྱུགས་ རོ་~མ་ ཡིན།

**gān ~qab dān ~mai gyūr ~kug ŋo ~ma yin**

These three are like the sound of the water of the river: true melody, authentic melody, not at all conditioned by ideas, etc. These three are the root, the melody is the root of our life. This is the *real* melody linked to our mind.

བཙེ་~ བ་~ ལ་~ཡོད་ ཡར་~ལུང་ གཙང་~ རོ་~ གཅིག

**ze ~va la ~yod yar ~lun zan ~bo jig**

Now, again there is a double meaning.

zeva: kindness

One usually says, 'kyen ze'. 'Kyenpa' means the knowledge of Manjushri, 'zeva' the compassion of Avalokiteshvara. This 'ze' means the feeling of kindness that is closely linked to those who live in this country, people who are kind and compassionate. How is this kindness among all of us who are in the same dimension? It is just like the Yarlung Zangpo, the great river that then becomes the Brahmaputra and goes to India: without interruption, without measure, infinite.

jig: this is one

གདུང་~ བ་ ལ་~ཡོད་ རོ་~མོ་ སྒང་~མ་ གཉིས།

**dun ~va la ~yod jō ~mo lán ~ma nīs**

dunva: feeling of the people

'Zeva' means 'kindness', 'dunva' means 'feeling of the people'. We know that we should have respect for one another. This is like Jomo Langmo, Everest, a very high level.

Whether it is pleasure or suffering, whichever it is, there is this feeling. It gives the example of Jomo Langma, the mountain, as a source. The water comes from all the snow that is there. If there were no Jomo Langma, there would be no water. So, this is linked to the feeling of the people.

nīs: this is the second

དམ་~ཚིག་ བཞེངས་~ཡོད་ རོ་~རྗེའི་ མདུད་~པ་ གསུམ།

**dām ~cig xén ~yod dór ~jéi dūd ~ba sūm**

All the peoples that live there are linked by spirituality, by brotherhood, by their origins and culture.

This is like *samaya*, there is a connection. We are all from the same family and we respect each other.

dórjéi dūdba: an example like the *vajra*, that cannot be changed. Like a knot of the *vajra*.

sūm: this is the third

གངས་~ཆབ་ ཟེགས་~མའི་ འབྱུར་~ཁྱུགས་ རོ་~མ་ ཡིན།

**gān ~qab sēg ~mai gyūr ~kug ŋo ~ma yin**

This is the true sound of the melody that we sing, that comes from the people, that comes from the water, and everything that one feels is true.

\*\*\*\*\*

དགའ་~ ལྟོའི་~ རི་~མོ་ རི་~ལ་ བསྐོས་~པ་ གཅིག

**gá gyoī ri ~mo ri ~la gos ~ba jig**

gá: pleasure, contentment

gyo: sadness

Both sadness and pleasure are symbols of this feeling.

ri la gosba: they have written some words on the mountain or on rocks that can be seen from afar.

Sometimes we are happy, sometimes we are sad. In order to remember our condition, whatever it may be, we are carving or chiselling it on the rocks, or designing it on the mountains with letters, for example.

The feeling of the people from generations ago until the present day is like this.

jig: one

ལྟོད་~ ལྟུག་ ལོ་~ལྷ་ ལུ་~ལ་ བསྐྱར་~བ་ གཉིས།

**gyid ~dūg lo ~dā qu ~la gur ~va nīs**

Happiness and suffering, all the problems that we feel over the years, the months, and the days are like the water that flows continuously. We always try to go ahead like the water, without interruption, even if we have a lot of problems and difficulties. Like a river that always accompanies our condition.

nīs: this is the second

བདེ་~ ལྟུག་~ ལས་~དབང་ དབྱངས་~ལ་ བཀྱག་~པ་ གསུམ།

**dé dūg las ~wán yán ~la gug ~ba sūm**

dé: may everything go well, there are no difficulties

dūg: suffering, when there is

laswán: action connected with our karma

yán-la gugba sūm: this is sung with the melody, this is the third, these three.

Our happiness and suffering, our problems, everything is related to the condition of our karma. We express them in a melody, we communicate them with a melody so people can understand. Whether good or bad, whatever it may be, everything is integrated with the melody. This means the real melody, the pure melody, the real sense.

» continued on page 14





# བདེན་པའི་འབྱུར་ཁྱད་གསུང་། 1/1



ཅུ་མ་ཐུ་པའི། མ་འོད།  
དབྱེད་པའི་ཐུ་པའི། གངས་ཅན་པ་སྒྲོལ་མ་སྒྲོལ་པ།  
ཐུ་པ་དབྱེད་པའི། ཤེར་བསྐྱེད་དང་ཚོད་བདེ་ལྷ་མོ།

མ་ཁའ་~ ན་མ་~ འཛོ~མ་པའི་ བདུད་~ ལྷ་ཅི་  
ཟེགས་~ཐེགས་ གཅིག་~  
སེམས་~ཐེགས་ འབབ་~པའི་ གཅོང་~ཐེགས་  
དུས་~ལེ་མོ་ གཉིས་~  
ཐུ་པ་~ ན་~ ཐུག་~ལྷ་པའི་ པ་~ལྷ་སྐྱེད་  
དག་~ལྷ་མོ་ གསུམ་~  
གངས་~ལེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་~ཐེགས་པའི་ འབྱུར་~ཁྱད་གསུང་པ།  
ཛོ་ལེ་མོ་ ཡིན་~  
རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~  
བཅུ་~ལྷ་པའི་ ལ་~ལྷ་མོ་ ཡར་~ལྷ་མོ་  
གཅོང་~ བོ་~ རྩ་ གཅིག་~  
གུར་~ལྷ་པའི་ ལ་~ལྷ་མོ་ ཛོ་ལེ་མོ་  
ཐུང་~ལེ་མོ་ གཉིས་། རྩ་~ རྩ་~  
དམ་~ལེ་ཆོག་ བཞེད་པའི་ལྷ་མོ་ ཛོ་ལེ་མོ་  
མ་དུད་~ལྷ་པའི་ གསུམ་~  
གངས་~ལེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་~ཐེགས་པའི་ འབྱུར་~ཁྱད་གསུང་པ།  
ཛོ་ལེ་མོ་ ཡིན་~



དག་པ་~ ཐུ་པའི་ རི་~མོ་ རི་~ལ་  
བཞོས་~ལེ་མོ་ གཅིག་~  
ཐུ་པའི་ལྷ་མོ་ ལ་~ལྷ་མོ་ ཐུ་~ལྷ་པའི་  
བསྐྱེད་~ལྷ་པའི་ གཉིས་~  
བདེ་~ ཐུག་~ ལས་~ལེ་དབང་ དབྱེད་པའི་ལྷ་པའི་  
བཀྲ་ག་~ལྷ་པའི་ གསུམ་~  
གངས་~ལེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་~ཐེགས་པའི་ འབྱུར་~ཁྱད་གསུང་པ།  
དག་~ལྷ་མོ་ ཡིན་~  
རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~ རྩ་~

# dénba 1/1



ce-wál] lha-mo & xer-dan

~ nas~ jò~ ò-vai dúd~ ùd~zi  
sěg~ ḡg-ma jig~--,  
sem~é-na bàb~à-bai zal~āṅ-qu  
dǎṅ~ āṅ-mo nīs~--,  
rus~ na~ sũg~ùg-bai pa~ ā-gad  
dǎg~āg-ma sùm~--,  
gǎṅ~āṅ-qab sěg~ḡg-mai gyúr~ù-kug  
ṅ0~ò-ma yin~--,  
ho--ò--ò-- ho--ò--ò--  
~é-va la~ā-yod yar~ā-luṅ  
zal~ āṅ- bo~ ò- jig~--,  
dúl~ùṅ-va la~ā-yod jǒ~ò-mo  
lál~āṅ-ma nīs, ho-ò-ò-  
dām~ām-cig xéṅ~ēṅ-yod dó~ò-jéí  
dúd~ùd-ba sùm~--,  
gǎṅ~āṅ-qab sěg~ḡg-mai gyúr~ù-kug  
ṅ0~ò-ma yin~--.



~ gyoi~ ri~ĩ-mo ri~ ĩ-la  
gos~òs-ba jig~--,  
gyid~ĩ-dúg lo~ò-dá qu~ùla  
gur~ù-va nīs~--,  
dé~ dúg~ las~ās-wál] yál~āṅ-la  
gug~ùg-ba sùm~--,  
gǎṅ~āṅ-qab sěg~ḡg-mai gyúr~ù-kug  
dǎg~āg-ma yin~--.  
ho--ò--ò-- ho--ò--ò--



ང་འགྱི་ རྩོད་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ རྩོད་ལྡེ་འགྱི་

ང་འཇུ་ཡང་འཇུ་ཡིན་ལ།

ང་འཇུ་ཆོ་ཆང་ལ་ཁྱེ་མ་ཁྱེ་ཆང་

གཅིག་ལ་གྱི་ཡིན། རྩོད་ལྡེ་ཡིན་

མཐུན་ལྡེ་ལྡེ་ལྡེ་ དཔུང་ལྡེ་དང་ དམིགས་ལྡེ་ལྡེ་

གཅིག་ལ་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ལ།

གངས་ལྡེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་ལྡེ་མའི་ འབྲུར་ལྡེ་ཁུགས་

བདེན་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ལ།

རྩོད་ལྡེ་

ལྡེ་

རྩོད་ལྡེ་

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ལྡེ་

ང་འགྱི་ རྩོད་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ རྩོད་ལྡེ་འགྱི་

ང་འཇུ་ཡང་འཇུ་ཡིན་ལ།

ང་འཇུ་ཆོ་ཆང་ལ་ཁྱེ་མ་ཁྱེ་ཆང་

གཅིག་ལ་གྱི་ཡིན། རྩོད་ལྡེ་ཡིན་

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གཅིག་ལ་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ལ།

གངས་ལྡེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་ལྡེ་མའི་ འབྲུར་ལྡེ་ཁུགས་

བདེན་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ལ།



ŋa~ā-ni kyod~ōa-yin kyod~ōa-ni

ŋa~ā- yaŋ~ āŋ- yin~,

ŋa~ā-co caŋ~āŋ-ma kyim~im-caŋ

jig~i-gi yin, no~ō ō-

tùn~ùn-dríl buŋ~ūŋ-dǎŋ mǐg~i-yul

jig~ig-ba yin~,

gǎŋ~āŋ-qab sěg~ěg-mai gyūr~ū-kug

dén~ēn-ba yin~,,

no~ō- -ō--

no~ō- -ō--

ŋa~ā-ni kyod~ōa-yin kyod~ōa-ni

ŋa~ā- yaŋ~ āŋ- yin~,

ŋa~ā-co caŋ~āŋ-ma kyim~im-caŋ

jig~i-gi yin, no~ō ō-

tùn~ùn-dríl buŋ~ūŋ-dǎŋ mǐg~i-yul

jig~ig-ba yin~,

gǎŋ~āŋ-qab sěg~ěg-mai gyūr~ū-kug

dén~ēn-ba yin~,,



>> continued from page 12

When I heard this, I thought, "I really have to listen to these songs. They are really communicating. This is very important. They are not in the streets protesting against the government, but they are singing a song. And people also like to sing: they listen, they sing, they reflect a little, and gradually they learn something. It is very very powerful!"

གངས་ལྡེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་ལྡེ་མའི་ འབྲུར་ལྡེ་ཁུགས་ བདེན་ལྡེ་ཡིན།  
**gǎŋ~ qab sěg~ mai gyūr~ kug déŋ~ ba yin**

This is the authentic melody of both the river and the song.  
gǎŋqab sěgmai: this is like the mist or dew of the mountain of the snows

gyūr~kug: the melody that they always sing

dǎgma: pure, without additions or modifications: everything that there is, is true.

ང་འགྱི་ རྩོད་ལྡེ་ཡིན་ རྩོད་ལྡེ་འགྱི་ ང་འཇུ་ཡང་འཇུ་ཡིན།

**ŋa~ ni kyod~ yin kyod~ ni ŋa ~ yaŋ ~ yin**

I am you, you are me, there is no difference.

ང་འཇུ་ཆོ་ཆང་ལ་ཁྱེ་མ་ཁྱེ་ཆང་གཅིག་ལ་གྱི་ཡིན།

**ŋa~ co caŋ~ ma kyim~ caŋ jig~ gi yin,**

We are all part of the same family,

མཐུན་ལྡེ་ལྡེ་ལྡེ་ དཔུང་ལྡེ་དང་ དམིགས་ལྡེ་ལྡེ་ གཅིག་ལ་ལྡེ་ཡིན།  
**tùn~ dríl buŋ~ dǎŋ mǐg~ yul jig~ ba yin**

our union is our strength, we have the same aims, the same desires, they are always the same, there is no difference.

This is what manifests.

This also means internal work, unification...

གངས་ལྡེ་ཆབ་ ཟེགས་ལྡེ་མའི་ འབྲུར་ལྡེ་ཁུགས་ བདེན་ལྡེ་ཡིན།  
**gǎŋ~ qab sěg~ mai gyūr~ kug déŋ~ ba yin**

... with the understanding that this is the true melody, linked to our nature and condition.

Do you see how nice the meaning is? It is very poetic.

The video of the dance can be seen on youtube

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM\\_oHfUkB38&index=1&list=PLonztwBHoxJm-Q5\\_Wnaqinqxpy\\_rsdWUU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM_oHfUkB38&index=1&list=PLonztwBHoxJm-Q5_Wnaqinqxpy_rsdWUU)





## Tibetan Translator Training

The Shang Shung Institute Austria is happy to announce that also in 2017 there will be several chances to study the Tibetan language. Like last year, Prof. Fabian Sanders will guide these courses. All courses will be held at Merigar West.

These Tibetan language courses are an initiative of the Ka-Ter Translation Project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

### Weekend Course for Intermediate and Advanced

April 28–30, 2017  
with Prof. Fabian Sanders

In this group, students just read and try to translate different texts with the help of various dictionaries.

We will send the Tibetan text to be worked on to participants, so it will be possible to prepare it in advance. Sharing of the instructor's screen will be available. In order to participate one should know how to read Tibetan, have a basic knowledge of classical Tibetan grammar, and be able to use dictionaries and other tools.

Schedule:

Friday 6–8 pm,

Saturday and Sunday 10–12.30 am and 2–4 pm, Italian time CEST (UTC+2), with a short break in each session

We will use skype for the call and skype or join.me for the shared screen.

### Weekends on Dzogchen Community Practice Texts

May 6–7, 2017  
with Prof. Fabian Sanders

We will read practice texts used within the DC and translate word by word, extensively explaining the terminology, the grammar, the syntax and the structure of the text. Students will increase their knowledge of Tibetan texts and learn important terminology.

We provide the participants with the Tibetan text and we share our screen to allow people to follow it.

Those who wish can attempt to read, analyse and translate sentences. After that the grammar is explained and the translation is given.

In order to participate

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

Schedule: Saturday 10–12.30 am and 2–4 pm  
Sunday 10 am–1 pm, Italian time CEST (UTC+2), with a short break each session  
We will work on the Tibetan parts of the Medium Ganapuja.

Costs: 69 Euro

*Special Offer:*

Fee for both courses: 117 Euro

For more information please write to:

[ghita.pansa@gmail.com](mailto:ghita.pansa@gmail.com)



### 15th Training for Translators from Tibetan

with Prof. Fabian Sanders

July 6–July 23, 2017

in Merigar West, Arcidosso (GR), Tuscany, Italy

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

If you are already skilled you can deepen your knowledge, discuss techniques, compare with others, and train your ability in a collaborative environment inspired by the ancient practice of translating in groups.

The training for translators from Tibetan is an initiative of the Shang Shung Institute Austria and first started in 2003. In 2017 we will have the 15th edition.

Schedule: 9.30–12.30 am and 2–4.45 pm  
(Day off 10th, 15th and 20th)

Please note: The program on July 15th and 16th may change according to Rinpoche's webcast, most probably we will have only longer afternoon sessions.

Costs: 210 Euro

For more information please write to:

[ghita.pansa@gmail.com](mailto:ghita.pansa@gmail.com)

Contact: the instructor: Fabian Sanders:

[fsanders@unive.it](mailto:fsanders@unive.it)

general information: Margherita Pansa:

[ghita.pansa@gmail.com](mailto:ghita.pansa@gmail.com)

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

©



## Traditional Tibetan Calligraphy Course

Dear all,

We are very pleased to inform you about our next event here at the Shang Shung Institute in Austria:

**The Uchen Script**

with Tashi Mannonx

Thursday 15th–Sunday 18th June, 2017

The renown master calligrapher Tashi Mannonx will be in residence at the Shang Shung Institute Austria to hold a workshop in the art of Tibetan Uchen script. Tashi Mannonx is one of the world's foremost contemporary Tibetan calligrapher artists who transmits his vast knowledge and skilled precision in a very open and charming way.

This Tibetan calligraphy course will be suitable for complete beginners and also for those wishing to polish and develop their skill. For those who already know the Tibetan alphabet, there will be a chance to refine skills and develop your repertoire.

The course will be taught in English. The maximum number of participants is limited to 20 people.

Course fee: € 220.-

Information and registration:

Maïke Stellbrink: [m.stellbrink@t-online.de](mailto:m.stellbrink@t-online.de)

The registration for the course is valid when the bank transfer of the course fee has arrived at the SSI Austria. Registration deadline will be May 15th 2017.

More information:

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

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



## Shang Shung Foundation New Director Appointed

*Oliver Leick, director of Shang Shung Institute, Austria, was recently requested by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to become the new director of the Shang Shung Foundation. Oliver spoke to The Mirror about his background, his work of many years with the Austrian branch of the SSI and the Ka-ter Project, and his hopes to carry on the work of the former director, Enrico Dell'Angelo.*

I was born in 1955 in June in Austria and I was fortunate to meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1977 when I was 22. I have followed him since that time. I was always very interested in practising Yantra Yoga and I received my first Yantra Yoga diploma from Rinpoche in 1981.

When Chögyal Namkhai Norbu started to give the first Santi Maha Sangha courses in the 90s I followed them and since then have participated in all the SMS courses. In November 2016 I managed to pass the SMS Level 3 exam and follow the SMS Level 4 training.

Among other activities in the early 80s and 90s Rinpoche sent me to places like Poland and Czech Republic to give some introductory talks about Dzogchen before Rinpoche visited these places. Up to now I have led 120 seminars and retreats in many different countries.

In 2002 in Isla Margarita, I was officially authorized to become a Yantra Yoga teacher, and in 2010 I was authorized as a Santi Maha Sangha Base level instructor.

I have been married since 1989 and we have two grown up daughters, who are also members of the international Dzogchen Community.

I have always been interested in the Shang Shung Institute and when H.H. the Dalai Lama came to Merigar in 1990 for its inauguration I was there and translated his teachings to some of the German speaking community.



On January 1, 2000, the first day of the new millennium, together with other people, I founded the Shang Shung Institute Austria. When the SSI Austria received an anonymous donation in 2002 it enabled us to start the Ka-ter translation project.

The word 'Ka-ter' is made up of two words: 'kama' and 'terma'. 'Kama' are the teachings of the Buddha, while 'terma' are the hidden teachings. The Ka-ter Translation Project involves the translation into English of many important teachings that are originally in a cryptic and old form of Tibetan that is not easy to understand. Rinpoche mainly entrusted Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco with the translation, with the collaboration of Jim Valby, so that his students would be able to read the texts in English. The Ka-ter Translation Project also has the task to train people in translating Dzogchen texts into English. The Translators Training from Tibetan has been going on for 14 years and this summer we will hold the 15th Translators Training under the guidance of Prof. Fabian Sanders.

Rinpoche asked me to be responsible for this project and to try to increase the income so that our translators could be supported in their work. Ever since then I have continued with this Project. Besides the Ka-ter Project I have organized several cultural events for SSI in places such as Romania, Tenerife, and Austria as well as public talks in Prague, Zagreb, Wales, London, etc. I was also one of the founding members of the Shang Shung Institute in London.

Recently Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked me to become the director of the Shang Shung Foundation, with its main seat in





## The New President of Shang Shung Foundation Visits Merigar West

Gaetano Ruvolo

Only a few days after his official appointment as the new President of Shang Shung Foundation by the council of the Founders, Oliver Leick came to Merigar West to meet all the staff of both Shang Shung Foundation and its publishing branch, Shang Shung Publications.

As you probably know, two years ago, in January 2015, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Rosa Tolti, the International Dzogchen Community and the Merigar Dzogchen Community founded the "Shang Shung Foundation, International Institute for Tibetan Culture", which replaced in its new legal structure the existing Shang Shung Institute Association. The first SSF president was our dear Enrico, who passed away last December. After a short period of vacancy, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has chosen Oliver Leick to lead the Foundation towards the goals established by the Founders which Enrico skillfully started to develop during his only two years of presidency.

Oliver had quite a tight schedule during his visit, which started on Sunday the 5th of March until Thursday the 9th in the evening, when he got back to Florence and from there to his home in Austria. During

these five days Oliver met with each member of the staff, individually and collectively, asking questions, gathering information and outlining his plan for the next couple of years of Foundation activities. One of the objectives he mentioned is the opportunity to organize locally and internationally special events linked to the 30th anniversary of the Shang Shung Institute, which will take place in 2019. Another objective is to reunite organically the different in-

us in all these years, which is to keep our presence and state of contemplation in a relaxed way, both when there is calm and when there is movement and confusion around us. Oliver also suggested stronger communication and transparency. There are still too many people in the DC who do not know that the Foundation exists, which books are going to be released, which activities have been planned, or which have taken place.



ternational branches of the SSI under the umbrella of the Foundation, to give it a stronger image worldwide and to efficiently pursue the goal of sharing the values and benefits of Tibetan culture and Dzogchen "public" teachings such as Yantra Yoga, Tibetan Language, Medicine, and Khaita, all over the world.

Oliver thanked and congratulated the SSF and SSP teams at Merigar for what they have done during the last couple of years, overcoming difficulties of all kinds. He also reminded us that our organization is different from any other in the world. We are part of the Dzogchen Community and we must remember what Rinpoche has taught

All in all, there was a lot of good feeling and humor during these meetings and discussions. Oliver told us many stories and personal experiences from his forty year long activity as a student of Rinpoche and his own various roles within the Dzogchen Community. As you can see from the attached picture, taken at the end of the general meeting of all the staff present in Merigar the last day of Oliver's visit (some of us were in Tenerife for the new year retreat), we had some good laughs together. At the end we all wished Oliver great success in his new role of leading the Shang Shung Foundation towards its future. ©

Italy and branches in different countries: a seat at Tsegylgar in North America, another in Austria, one in London, another in Russia, a branch in Argentina, and another in Australia. The main seat of the Shang Shung Foundation in Italy is more or less responsible for all these seats.

Unfortunately our dear Vajra Brother Enrico Dell'Angelo who was the president of the Foundation for many years, passed away recently, so my role and what Rinpoche has asked me to do is to continue the work that Enrico started. Enrico's idea was

that the Shang Shung Foundation should become a recognized institute for Tibetan culture at the international level, offering various courses on Tibetan medicine, Tibetan language, Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, and Khaita Joyful Dances in the field of art, but also courses on the inner meanings such as public talks introducing Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism. And that people studying these different fields of knowledge would be able to receive diplomas that are recognized worldwide.

These are still early days for me and I will need some more time to oversee the whole range of my work and responsibilities for the future. My priority as the director of Foundation is to have a very good collaboration with all the people involved in the SSI worldwide as well as with the International Gakyil of the International Dzogchen Community. I'm looking forward to a prosperous collaboration that may benefit all people interested in Tibetan culture. ©



SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS

ཡུ་ཤུང་ཤུང་པུ་བླ་མ་གྱི་འཁྲུང་ཁུངས།



## Tibetan Calendar for the Year of the Fire Bird 2017–2018

Updated annually, this pocket agenda contains concise indications of the practices recommended by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for special days, astrological aspects from the Tibetan lunar calendar, individual influences affecting those born between 1918 and 2017, and positive and negative days for Naga practice. It is indispensable for identifying favorable and unfavorable days for daily activities and remembering special practice days. The calendar also includes a table indicating the days of the month to avoid surgery in specific areas of the body according to three Tibetan astrological systems as well as a table with the first days of the Tibetan new year according to the Phugpa system.

To better understand the information contained in our Tibetan calendar, refer to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar*, and the *Special Practice Calendar for the Fire Bird Year*, also published by Shang Shung Publications and available in our webstore.

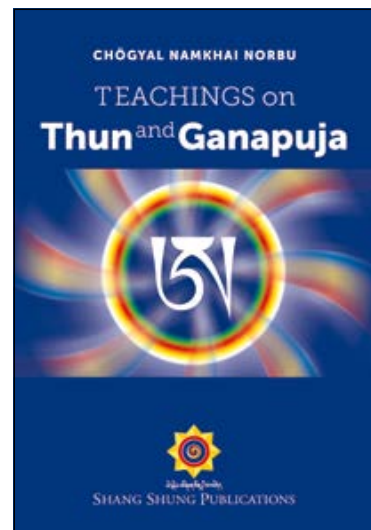
<http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com>

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Teachings on Thun and Ganapuja

A Compilation of Oral and Written Instructions  
Euro 20

This book contains explanations of the Short, Medium, and Long Thuns and the Simple, Short, Medium, and Long Ganapuja practices performed in the Dzogchen Community founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The related practice texts can be found in *The Book of the Thun and the Ganapuja* (the "Thun Book").

Thun and Ganapuja are secondary practices, but they all have the goal of helping us integrate the essence of the Dzogchen transmission: Guruyoga, the state of contemplation. In that sense, any secondary practice when combined with Guruyoga becomes a principal practice. Moreover, performing secondary practices strengthens the connection with our Teacher, the teaching, and – especially when done col-



lectively – our fellow practitioners, making this connection a conduit to boost our understanding and realization of the primordial state.

Available in the webshop

<http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com>

### 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)





## Tibetan Culture Spring Workshops

SSI-USA is offering a rich array of events this spring including Tibetan Medicine, Dance and Calligraphy workshops. Check out the details below!

### Healing with the Five Elements

*Free Talk on Tibetan Medicine Live Webcast through Facebook!*

with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

April 21st, 7:30 pm PDT

at Dondrubling in Berkeley, CA

This is a free public talk on the foundational theory of Traditional Tibetan Medicine. Learn how the five elements are considered to be the basic building blocks of the Universe including our body, its physiology and the world it lives in. Understand how that knowledge can be applied to protect and balance our health throughout our daily life activity.

Join our Facebook event to be notified when we go live.

### Horme: An Introduction to Tibetan Medicine Warm Oil Compress for Mental Health

with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

April 22nd, 9:30 am–12:30 pm PDT

at Dondrubling in Berkeley, CA

Horme, literally meaning “Mongolian Moxibustion,” is a warm oil compress used on specific points related to the central nervous system for balancing mental health conditions. It is a very helpful method for treating many disturbances of the central nervous system known as wind disturbance or loong in Traditional Tibetan Medicine. This 3-hour workshop will provide a basic introduction to the theory and application of Horme.

Get more info, register, and spread the word through the event on Facebook



### Tibetan Medicine on Mental Health – What is Mental Illness Really About?

with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

April 28th–30th

at Shang Shung Institute in Conway, MA

In the field of Traditional Tibetan Medicine it is considered that in most cases of mental illness, including anxiety disorders and depression, a person's wind element has become disturbed. In Traditional Tibetan Medicine, the wind element is considered to be responsible for the movements of the respiratory, circulatory and nervous systems as well as the mind. For this reason, if the wind is disturbed, it becomes the primary cause of mental illness.

Get more info, register, and spread the word through the event on Facebook



Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo is the Academic Director of the School of Tibetan Medicine of Shang Shung Institute. Menpa Phuntsog received her advanced degree from Lhasa University School of Traditional Medicine and trained with two of Tibet's foremost Tibetan Medicine doctors, or Menpas (Khenpos Troru Tsenam and Gyaltsen). After working many years as a physician in remote regions of Eastern Tibet, she became project coordinator for Gamthog Hospital. She lectures in the US, Europe and Asia.



### A Meditative Approach to Creativity with Tibetan Calligraphy

with Tashi Manno

May 5th–7th

at Shang Shung Institute in Conway, MA

Renowned calligrapher and artist Tashi Manno will present an interactive workshop where participants bring their hand and heart of awareness while creating an ensō\* and selected seed syllables. Tashi will explain the historical and contemporary sacred integrity of Tibetan calligraphy and mark-making, and how to unite heaven and earth through the creative process of spiritual practice in art – as a means of liberating the mind.

Get more info, register and spread the word through the event on Facebook

### Tibetan Dancing 2-Step Workshop: Learning and Deepening Khaita

with Matthew & Katya Schmookler

June 10th–11th

at Shang Shung Institute in Conway, MA

June 10th will include step-by-step instruction on how to perform Tibetan dancing with simple dances. While learning the simplest of Khaita Joyful Dances, we will go through basic steps of Tibetan dances and explore what Khaita means in theory and in our own experience.

June 11th will focus on circle dances (kordro) that have more unique movements requiring a little extra explanation and training. We will cover dances such as Tenjung De-kyid (Stable Happiness) and Ma-jai Dos-gar (The Peacock Dance). ©

## They Don't Like Eating Outside

**T**ibet. The children at the Wakha school eat outside in the mud seated on rocks and logs. This situation is really dangerous most of all in the winter when the temperature is extremely low.

In Qinghai province the study of Tibet-an language and culture is increasingly at risk. The rate of illiteracy and school drop-outs in the areas inhabited by nomads are very high and the cultural impoverishment of the new generation of Tibetans is becoming more and more marked.

For this reason the Wakha school is essential to ensure the right to education of the children of the nomadic Tibetan community living on the grasslands at 3500 meters of altitude.

Wakha is one of the few rural schools in the province, although the school is not able to adequately accommodate all its pupils.

In 2012 ASIA intervened and completed a new building for classrooms and staff offices, and equipped it with all the necessary teaching materials. The new classrooms – designed combining traditional Tibetan architecture with green building techniques – ensure quality primary education to Tibetan children, preserving their language and their culture. Currently they are also completing the dormitories to accommodate the 127 students who are enrolled.

The school, however, is not yet able to fully satisfy the quality standards and specifications that meet the needs of the young students.

**The lack of toilets** increases the risk of spreading oral-fecal diseases and forces students and teachers to open defecation, spreading bacteriological risk to nearby villages due to natural drainage resulting from rain and snow. The school also lacks showers or hot water points where the children can wash and improve their hygiene.



**The lack of a wire fence or protective wall** increases the risk of attacks by wild animals and the increasing number of stray dogs approaching populated areas in search of food and prey.

Finally, but perhaps **the most urgent element today is the lack of an adequate kitchen and a place to eat** and to store supplies. This means that children are forced to eat in the classrooms or in the open air, and that the cooks are affected by the fumes arising from the combustion of charcoal and coal. This causes serious cardio-respiratory problems to the staff and young students.

**Today the students eat in the middle of the mud sitting on rocks and logs.** This situation not only represents a great risk to the health and hygiene of young children during an important moment in their daily routine, but a **real danger particularly in the winter months, when the temperature is extremely low.** A canteen and a kitchen that meet the minimum standards of hygiene are very important and urgent.

To help the children at the Wakha school you can join this project with different types of donation:

**10€** to donate a set of dishes to a child

**50€** to contribute to the purchase of equipment for the refectory

**300€** to participate in the construction of the kitchen and refectory

To help the Wakha children watch the video and join the project

<http://asia-ngo.org/en/project/a-rural-school-in-wakha/> ©

### 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 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  
www.asia-ngo.org/en/

Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V.  
c/o Gisela Auspurg  
Königswieser Str. 2, 82131 Gauting  
Tel.: 089 / 127 630 32





The finished Dzamling Gar houses.



## Auspicious Symbols Now Ornament the Gar Houses

In the first days of February 2017, Migmar Tsering, Tibetan artist and craftsman resident at Merigar West in Italy, was invited to Dzamling Gar in Tenerife to decorate the six houses of the Gars with six of the eight auspicious symbols over each of the main entrances.



Photos by Paolo Fassoli

Assisted by several artists at the global gar, Migmar painted the following symbols:

The Tashigar House – the Wish-Fulfilling Vase  
The Namgyalgar House – the White Conch Shell  
The Samtengar House – the Endless Knot  
The Kunsangar House – the Lotus Flower  
The Merigar House – the Precious Parasol  
The Tsegyalgar House – the Golden Fishes.

Previously, the Houses could be identified by their position and the individual flower-like shades they are painted. Now each building has its own symbol and name, another addition to the embellishment of this wonderful Gar at the center of the International Dzogchen Community mandala.

©



Portraits of Rinpoche by Ralf Plüschke



Photo by Ralf Plüschke

The fire puja in front of the space that will become the Gönpa.

## Losar at Dzamling Gar

New Year of the Fire Bird



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Monday, February 27. Losar. Rinpoche prepared presents for hundreds of people and early in the morning, everyone enjoyed a breakfast of tea and *kapse*, fried Tibetan biscuits.

Left by Wilvin Pedersen, Right by Liz Granger





Rinpoche enjoys the performances. In front of him some of the Fire Birds for the New Tibetan Year.



Khaita dancers in costume presenting some new dances on the occasion of Losar.



Khaita festivities included some spontaneous performances from singers and dancers from different parts of the world.



# Celebrating Forty Years of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Teaching

On the afternoon of Sunday, February 26, 2017, the last day of the Tibetan Fire Monkey Year, a surprise celebration was held in the Dzamling Gar Gönpa in Tenerife. After a short Ganapuja, followed by an offering of thanks to the Teacher, instructors, collaborators, and donors, the International Dzogchen Community made a special presentation to thank Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for 40 years of teaching. Two of Rinpoche's students who were present at the first retreat he gave in Subiaco, Italy in 1976, Fiorenza (Poupé) Cozzi and Nancy Simmons, read a moving speech in Italian and English respectively expressing the entire Dzogchen Community's heartfelt thanks to the Teacher.

This was followed by Palzom Films' short documentary film of photos and interviews about the Subiaco retreat. The event concluded with a wonderful presentation of several new Khaita dances, the last one performed by some of the young children at the Gar.

The following is the English text of the speech of thanks read by Nancy Simmons.

**P**recious Master, Beloved Rosa, dearest Vajra Brothers and Sisters here at Dzamling Gar and around the world, We are here today to celebrate you Rinpoche and the fortieth year of your transmission of the Supreme Ati Teaching to the thousands of us who have become Dzogchenwas, members of the International Dzogchen Community in these four decades.

Rinpoche, when you in your great generosity and compassion accepted our request and began teaching a first group of fortunate students in the summer of 1976 at Subiaco in the Apennine Mountains of Italy, we were inspired by the profundity and clarity of your instruction and made happy by the joyous atmosphere of freedom you emanate and advise. It is then we learned about and began the discovery of our real condition. We had no idea. Our ignorance was total. A second retreat happened that same year in December in Sardinia at Costa Paradiso and by the way we are still in paradise, no surprise, this time in Tenerife at Playa Paraiso. We have followed you to many places. You have nev-



Subiaco retreat 1976.

er ceased to lead us, to amaze us, teaching ever more people in hundreds of retreats, giving a constant gift of your life and energy with loving care to help us reach the ultimate goal and avoid the obstacles of our relative existence.

ten which have illuminated the understanding of so many, for your endless hours of work through days and nights, months and years. As if that were not enough for one magnificent life, you are also a great pandit, the great erudite master whose



left: Nancy Simmons  
right: Fiorenza (Poupé) Cozzi

Like a wise doctor who knows the right medicine for each of his patients, you have guided us and been our example. You are the great master who has pointed out the way, simply and clearly, presenting the sacred methods in their essence, allowing us to receive their fruits. There is no one like you. You are the powerful flow of a sacred river, dissolving the barriers of language, culture, race, and religion. Accompanied by laughter and play, dancing and singing, you have shown us the road to travel, the Great Path. We have heard you Rinpoche. We have followed you and we always will.

We want to express our gratitude for the countless aspects of your accomplishments, for the hidden teachings you have revealed, the commentaries you have writ-

groundbreaking research on the ancient history of Tibet and of its culture has awakened not only the West but importantly has given the people of the Land of Snow knowledge of their vast and precious cultural heritage and restored their very identity. You, who are also expert in the realms of Tibetan medicine, astrology, geomancy, art, music, and dance, are helping your people rediscover what is their own. There is not a scholar in Tibet who has not cited you and many know your works by heart.

In your homeland you are celebrated as a great master and exalted guide. Because of your efforts schools have been built, colleges for study and practice founded, new hospitals and clinics have opened their doors to the suffering. You have completed



# The Power of Drubchen The Mandarava Retreat 2017

Nina Robinson

Some people who followed the Mandarava Drubchen retreat in webcast are curious about the string, wound around a box, they saw being handed to Rinpoche during the practice. There are two very long threads of five colors twisted together. I don't know if they are the same ones Rinpoche made for the empowerment of the *chüdlen* elixir he made in Merigar in the early '90s. Both strings were passed around the statue of Mandarava on the altar behind Rinpoche and then around the collection of *chüdlen* pills wrapped in brocade. One passed along the top of the tent and then overhead down into the place of non-interrupted mantra recitation, around the practitioners taking turns to keep the mantra going, and back to the *chüdlen* pills. Martin from Slovakia unwound the other one at the beginning of the singing of the main mantras, and skillfully passed it around behind all the people practicing in the Gönpa, finally handing it to Rinpoche. He then rewound it after the *sogthig* breathing and replaced it on the *chüdlen* pills. Thus they were empowered by millions of mantra recitation.

Although many people used their available financial resources to attend the Yang-



tig retreat at the end of last year, and also many find it impossible to come because of rising prices and falling income, almost as many people were physically present as last year: 760 participants.

**Drubchen** means vast accomplishment. It is a form of intensive group practice. It is said that several days participating in a *drubchen* can yield the same results as years of solitary retreat.

Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche says: "If there's any *drubchen* happening, one must try to participate. Just as we should participate in *tsok* offerings again and again, it is really good to participate in a *drubchen* as a Vajrayana practitioner again and again. It is believed that just going to one *drubchen* will take care of all samaya breakages instantly. Where there is no *drubchen*, one should try to organize one."

Our Mandarava Drubchen retreat seems to have become an annual event, starting at Losar and ending at full moon. This time Rinpoche gave very few explanations and personally led long practice sessions twice a day. He gave the lung of the whole *terma* twice as well as the lung of the relevant *tsalung terma*. He also gave the initiation. What a downpour of blessings! E Ma Ho! ©

projects in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Mongolia, and Burma to benefit the poor and defenseless. You have supported thousands of Tibetan students and monks in their studies through the ASIA Foundation that you established. Here in the West you created the International Shang Shung Institute that has opened its doors in a number of countries, expanding awareness of Tibetan knowledge in order to help humanity in the quest for progress, greater harmony, and happiness. To do so, you have taught and spread knowledge of Yantra Yoga, the Khaita dances, Tibetan medicine, and the Tibetan language in which all the teachings of the Buddha have been preserved.

You are the creative and continuing source of magnificent projects which further all you have at heart for the benefit of beings. Most recently a few months ago in the town of Arcidosso, where Merigar, the

first center of the International Dzogchen Community was established in 1981, you opened a splendid museum of Tibetan history and culture, the only one of its kind in Italy, that will enable also future generations to come into contact with this rich culture.

Today, forty years from when you began to spin the Wheel of the Dharma in the West out of the depths of your compassion, we the practitioners of the International Dzogchen Community across the world celebrate you and your achievements with deep gratitude.

We implore you with all our hearts to continue to transmit the precious Ati Teaching until all sentient beings free themselves in the pure dimensions.

Thank you Rinpoche. Thank you everyone.©

# Lha Gyallo! Three Stupas at Merigar West!

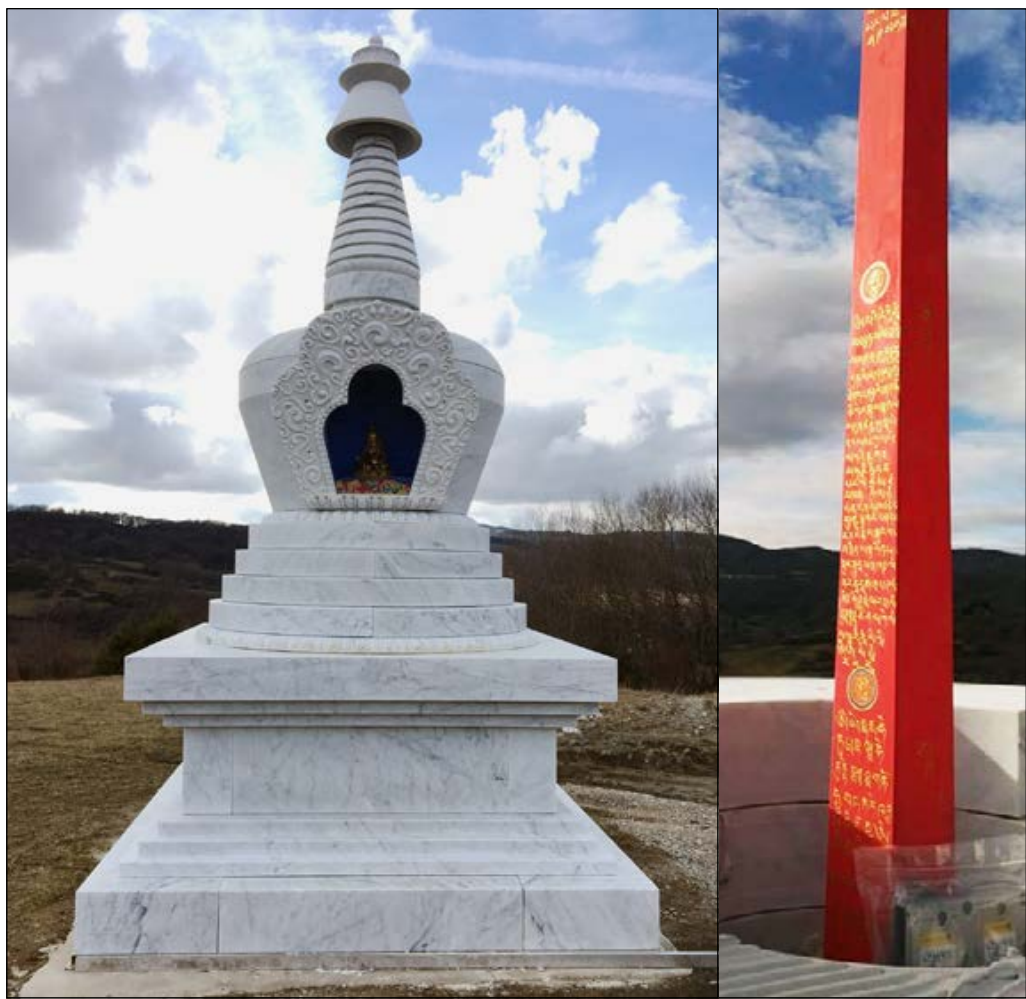
Cvetko Jovanovic

**M**erigar West, the first Gar of the International Dzogchen Community, has built a new stupa. Built in the "Complete Victory" style, its name is Palbar Chorten, meaning the Stupa of Blazing Splendor or the Stupa of Rising Glory. This marvelous achievement took a lot of effort from many members of our Community: sponsors, organizers, and workers, collaborating under the guidance of Migmar Tsering. Merigar already has two other stupas, both built in the "Enlightenment" style. The smaller one was constructed in 1983 and the much larger one in 1998. The Palbar Chorten was built on the occasion of the Fire Monkey year, the same as the year of birth of Guru Padmasambhava. It is dedicated to the long life of our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Located on a small hill near the Temple of the Great Contemplation, near the statue of Adzom Drugpa, the Palbar Chorten is surrounded by open space on all four sides, so you can enjoy both the sunrise and the sunset throughout the year, with a view of both Monte Amiata and Monte Labbro. It is a perfect spot for practice and relaxation.

What makes this stupa unique, aside from the precious relics used to bless it, is that it is made of Carrara marble, renowned for its quality as a building material because it has the capacity to remain intact for centuries. Sculptors and builders have used Carrara marble since antiquity because of its softness and resistance to shattering. It took about 18 tons of this precious material to create the sixteen jigsaw-like pieces that make up the stupa, some of them weighing over two tons.

Construction started in the early morning of the first day of Tibetan New Year (February 9, 2016), when a boy born in the year of the Dog dug the first spade of earth to mark the beginning of work. In keeping with traditional practice, many objects symbolizing war, obstacles, and negativities were placed under the foundation. These objects are symbolically controlled by the stupa itself, as it is filled with sacred materials and symbols. Once the heavily armed concrete was poured, we had to wait for several months for the concrete to



dry well enough to support several tons of marble. At that point, the vase, filled with four layers of sacred substances and objects, including precious materials and objects such as rolled mantra scrolls and tsatsas prepared by practitioners, was inserted inside the base. Then the first block of marble was put in place and the construction of the visible part of the Stupa commenced.

On the auspicious anniversary of Guru Padmasambhava, the 10th day of the 6th month (August 13, 2016), our precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu led the ritual of Sang and Serkyem to bless and inaugurate the stupa. At that point the height



of the assembled marble blocks reached about one and a half meters. A collection of teachings of our precious Master, recorded on different supports, was carefully placed



inside the stupa, followed by another vase with precious substances and relics, and on top of that the tree of life, the wooden pole forming the center of the stupa. The pole is made of a special kind of wood, filled with relics and mantra scrolls, carved into an obelisk-like shape with the tip of a gold-plated vajra at its base, and inscribed with important mantras written with golden paint. Many additional sacred and precious materials were then placed inside the stupa, around the central pole, not leaving a single empty space.

Once the stupa was fully assembled, the central part was sealed and a statue of a nirmanakaya manifestation of Guru Padmasambhava was set in the ornamented opening facing the east.

The work, however, is not quite done. In the spring the marble needs to be puttied with a special stucco, a path for circumambulating the stupa needs to be created, lights for illuminating it at night need to be installed, a path to the stupa needs to be made, and finally a beautiful flower garden needs to be grown around it. Though the project is nearly complete, we are facing a lack of funds. Not all of the total project cost of €57,500 has been covered yet. Contributing to a project as beneficial as a stupa is a wonderful source of merit, and the Palbar Chorten is especially important for members of the Dzogchen Community all over the world. All are most welcome to participate.

Auspiciously, the work went perfectly without anything going wrong, which is close to miraculous as marble is very fragile and building blocks so large and heavy. The last day of work, January 25, 2017, ended with the top ornament of the stupa being put in place while the sun was setting behind it. The sky was illuminated in amazing colors and remained perfectly limpid, clear, and blue sky for three days. How wonderful! A la la ho!

To make an offering for the Merigar Palbar Chorten, please send your contribution to: Banca Etruria CC 92203  
Comunità Dzogchen Merigar  
IBAN: IT 28 D0539072190000000092203  
SWIFT/BIC: ARBAIT33126

## Come to ME!

### An Open Invitation for Practitioners

Alexandru Anton  
for the Merigar East Gakyil



Happy Fire Bird Year to everyone!

Merigar East is one of the places on the Vajra Dance Earth Mandala, a power place chosen by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to serve for the practice and collaboration of Dzogchen Community members.

The actual construction of the Gar is according to Khyentse Yeshe's vision, in which the Gönpa, the two Stupas and the three Vajra Dance mandalas are the key points of a large Longsal symbol.

### Exploration and freedom

While spending a few months at Dzamling Gar I had the opportunity to travel beyond time and reconnect with Rinpoche's vision. I met with practitioners from several different national communities affiliated to Merigar East, such as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Croatia, and Serbia. I was surprised to find out that in some of these countries, for example Lithuania, there is now a strong community of practitioners. Merigar East has been growing "under the radar" of many of us and is now openly manifesting in a more extended version. Now I am able to see the potential of Merigar East as a communication-and-opportunity hub amongst all of us. There is a great diversity that everyone brings with them. Whereas in ordinary conditions all these people would face many challenges in connecting to one another, practice



Welcoming the Master, 2009.

brings us together and helps us go beyond cultural limitations. This creates a unique space for creativity and mind-opening activities and this is one of the most important resources of Merigar East: space for exploration and freedom. Yes, this is Merigar East in its essence – an open space under the sky where we can meet, enjoy, and create a lively communication network together for the benefit of the entire IDC.

### Local community

Merigar East is located in the Romanian region called Dobrogea, between the Danube and the Black Sea. In its Slavic etymology Dobrogea means "good earth". Historically, it has been inhabited since ancient times and there is a rich collection of neolithic archaeological evidence. Geographically, this region has particular climatic conditions, offering a unique habitat to plants and animals specific to semi-desert areas, like the turtle. Culturally, it is a confluence of Romanians, Turks, Tatars, Lipovans, Greeks, Ukrainians and Bulgarians. In the village of 23 August, very near the Gar, there is the annual Kurash Championship – Tatar Belt Wrestling. Kurash is an old Turkish word that describes this type of traditional wrestling, still practiced in Tuva and other parts of Siberia.

Over the centuries this diversity has created an interesting combination of ethnic-tolerance and exotic atmosphere and the villagers are always happy to meet practitioners coming from far away, who want to be their guests or simply get supplies from the local vegetable market.

» continued on the following page





The stupa was finished 2015.



Vision for the Gar.

» continued from previous page

### Fresh Growth

The Fire Bird year of 2017 will bring many new opportunities to Merigar East, so that regular Vajra guests can continue to feel welcome and more and more practitioners can benefit from the beautiful conditions of the place.

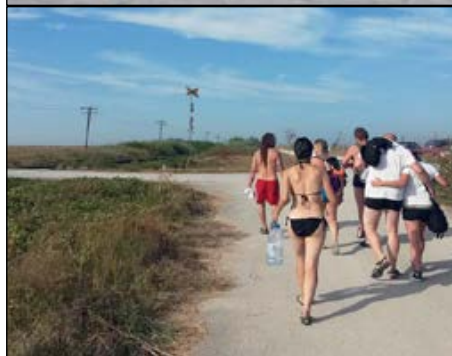
Everybody who has visited the Gar on the Black Sea has experienced the special atmosphere created by the vastness of the land, the remoteness of the place, the fresh salty sea breeze, steppe-like surroundings and special atemporal quality of the space.

This year we are extending the camping facilities, so that more Dharma-thirsty travellers can come and enjoy this oasis: we are building shady areas, increasing the number of toilets and showers, and increasing the number of tents that can be set up inside the Gar.

The intention is to provide an amazing experience in very affordable conditions, so everyone can feel welcome. There will be many available places in the tent-camping, and for those who want more luxury, the villagers are more than happy to receive us in their hostel-like houses.

### What's Next?

May 11–18, Migmar Tsering will join us and lead one of the dearest karma-yoga activities: painting the two remaining Vajra Dance open-air mandalas, participating in this activity to create space for practicing Rinpoche's terma. In total there will be three usable VD mandalas, creating more secondary causes for VD retreats and also allowing more Dakinis and Dakas to dance together, at sunset, continuing this tradition of Merigar East. No words or even photos can express the plenitude of this experience, but I will just tell you that being able to see almost the entire line of



the horizon while spinning in the centre of this vast space adds a rare flavor to the practice of this sacred dance.

July 21–23 Merigar East welcomes the new Yantra Yoga instructor, Magda Ourecka, who will lead a beginner's course. She will be staying with us for a longer time, so we can have morning practice sessions every day.

August will be "Merigar East month", as it is filled with opportunities to enjoy, explore and practice. At the beginning of the month instructors will come for a **Communication course** with Gianfranco Brero (August 4–7). A few days later, Zoli Cser will start teaching the whole **Dance of the Song of Vajra** (August 11–20). Then follows Elio Guarisco, who will guide us for a practice retreat of the **21 Semdzins** (August 21–27).

### Health and Relaxation

Since its foundation, Merigar East has been collaborating with local **health centres**, especially "Doina", which Rinpoche visits every time he comes for a retreat. These treatment centres offer professional and affordable **services** ranging from massage and lymphatic drainage, to hydrotherapy, and mudbaths, and are very near the Gar. All practitioners who want to benefit from these can do so, combining practice with purification and relaxation at all levels.

Walking 10 minutes from the Gar you come to a pristine beach, with only a few fishermen's houses around. Here you can enjoy the sun, the sand, and the Black Sea waves. Come at night during the full moon to have a good time with your friends. If you're lucky, you can swim in the sea at night and find yourself surrounded by

# Tsegyalgar East News!

## IDC alignment – BACK ON TRACK!

As many of you know Tsegyalgar East's alignment with the IDC was halted back in August of 2016. Rinpoche, in his immense generosity, kindness and patience, has given us the green light to continue to pursue our alignment with the IDC.

## Dzamling Gar Tsegyalgar House – COMPLETED

Thanks to all of our donors, sponsors and most of all our guests who, with their booking and reservation, contributed towards completion of our Dzamling Gar house in Tenerife. Completion of the house was a very specific request given by Rinpoche to our Gakyil in 2014. Completing it was the first logistical step towards obtaining the permits for the Dzamling Gar Gönpa Construction, a project of top priority. As Rinpoche often says, the completion of this Gönpa is for the future of our Dzogchen Community.

## Schoolhouse Grant: PRE-APPROVED

Thanks to Ed Matheny and Matt Hayat for preparing a professional grant proposal on behalf of Tsegyalgar East. In February, we submitted a grant application to the Town of Conway, MA to help subsidize the repairs and restoration of The Conway Schoolhouse. In the preliminary meeting of the Grant Review board Tsegyalgar East was approved for \$60,000 pending final approval in May of 2017. If approved it will provide funds for the Schoolhouse roof to be fully



renovated. If you want to help with fund-raising for this project contact:

[gakyil@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:gakyil@tsegyalgar.org)

## 5 Year Strategic Plan:

### ROAD MAP TO COLLABORATION

The last seven months have been marked by an increased effort to collaborate well between large and small groups of TE members both local to the Gar and across our membership area. During this time the Gakyil created a road map wherein a 5 Year Strategic plan gives us the framework to support and help grow Tsegyalgar East into a thriving sustainable center for the Dzogchen Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in North America.

## Finances: WE NEED YOUR HELP!

This year will be a critical one for our finances. Without a major retreat with Rinpoche, by the end of this year we'll have used up our reserve fund of \$50,000 to fulfill our budget. We urgently need major donations. Our fund-raising goal is \$75,000, to fulfill the budget and have something left over to start 2018. We want to thank all the generous donors in the past who have stepped in and helped. We want to encourage people to contribute whatever is possible, every donation counts. Donate today!

## Membership: RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP Today!

Our membership is still down – 154 Members, this includes Kundrolling. If you forgot to renew please don't wait at the end of the year!

## July and August: INTERNATIONAL TEACHERS ON KHANDROLING

We are very excited to welcome Laura Evangelisti and Prima Mai this Summer at Khandroling and New York City.

## DCA & SSI: 250 YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF TOWN OF CONWAY

DCA & SSI USA, will participate in the parade of the 250th year anniversary of Conway. In addition to the parade, from June 16–18, the local town organizers have accepted the proposal to do demonstrations of Khaita, Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga for the public. To participate contact:

[matthewsio8@gmail.com](mailto:matthewsio8@gmail.com).

For more question or any ideas and suggestions please feel free to contact Tsegyalgar East Gakyil: [gakyil@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:gakyil@tsegyalgar.org) ©



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thousands of plankton microorganisms that make sparks around you as you move.

## SMS Scholarships

Every Gar has its own unique potentialities. Merigar East enjoys a strong manifestation of the natural elements and especially the expanse of limitless space. There are perfect conditions to integrate with the elements – the Black Sea, the occasional strong winds, the generous sun, surprising intense thunderstorms, and also plenty of private space to do the special practices for the voice – many of which can be quite challenging in an urban setting.

For this reason, Merigar East is offering SMS scholarships for up to six months for up to 2 practitioners who want to complete their SMS practices.

The possibility to do karma yoga by participating in the various activities at the Gar is included, thus maintaining the continuity of contribution to the Dzogchen Community – an essential part of the SMS program.

## Coming to ME

Although the country of Romania might still seem an ancient far-away place for those who have never visited, it is now quite modern and tourist-friendly, with

most young people speaking very good English. Coming to Merigar East is now easier than ever. Several low-cost companies operate flights directly to the city of Constanta, which is 40 minutes from the Gar. You can fly directly to Constanta from Rome, London, Paris, Milano, Bruxelles, and Istanbul. Otherwise, fly to Bucharest, which is 3–4 hours from the Gar (a bus takes you directly from Bucharest International Airport to the 23 August village near the Gar).

For further information please contact us at [blue.me@dzogchen.ro](mailto:blue.me@dzogchen.ro)

See you soon!

©



# The 2nd Annual Tsegylgar East Summer Celebration

Monday, July 17 – Sunday, July 23, 2017

**Y**ou are invited to participate in the second annual Tsegylgar East Summer Celebration! We have planned an awesome 7-day gathering on the Land of the Dakinis that will include an intensive practice retreat offering daily collective practice, community collaboration, dancing, music, food, and more.

Come learn and practice with authorized teachers. Daily practice activities will include Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, collective practice Thuns taught and led by Santi Maha Sangha teachers, Khaita, and Karma Yoga opportunities.

**Registration:** Please reserve your space as soon as possible!

Transmission is required.

**Housing:** There are a limited number of spots for camping on the land. If interested, contact the Gekö, Jeremy, at [geko@tsegylgar.org](mailto:geko@tsegylgar.org). Other options for local accommodations can be researched at: <http://tsegylgar.org/localcenters/tsegylgareast/accommodations/>

**Cost:** The recommended donation for the full retreat will be \$200, or \$50/day. Please offer a \$50 pre-planning donation to indicate your commitment and interest. You can also contribute more if you like. Your pre-planning donation will be deducted from the total donation requested for the Summer Celebration – \$50 per day or \$200 for the full event.

<http://tsegylgar.org/support/tsegylgar-celebration/>

We hope that you will join us! And encourage your Vajra Brothers and Sisters to participate as well! Let's work together towards the Gar's self-sustainability and our individual and collective development.



## Other Summer Events at Kundrolling, NYC and Khandroling

July 24–August 3, 2017

Khandroling

**Yantra Yoga First and Second Level Supervisions**

with Laura Evangelisti

August 1–3, 2017

Kundrolling, New York City

**Vajra Dance**

with Prima Mai

August 5–6, 2017

Khandroling

**Kumar Kumari for Instructors and Practitioners**

with Laura Evangelisti

### For more information:

Kundrolling, NYC:

[nydzogchencomm@gmail.com](mailto:nydzogchencomm@gmail.com)

[www.kundrolling.org](http://www.kundrolling.org)

August 9–27, 2017

Khandroling

**International Vajra Dance Teaching with Prima Mai**

August 9–15

**First Level Vajra Dance Teacher Training**

August 17th–20th

**Advanced Course Vajra Dance: Dance of the Song of the Vajra**

August 22–24

**Supervision Course: Dance of the Three Vajras**

August 25–27

**Supervision Course: Dance of the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings**

Tsegylgar East:

[secretary@tsegylgar.org](mailto:secretary@tsegylgar.org)

<http://tsegylgar.org/localcenters/tsegylgareast/>

See you soon!

With love and appreciation,

Tsegylgar East Gakyil

©



## THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International

Dzogchen Community of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

US Office: [mirror@tsegylgar.org](mailto:mirror@tsegylgar.org) • European Office: [lizgranger.mirror@gmail.com](mailto:lizgranger.mirror@gmail.com) • Editorial Staff: Naomi Zeitz, Tsegylgar, 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.

# Tsegyalgar West, Baja California South, Mexico

Update from Painting and  
Decoration of the Gar's Gönpa  
With Joy and in a Relaxed Way  
March 21–April 28, 2017

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters,  
We want to let you know that the painting retreat of the Gönpa at Tsegyalgar West, 'Let's Live the Gar – generosity/harmony/participation' is manifesting and moving forward and our Gakyil wants to thank very much all that are participating in this wonderful project.

The first week of work was dedicated to the hard job of smoothing and cleaning the wooden structure of the Gönpa, and providing the scaffolding and working



Painters with Migmar.

The group of volunteers is working eight hours a day for six days a week in a very relaxed environment. All are astonished to find themselves in such an incredible place and with such an interesting project; much more than what they expected. And what an incredible opportunity to work

Gar and to help and learn in the kitchen. We received a class from Yushan on Chinese cooking from Sichuan Province, we learned to prepare different Mexican chili sauce from Veronica Torres and Migmar will soon teach how to prepare Tibetan Momos. All is working very well!

More volunteers are expected and some are changing during the next weeks. There is still the possibility to participate for anyone interested to come by contacting Tsegyalgar West Gakyil at [2000giorgio@gmail.com](mailto:2000giorgio@gmail.com)



View of the Gar.



New interior finish of Gar casitas with flush toilets and hot showers!

materials needed to prepare the Gönpa for the painting. Finally, in the second week, Migmar Tsering, Yushan Zhong and the first group of seven volunteers arrived to start the painting.

It took less than one day for Migmar to think and design the project for the Gar's Gönpa, deciding on a combination of Tibetan decorations integrating with colors and motifs from the Mexican culture. After just a couple of days of work, we already have the feeling of the work envisioned by Migmar. The dense blue sky of the roof, combined with the colors of Mexico, seem a perfect combination for the place and the time.

with Migmar and Yushan who are always kind, and open to sharing their knowledge and experience in this extraordinary and unique project.

Daily activities include a class of yoga at 7:00 am, and in the evening Vajra Dance at 6:00 pm, followed by Khaita at 8:30 pm. People listen to recordings of the Teachings last given by the Master in Tsegyalgar West, in the morning from 10:00 to 12:00 noon, while painting. During the day, volunteers share their preferred music, both Western and Tibetan, while working in the Gönpa.

People who like are also dedicating some time in the vegetable garden of the

Other good news is that we have already received donations to cover 50% of the project costs and we want to thank all the Donors very much that made this possible in so short a time.

Make a connection here with Tsegyalgar West, the Gar of Baja California, by applying generosity with a donation to this project at the page:

<https://tsegyalgarwest.org/donate-2/>  
SPECIFY: "DONATION FOR THE GÖNPA"

For more information:

[tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com](mailto:tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com)  
[2000giorgio@gmail.com](mailto:2000giorgio@gmail.com)





# CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU IN REUNION ISLAND (INDIAN OCEAN) !

2ND TO 4TH  
JUNE 2017



[WWW.MAISONKAILASH.COM/EVENEMENTS/ENGLISH/](http://WWW.MAISONKAILASH.COM/EVENEMENTS/ENGLISH/)

We are honored to announce the visit of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on Reunion Island (Indian Ocean) for the first time!

## Dzogchen Retreat

June 2–4, 2017

The retreat is free. Its realization is made possible thanks to the generosity of your donations. Registration is required: [www.maisonkailash.com/evenements/english/](http://www.maisonkailash.com/evenements/english/)

The retreat will take place on the West coast of Reunion Island, at the Stella Matutina Museum:

<http://museesreunion.re/stellamatutina>  
Info: [chnn.reunion@gmail.com](mailto:chnn.reunion@gmail.com)



## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Kyoto Retreat!

2–6 September

Dear Vajra Sisters and Brothers,  
We are very much delighted to have our beloved master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche at the Kyoto Retreat 2–6 September 2017.

Please plan now your Kyoto visit for this precious occasion! *\*Registration required*

For further information and registration please visit our special webpage just opened (English page available): <http://dzogchencommunity.jp/kyotoretreat2017>

We are looking forward to welcoming you in Kyoto!! Gakyil of Munselling

# The Dzamling Gar Houses

## Houses Accommodation Service

Collaboration and harmony between the houses and the gardens

### Aims and Values

**W**e promote living together in harmony and with cooperation, as representative of the values of the International Dzogchen Community according to the principles of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by providing an accommodation service to all people with genuine interest in these same values and associated activities.

The houses within Dzamling Gar, while respecting their individual cultures of Europe (Merigars), China (Samtengar), Russian and Ukraine (unified as Kunsangar), South America (Tashigars), Australia and Asia Pacific (Namgyalgar), Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain – Base of the International Dzogchen Community (Dzamling Gar), Tibetan Medicine healing arts – Shang Shung Foundation and ASIA Onlus for the preservation of the immense irreplaceable cultural and traditional heritage of Tibet, will serve as collective bases for the promotion of the co-existence of peace and unity within cultural diversity.

The gardens, linking the houses as living symbols of the harmonious flow of communication between the houses, will be nurtured as ornaments of the spaces between the houses.

### Dr. Rosemary Friend – An Overview of Managing the Dzamling Gar Houses

**W**ithin Dzamling Gar, there are seven houses now providing accommodation to members of the International Dzogchen Community (IDC). Six of the houses belong to the international Gars of Europe (Merigars), North America (Tsegyalgar), South America (Tashigars), Russia/Ukraine (Kunsangars), China (Samtengar) and Australia (Namgyalgar). The seventh is the 'Tibetan Medicine' house linked with the Shang Shung Foundation (SSF). Miraculously, all the seven houses were completed and furnished in time for the December 2016 Yangti retreat.

SSF will also be collaborating with ASIA and the International Gakyil in the management of the eighth house, which is yet to be completed. The ninth house, also yet to be completed, is planned to offer work exchange and dormitory accommodation and be managed by Dzamling Gar Gakyil. Dr Rosemary Friend has been assisting with communication between the different groups involved in the houses accommodation project.

"A 'grass-roots' evolution of management of the houses accommodation service....."

All visitors are welcome to contribute to the participate in a wide variety of educational and artistic activities that facilitate relaxation and enjoyment, the pursuit and discovery of knowledge and understanding and the confidence to express the natural love of humanity. ☺

vice has been unfolding here in Dzamling Gar. It all started during the 2016 Mandarava Drubchen retreat, when Giovanni Boni invited representatives from each Gar to meet. Giovanni is director of the IDC owned 'Meriling' company responsible for the construction of the Dzamling Gar project. For those of us returning to our lives in other parts of the world, continuing to work together across time and space has been like being a team member in an international 'virtual' project. A year later, as we arrive again to Dzamling Gar, we have a more concrete experience of the everyday challenges of a fast-moving project with unlimited potentiality for harmony and collaboration.

It is only now, with the recent experience of fully occupied houses during the recent Yangti and Longsal Rushen retreats, that we see and experience the reality of what is required to manage this broad project. Pancho Company (initially) and Nuria Moreno (more recently) are working together to develop a management structure that will support Meriling, the international Gar Gakyils and SSF-ASIA-IG to continue providing this unique accommodation service.

What has most recently become clear is that we need a clear, efficient decision-making process, between Meriling and the Home Owners, that will ensure transparency and accountability for all. For this, we require a simple system wherein information regarding topics, such as electricity, garden-water-eco, summer season management, global reservation system, internet, finances, management team communications and so on, will be shared and decisions finalized with ease and enjoyment. This is where we are. ☺



During the 2016 Mandarava retreat, the first meeting was held with representatives of the gakyils of all the Gar houses to see how to organize. There I understood that the gakyil people were there only for the retreat and that somebody who lived at Dzamling Gar was necessary to coordinate the system. Because it was something completely new and we needed to have some experience, I volunteered to be the coordinator and administrator, working in karma yoga with the different representatives for the first months, a year maximum.

We have ten gars and six houses that correspond to those ten gars, with four houses each corresponding to two gars – Tashigar Norte & Sur, Merigar West & East, Tsegyalgar East & West, Kunsangar North & South – and two houses for only a single gar – Samtengar and Namgyalgar. In the future Dzamling Gar is going to have its own house but doesn't have at the moment.

The gakyils named one person as a representative for each house. So even though there are two gakyils or two managers for some of the houses, there is only one reference point for us. This was for simplifying. Then we created some norms and principles because some things are common to them all, even though each house is different: firstly, these houses are accommodation facilities for practitioners, for members of the community, to participate in the different activities at the Gar.

At the Gar there are different types of facilities in addition to the houses: the gōnpa, cafeteria, and jyagyip. Practitioners can use these facilities and contribute to the maintenance of all of them. This is the point of view. At the beginning, there was an erroneous point of view that people could rent apartments at Dzamling Gar.

This is absolutely not correct. We use the apartments and all the facilities at the Gar and contribute to their maintenance. If you have a coffee at the cafeteria, you don't pay, you contribute. When you come for the retreat, you contribute. When you use the houses, you contribute. It's different. This is the real point of view, and also the legal one because we are a non-profit organization. This is why at the moment only active members of the Community can use the facilities.

To use the accommodation facilities, members go through the reference person at their gar. If there are possibilities for the dates requested, the representative at the Gar will start the procedure. If there is no accommodation for those dates, the person will go on a general waiting list and may be able to have accommodation in another house. So we started like this. Each representative had to have a clear understanding of how to process the reservations and connect with the central administration to optimize and to avoid duplications.

In principle, there is a system for confirming reservations by paying in advance 30% of the contribution (not payment) that is calculated for the stay. It is important, to call things by their correct name. There is no rental, no price. There is "use" and "enjoyment of the facilities" and there is "contribution" to support the expenses.

There are also some tariffs, more or less established, which should be common among the houses. They are not identical, because the houses have manifested in a different manner. Also the set up at the houses is not exactly the same. Some of them are only private apartments, while others have some kind of a hostel, so you can reserve an apartment but also just a bed. This was Rosa Namkhai's idea to create a possibility for practitioners with less economic capacity.

In general each house has four apartments downstairs and upstairs there is a different arrangement in some of the houses. One example is Samtengar with the "Tibet House" upstairs, which is a space that can be used for courses and practices, and also has a shop with *dharma* ware. Merigar has reserved the second floor for special guests and for old practitioners.

In general we can say that the first experiences were not very easy because we lacked experience and also because the first guests started to arrive before the houses were totally set up. But as always, our marvelous *sangha* manifested and helped enormously, and, on the whole, I believe that the guests were very happy. I always talk to them when they arrive and when they leave and in general they are grateful to be living here in the Gar and appreciate this special situation that they are Rinpoche's neighbors. Of course we have had different problematic situations with electricity and hot water, but in general everybody has reacted well. They are practitioners, and are supposed to work with circumstances.

Many guests have improved the apartments. If there was something lacking that they wanted, like a kettle or wine glasses, they purchased it and donated it to the gar. In general the experiences have been very good, although there have been a few bad ones, too. But in general it had been good.

Now my work is finishing, because we have incorporated Nuria Moreno, who is a practitioner living here, a lawyer, with very good capacity. She will be the formal administrator and also give a legal framework to the project because there are chains of responsibility that start with Rinpoche, go through Meriling, and end when I give the key of an apartment to somebody and tell him that now he is responsible for the apartment.

At the moment Nuria is meeting with Meriling and all the representatives of the Gakyils to understand the situation. Based on the experience that we have had up to now, some more definitive or updated norms of operation will be established.

This is the situation right now. I will be collaborating with this person because here at Dzamling Gar, this administrator will also work with the reservations, managing the waiting list, and direct occupation of the apartments. This refers to practitioners who arrive and request lodging directly. This is something that we manage directly here at Dzamling Gar and is another job of the administration. There is the reception of people, giving them the keys, etc. Finally there is the maintenance, cleaning, and laundry, which are important and problematic, but gradually we are finding ways to resolve.

During the Mandarava retreat there was full occupancy with more than 150 people living at the Gar. In the future, when everything is finished there will be capacity for 180 people.

Finally the vision of Rinpoche is manifesting here at Dzamling Gar and we can see the real international community. Everyday we see, at Khaita, in the cafeteria, or on the *mandala*, that there are people from all over the world, like the houses that represent every gar. In the past this vast Dzogchen community around the world was a little disconnected. What was happening in one place was not known in another and so on. Now Dzamling Gar is like the heart of all the community. As I understand it, Rinpoche's vision is that here is like the nucleus of the whole international community. ☉

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Alejandro Acuña – Secondary  
Occupation Manager of the  
Merigar House

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Every house at Dzamling Gar functions in a different way for the moment. At the beginning we had the idea that all the houses should work in the same way but we found that they started to work in different ways. For example, the Kunsangar House is for Russian people and has to be managed by someone who speaks the language otherwise guests don't understand very well.

I'm the Secondary Occupation Manager (SOM) at the Merigar House and there is a Primary Occupation Manager (POM) who is Rocco Vassalli from Merigar West. When we started to have meetings here at Dzamling Gar to discuss how to organise the houses etc., Rocco was in Italy and Skype connections were difficult so I started to take part in the meetings, work with communications and took over this role as SOM.

In the role of SOM I take care of the bookings and the running of the house in general terms. At the moment we are in the first stage of providing accommodation at the houses. At the start the idea of the Occupational Manager was to try to organise how to make repayments to Meriling, to furnish and make the apartments functional. But then we realised that we needed someone physically at the Gar taking care of the houses.

The Occupation Manager makes sure that the apartments are working properly, resolves any problems that might arise, and helps to design the booking system. Merigar has already established a number of requirements for people who wish to stay in the house and we have to check this type of thing.

We are transforming the houses from empty apartments into places that are alive, that have some function and are designing how the system is going to be. We are planning to set up an online system, which people can access with a username and password, and be able to reserve places in the houses. We have had an initial experience and also received feedback and may have to make some changes about how the apartments are managed and also set out.

One point that we have identified is that when there are no retreats with Rinpoche many of the apartments are empty. There will still be utility bills to pay at the end

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Rocco Vassalli – Primary  
Occupation Manager,  
Merigar West

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Regarding the furnishing of the Merigar House, the two Gakyils of Merigar East and West decided that the most essential thing was that the 5 kitchens of the house should be of good quality so that they would last over time. This meant that while we decided to spend a lit-  
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.....  
of each month as well as maintenance etc., and if the houses are empty this will be a problem. This is one of the situations that the Occupation Managers will have to take into consideration and resolve. We are also discussing the level of contributions for accommodation as a few of us feel that some members are not able to stay at the Gar because of this.

After several meetings we decided that each house needs a general manager who will take administrative decisions and there will be a board so that we can organise the administration better. We will try to set this up in the next few months. At the beginning we had a rush to start and many of us were not living here and when the project began we started to discover a lot of things.

At the moment we have 10 houses for accommodation: the 6 houses for the Gars, the Meriling house, the Dzamling Gar house, the Medicine house, and the Special Needs house all accommodate people. There are a total of 13 houses although we do not include the Master's house, so there are 12, two of which are not ready – the Dzamling Gar dormitory which has been serving as a garden center and the house for ASIA, SSI, and the IG – but should be later this year. ©

tle more on the kitchens, we were very limited in spending for the rest of the furnishings. This was because we needed to pay back very quickly the loan from Meriling to cover the costs of renovating the house, and in addition over 2016 the Gar had had several large expenses such as the Museum, the 35th Anniversary of the Gar, furnishing the MeriRooms in Arcidosso, etc.

I was in charge of choosing the furnishings for the apartments together with Paola Rosato, an architect at Dzamling Gar. We bought a few things but for the rest of the furnishing, we left some of it up to Giovanni Boni who managed to have some of the beds donated, and found other material second hand because we had a very limited budget for these things.

I was a little worried when I arrived here for the Mandarava retreat (February–March 2017) because I had heard a few complaints from people staying in the house. But, on the whole, I feel that the house is fine. I think that there hadn't been much communication with people to let them know the reason why the house was not quite up to their expectations.

I have to say that throughout the process, I respected the chain of command. When we had meetings about the house, we were told, for example, that no house should accommodate more than 22 people. In order for things to work, we have to respect the rules. There may be some rule that we feel may not be good, but let's make a start. Let's get a bit of experience. Let's see how things go. This is not a five star hotel. The value of this place is the fact that it is at the Gar and that the Master is here. Not that every apartment has a washing machine or a hairdryer. Let's adapt to circumstances.

We have to accept the fact that the house cannot be perfect immediately. We also need to build things over time. At the beginning we had to make some decisions right away so that we could offer the houses for accommodation. And when we take decisions, we also have to take the responsibility for mistakes. For example, to say that the four apartments on the ground floor are each for four people is true, but only in special circumstances that you cannot generalize. This is a choice that was made. Perhaps if I had had more time or been able to spend more time here things would have gone a little better.

It wasn't possible to start things off in a grand way but it's important to start and to see how we can gradually improve. ©





## Merigar House

Karin Koppensteiner, Guest

We are staying in apartment number 3 at the Merigar House. When we arrived we first stayed in apartment 2. Since Peter is always curious and between the apartments there was a dark brown curtain, he moved it and said: "Someone has forgotten his Chinese medicine." At the same moment someone on the other side opened his curtain. There was a Chinese man standing there who said "Hello!" The wall was missing between the two apartments so we asked to move to number 3. By now there has been a solution with a temporary wall between those two apartments. But it would also be nice to keep those two as one open space to house several friends.

All the flats on the ground floor are operational, are the same size, and all have a good Ikea kitchen and good bathroom. I understand that they still have the original

## Kunsangar House

Anya Neyman, guest

We are happy to stay here as we put our contribution into the Gar instead of using it for accommodation outside so it is our little input into the Gar's development.

It's a very nice feeling when you wake up and greet your neighbors. In particular the Kunsangar House is situated very close to Rinpoche's house and we often see him pass by, and we also have a wonderful view of the sea.

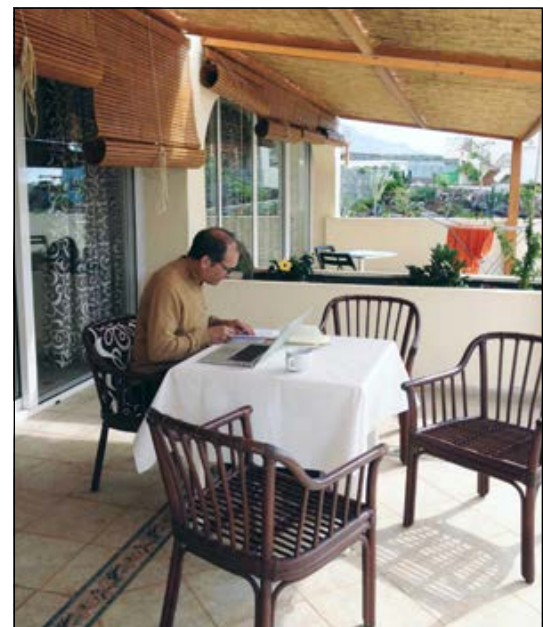
The house was furnished by Lesya Cherenkova, the Occupation Manager, and since she has worked as an interior designer, she did it very well. The house has been furnished with very limited resources but it is very comfortable and cosy with many small touches and everything has been thought out very well. For example, the kitchen is very well equipped for cooking and serving food and in every bathroom there is a washing machine and a hairdryer etc. Everything we need for living is here. There are even yoga mats at the house so that we can practice Yantra Yoga on the terrace. To save money, Lesya bought material for the curtains which were sewn by Lidia Kudryavtseva. Lesya, Lidia, and Dima Volodin volunteered a lot of their time and effort as

karmayogis to make everything ready in such a short time.

We are sharing the upstairs apartment, which has two bedrooms, each with its own bathroom, and a big communal kitchen and living area. Downstairs half of the space is divided into two apartments, like the other houses at the Global Gar, but the other half has become a hostel. The hostel has two 3-bedded bedrooms, two bathrooms, a communal living room with two beds, and a big communal kitchen, so it can host eight people. The hostel kitchen is well-equipped for a large number of people and everything is simply but very nicely furnished and very comfortable. It is nice that people with different budgets can afford to stay in the house; there are possibilities for everyone here.

Being here is a good opportunity to collaborate. For example, we are sharing with another person who is older than us and we have different times for sleeping etc. so we had to adjust to each other to have similar times for sleeping and waking so that we don't disturb each other.

Finally I'd like to mention that I haven't been at Dzamling Gar for three years and was amazed returning this time. It was dark when we arrived and there were so many trees and plants, it was like a jungle. I remember the first year at the Gar when there was barely a living thing here. I was really impressed. It's such a big job, such a change. ©



marble tiles that were here in the unfinished houses before the property was bought. We have a big terrace and a nice sleeping room, although I think we need to put some mosquito netting on that side of the house.

My husband Peter and I have put lots of plants in the planters dividing the individual terraces, some of them will grow into bushes and also separate the spaces. Next week we will add the watering systems

that are necessary. The terraces looked a bit deserted and the plants have transformed the whole area into a more pleasant space. Even when you look outside, there is more life between the Gar houses, which, in some places, stand quite close together. The plants will grow and bring friendliness into the spaces. I am very thankful to the plants, I enjoyed this work very much.

When we came here we thought the accommodation was very basic and we decided that we wanted to dedicate and give rather than talking too much about what was missing. We started to buy things we needed, with the idea to leave them in the apartment when we leave, like a reading lamp or a teapot. Things in a flat with always changing inhabitants should be good quality but do not need to be expensive. Yesterday someone took us to a flea market and Peter found some wonderful little glasses.

And regarding some of the furniture from Ikea perhaps savings were not made in the right areas. It would be good to invest in stable things if many different people are going to stay in the flats.



I was talking with people from the other houses and it is not so clear how the organization of the houses will go on. We have to take our laundry out of the Gar to wash it. But it would be nice to have one common laundry for all the Houses at the Gar. Now we are just renting this space and being happy here.

I grew up with this idea of cooperative living. I think this is a big opportunity to



## Namgyalgar House

Thuy Nguyen,  
Manager of House Furnishing

**What was your experience of setting up Namgyalgar House?**

**N**amgyalgar House has been a monumental project that was a great privilege to be a part of, exhilarating, exhausting and at the same time rewarding. When I volunteered to take responsibility of furnishing the Namgyalgar house in July 2016 I knew that it would be a big task, however to design and install 2 kitchens and fully fit out 2 apartments with furniture, seemed straightforward enough. Even if I had zero experience in installing kitchens and furnishing whole apartments, at least I had a copy of a basic floor plan to go wild on the imagination with and a supportive partner who would assist me all the way. However even with all the months .....

move in this direction and organize things together, such as the cafeteria of the Gar. If we don't want to cook we can have a good lunch down there. But it needs many people who dedicate and give rather than take from the Gar.

The experience Peter and I have had here is not so much about the flat but of being in the Gar, feeling part of the Gar. This is a unique experience for me – to be here, to be so close to Rinpoche's house, to step out of the door and always meet practitioners. And it is also very inspiring because we go to the Gönpa as if it were part of our living space. I find it really wonderful. ©

of preparations my partner Chris and I made prior to my arrival to Tenerife; planning, budgeting, raising contributions and reaching out to other house project managers and Meriling workers for information, nothing could have prepared me for the extraordinary ride that I was in for.

I landed mid October 2016 to a very dusty and loud construction site. The house had been completely transformed from a derelict building to a solid structure painted in lavender. Inside this shell, floors and windows were covered in layers of dirt, paint tubs and ladders were stored in a room and builders' equipment scattered throughout the house.

Within 2 weeks of being on the ground my scope of work doubled in size to **four** Kitchens, **six** bedrooms and **six** bathrooms across four apartments and also making it available to occupants in time for the Yangtig Retreat in December, within 2 months.

I gave it everything that I had to complete the project within the time frame. I lived and breathed the Namgyalgar house for months on end and it was very intense and stressful indeed. Daily when I caught sight of Rinpoche I would have a small reminder that being present and relaxed was the goal...but rarely did I find that easy. The journey was laden with endless trips to IKEA, driving around the island scouting for comfortable, decorative furniture and other good buys, overseeing furniture deliveries and assembly, returning unwanted goods, preparing spread sheets, updating the budget and documenting the spending. Literally hundreds of items from beds and mattresses to hinges, peelers, towels, light fittings, had to be sourced, purchased, delivered and installed. My mind was charged daily with furniture decision making and buzzing with IKEA catalogue numbers. All the while trying also to prepare for my

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yantra yoga instructors authorization, it certainly was no walk in the park.

However it all came together and it would not have been possible without the



help and kindness of many who generously gave their time and energy to help. That was richest part of the journey, the relationships built along the way with all the people who helped make Namgyalgar House possible. Finding Marco our carpenter was like winning the lottery, he was instrumental to our elegantly fitted kitchens and was such a great handyman in more aspects than one. Marco built the outdoor furniture through using recycled timber found on the Gar. He donated that to Namgyalgar at no cost and it has transformed the outdoor living spaces.

So when you arrive in Namgyalgar House and sit, sleep, wash, cook, eat, cele-

brate, practice – in fact all the usual things we do – please spare a thought for the efforts of many people who brought it all together and made it possible.

It is a beautiful space that speaks of harmony and calm.

## 2. Is the Namgyalgar House layout like the other houses?

Namgyalgar House has a two-bedroom apartment up stairs, two separate one-bedroom apartments downstairs and a ground floor two-bedroom apartment that can be used on a per bed basis or whole bedrooms. It has flexible accommodation to meet many requirements. We are unique

in that each bedroom has two beds, a single and a double. This avoids moving single beds together to make a double for couples, and gives accommodation flexibility and increased capacity for highly popular retreats.

## 3. What is the feeling in the Australian Community about the Namgyalgar House here at Dzamling Gar since it is so far from Australia?

Well, everywhere is very far from Australia, but Australians are used to big distances. After a long gruelling journey however they have said that arriving to such a place is like reaching an oasis in the desert. Residents from Australia report that staying with other practitioners, and with community activities literally on our doorstep makes the trip a lot more attractive to organise. We see more Aussies making the effort to come at least once now the House is operational and they have early-bird booking preference.

## 4. Are there any special arrangements for letting people or Teachers from other Gars stay?

Namgyalgar is a small community and although Namgyalgar members have priority we happily accept members from all Gars, and they can request to book by emailing [namgyalgarpom@gmail.com](mailto:namgyalgarpom@gmail.com). ©

# Samtengar House

Elena Kalistova, Caretaker

On the ground floor of the Samtengar House there are four apartments, each with four beds: two in the bedroom and two in the living/dining area, similar to the other Gar houses. The apartments are very simple with Ikea furniture. The only thing that is different is that we put some curtains in the kitchen/living room area to separate the kitchen area from the sleeping area in order to give people some privacy.

During the Christmas retreat the house was full of Chinese practitioners, but now there is a special situation because not



many people are able to come from China and the Asian Lings and so it is a good opportunity for people from other Gars to stay here. At the moment, the apartments are always full but with practitioners from Italy, Switzerland, Russia, and Spain.

On the upper floor of the house the space has become a beautiful gönpa with a small shop with objects for practice such as damaru, vajra and bell, etc. [<http://melong.com/tibetan-room-samtengar-house-dzamling-gar/>] In addition there is a very

# Tashigar House

Valter Bianchini, Sponsor

I'm a member of Merigar but I feel a bit South American. I have a house in Isla di Margarita and I'm often in South America. Seeing that the Tashigar House had a little more difficulty in being completed, a few of us talked about it and thought that the best way to complete the house would be to collect funds in order to furnish the apartments. We decided to ask for sponsors to donate a certain amount of money and in return be able to occupy an apartment for a month for five years. This would be like an advance contribution covering their five-year stay.

We found four people who were willing to donate and we were able to furnish all five apartments in the Tashigar House. Fanny Santos and Steve Landsberg furnished the larger upstairs apartment, and Clara Bordeu, Ottavio Lilla, and myself furnished the four lower units. Basically the units are furnished in a similar way but with little variations. I came here for 15 days to buy the furniture and Clara bought the furnishings – linen, towels, kitchenware etc. We are very happy with how the house turned out and people who have stayed here are also pleased with it.

Now we are learning how to manage the house so that it can be made available to accommodate everyone. For the first two months the house has been available prevalently for people coming from Tashigar, but when that time is up, the house will be able to accommodate people from other Gars.

Generally things are going well. There are a few adjustments to be made and we'll be having meetings with people from the other houses to see how the first months have gone. All in all it was an interesting experience completing this house, and also a pleasure. ©

Alonso Espinosa, Guest

It's important to have feedback about the Gar accommodation because there is a lot of asymmetry of information as the process is being polished. You have the countries, the Gars, those in charge at Dzamling Gar, and then another level like Meriling etc., so the coordination is quite a big thing.

When the houses were being renovated and we were looking for funds for the infrastructure the people who stepped up in a more active role were the 'donors' from the individual Gars who really brought the houses to life. Now that they are alive, things have totally changed. Before we re-



ally needed to gather our forces, but now some people want to come here like a holiday, others want to stay long-term or short-term. There are so many variations. Now that there is the real possibility of a bed, people occupy an apartment and then try to share it, with others. It's kind of a complex phenomena but to give credit, it's working.

Then in order to stay here, you really need to be able to say yes to all the terms and conditions of management. You don't have many rights, although Tashigar has less rules than some of the other houses.

Being in the Tashigar House is really fantastic. The apartments are quite a high standard and there are quite a lot of comforts. Clara Bordeu and Valter Bianchini, some of the donors at the house, have done an incredible job of furnishing it.

This is my third stay in the area, but staying at Dzamling Gar is by far the best.

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small room that serves as an office, a small kitchen for tea and coffee, and a bathroom.

We have already had some retreats and courses here in this gönpa. We also do a regular Green Tara practice here every evening. In January we did a SMS Level 1 course

here with about 35 people. There are lots of mats and cushions so it is quite comfortable for sitting and people really like this place. In the future, this little Gönpa will be available for other small courses if the Dzamling Gar Gakyil would like to use it.

All the decorations and furniture for the Gönpa – in traditional Tibetan style – were made in and brought from China. The decorations are not completely finished and they will be bringing more in the future.

I am not Occupation Manager but a caretaker and for the time being I am staying upstairs in the office area because the gönpa and shop are open and somebody needs to be here as a type of guardian.

Staying here is like a dream for me. I am only a few meters from the Dzamling Gar Gönpa and have a small room for my practice. I don't need anything more. It is not a cave but it is like being in a monastery. You don't need more than this in life. ©



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Here you can resolve many tensions that you don't resolve outside because here what governs is the Gar. When you stay outside the Gar you just have a monetary agreement for accommodation. Here you are with practitioners, very close to the Gönpa, you can socialize. This isn't possible outside.

On a general level I think there could be some improvements with the electricity and water because when the Gar houses are fully occupied there wasn't enough power for the hot water and the kitchens. We are still in early stages of the project and I think they are working on it. Then washing machines here are like a treasure. Everybody is looking for them. But we go to a laundromat outside the Gar.



One thing that concerns me is that it's not very easy for people to come to Dzamling Gar from South America. The ticket here is very expensive and also the stay so for people in South America it's something like a white elephant and they are totally disconnected.

Another point is that what is happening here is very different from what is happening at the various Gars around the world. There is a different texture here, more

open, more Khaita etc. Up to now the Gars have been a little more closed and now it's totally the opposite at Dzamling Gar and many people don't get that. And that is something it's impossible to get unless you come here. My advice to people is to really try to create a possibility to come here and really experience it. It's something you cannot put into words. ©

## Tsegyalgar House

Kyu Kyuno, Caretaker/Gekö

I feel that each house that Rinpoche designated to one of the Gars is like his gift to the Gars and that they represent the International Dzogchen Community here.

Each house has its own flavor.

I was asked to help furnish some of the units in the Tsegyalgar House. I came here three and a half months ago and originally I was only going to stay for two months. When I arrived I found that there was very little money to furnish the upper two-bedroom apartment and one of the apartments on the ground floor. The kitchens had already been fitted but apart from that they were totally empty. So it was agreed that I stay longer and my contribution for accommodation would go towards furnishing the apartments. This covered half of the costs and the rest came from fundraising.

Giorgio Minuzzo and Monica Patino from Tsegyalgar West were the first people at Dzamling Gar to start furnishing and had completed some of the units at this house. I helped them to do this last year so I had some experience and I tried to copy them this year with the other units. We divided the responsibility with Tsegyalgar West furnishing three of the ground floor units and Tsegyalgar East one ground floor unit and the bigger first floor apartment. They did their thing and we did ours but the whole thing is the Tsegyalgar House.



Kyu and Tsegyalgar House.

Now that everything is more or less finished, East and West doesn't matter.

I've realized that I have a sort of Geko position here, making guests feel comfortable. Most people who come here really enjoy staying at the Gar. This house is also directly behind Rinpoche's.



At the same time there is the relative level of maintaining a house with five units. Even though the furnishing is finished there is continual repairing and taking care of things and perfecting them. We just had a house meeting and at the moment each Gar house is looking for a care-

taker. Although Pancho Company is over-seeing all the houses, looking after them is a lot of work because each house has five units. Each Gar would also like to take care of its own house. Then on the financial side, apart from repaying the loans that were made to renovate the houses, the utility



and condominium costs have to be shared among the houses based on occupancy.

This is part of Rinpoche's vision. People come from all over the world, like Rinpoche's song – 'come as soon as possible in a relaxed manner'. I'm here to assist and my experience of being here is that I am very blessed. ©

# The New Gönpa of Dzamling Gar – An Update

The Presentation of Giovanni Boni and Benedetta Tagliabue  
February 24, 2017, Dzamling Gar

**Giovanni Boni:** First, I want to thank Rinpoche because we are doing this big project here at Dzamling Gar because Rinpoche wants this to happen. I also want to thank all the people. This time I do not want to repeat always the same thing, but I would like to explain the situation very quickly and look at the economic situation. This photo [GB shows a photol is from the beginning [of Dzamling Gar] and it does not need an explanation. This [he shows another photol is not the beginning, it is now. This is the house of the Master and I want to also thank Paolo Fassoli for the nice photos and thanks to Benedetta for her precious advice. This is the garden, and I also want to thank Alix and her company for the garden, because this is very important work they are doing. This is a house that you already know because many people are living here. It is not completely finished because we are waiting for the last permits – the license for occupation. This is the last license we are waiting for and we have already asked and we are waiting for a visit from the authorities.

Regarding the license, we are waiting for the last license of the first phase. We asked for this permission in August of last year, and we are waiting because the procedure takes so long, but I think in one month we will have it. In any case, we are doing work

in a part of the future Gönpa, we are doing the work of demolition and reinforcing, and this is under the permit from the first license. Therefore everything is legal. In any case, we are looking to improve the project. This is a photo of a house you know [showing the photos] because people are living here now. We have also painted each house with its symbol and we have to thank Yeshe Namkhai and Dasha for these precious symbols. This was done at the request of the Master.

Regarding the financial situation, firstly it is important to know that here are two separate entities working here: Meriling and Dzamling Gar. Meriling is the commercial company that purchased the land. Dzamling Gar is the name of the Gar and also of the Spanish Cultural Association here in this Gar. It is not easy to explain this situation in a very few words and we don't have too much time, in any case, if anyone needs more explanations and more details, please contact me at [bonig1950@gmail.com](mailto:bonig1950@gmail.com). We are able to explain everything.

Now we ask Benedetta about some news.

**Benedetta Tagliabue:** Thank you Giovanni. So today is not about explaining the architecture. I think we have seen the destruction of the pieces that we do not need in the structure of the future Gönpa, which already exists, so this destruction will make the structure ready to receive the reinforcement and the new construction very soon. This means this is the first part of the construction. Even if we were able to begin now we cannot, because we are waiting for the real permission for the construction to begin. So we still have to wait. We have had this promise since August, and here it is very normal that they say, "Oh yes, yes, in a couple of days."

So now we are going into the construction phase and the first step is going to the construction company and asking for real prices. The real prices are putting into doubt some of the beautiful wooden structure we have proposed, so we are revising and somewhat simplifying what we have seen until now. Now it is not ready to show because we are still making the plans with a construction company that works with wood. We are nearly there and we already have a very beautiful plan, which is a little simpler than the one we had before, so we are closer to a concrete position. I really hope the process will not stop and that this permission will arrive very soon, and then we will be able to go directly from preparing the existing structure towards reinforcing and then going on and on and on with the construction. So we hope in 2018 to inhabit the new Gönpa, and we go on to make the new Gönpa as fantastic as it can be! Thank you.

**Giovanni:** Maybe the Master wants to say something.

**Rinpoche:** I want to say thank you very much to Benedetta, Giovanni and all the architects who have worked very hard, and you should continue until we have this Gönpa concretely. And we all do our best. Thank you.

**Giovanni:** I want to say one last thing. We want to especially thank the big donors, and when the Master says how important this project is, also the donations are very important, and we want to thank all people who are helping us to realize this dream of ours and of our Master in particular. Thank you. ©

Transcribed and edited by N Zeitz





# Paradise at Our Fingertips

Alix de Fermor, Garden Architect at Dzamling Gar, recently spoke to The Mirror about the progress of the existing gardens and the new garden spaces being created at the Global Gar

I am very happy because the gardens are growing quite well and many people appreciate them. At the beginning I was working with Saviana and Will and the gardens were supposed to be a permaculture project. But in order for the houses at Dzamling Gar to be legally habitable, cement paths were necessary for access to and between the houses within the Gar. On the other hand, there has been no real effort made to collect rainwater and send it to the gardens (it's also true that there has been very little rain these last two years).

While planting, I am trying as much as I can to respect a few permaculture principles like creating mini swales, mulching with our own cuttings after they have been chopped and composted. But in no way can we expect this garden to produce food as a



The secret hill.

5 mangas, 7 fig trees, 8 cherimoya trees, 3 apples, 2 kaki, 7 peaches, 3 almonds, 14 oranges, 15 lemon trees, 6 mandarins, 3 starfruit, 2 lucuma, 1 lichee, 34 bananas, 7 guanabana, 14 carissa, 3 pitanga, 10 guava, 1 guava fresa or strawberry guava, 7 granadilla trees, 11 pomegranates, 7 nispero, 20 papaya, 4 olives, 1 carob, 3 tamarind trees, 2 grape vines, 2 uva de playa or seagrape, and 3 coconuts. I'm planning to plant more avocado and starfruit trees because they grow very well here and there are not enough of them in the Gar. Does anyone know of a more fruitful gar?

randa, *melia azedarach* (Paradise tree), *chorizia speciosa*, *brachychiton acerifolius*, *buttea monosperma*, *metrosideros*, *Magnolia*, *brassia actinophylla*, *thespesia populneae*, *erythrina crista galli*, *plumeria rubra* (frangipane tree) etc.

And, of course, there are flowers. I love flowers, I love their color and perfume, and their beauty is like food for the soul. Rinpoche always points out how important it is to relax and I think that walking in a beautiful garden full of colors and scents makes it easier to relax. So, let's walk together and relax in this garden.



The Longsal garden with a Bodhi tree on the right.



Alix and her team.

permaculture farm and in no way will the gardens be able to sustain the economy of the Gar!

Some people have commented to me that I am mostly planting ornamental plants and flowers, and to these people I would like to point out that up to now 243 fruit trees have been planted at the Gar: 24 date trees, 6 avocados, 8 mangoes,

Some people asked me for shade and I have also planted a lot of good ornamental and shade-giving trees such as: *schinus molle*, *schinus terebentifolium*, four different types of *ficus* family (*ficus religiosus* which is the Bodhi tree, *ficus benjaminus*, *ficus alati*, Laurel della India), tipuana tipu, flamboyant, *spathodea campanulata* (African tulip tree), baubinia, guayacan, jaca-

## Rinpoche's Garden

Rinpoche's garden is a perfect example of mixing fruit and ornamental trees and flowers. It's a very colorful garden, full of different smells. There is jasmine climbing the stairway together with stephanotis, and Lady of the Night with its flowers opening after sunset giving an inebriating perfume. The carissa tree has flowers like





Left: The secret hill,

Middle: Footpaths of the secret hill,

Right, up: *Thumbergia grandiflora* creeping up the wall of the Milarepa garden; Right, below: Sea lavender.

jasmine and a red oblong fruit that is very rich in iron: 10 gr per 100 grams of fruit. The colorful waves of bougainvillea go down the slope towards the swimming pool and little winding paths all over the garden lead you to discover many varieties of roses and other plants. There is a wall of *passiflora triangularis* that has huge purple and red flowers with an amazing musky smell.

#### The Longsal Garden

Directly below the Kunsangar House is an area called the Longsal garden because of the Longsal symbol here in white stones. There is a bodhi tree here that is growing well and the garden is a mix of fruit trees and aromatics.

#### The Milarepa Garden

Directly behind the house with the nursery and the accommodation for the karma yogis, there is the Milarepa garden. Milarepa encountered many hardships. We had just one. All the stones coming from digging the terrace for Rinpoche's swimming pool were dumped there and we had to separate them by size. Some were sent to

make walls on the hill and with the rest of them we built the terraces for this garden.

It is an ornamental garden and has a beautiful baubinia tree that was here originally with a wonderful perfume. We also have a few aloe plants.

#### The Mandarava Garden

This garden is at the side of Rinpoche's house as you walk up from the pool. Will originally made the garden but it didn't do very well and I was asked to do it again. I did it two years ago during the Mandarava retreat, and the name stuck. The garden is a mixture of soil covering plants and fruit trees.

#### The 'Vivero' Garden

It has this name because it is at the side of the nursery/karma yogi house. It's a very colorful ornamental garden on a slope with a lot of ground covering African daisies.

On the path going down to the swimming pool, on one side there are a few cypress trees and on the other a row of palms called *mascarena*, a type of palm found in the Mascarene Islands. I chose this palm

because it is very sturdy and the leaves are not affected by the wind. Also they are next to the pool and won't make a lot of dry leaves to clean up. The cypress trees were planted only two years ago and have grown from 80cm to 4/5 meters. They give some protection from the west wind and, like the palms, do not lose their leaves. In Tuscany people seem to mix pine and cypress. Here we are near the tropics so I thought palms and cypress would be suitable.

#### Overlooking the Jyagyip

Behind the cafeteria there is a path leading to the Gönpa that overlooks the entire Jyagyip (basement area). We had a lot of problems putting plants here because it was all rocks, so we put bougainvillea because there was no way to put anything else. After a few years they will grow and the weight of the flowers will pull them down to cover the rocks. We have also put a ground covering plant called cat's claw and because it is so heavy it tends to go down. It gives the impression of a green carpet and it makes yellow white flowers in late spring.

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The wild garden.

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### In front of the Gönpa

There are mainly ornamental trees here. There is an African tulip tree with its brilliant red flowers, and a *schinus terebinthifolium* or false red pepper tree with its brightly colored fruit. Near the entrance to the gönpa there are two striking pandanus palms one on each side of the entrance, like two guardians.

### Just Before the Dzamling Gar House

We made this garden a couple of years ago. There is a bauhinia or orchid tree with its richly perfumed flowers, a flamboyant tree with brightly colored blossoms and fernlike branches that are already giving plenty of shade, and two *schinus molle* or false pink peppers. They were only a meter high when we got them and after a couple of years they have become enormous, 8 or 9 meters tall, and give some wonderful shade from the sun! The garden also has some aromatics and this curly type of aloe called *aloe plicatilis*.

One of the things that I have noticed is that now that there is a wide variety of trees and plants there are a lot of birds. When spring comes you really notice them because the garden is full of birdsong.



*Adenium obesum*, the desert rose flowering in the cactus garden.

There is even a nightingale that sings like an operatic star early in the morning!

### The Wild Garden

Along the side of the Gönpa is the second or third garden we made with very small plants. The ground is covered with a carpet of flowering plants. We had a very small budget when we made this garden and I put mostly bougainvillea and plants that I found in the wild like marguerite daisies, and it's full of colors.

### The 'lung' of the Gar

Behind the Gönpa there is a newer garden that we have been working on for a couple of years. It has been created on a steep slope behind the Gönpa coming down from the wall marking the edge of the property. This is my pride and joy. It is the area that is the most amazing and has been transformed the most. Here there was absolutely nothing and it was very ugly.

I would like to thank Pavel, who sculpted the swales, Igor Flintstone, who carried the rocks that we found at the top of the Gar, and Arnis, who is very talented with stones and built these little walls to sustain the terraces.

Then we divided the slope horizontally with two footpaths.

We found that this was the only 'clean' earth in the Gar, without cement, plastic tubes, coke bottles, etc., because this is the only area that has not been a construction site. Because of this, we put a lot of fruit trees here. Most of the plants on the hill, both ornamental and fruit, have been grown from seeds.

### The Secret Hill

On the top of the area behind the Gönpa overlooking the main road we have an area with aromatics like rosemary, lavender, sage, etc., because it's very hot in summer and they enjoy the heat. There is little date

oasis here with 20 trees that are almost 3 meters tall, all grown from seeds. In the future it will be a wonderful shady place to sit because there is a stunning view of the sea from this high point.

Then moving along a little path next to the wall back towards the houses we have a little vegetable garden with rapini, onions, a climbing bean which is indigenous to the Canaries, sugar cane, Chinese cabbage, carrots, radishes, rocket, chilli, peppers, artichokes, moringa, endives, courgettes, and many more.

### The New Gardens

Originally the idea had been to make a vegetable garden in this large area between the Namgyalgar and Medicine Houses but there was absolutely no way to do that be-



The new garden with the cacti slope on the right.

cause there was simply too much building rubble. The earth here is not clean, it is construction ground with plastic tubes, bottles, cement underneath and a lot of huge rocks probably coming from laying the foundations of the houses. We put an enormous amount of work into creating new gardens here because in order to make places for the trees and their roots to grow and anchor them securely, we spent a lot of time and energy digging the holes for the trees. In some cases it took us a whole morning to dig a hole for a tree.





The wall of the Tsegyalgar house at the corner of the entrance to Rinpoche's garden.

We decided that it was best that we put a few trees and a lawn there because it would not have been possible to make a vegetable garden. We did our best to create something ornamental and even put a few fruit trees near the houses.

At the side of the Namgyalgar House we are creating a shady place to sit surrounded by false pink and red pepper trees and a jacaranda tree. If you sit here you will be able to see part of the swimming pool and the sea sitting in the shade. This is mostly an ornamental garden with some aromatic herbs that people staying in the houses can use for cooking.



Young tomato plants growing on the secret hill.

I think that we did an incredible job in the new gardens and I'd really like to thank the garden team for all their work. It wouldn't have been possible without them!

### The Terraces

Last December the large area between the houses was made into three terraces crisscrossed by paths. In the terrace closer to the house we put fruit trees which will not only give fruit but will provide a lot of shade, although we may have to wait a couple of years for it.

In the middle terrace we put mainly grass with a few aromatics and flowers, shaded by trees. There are two places where we plan to put benches: one with a lot of shade and the other with a view.

At the back of the third terrace, which borders the lower wall of the Medicine House, there is a trellis the length of the wall with mainly bougainvillea and some other plants climbing it in order to cover the wall. They will cover the wall and also fall on the other side of the terraces.

### The Desert Garden

Last year in May I started to prepare this garden between the Kunsangar and the Special Needs Houses because somebody gave me a lot of desert plants. Most of the land is flat here but on one side there is a slope and this has been planted with a variety of cactus plants. We also have a watering system on both sides of this garden that collects the rainwater from the cement paths. It consists of narrow diagonal gutters cutting across the paths that collect the rainwater running down them and take it to a little gully covered with stones where it accumulates and feeds the trees. It works very well ... when it rains.

At the bottom of the cacti slope, there is a green area, because I wanted to make a contrast between a desert garden and something that looks very European, with grass, with roses, and shade giving trees. With the trees giving shade, it should be easier to have grass growing. By next year there should be plenty of grassy areas where people will be able to enjoy sitting or lying. There is also a kind of big step running the length of the Special Needs House, sheltered from the north wind, where it is very nice to sit. There is enough space for people to sit and practice together.

### Rose Alley

This path goes from the Merigar House to the Namgyalgar House and is lined with roses and alyssum or 'carpet of snow', which smells like honey, covering the soil.

### Planting, mulching, and ... bugs

When I plant, I use local soil then I put some turf because it is a very good starter. Early on I used straw and later on I used dried plant cuttings (mulch). On the top of this we install thin black tubes for the drop system that waters the plants in drops. Then I cover both the mulch and the water pipes with small volcanic pebbles, and I water once a week.

Now we have a mulch machine to which we feed the plant cuttings. Then we let the resulting mulch sit and ferment and it becomes very nutritious for the plants. We use it around the plants before we put the pebbles. It is a cycle – when the trees and plants are growing and their leaves fall off, they give nutrients to the soil. I think you will be very surprised to see this place in a few years.

We have had some bugs in the gardens and that is what bugs me! The Canary Islands are famous for this bug called cochineal because they use it to make a color of dye for the bishop's robes. This bug is very resistant. Mostly I use copper sulphate to deter it, but occasionally I have to resort to something stronger.

Then we have some white fly and what we have been using is water under pressure to remove the eggs from under the leaves.

At the moment I am mostly winning the battles, the plants are getting stronger, and can take it. The only plants I haven't completely won the war with are the bugs on the citrus fruits.

These last two years we have had a very harmonious team working in the gardens and we enjoy working together: Lena is working mostly on maintenance, then for the new gardens we have Igor, Tony, Dima, Nicola, Sebastien, and myself. Frank did some karma yoga in the vegetable garden.

People have to be patient for shade. The oldest gardens have only been growing for a little over three years and there is already a little shade. In five years there will be so much shade in the gardens that people will be asking for sun! I know how these plants grow. When I plant something, I have an idea how it will be in three years, in five years, in ten years. Then I don't want to think any more about it because it will be a jungle!

©



# An Interview with Elías Capriles

Santi Maha Sangha Teacher

**The Mirror:** How did you approach studying Santi Maha Sangha and was your academic background helpful in your studies?

**Elías Capriles:** For taking the ordinary Base exam I studied quite intensively, perhaps for four years, and learned all the enumerations by heart, even though what I really care for is the essence of the teachings – their true meaning and its realization. And in fact, whereas my understanding of the teachings of the SMS seems to grow ever deeper as time passes, even though I teach SMS quite often, nowadays I don't remember all the enumerations by heart.

As to my academic background, it probably helped, but that wasn't the main factor. I was in India and Nepal from 1973 through 1983. In Nepal a Dzogchen master and university professor invited me to study with him at an Indian university. However, roughly at the same time I received Dzogchen *tregchod* and some specific Anuyoga teachings from Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, and hence I declined the professor's invitation and decided to go into retreat on the mountains and devote myself to practice. Then I went to Dudjom Rinpoche for blessings before setting off to the mountains, and he told me I had to come the following day – and that day gave me very detailed and specific instructions for my retreat. Definitely what I experienced in that retreat and in subsequent ones was far more helpful for understanding and getting the essence of SMS than whatever I could have learned at the university and than whatever academic background I may have had.

Then in 1978 I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who was giving teachings in Boudhanath, and connected so deeply with the master that I immediately wrote a poem about him. Since, moreover, I found his way of teaching to correspond to our time, later on I invited him to Venezuela and began studying with him. Then I became a SMS teacher.



**The Mirror:** Did you spend a long time in retreat?

**Elías Capriles:** I never did 9 years, 9 months and 9 days, or 7, 7, 7 or even 3, 3, 3, because that was not the kind of retreat I was interested in doing – and, on the other hand, the visa the Nepalese authorities gave me each time I entered the country lasted for three months only. So I would stay on the mountains for 3 months, come down to Kathmandu, go to India, come back, and go up the mountain again. Thus I did quite a few three-months retreats but I never did a longer one. I concentrated on *tregchod*, though I was doing two Anuyoga practices, one of them involving ritual.

**The Mirror:** They will soon be holding the SMS exam at Dzamling Gar. Do you have any advice for students studying for the exam?

**Elías:** Even though the enumerations are essential to pass the exam, I think that for one's spiritual evolution it is far more important to grasp the real meaning of whatever one is studying. And to that aim, I think there are two keys. (1) The first is to distinguish the principles of the different teachings in *The Precious Vase* so that one is not puzzled by seeming contradictions, (a) among teachings that pertain to different Sutric vehicles, teachings that pertain to different Tantric vehicles, and teachings that pertain to the different series of Dzogchen, (b) among outer, inner and secret meanings, and (c) between provisional and definitive meanings. (2) The second is to intensively apply the practices that are part of the SMS Base training – and in particular the *semdzin*, the *rushan*, and the three varieties of the 7th *lojong*. Even though you will not obtain realization by intensively doing these three sets of practices, you may have determinant experiences. On the

basis of those experiences you may have at least some glimpses of *rigpa*, taste the single flavor of *rigpa*, and begin to distinguish between *rigpa* and the variety of mere experiences, realizing how they are normally mixed. And after that, you may learn to use experiences as fuel to maintain the state of *rigpa*. I think practice is the key to grasping the true meaning of all that has to do with the whole of SMS.

**The Mirror:** I'd like to ask you about your recent publication, *The Ornament of the Thought of Nagarjuna*. In what way is this book useful for Dzogchen practitioners?

**Elías:** I think that depends on the kind of mentality the person has. There are two ways in which it is easy to get full realization with Dzogchen. (1) One is by being quite simple-minded, guileless and not too clever: by applying pith instructions, without having to study a lot, one may get realized. Since one doesn't have a complicated intellect, one doesn't have many doubts to clear and thus can have heartfelt trust and faith. (2) The other way is that one has a very complicated intellect, but one exhausts it: one studies the teachings thoroughly, testing them with a highly critical attitude (the Buddha himself said his teachings were like gold, and should be tested in the three ways in which gold is tested in order to determine whether they were true and effective, or false and useless), and then with correct reasoning refutes and counteracts all of one's wrong assumptions before one sets out to practice. It is only for such complicated-minded people that the book in question may be useful.

The book is on Prasangika Madhyamaka philosophy, which according to the current version of the *Dra Thalgyur Tantra* is the viewpoint of Dzogchen. Of course in reality Dzogchen is not Prasangika-Madhyamaka, for Prasangika-Madhyamaka is Sutra, not Dzogchen and not even Tantra. Therefore, we cannot say Prasangika is the same as Dzogchen. But if we account for the differences in approaches, realizations and so on, it is one of the systems that fit Dzogchen the best among Sutra systems.

The teachers of the Rime movement – except for Mipham Rinpoche, who adhered to Prasangika – asserted Mahamadhyamaka to be the Madhyamaka system nearest to Dzogchen. Prasangika does not teach the *emptiness of other-existence* taught by Mahamadhyamaka, but the ways in which both schools explain the *emptiness of self-existence of all entities* are the same

as that of Dzogchen. Therefore, in my view both systems are compatible with Dzogchen – which, it must be noted, uses a lot of Third Dharmachakra terminology.

In all vehicles other than Dzogchen, and in agreement with one of the senses of the Tibetan term, *tawa* refers to an intellectual point of view. However, in the Dzogchen teachings *tawa* is understood in another of the acceptations of the term, which is not that of an intellectual point of view, but that of seeing. In fact, in a Dzogchen context I render that term as Vision, because the *tawa* of Dzogchen is the direct Vision of the true condition of reality, utterly beyond the intellect. This is so because it is evident to all Dzogchen masters that words and concepts can never fit reality and that, therefore, whatever one can understand or say about reality is simply wrong. To begin with, the true condition of reality is continuous – it is a *continuum* that as such does not involve divisions, discontinuities, differences or separations – whereas thoughts are discontinuous: they establish differences and (as evinced by Dignaga's doctrines of *apoha* and *anyapoha*) are defined by exclusion of something else. Thoughts, which are discontinuous and always exclude something, cannot fit that which is continuous and does not exclude anything. In fact, thoughts establish limits, represented as corners or angles, whereas the true condition of reality is represented as a total thigle or sphere, which has no angles or corners. Only when thought collapses can the true condition of reality appear in your mental stream. That true condition is compared with the sun, and our *samsara* is compared to the sun being covered by clouds. The thoughts are the clouds. How can anyone grasp the sun in terms of the clouds that conceal it? It's absolutely impossible.

So the point of the *tawa* of Dzogchen is that the clouds are dispersed and the shining sun is realized beyond any conceptual interpretation. And then you know that all interpretations are wrong: all interpretations were clouds that were covering the sun.

Genuine Prasangika agrees that thoughts are like clouds that cover the sun and that only when they are dispelled can the sun be realized. However, Prasangika is intellectual in that it uses reasoning exhaustively in order to bring the reasoning mind to the point at which it is blocked and thus is made to collapse. Dzogchen does not necessarily do that. In Dzogchen

you get a direct pointing to the true condition, a direct introduction, as indicated by Garab Dorje's *mudra*, which is pointing right behind one's eyes. It's an instruction on how to look at the mind so that our dualistic subject-object perceptual structure short-circuits and collapses, and by the same token the true condition, which is the *nondual essence or nature of mind* that our dualistic *mind* conceals, may manifest – which is like the clouds dispersing and the shining sun being seen as it is.

Thus the approach of Prasangika and that of Dzogchen are clearly not the same, and certainly Prasangika cannot take us to the heights of realization that may be reached by means of Dzogchen, yet both have their respective means to make the dualistic mind and the intellect collapse. And this is why that book can be helpful to a Dzogchen practitioner who has a complicated mentality, who is highly intellectual.

**The Mirror:** You have written a lot. Is that your latest book? Are you working on a new publication at the moment?

Elías: I've published over fifteen books. At the end of 2013 I published a book in four volumes called *The Beyond Mind Papers: Transpersonal and Metatranspersonal Theory (A Dzogchen Approach)*, which has had quite a big impact on transpersonal psychology.

Then in December 2016 I finished a book in Spanish called *Shamanism and Dzogchen* that is now in press with Ediciones La Llave. I wrote it because many people are practicing both systems and fail to see that those two are absolutely different and mutually contradictory. For example, in South American shamanism, the point is to have access to a reality of elementals, spirits and demons that ordinary people can't see. According to that system, the reality to which those beings pertain is the true reality, whereas the ordinary everyday reality is false. In Dzogchen the point is to realize that *both* the reality of elementals, spirits and demons *and* everyday reality – and indeed all realities – are false, and to become free from the hold of them all. For example, in the practice of *chöd*, which combines the principle of Dzogchen with those of other vehicles, you come in contact with spirits, demons and elemental beings, but you do so in order to have an experience of extreme dread and then apply a Dzogchen instruction that will allow both those beings and your dualistic, dreadful mind to instantly dissolve, making you free

from their power and from your belief in them. And since you become free from the power of your mind, by the same token you become free from your belief in ordinary reality and from the power that this reality has over you.

Now I am giving the last touches to Volume I of *Buddhism and Dzogchen* and about to begin writing Vol. II of the same book. They're part of a big book in various volumes, but a provisional version of the first volume is already available in my Webpage, where it can be freely downloaded (to access it directly go to <http://webdelprofesor.ula.ve/humanidades/elicap/en/uploads/Biblioteca/bdz-e.version.pdf>; though sometimes the URL doesn't respond, if this happens, on trying later on it usually opens). After those last touches I'll send that first volume to the publishers.

**The Mirror:** Thank you very much for your time. ☺



# Artists in the Dzogchen Community

## Interview with Chinese Rock Star Zheng Jun

Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, Spain,  
3rd January 2017

I was born in a very old city called Xi'an into a Christian family. My grandmother's family was Christian therefore so were my mother and I. From my teenage years I was really interested in Tibetan things and also in practices like Taoism and Xigong. I even tried to do some meditation but I didn't do it well because I had no teacher. Even though I was born into a Christian family, I did not feel Christian and I refused to accept Christianity. I really wanted to know the answer – the truth.

When I was growing up I went to college quite far from my home in a traditional Chinese city in the south of China called Hangzhou. My major in college was foreign trade and that is how I learned English. We had an American teacher who let us listen to rock music which is where I was first introduced to rock music. I was really interested in rock and roll, so I formed my own band in college and I started to learn to play guitar and write songs even though I did not have any musical training.

Once I got interested in music I was listening and playing from morning to evening and trying to write songs. At one point I tried to go to America to finish my university study there, but after I got my American visa, at the same time I met a famous rock band agent in Beijing. His band was looking for a new lead vocal, I gave him my demo tape and he loved it. He told me to come to Beijing to try to become a rock singer. So I gave up the American visa, gave up the flight, and went to Beijing with the guitar and tried to become a singer. I was like a beggar there. I had no money. I was still trying to write songs and I felt really happy because I was doing what I wanted to do. So, after one year, I released my first album. I had my own band. After the release of my album, I became famous in China and then



Zheng Jun and new found Vajra sister Lourdes saying farewell.

I got lost. I was young, like 24 or 25, and famous. At that time China was not that rich, but my friends and I had money, we partied all the time. I got drunk until the morning.

For ten years I lived this kind of life and it almost killed me. I was not happy. Before, I thought maybe one day when I got fame and money I would be happy but when I reached there, I found it was not what I wanted. It was just like a fast car, but I was not driving, the car was driving me. And after that kind of life, my ex-wife got tired. She wanted a divorce. We had a daughter. I was a terrible husband and father. After I divorced, I moved out and I took nothing with me. I started from the beginning again. So, suddenly I thought life was like a dream. I really wanted to find the truth. I didn't want to live like this again.

In 1997 a friend called me and asked me if I wanted to meet a Tibetan master. I didn't know why, but I said yes. A master came to the mainland, to a city called Guilin. This great master was called Jigme Phuntsok, the founder of one of the biggest Buddhist universities in Sichuan.

My most famous song and the one that made me an overnight success was called "Back Home Lhasa". When I wrote this song I had never been to Tibet. I wrote it five years before I met Jigme Phuntsok. One day this melody and these words came into my mind like a dream. I went back to Tibet, imagined the Potala Palace, everything. That song was a hit in China, even though I wrote it in just half an hour.

Then I flew to meet Jigme Phuntsok and I stayed there for two days. He gave me an initiation and a Tibetan name: Yeshe Nyingpo. I totally didn't understand that because I had no idea what was happening. I had just met him but I felt that he was not a normal person. People like Rinpoche and this master are shining from their natural state of mind and wisdom. You can feel their energy, compassion and love are so strong. Jigme Phuntsok gave me a page with my Tibetan name on it with Chinese pronunciation. I thought this was strange and difficult to pronounce.

I put all the stuff away in a book. Then I totally forgot about it. Ten years passed, I got worse and was down to the bottom of my life. I had this feeling that now it's time to try to find the truth about Tibetan Buddhism.

One day at a party I met a famous businessman. At that time we should have talked about business, but my friend introduced us saying, "Oh, you guys have the same subject to talk about because you both are very interested in Tibetan culture." Then we just talked about Tibet and Buddhism. He invited me to meet a young Tibetan Buddhist master the following day. The next day, I went to the place, and there was a dark room and a young man sat there with some older guys. My friend introduced me and left. The other guys asked me where I lived and when I replied the young master said we lived very close to each other and invited me to visit.

Then, he gave me a book saying, "I have a gift for you, but it is in Chinese. It is written by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche." This was eight or nine years ago. That young man followed Rinpoche and studied Rinpoche's teaching. His name is Agarba Lobsang. He is Tibetan and a Rime practitioner. He was born in 1980 and became a monk when he was 4 years old. He grew up in a Yungdrung Bonpo monastery and followed the Nepal master Lopon Tenzin Namdak for ten years, finished all his Shangshung Nyenjur teachings, and is his last real student. Last year when we were there, Lopon Namdak gave him his hat and said, "He can represent me to give you all the teachings."

The night he gave me this book "Dzogchen Teachings", when I got home I read the book for the whole night and was



Zheng Jun with Rinpoche at the gathering at the Samtengar House.

shocked because I felt that this was what I had been looking for all my life – the Dzogchen Teachings. I already felt that I came to this life just for this so I was really excited. Then, I contacted this young master. The day after that he was going to Italy to meet Rinpoche. He came back in one month and brought me a new book “The Crystal and Way of Light” with Rinpoche’s signature. Rinpoche’s teaching influenced my life and my behavior. After that, I followed the young master and studied Dzogchen with him, how to do contemplation, how to do the *tsalung*, from then to now for eight years.

I was still doing my music but my interest moved to Dzogchen. The first time I fell in love with rock and roll and the second time I fell in love with Dzogchen. So every morning I woke up, I just did my homework. So eight years is not that easy to repeat something, again, again, everyday. That needs devotion and people around me saw me as crazy.

In one year, the businessman, who led me to the young master, called me again. He told me that the teacher of the young master, Yeshe Khenpo, of Langyi Monastery in Amdo, Aba, was in Beijing. Yeshe Khenpo really admires two Dzogchen masters, Lopen Tenzin Namdak, and Namkhai Norbu. He said he listens to their tapes and their teaching daily. He is not famous, but he did retreats for many years. He just focuses on Dzogchen. The day I met him, I told him, “I want to be your student.” He said, “I don’t have too many Chinese students because

Chinese people like to talk too much, and I don’t know which one is real, and which one is lying.” I felt very disappointed. He said, “You can follow the young Rinpoche to study because normally I don’t stay in Beijing. I stay in the Tibetan region.” I was disappointed, but before I left I wanted to offer him some money but he said, “No, not this time! Maybe in the future.” I was really upset, almost crying because I felt I had found the guru, that was the one I wanted, but he refused me.

The next morning my friend asked me to come to his home. He told me that the night before Yeshe Khenpo was doing his Chöd practice. Then he opened the door and he said, “This is my student, let him come.” I went there and had ten days living near the lama since our houses are very close. He told me, “According to our tradition, you have to do preliminary practices and then I can teach you. But the situation here is different. You are not young anymore, and I worry that you will die before you finish this practice. So, how about we start right now?”

Then he taught me how to do this meditation. He gave me the direct introduction. Actually, the first time I read Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s book, I felt I got his direct introduction. But the second time, I got it from my Lama Yeshe Khenpo, and that made me confirm that feeling, this natural state of mind. Then, I started to do all these practices for eight years, almost nonstop.

After eight years Yeshe Khenpo went back to Tibet. The young master, Agarba

Lobsang Rinpoche, stayed in Beijing most of the time, so he taught me a lot. He is my teacher too. Agarba Lobsang Rinpoche, the young Lama and his root lama, Yeshe Khenpo were my two main teachers. I also met Lopen Tenzin Namdak and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

My story regarding Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is that I had heard of him eight years earlier and had read several of his books. One day I heard that Rinpoche was coming to Shanghai. Agarba Rinpoche told all his students that Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche is one of the greatest masters in the world, so his students should know him. Many of his students flew to Shanghai to meet Rinpoche and I went there, too. That’s the first time I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in 2014. Rinpoche came and gave a public talk. When I went back to Beijing I thought, “Maybe this time I didn’t have an opportunity to meet him closely.”

Wes Guo was preparing for Rinpoche to give a public talk at Beijing University. This was not easy because Beijing University is very traditional and sensitive about whether they should invite a religious figure to do this. Wes called his friends and asked who could help to get permission. I had friends who were in charge of this and I called them and we got the permission.

Rinpoche came to Beijing. I told Wes that if he needed help with cars to call me and he said, “If you have cars, maybe we need more cars.” So, my driver and I went to Rinpoche’s hotel and we all drove to the university together. When we left the university, they couldn’t find their own cars and they used my car, so we drove Rinpoche to the hotel. And that is the first time we had an opportunity to talk.

Then another day they had some meeting, but I was busy, I couldn’t go there because I had a concert in Beijing. They knew that and they asked if Rinpoche could attend the concert because he was free. I was shocked. The concert was sold out, so we had to find ten tickets for them. They came and sat in the first row. My concerts are noisy rock n’ roll. I was worried about that because they sat so close. The speakers are really huge. But Rinpoche has a really young heart. He enjoyed the rock n’ roll the whole time. I sang “Back in Lhasa” and before I sang, I did some prayers to Guru Padmasambhava.

I worried and was a little bit nervous because I didn’t know whether Rinpoche would

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Zheng Jun with Rinpoche at the gathering at the Samtengar House.

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like the concert or not. After the show I ran to Rinpoche asking, "Are you ok with this?" "I loved it!" he said, "I enjoyed it!" So, that made me really happy. You know, when you are performing on the stage, you feel the presence or your state of contemplation because you have to focus and concentrate. And at that moment, if you observe yourself, your mind, you can feel a very strong clarity. So, I did that on stage sometimes. And that day I felt really good. The day after that, Rinpoche was leaving for Japan.

Then, my young master Agarba Rinpoche called me, asking, "What have you been doing?" I said, "I met Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche here in Beijing." I told him what had happened and he said, "Oh, that's great! Could you say hello to him for me? I am coming from Europe to Beijing. Is possible to meet Rinpoche in Beijing?" Then I called Wes, who said, "Rinpoche is leaving at that time, how about we let them meet in the airport?"

So, the next day, I drove Rinpoche, Rosa and Migmar to the airport. On the way, I talked to Rinpoche, "I really want to thank you, a face-to-face thank you, for the Dzogchen teachings I received from you. Before that, I knew nothing about Buddhism, but that is not important. You gave teachings about Dzogchen, that's what I want. Dzogchen teachings don't belong to any religion. It is just about the truth." So I thanked him and told him what my two lamas said about him and he was happy. He said, "Yes, you are right."

In October of 2015, Agarba Rinpoche and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu met in the airport,

one just returned and one was leaving. When they met each other, immediately they talked about the view, about the Dzogchen teaching. Both of them are Dzogchen practitioners, they are not just like religious people, they are not doing superficial things and go directly to the point. They had a long talk in the airport.

I felt very happy about it. These people are real Dzogchen practitioners and that means that the Dzogchen transmission is alive in the world. That's so great for us! One master is older and one is young. They made me feel really touched. I felt they are full of compassion.

Then Rinpoche left, I drove the young Rinpoche to his house, asking him, "What were you talking about?" He said, with a great master like Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, anytime you have the opportunity to meet him, you should ask him about the teaching. We don't have those nonsense conversations. He is the teacher, you should ask him about the teaching and the transmission."

That really touched me, because Dzogchen is not just a teaching, it is a way to live and behave. So that influenced me a lot. I felt the rest of my days are still like a sports car, but I can drive the car, I am the driver. Life is the car. That was the first time I felt so free, so relaxed, so comfortable, and so happy. No matter what happens in my life, that experience has changed me. So in the future if I have the opportunity to help other people, and they can contact the Dzogchen teaching, I would like to.

I meet many people but just like Rinpoche said, most people aren't interested

in the teaching, because human beings always like to choose the easy way. To live like a Dzogchen practitioner you first really need to understand that and find that state, and that is not easy. The moment you've found it, you never want to lose it. One of my brothers became a practitioner. He is a very successful businessman, but right now spends a lot of time doing Dzogchen practice and contemplation.

You know, many people are interested in Buddhism but not interested in freedom. They are interested in a more convenient life or getting richer or more famous or more comfortable. So they want to do a trade with Buddha, but they don't want to set themselves free. They want to get more material things, and that's a tragedy.

People like Rinpoche are full of compassion. For me, this kind of person is special. I am so selfish. I try to be like that, but it is so hard to forget about yourself and benefit sentient beings. We all have egos and that makes you feel hopeless sometimes. You try, you fail, and you try again. So you really need big courage for that.

This Yangtig Retreat was my first big retreat with Rinpoche. For these seven days I have been so very happy. When I came here, and saw him and met Rinpoche, to tell you the truth, what I felt is that Rinpoche is so great. He is Dzogchen himself; he is living Dzogchen. I also felt that the people around him should know how lucky they are and follow his teaching and spend more time on his teaching. That's the most important thing. Dzogchen is not to worship someone or make someone a god. You follow him by following his teaching, that's real following. So we should really do what Rinpoche asks us to do. That means you really respect Rinpoche. ©

# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Julian King-Salter

In the dream of my birth  
I was in a house of many rooms  
and,  
entering the basement,  
knew I would have to leave,  
through a very narrow space,  
fearful of being stuck,  
but knowing I would get through.

Born to Christian parents,  
I later offered myself for ordination  
as a minister in the Church (of England),  
already knowing  
that there was no God  
as such  
but that there was something in the  
tales of Jesus  
which pointed to the essential divine  
nature in us all.  
Then, in the year that Namkhai Norbu  
began to teach Dzogchen,  
long before I ever heard of him,  
I moved to Wales  
learning to be self-sufficient,  
living off the land  
respecting land and livestock  
and our precious planet,  
and gave up thought of ordination.

Many years later,  
having meanwhile,  
transformed into an artist potter,  
and after my first child was born,  
I experienced, unlooked for,  
an awakening of my basic energy,  
once begun,  
ongoing,  
and during this time,  
first heard the name of "Norbu" -  
"you should meet Norbu"  
said Claire,  
during a session of shiatsu.

Forming then, an aspiration to do just  
that,  
I went in consciousness  
to Rinpoche's hospital bed in America  
where he was being treated for  
Leukemia,  
saw him there,  
and formed strong aspiration that he  
might recover  
and that one day, I might have chance  
to meet him  
physically.  
This was in Wales,  
where in the first place, one year later,  
I met him in a book,  
'Dzogchen -the self-perfected state',  
which corresponded  
in full  
with all that I experienced  
and after reading  
in one morning,  
went out into a world of fog and  
sunlight  
and in short walk, saw one, then two,  
then three,  
bright rainbows.  
This was my introduction,  
affirmation of what already discovered.

Some years later  
during a kind of shamanic crystal  
dreaming journey,  
and being asked if there was anything  
I wished to undertake, while in this  
state,  
I offered then, never having met in  
person, to spend some part of this,  
my life,  
to help Choegyal Namkhai Norbu in  
his work for the benefit of all.  
(this I have since done).



In some way, it seems,  
this was the immediate cause,  
of actually meeting Rinpoche  
at Ewen Maddock Dam, Caloundra,  
2003.  
It was a homely homecoming,  
relaxed and easy,  
(Mandarava Tsalung was the teaching  
he gave)  
and I left there  
feeling there was not so much to do,  
yet before long  
found myself studying and practising  
the Base of Santi Maha Sangha  
and when Rinpoche returned,  
six years later,  
took the exam and level 1 training,  
and at the final retreat at Namgyalgar  
of that season,  
offered myself for its Gakyil.  
(as Red – my socks were red, and Red  
was needed).

When we met next, it was the first  
retreat at Namgyalgar (then North)  
after Rinpoche had once again been  
close to death  
in Argentina.  
I'd written many (short) emails  
about the purchase of the new Gar  
and matters arising,  
but always unseen,  
so when I was the one who introduced  
him at the start of the retreat,  
later he asked Rabgyi,  
"who is that man?"  
"oh, that is Julian"  
"Oh, we have had many emails!  
But I thought it was a woman!"  
So from that moment then,  
I met Rinpoche  
in very concrete way.







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Every <sup>1</sup> reads  
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