



THE MIRROR

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INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY



Upcoming Events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Photo: P. Fassoli

2017

Italy
Merigar West
June 30–July 4, 2017
Ati Dzogchen Kyung-chen Ding-va,
the Dzogchen Semde text “The
Great Garuda in Flight”

Germany
Munich
July 14–16, 2017
Ati Dzogchen Tsalchen

Austria
July 28–30, 2017
Vienna Retreat

P.R.C.
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
Dzogchen Teaching – The Cycle of
Day and Night

Front cover: A detail from the obverse or front of a
Tibetan 10 *srang* banknote dated Tibetan Era 1689
which corresponds to the year 1943. The coin on
the left is the obverse of the *Tangka dkarpo*, the
most used silver coin in Tibet until the 1930s. On
the right the obverse of the three *srang* coin in
silver showing a snow lion encircled by the legend
'dga' *ldan pho brang phyogs las rnam rgyal*.

Taiwan
September 11–13, 2017
Taiwan Retreat

Malaysia
September 18–20, 2017
Kuala Lumpur Retreat

P.R.C.
Samtengar
October 1–7, 2017
Samtengar retreat of Longsal Longde
teaching and practice

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

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

Singapore
November 3–5, 2017
Singapore Retreat

Australia
November 10–14, 2017
Namgyalgar Retreat

Argentina
November 24–28, 2017
Tashigar Sur Retreat

Colombia
December 15–17, 2017
Bogota Retreat

Back cover: Details from the obverse of a Tibetan
10 *srang* banknote with a red seal symbolizing
spiritual authority and a black one showing an
inscription in *phags pa* script – *gzhung dngul
khang*, which stands for 'government bank' or liter-
ally 'government' and 'silver house'. The coin is the
reverse of the *Tangka dkarpo*.

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Photo by Lesya Cherenkova

The Relationship between the Physical Body and the Mind

A public talk given on April 28, 2017, during a three day event on Tibetan Medicine and Culture on the island of Gran Canaria, Canary Islands, Spain

I am very happy to be here with all of you. This is the first time I have been in this place. In general most of the time I live in Tenerife. My origin is Tibetan and I received all my education when I was in Tibet. When I was 20 years old I came to India and two years later I was invited by the famous Tibetologist, Giuseppe Tucci, to Italy, and worked at the university in Italy for many years.

As you know, for many centuries Tibet remained isolated and for that reason ancient spiritual knowledge and many ancient sciences have remained as they were up to this moment. When I was studying in Tibet, I did not realize the value of all the education that I received there, but after working for many years at a university in the Western world, I have understood that Tibet has many things that are valuable not only for Tibetans but for all human beings. So a little later when I finished working at university I dedicated myself to trying to communicate this knowledge to people.

I have been requested to explain a little about the relationship between body and mind. In general, in the Tibetan sciences and the spiritual path, when we speak about a human being we speak about three gates. A gate means something for entering into knowledge, or a way to come out of a problem. For example, if we want to visit a museum, we have to go through a gate or door. When we enter then we can discover what is inside. In the same way if we are inside a prison, in order to free ourselves, we need to go through the door. For that reason our physical body, our energy, and our mind are called our three gates. It is important to understand that we all have this base. If we study Tibetan medicine, it is explained and people learn it that way. That is the base of the relationship between the physical body and the mind.

This is connected to our different kinds of energy. Basically our physical body and everything is related to the five elements, and the function of all our vital energy and movements is part of energy. For example, if we want to have a peaceful calm state in our mind, even though we may have a very nice idea about it, it isn't easy to find this peace because mind is related to our energy. If we want to have a peaceful mind, we should know how to work with our energy. If we want to control and coordinate our energy, we need to understand how our physical body is because energy is also dependent on the physical body.

Energy is very important in our daily lives. Sometimes we are happy and everything goes well. I am sure that all of you have had this experience. We think that it is a fortunate moment for us because everything is going well and we don't need much effort to do things. Even if we buy a lottery ticket in that moment, perhaps we can win. Other times we have the opposite situation and even though we make our best efforts, everything goes badly. When we have these experiences we think they are linked to luck or fortune, but they are based on the condition of our energy.

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In Tibetan medicine we talk about the three humors, which really have their origins in the three emotions. The first of these is ignorance. But ignorance doesn't mean that we have no education. It means we are ignorant of how our real condition is. We do not observe it and we do not know it, only going after our minds, judging and thinking. Then, when things do not correspond, we are upset. But in the real sense, instead of fortune, it is the condition of the three humors. When our three humors are balanced in a perfect way, we are very healthy. When one of these humors is disordered, or missing some function, then we have illness and problems. It is the same with the condition of our five elements; when some are damaged or not balanced, we have many problems. When we have problems and everything goes badly, in that moment our energy is disordered or damaged. In general, when we have these types of problems, we are upset. But it doesn't help to be upset. It is more important that we understand that.

There are many ways to coordinate and strengthen our energy. At the physical level there are many types of movements such as Yantra Yoga to coordinate and strengthen energy. For example, if we have this kind of problem, by learning and applying the eight movements of Yantra Yoga, we can coordinate our physical energy. There are many things related to our energy level. On the spiritual paths in many different traditions they use different kinds of mantras to help for particular diseases. There are also many mantras for controlling negativities when they are related to our energy.

So first of all, it is very important to know why we have a type of problem. Then it is not enough to know it, but we should also apply something. In the same way, we may also have an opposite situation when we are very happy. But it is not sufficient that we are happy. It is important to understand this. That is why we say 'gate'. It is a means for entering into knowledge, so we should observe ourselves.

Observing ourselves is the root of everything because in our condition, everything is interdependent. We talk about good and bad, but they are interdependent. Good does not exist on its own. Today something may be good but tomorrow another aspect may manifest because we live in time. Today is not tomorrow and every day we have different kinds of situations.

Instead of thinking too much and making too many programs, it is more important that we are present in the same way that we drive a car. When we learn to drive a car, at the beginning it is not so easy. But when we become familiar with driving, we don't need to concentrate only on driving. When we drive, we can talk with our friends, and even if they ask us something complicated, we can think about it and reply while we are driving. This is called presence and we learn this when we drive. But our lives are not only driving a car. If we are present, we observe ourselves and then we can discover that.

It is really very important that we observe ourselves. In general we do not observe and we do not know what the root of all problems is. This is why, when we talk about the three emotions, the first one is called ignorance. We are ignorant, we do not observe, and we do not really know what the root is. For example, we may have a problem with someone. In our human condition we are very proud and always think that our way is perfect, that

we know everything. Perhaps we don't say this to other people because we want to be polite and if we tell people that we know better than they do, then they think it is strange. We don't say it, but we think it. Our ego is very strong and for that reason when we have some problems we immediately think that we are the innocent party, that it's all the fault of the other person. We insist on it. That means that we do not know how it is related with interdependence. If there is no connection of interdependence, then why do we have a problem with that person? When we have a problem with someone, there is some connection. It may not be easy for us to convince that person because they, too, have a very strong ego, and so we develop our tensions more and more. The best way is that we observe ourselves. We can change our own ideas easily, but it is difficult to change someone else's.

This way of doing things is called 'evolution', in your language. We work with our condition and when we free our tensions, we feel happy. If we keep these tensions and they develop day by day, we are not happy at all. This means not being ignorant and observing.

Another of the root emotions is attachment. An example of this is when we need or want something. When it is difficult or not possible to have it, then we get angry. Attachment and renunciation are the two bases of the emotions and we go ahead in that way - right, left, right, left - just like our two legs, spending all of our time like that, from childhood until the end of our lives, instead of observing ourselves. We never enjoy our lives and they become heavy and problematic. So it is better that we know what these three root emotions are. We also have jealousy and pride, which are combinations of the two legs - attachment and renunciation. We should work to observe and free ourselves from these because it is one of the most important aspects of our lives.

We may follow a spiritual path - and there are different kinds of teachings and traditions - but in the real sense the conclusion is that they all teach these things, even though they may use different language or present it in a different way. When we have learned and had experience, we can understand what the essence is, even if we are not following a particular religious tradition. We can understand what we should do in order to live in our society. This kind of knowledge is also very useful.

For example, we put everything into right and left sides and we are always fighting. That is called limitation. If we observe, we can understand that the root of everything is our limitations. Limitations are not really positive.

In general everybody says that we need to have peace and when we talk about it, it is very nice. When I worked at the university I participated in many of these peace meetings. When we went there they would prepare a very nice hotel and we would talk about peace for a few days. But then it would finish and become history and nothing much would remain. However, when we know a little about the real sense of the teaching, or a spiritual path, or our condition, we can discover that the root of all these problems is our limitations.

We know very well that we are living in a limited society. If we are not limited, we cannot do anything. I'll give you a simple example. Some time ago all the Tibetan traditions of Buddhism met together in India. The meeting was organized by HH the Dalai La-



ma's office. In that period I was working at the university [in Italy]. I received a letter from the organizers inviting me to the meeting but I couldn't go in that period because we had exams at the university and I wrote telling the organizers that. After a few days I received a letter from the Office of the Dalai Lama telling me that I should come because it was an important meeting, so I couldn't say no. Then I organized for the exams and I went to Varanasi in India where they were holding the meeting.

It was very crowded with Tibetan lamas and monks. They had invited me but I didn't know where I should stay. I asked some monks where the office of the organizers was and when I got there I found it was a big school of the Gelugpa tradition. They asked me which school I belonged to. I had a bit of difficulty explaining because I left Tibet when I was nearly twenty years old and when I was there I had spent most of my time at college studying. It wasn't necessary for me to come from a limited tradition. Until I was nine I lived in a monastery belonging to the Sakyapa tradition, so I thought that maybe I was Sakyapa. But according to Tibetan tradition I am also recognized as a reincarnation belonging to the Kagyupa school, so I thought that perhaps I was Kagyupa. Then I follow a teaching, the principle of which is called Dzogchen. I follow Dzogchen teaching not because I belong to this school. After many years of studying the Buddhist traditions in Tibet, I finally understood the real sense of the teaching in the Dzogchen teaching and for that reason I am following Dzogchen teaching. But basically the Dzogchen teaching is related to the Nyingmapa school, so I thought maybe they consider me to be Nyingmapa. I really didn't know what to reply. I asked them if they could check to see which school I belonged to. So they sent some monks to the offices of the different traditions and discovered that I belonged to the Nyingmapa school. When I discovered that I finally got a place to stay!

In the Dzogchen teaching, the root of all problems is limitation. When we observe and discover that, then we know that we should go beyond that in the real sense. When we have this knowledge then we can recognize all limitations that apply to our relative condition. When we know that limitations are negative and the root of all problems, it is fine if we comply with them. When we do not know and we think that limitations are important, we are controlled by them. I'll give you an example of this.

When I was working at the university in Italy, the cultural revolution was taking place in China in that period. At the time I received a lot of negative information about monasteries being destroyed in Tibet. I knew a little bit about the Chinese Communist system because before I went to India I had spent almost two years in China when I was 16 years old. I had the name of a reincarnation and they invited me as a representative of the monasteries for a conference in China. We had a five-day conference and people spoke every day but I didn't understand anything. I had only studied in college and didn't know anything about the political situation.

When the conference finished, they formed a new school with the young Chinese people who were working in East Tibet and learning the Tibetan language. During the meeting they chose two teachers: one was called Konkar Rinpoche, a very famous scholar, and the other was me, even though I was quite young. So I wasn't able to return to Tibet and remained in China for two years. During

that period I also studied Chinese language and the political system, so I knew a little about the situation.

I believed that possibly they had destroyed something, but I never really thought that everything had been destroyed because China is a very big country and there are many people who know the value of culture. So even though I received a lot of information, I didn't completely believe it.

Then in 1982 I went to Tibet for the first time [since I had left]. Then I saw that the monasteries and everything had really been destroyed. I was very surprised even though I hadn't believed it before. I spent a few weeks there, the local authorities helped me, and it was very nice. Then before I left, they invited me for dinner and asked me how I found the current situation in Tibet. I replied that it was fantastic, really nice.

Relatively this is called how we should work with circumstances. Even if we know that something is a limitation, is negative, we can accept that and know how to work with circumstances, if we are aware.

What I have learned in the Dzogchen teaching, teaches that. It is not only doing meditation, chanting, and prayer, but basically being present and working with circumstances. This is, I feel, really useful not only for people who are following a spiritual path. If we have the base for evolution it helps our fellow countrymen and we can work very well in our limited situations. Gradually going in this direction, increasing and developing our knowledge, is called evolution.

When I arrived in Italy, I worked with Prof. Tucci, the famous Tibetologist. He had been to Tibet seven times. He was also famous in Tibet and had a vast knowledge of Tibetan culture. One day he asked me about a current in the different schools and traditions of Tibet, a kind of teaching called Dzogchen. He didn't know about it because officially Dzogchen is not a school. It is not a tradition. Dzogchen is one of the most ancient teachings that has existed in Tibet for centuries. So I explained and showed him some books with explanations of Dzogchen teaching. Of course if someone is following the path of the Dzogchen teaching there is also meditation and a wide range of practices. But what I discovered is that the principle of the Dzogchen teaching is very useful in our society. If we develop that, there is really a possibility that we can have peace in the world because first of all we observe ourselves and free ourselves from our limitations.

I'll give you an example. In the teaching we say that all the schools of the Buddhist tradition give too much importance to their own point of view and discuss them among themselves. The Hindus and other traditions have all developed their point of view. For many years I also studied that kind of teaching in college and was convinced that I knew the traditions of the Buddhist schools very well. The college where I studied belonged to the Sakyapa tradition and I studied the Sakyapa point of view very well and was convinced that this point of view, which negates that of the Gelugpa, was the most important.

When I met my teacher of Dzogchen and he transmitted knowledge of Dzogchen concretely, he said that the point of view of Dzogchen teaching is not what you have learned. I was very upset [when

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I heard that because of what I had learned and studied. He told me that I should discover what the difference is between how a pair of glasses and a mirror work. If we have a good pair of glasses, we can see even the smallest things in front of us very clearly. This means that we remain in dualistic vision: I am here and there is something there and I want to check what these things are. But in the Dzogchen teaching firstly we observe ourselves, and an example of this is the mirror. If we look into a mirror, immediately our face appears. If there is some abnormality with my face – perhaps my nose is not normal, and I don't recognize this in the mirror, I don't know my face – and someone tells me that my nose is strange, I don't like it. I defend myself – my nose is perfect. This means that we do not observe ourselves. If I recognize the way my nose is in the mirror, there is no need for somebody to tell me about it. I can accept it myself.

My teacher told me that the point of view of the Dzogchen teaching is that we observe ourselves. When we observe ourselves, we can discover how many limitations we have, how these limitations create many problems, and we can free ourselves from those problems. We no longer go behind or believe our inventions and become free from all these limitations.

It is the same with the situation in our society. We may be part of this or that political party because our condition is always limited, but we do not seriously believe that this is the final goal. The final goal is that we observe and discover that limitation is not good and in that way we are not conditioned by it. This is an example I learned in the Dzogchen teaching and is important not only in the teaching but in our society. When I went to different peace meetings, nobody would speak about our limitations. They would only speak about how peace is very important. We can talk, but it doesn't always work in a practical way.

Firstly we need to discover what is more important. An example. If we have some problems on the physical level, such as an illness, we understand that it is related to our energy. We go to a doctor because we are ignorant about medicine and think that the doctor is an expert. Even though he is an expert, he always asks his patients questions about what they ate and what they did in order to discover the secondary causes. Finally the doctor identifies the problem and advises us what to do. That is an example of how we need to discover the root of a problem. Then sometimes we discover it and are happy. But this is not sufficient. We should apply [the knowledge we have discovered]. When we discover what the real condition is and we apply [this knowledge], then everything becomes easier.

When I give explanations to my students, they learn gradually. Sometimes they say that I have changed their lives. But I have not changed anyone. I couldn't. I know that everyone has their limitations. But what I can do is explain and make them understand themselves, observe themselves. When they discover their condition, and are free, they feel more relaxed. When they are relaxed, their situations also change. They think that I have changed them, but they have changed by themselves. This is something very important that we should learn in our daily lives.

Some people say that they are following Buddhist teaching. It is very nice if we follow some particular method and learn. But time

goes by very quickly and our lives are very short. We can see that time is going ahead when we observe a clock ticking. It always goes ahead, never back. This is our life and it passes very quickly. Time is very important. Knowing that time is important we should enjoy our lives and we can only do that if we are relaxed.

Everyone knows that being relaxed is useful. But it isn't sufficient that we only know that relaxing is good. When people don't know how to relax they may go to a teacher to learn. If someone comes to me and says that they don't manage to relax, then I have to explain somehow. What is the easiest thing to do to relax a little? I tell them that they can do breathing practice, for example, inhaling reaching up and then exhaling bending over, repeating twenty or thirty times. Then they should lie down and after a while they will feel a little relaxed. But although they may relax with that breathing today, tomorrow is another day and they need to do the breathing again to relax. In order to be completely relaxed, we should work not only with breathing but breathing related to mind. In this case, we know how we should observe ourselves related to limitations of the mind.

In general we follow our minds too much, thinking, judging, and making plans, considering that we are clever. At times mind is very useful, but when mind dominates us and we become slaves of the mind that is not good. If we dominate mind, that is good. In this case we need to observe ourselves and understand the root of how our minds are related to limitations. Then mind cannot dominate us because we already know and do not totally follow mind. Otherwise, when we follow mind too much, when mind succeeds in dominating us, it dominates not only us, but also our energy. When mind dominates our energy, we can have many heavy problems. Some people become abnormal and think that they see things that are not there. They are definitely sure that someone is talking in their ear telling them, for example, to jump out of the window. Many people actually jump from their windows and die. This kind of thing happens when people are dominated too much by mind. In this case it is not so easy to coordinate and to do that we need to do some deeper spiritual practices such as fixation or other methods to coordinate energy. That means that we re-educate our minds. We can do this when mind is dominating us but has still not succeeded in dominating our energy.

It is very important that we understand these types of situations. When we know all these things then we are being aware. So we should remember these things in daily life because they are very useful, not only spiritual teachings. In the relative condition we need to be present and not distracted, just like driving a car. If we learn and develop how to be present in that way, this can also be an important practice, even a spiritual practice.

For example, I am teaching dancing to my students. Some of them feel strange and think that these are just ordinary dances. But if we are present we can also integrate a spiritual path in ordinary things. That is what we should learn and is very useful for everybody. We don't always need to become a practitioner of a spiritual path. We also don't need to refuse or negate that. Everything is relative. ❀

Transcribed and edited by Liz Granger



The Importance of the International Gakyil

Opening talk at the International Dzogchen Community AGM at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, Spain, on April 16, 2017

I came here to greet everyone at this meeting because the International Gakyil's role in the Dzogchen Community is very important. We are learning the Dzogchen Teaching and the principle of the Dzogchen Teaching is to be beyond limitations, which corresponds to getting in our real nature. This is the essence of the teaching, and it is also what we need in our society. But if there are no organizations we cannot live, because we live with dualistic vision and everything is limited.

For that reason, when we work with the teaching and try to get into our real nature, it corresponds with the Dzogchen Teaching. What we call evolution in ordinary terms is the real nature in the Dzogchen Teaching. It is also related to the relative condition and it brings us to our real condition. But relatively we need something for organizing.

For example, when we started the Dzogchen Teaching, at the beginning we tried to do something together. If we had not organized, we couldn't have done anything. But when we started to organize, everyone started to fall too much into dualistic vision. I was at the University of Naples and we made a program. We rented a house, and organized for meeting and doing some activities there. But when we made that program, our organization became very limited; it did not correspond because in our system there is always hierarchy. That is our way. So even though we had paid some money for this rented house, the night before the day we were supposed to sign for the house, I could not sleep. I thought about how we were starting something for the Dzogchen Teaching.

We don't have this kind of organization in Tibet. All the monasteries are run in a traditional way. But this does not correspond to the teachings. I didn't want things this way, because we had no monasteries or tradition to maintain or preserve here. I wanted to teach and apply the Dzogchen Teachings in the best way. In this case I did not want to start or create something that did not correspond to the Dzogchen Teaching. For that reason, the next day in Naples, I said we would not rent the house and we didn't go to sign. We lost a little money, but we didn't do it.

But we continued to think what we could do for meeting and doing something together. In the end, when I went to the United States, I was flying from New York to California, and on the airplane I thought, "In our human condition, we have three existences – body, speech and mind. That is the way of being and of living. There



Photo by Ralf Plüschke

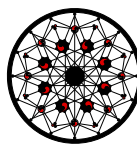
must be something that corresponds to those three existences." Then I thought and thought, maybe we need a Gakyil. Until then the Gakyil had only existed as a symbol, the significance of the Gakyil did not exist. There are the three colors, which represent body, speech and mind. We could work in society that way and it would not be a hierarchical system. Collaborating. I had a rough idea and when I returned to Italy we started that Gakyil. This is the origin of the Gakyil.

We cannot live or do anything if we do not organize because we live in society. But the organization must be done in collaboration, respecting each other, and working with circumstances. This is the teaching of Dzogchen. The Dzogchen Teaching does not say that you should always be in contemplation. You can also be in dualistic vision, but you should be present and collaborate. So when we have a Gakyil – for example, now we have many Gakyils for the Gars and Lings that have developed – you should remember the origin from the beginning and not fall too much into an egoistic system. We need to collaborate.

For that reason, after my teaching, one of the most important aspects of the Dzogchen Community is the International Gakyil. They are providing services, they are trying to work on how we can live and collaborate in the same family and respect one another. Of course we know very well that in each country there are different rules and different systems. If you go to different regions inside a single country, there are even different ways of doing things. This is normal in our society. But there is always a way to collaborate and pay respect.

Some people say, "Oh, we couldn't do things that way because in our country we have different rules." When Enrico Dell'Angelo was alive he told me that many times he could not get people to collaborate in an easy way. It was very difficult and people were not collaborating because they did not want to and because they had their own systems and ways of doing things. You can have different ways of doing things, your systems, etc, but in the Dzogchen Community we always have the principle of collaboration. If you don't want to collaborate then it means you don't want my teaching. You don't want the principle of the Dzogchen Teaching.

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Update on the IDC Annual General Meeting

April 16, 2017

Mark Farrington

The International Dzogchen Community (IDC) passed some important milestones in 2016 and we used this opportunity at the IDC Annual General Meeting (AGM) at Dzamling Gar on Sunday, April 16, 2017, to share these with the global Sangha; both those present and via Webcast. We were especially grateful to Rinpoche for opening our 3rd IDC AGM with a strong and clear message of support to the International Gakyil (IG) entrusted with this 'project' of realising a global community linked together via IDC affiliation.

The highlights of the presentation concentrated on updates to the global align-



ment process and changes in membership trends. The IG also introduced the budget & plans for 2017–18 and introduced the new IG members joining from April 2017.

In the presentation [http://dzogchencommunity.org/assets/2017_IDC_AGM.pdf] you can see, firstly, the full organisational view of IDC, which now includes

many dimensions of collaboration. Important points of contact for members are Global Course Coordinator Emmanuel Jouan, Global Membership Coordinator, and IDC Administration Team headed by Rita Renzi and supported by Daniela Garbo. The IG is very grateful to these karma yogis

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We are trying to collaborate and do our best for working with teaching so it is very important that we have the International Gakyil. The International Gakyil is trying to work for all the Gars and Lings, and when they really collaborate with each other and pay respect, we can feel that the aim of the Dzogchen Community for the future is guaranteed and that somehow we can continue in this limited society.

The International Gakyil is working with all the different systems that we have in different countries. We know very well that when we travel just a little that we need a passport. If we have no passport we cannot go, we are not permitted to go. This is our condition. But with the principle of the Dzogchen Teaching we do not need a passport. We should go beyond that. So collaborating and paying respect to each other, just like the same family, is very important.

For example, people say they are doing Santi Maha Sangha to learn Dzogchen and go deeper and deeper into it. If people are going deeper and deeper, they should understand what the Dzogchen Community means. The Dzogchen Community is very important for the future and that means collaborating and taking responsibility in a limited society. I am the teacher, I am teaching, I am trying to help you understand what you should do. Then you should apply it. What the International Gakyil is doing is very important for applying it.

But they cannot do very much if you do not collaborate. What can they do? Some people say they do not want to collaborate with

the International Gakyil. Then you should go your way. That means you do not want my teaching. You don't want the Dzogchen Community. If you want the Dzogchen Community to survive in this society, on this globe, you should work with the International Gakyil. If you do not work with the International Gakyil, then you should forget me. That is much better.

So please do your best. This is what I want to say to everybody. To those who are collaborating and paying respect to each other, I want to say thank you very much. That is what we need. But if you have knowledge of Dzogchen and you are not respecting your Vajra brothers and sisters at the Gars – if there are groups like my group and your group, and you are not collaborating – that means you are not going ahead in the knowledge of the Dzogchen Teaching. The Dzogchen Teaching goes beyond that and is about collaborating. There should not be any kind of conflicts at a Gar. You may not like this or that person, but if you are following my teachings and that person is also following the teachings, that person is a brother or sister of the Dzogchen Teachings. Why are you not paying respect or collaborating with that person? So it is very important that everyone recognizes that. This is what I want to say. I do not want to say anything else about organization. The International Gakyil will inform you about the organization. You should try to learn and apply. This is what we all need. Thank you very much. ☸

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz

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that selflessly donate their time year after year.

After little change in 2015, the membership growth trend returned to positive in 2016, and in particular we saw strong growth in Samtengar, Kunsangar & Dzamling Gar membership.

There are also updates on Webcast connection trends and number of authorised Instructors practicing around the world.

Financially, IDC remains in very healthy condition, thanks to the stable membership of our Gars & Lings globally. We are grateful for all the efforts done at the grassroots level in support of membership. We also thank all Gakyils for helping us with our surveys from time to time, where we try to incorporate the local wisdom in our global guidelines and ensure we are learning from everyone's unique experiences.

The focus of 2017–18 budget and strategic priorities are on 1) an improved communication strategy, 2) formalising collaboration and synergies with Shang Shung Foundation and 3) support to Gakyils of Dzamling Gar and Tsegylgar West where IDC has an ownership and administrative role to play. We also continue with our on-going priorities of legal alignment of all Gars & Lings, and publication of global standards & guidelines for teaching courses. The project to develop a single, umbrella web portal for the IDC is another on-going area of focus carried over from last year.

It was our first IDC AGM since the passing Enrico Dell'Angelo, the first IDC President. We paid tribute to his legacy and highlighted the many achievements realised under his leadership from 2012–2016. May all future Presidents and IG members live up to his high standards.

To view the entire power point presentation given at the General Assembly in Dzamling Gar go here: http://dzogchencommunity.org/assets/2017_IDC_AGM.pdf

Roles of Responsibility within the IG

The Mirror spoke to Mark Farrington, Vice-President of the International Dzogchen Community, about the background to the birth of the IDC and the selection process for becoming President.

The Mirror: Mark, could you tell us about how the International Gakyil came into being.

Mark Farrington: The whole process began with Enrico Dell'Angelo having a concern that the collection of Dzogchen Gars and Lings around the world was not formally linked together in any particular legal manner and this could be a worry for the future. Gars tended to act autonomously and interpret guidance from Rinpoche differently so it was difficult to envision stability with Rinpoche. When Enrico approached him with this, Rinpoche famously put it to Enrico and told him to 'fix it'.

Enrico then conceived the idea of legal alignment with the primary binding relationship between all the autonomous Gars and Lings with the International Dzogchen Community being the right to use Rinpoche's Longsal symbol, and the right to disseminate his copyrighted teachings. If the Gars and Lings wanted to have access to these things, the students needed to be members of the International Dzogchen Community and adhere to the requests of Namkhair Norbu Rinpoche.

Simultaneously, Rinpoche had an idea to buy land for the Global Gar in Tenerife and asked me to do fundraising for this project and help to bring this about. Enrico and I were put together in this case with two independent but overlapping projects. In order to both buy the land for the Global Gar and launch the IDC alignment project we formed the legal entity for the IDC in a rush, as a very wonderful opportunity had presented itself in Playa Paraiso. The non-profit association for the IDC was formed in September 2012 at Merigar, in between Rinpoche's retreats, and we chose founding members from the mixture of old students at the retreat, with many different nationalities, so that it would symbolically represent the international community we were forming.

After the purchase of the property in Playa Paraiso with help of Benedetta, we

began to transfer the responsibility of managing the property to Giovanni Boni and others based in Tenerife, and this eventually became Dzamling Gar. Our responsibility then switched back to creating the IDC organizational structure, which was the original task given to Enrico. This has since been our primary focus since 2013.

The Mirror: Can you explain about the roles of responsibility within the International Gakyil and how they have evolved.

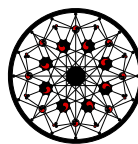
MF: At the time of purchasing Dzamling Gar there were only two Gakyil members essentially, Enrico and I, and so we then began to recruit the first International Gakyil. We had a recruitment process where we chose people based on professional skill sets and also to have some sort of geographical footprint globally across our Community. Enrico was very much in favor of having an Executive Director running the day to day operations, and a separate Board or the Gakyil to oversee decision making. He asked me to be Executive Director and we named Rinpoche as President. However, eventually it became clear that we didn't want Rinpoche to have a legal or administrative role because that would be a burden for him and would also expose him to certain legal and financial liabilities.

With the first revision of Statutes we renamed the 'Spiritual Leader of the Community', Chögyal Namkhair Rinpoche, as Honorary President. We then made Enrico Vice-President, left the office of Presidency vacant, moved me from being Executive Director to Gakyil member, and temporarily made the position of Executive Director dormant.

After a couple of years we tried to submit for recognition of the IDC as a cultural nonprofit, but the Italian authorities would not accept our structure with the Presidency vacant, so for that reason, we had to make Enrico the legal President. This was in October or November of 2016 just before he passed away. Enrico always resisted being named President due to the symbolic importance of this title and issues of succession had not yet been fully discussed.

While we were in that transition between the point when Enrico died and the appointment of a new President, I was acting Vice-President with interim authority as President, and then we began the selection process.

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The Mirror: Are the members of the International Gakyil chosen in the same way as the Gakyils at the Gars and Lings?

MF: The selection of the International Gakyil is a very similar but importantly different process to the Gakyils for the Gars and Lings. At the Gars people volunteer, they are presented to Rinpoche, Rinpoche accepts, and they are presented to the general members who vote. This is more or less true for the International Gakyil except that we do specific recruitment to choose members, and then we present the list of recruits to Rinpoche, he approves them, and only then do we present them to members at the AGM. This will always be true for all International Gakyil members.

The President, however, should be proposed by Rinpoche himself with possibly some interaction with the Vice-President or other members of the IG that are close to Rinpoche. The main point is to arrive at some kind of very short list of candidates that possess all the important characteristics, and then they are formally asked if they are willing to fulfil this role, rather than individuals volunteering for this role and being elected. So it is a little bit reversed in terms of the starting point of the process.

The Mirror: How does the selection process for being on the short list for President of IDC work?

MF: We considered from the beginning that the role of choosing the President of the IDC should belong to the Honorary President. As spiritual leader of the Community, Rinpoche will want to choose a President that can best represent his vision for the IDC, and is very integrated into the global life of the Sangha. In this particular case, where we suddenly lost our President and needed to quickly fill the position according to Italian law, the short list was produced by consulting closely with Rinpoche and Rosa. We then met with different potential candidates until one was chosen.

The process is obviously not yet formalized in a procedural sense. Enrico was our first President by logical conclusion. Steven Landsberg is our second President, chosen through consultation with Rinpoche

& Rosa amid extraordinary circumstances. We agreed from the beginning that the appointment of President would come from a nomination from Rinpoche, so this is the process to date. It is not a democracy, nor is it simply a vote from the IG Board. The President stands in Rinpoche's place to take legal and administrative responsibility for the Community so that Rinpoche doesn't have to. It is not a normal karma yoga role. It is taking on all of this responsibility of administering and legally representing the Dzogchen Community so that Rinpoche can focus on being a Teacher. For that reason we have only dealt with people who have been put forward by Rinpoche. It is very personal selection process and therefore differs from being an ordinary Gakyil member.

The Mirror: So Steve Landsberg's name was put forward to take over this role?

MF: When Enrico passed away, the IG continued to carry out ongoing daily operations and I assumed the role of Vice President. Perhaps there was a belief amongst some people that I would be the one to naturally fall into the role of President. But my own personal view was that, unlike Enrico, I didn't have this capacity to explain well to people exactly what Rinpoche means in his Teachings as it relates to our individual behaviour, what it means to commit to Samaya and to be a Dzogchen Community member. Enrico had this ability to speak up, to make people stop, listen, and remember what Rinpoche had taught and then to follow the guidance that he was giving. I came to believe that the IDC President needed to have this essential ability to speak on behalf of Rinpoche.

The obvious name that everyone immediately put forward was Costantino Albini, but unfortunately his health conditions at the time complicated this simple solution. We then discussed several of Rinpoche's other senior students as successors to Enrico, but one by one they were not able to take on this role due to other responsibilities.

In January I met with Rinpoche and Rosa at the retreat and we discussed many names but had no answer, so we decided to leave it and talk again in April when I

returned to Dzamling Gar for the AGM. In April we thought to approach Costantino again, suggesting that he be more of a figurehead President with the IG doing most of the daily operational work. But then Rinpoche suggested Steven Landsberg and we both thought that this was very interesting. In addition to having this skill of being able to speak about samaya, about what it means to be a member of the Dzogchen Community, Steve was an old student that many people around the world knew and were familiar with. He has not only been travelling around the world to retreats with Rinpoche, but also teaching, living with and being part of different Sanghas around the world. He is a known person and this was considered an important attribute to have, in terms of being a recognizable President.

I also remember that when we chose the first Gakyil, Enrico and I presented it to Rinpoche and showed him the collection of names and there were several people that he didn't know. But what he said about all the people that we had chosen was that they all had a flexible mind. So in his opinion this was one of the most important characteristics to have. Many people are intelligent, familiar with the teaching, but if their minds are not flexible, it is not easy to do this job. Steve has a flexible mind, is easygoing, a good listener, has ideas and opinions but doesn't give them too much importance, so I thought he would be very good. Several years ago I had asked Steve to be part of the IG but he had said he was too busy at that time. This time it was a direct suggestion from Rinpoche and Rosa to be President and when I called him he agreed immediately to take up this position. That is how we arrived at this decision to choose Steven Landsberg.

The Mirror: Thank you, Mark.

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Perseverance, Engagement, and Personal Commitment

Interview with Steven Landsberg,
New President of the International
Gakyil
May 10, 2017

The Mirror: Steve, you have recently been appointed as the president of the International Gakyil by Rinpoche and Rosa Namkhai, with the approval of the International Gakyil. Was that a surprise for you?

Steven Landsberg: Yes it came as a total surprise. I had also had a communication from Mark Farrington about the position and the situation. I have had a little bit of experience of being on the Gakyil because I served in Tashigar North (Margarita Island, Venezuela) for many years, but this is a totally new thing for me because the function and purpose of the IG is a little different than the function of a local Gakyil. So there will be a period of adjustment for me while I learn about the IG and what their basic conversation is about.

M: Do you serve in a particular color function like the others or are you solely the director?

SL: I don't think I am associated with any particular color. Mark Farrington said he is handling most of the day-to-day activities. So my position and actual function is still to be revealed and made clear to me. It seems an older student who was more involved with the practice end of things and less with the financial and administrative end of things was desirable to serve as president.

M: So you have served on the Tashigar North Gakyil and you have also been involved with different Community management activities. How do you envision the work of the IG and how would you like to see it function?

SL: I don't have a particular agenda for the way in which the IG should function. From the few messages I have seen, I think it is working quite nicely now and communication between the members is working smoothly. We will have to wait and see before I come up with any particular thought on the direction in which we should go. Obviously we will be taking most of our

direction, if not all of our guidance, from Rinpoche's lead. And we will just be trying to administer and facilitate its application. That is more or less what we are going to be doing. Maybe there will come a time when we need to gage a direction in which the Community needs to move.

M: Because you move around a lot and have visited many Communities as a Santi Maha Sangha teacher, based on your observations and experience, how could you see your role, and what do you see as a way to facilitate communication among the international Communities and between the international Communities and the International Gar of Dzamling Gar?

SL: The key issue is the individuals who are members. It's one thing for everyone to be paying their membership fees etc, but it is certainly not enough. And the main thing is that people as individuals consider the importance of the Dzogchen Teaching and practice and study as much as they possibly can and if that understanding matures then all the other pieces will fall into place automatically. They will naturally want to contribute, get more involved, and there won't be so many details we will need to figure out for everybody. I think the main thing comes down to how the individual member is going to consider his or her place within the Community and that place is going to be pretty much, if not totally, determined by their connection with the Teaching. And that means his or her own personal study and practice.

It will take time to discover what this role is really about and I'm a beginner and I will have to discover basically how it works through contact with the other members and by attending their virtual meetings.

M: Many people around the world know you, but some do not, so can you talk a little about your life, about how you became a spiritual seeker, how you met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a kind of general biography?

SL: I was raised the first seventeen years of my life in Los Angeles, California. After a brief period at university I had the opportunity to go to India. This was around 1968. My initial interest in going to India was to study classical Indian music, and sitar, which I did. After some time in India it is not difficult to realize what a kind of spiritual place it is, and I came into contact with many individuals who were connected with one kind of spirituality or another,



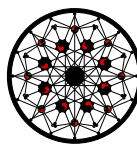
and I had a number of friends who were connected to Tibetan Buddhism. Somehow I came in contact with a group of masters who had recently arrived in India, and by recently I mean it had been maybe five or ten years that they had been staying in Darjeeling. I made my initial contact there with several masters, and I did take some teachings, and I started practicing in my more or less naive way. But you have to sort of jump into the water somehow and get started.

Then after a number of years that I spent in India I returned to the US, and I had made some connections with some people while I was in India who then became students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, some of their names will be familiar to people, Mario Maglietti and Paolo and Pupe Brunatto, and they kind of encouraged me to go to a retreat with Rinpoche, in July of 1982, at Oz, California.

So at that retreat when I listened to the teachings, and although I had listened to many teachings in India, somehow this was different and it was not like I was just listening to a lot of words, or a lot of information, but somehow it was very much connecting to my own condition, and I related that way and that was the beginning.

From 1982 to about 1993 I was practicing a lot of the practices I had received from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, as well as practices that I had received from other teachers, and then in 1994 or 1995, at a certain point I made a commitment that I was going to really get involved with the study of Santi Maha Sangha. I was in Peru at that time

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and it was in Lake Titicaca, I had been in Machu Pichu, and suddenly I just got this desire to study Santi Maha Sangha and pursue that way and try to do the examination. And then from that point on I became very connected to Rinpoche and his teachings, and especially those related to Santi Maha Sangha.

M: When did you decide to become a Santi Maha Sangha instructor?

SL: I decided to pursue that around 2007 or 2008, when I was in Margarita. I took my exam at Merigar West in the summer of 2010.

M: When did you move to Tashigar North, Margarita?

SL: In the very beginning, there was a retreat in 2002 that attracted a lot of people from everywhere, and I went to that retreat. Then the issue about buying land and building houses had already started and most of the land has already been allocated or sold, I was living in Nepal at that time and I went back there for a time and a few months later there was information circulated that had been owned by one of the Gars, and they decided that they were not able to go ahead with it, and that land became available and I agreed to take it. And very shortly thereafter I went back to Margarita and designed and built one of the first houses built there. So for a while I continued to commute between Nepal and Margarita a lot and then in 2007 I actually moved there. I did not get into the Gakyil until 2008 and I remained on the Gakyil there until 2013.

M: What was it like to participate in Tashigar North when there was no longer much activity there after some difficulties and Rinpoche no longer came as often?

SL: That was a really tough period. First of all because it was a huge change from being such an important place and receiving so much attention and developing so rapidly, and then almost coming to a total halt. Financially it was a challenge, in terms of peoples' participation it was a huge challenge and there were a considerable number of obstacles that we had to navigate

our way through and work with. It was not easy at all. Even today the membership is very small. Because of the financial crisis that occurred in Venezuela, in some way it benefitted the Community, because, even though it wasn't a lot of money, we could still manage it in a way that worked with the continual exchange due to inflation and due to currency exchange. Now everything is changing there and things are becoming more and more expensive. It is really tough for a Gar that doesn't have that much income. Also how can they make payments to the international community? That becomes a problem as well.

M: So that must give you a kind of base for working on challenging circumstances.

SL: I was the president of the Gakyil there for a number of years too and my principle from the time I started with the Gakyil was don't block anything. If you find motivated people who want to do a job, let them run with the ball. I feel my function on the Gakyil was to encourage those people who actually wanted to do something. We tried to work with the people who were trying to get in the way or create obstacles or block and help them understand that we need to make decisions and we need to move ahead and we can't get bogged down with long discussions about doing or not doing something.

It's a challenge because, for example, for people who have served the Community for twenty-five or thirty years, it's normal, a certain kind of attachment grows, but the condition of the world and the function of the Community is always something that is changing and evolving. And it becomes a challenge for the people who reach my age, for example, to relinquish that kind of attachment. So they need to look at the fact that they are getting older and maybe now it is time to take practice seriously and this critical moment is arriving.

M: Do you see that as an issue in a lot of the places you visit around the world?

SL: There are a lot of Communities, like the Czech Republic, that are young and very dynamic and really moving forward and very, very active, with very strong schedules, and it's great. The people are very ex-

cited to learn. Most of the places I visit are doing well. Some places are still not manifesting.

M: So finally, you are an accomplished classical sitar musician, a Santi Maha Sangha instructor and a long time practitioner. How do you feel these accomplishments can contribute to your position on the IG and benefit the Community?

SL: I feel that whatever one does in ones own personal practice, when it comes to some level of maturity, then no matter what one engages in, somehow that experience is going to relate to whatever one engages in. So even though being an administrator or serving on the IG is not exactly what I do, because I am mostly engaged with music and Santi Maha Sangha work, still, if one allows oneself and opens up that space, then you can participate somehow in managing, or helping to administer what needs to be done, and just trying one's best.

M: Also the level of mastery of the sitar you have achieved must require a lot of discipline.

SL: It takes a lot of time, a lot of discipline, it is an endless work, and it's not something that can be really done in a single lifetime. I continue with that because I have spent my life doing it. One of my thoughts is that whatever one starts and practices for a long period of time, one should never give up. Sometimes people embark on something and do it for some time and then they get frustrated and give up. That is a real pity because they have lost that chance.

M: Do you have anything you would like to add in conclusion?

SL: The Dzogchen path is definitely a path that requires a lot of perseverance, a lot of engagement, and a lot of personal commitment. It's also a path especially related to ones relation to the Community that demands a lot of patience and dealing not only with ones own conflicts and difficulties, but also dealing with the conflicts and difficulties of many other beings. There is just no other way. ©



Steven Landsberg, President.



Fabio Risolo, Blue.



Libor Maly, Blue.



Scott Diamond, Blue.



Monika Walczak, Red.



Scott Townell, Red.



Roberto Zamparo, Yellow.



Mark Farrington, Yellow.

Announcement of New and Ongoing Members of The International Gakyil

The International Gakyil has recently expanded its membership with several new people from around the world. They join the ongoing members to form a larger group that intends to build on the accomplishments that have been made by the International Dzogchen Community in recent years.

The new President of the International Dzogchen Community is Steven Landsberg, a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for several decades. Steven currently resides in New York and travels extensively as an authorized Santi Maha Sangha Instructor. He is a welcome addition to the group who will now fill this important role for the Global Sangha.

In the Blue, Fabio Maria Risolo joins the International Gakyil from his home near Merigar West in Italy. Fabio comes from a distinguished background in Education and is an authorized Santi Maha Sangha Instructor.

Another new addition to the Blue International Gakyil is Scott Diamond, a member of Dzamling Gar currently living in the United States. Scott brings Communications experience from non-profit development and his career as a creative entrepreneur.

Libor Maly continues as Blue after dedicating several years of work within the International Gakyil. He has extensive experience in technology, business, and philanthropy. Libor is based in Prague and is a member of Merigar East.

For the Red, Monika Walczak is a new member of the International Gakyil from Warsaw (Namdagling). She specializes in Human Resources Management, with a focus on business consulting in the fields of project management, emotional intelligence, team building, leadership, and work-life balance. Monica is an authorized instructor of Khaita.

Scott Townell continues to dedicate his work in the Red from his home in New York. Scott is a member of Tsegylgar East with decades of experience in management consulting, technology, and general management for global companies.

In the Yellow, Roberto Zamparo continues to contribute his expertise in business planning and control. He lives in Italy and has been the Auditor of Merigar West since 2013.

Mark Farrington continues as Yellow International Gakyil and serves as the Vice President of The International Dzogchen Community. His professional background is in International Finance and Politics. Currently a member of Merigar West, Mark is based in London. ©



My first 100 Days as Director of the Shang Shung Foundation

& an Invitation to Our First 'All Hands Meeting' of the SSF on July 6, 2017 at Merigar

I was quite surprised when I received a letter from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in which he asked me to become the new principal Director of the International Shang Shung Foundation, after the very sad passing away of the former Director of the SSF, Enrico Dell'Angelo. After some days of reflecting on this request, and speaking with my family and Vajra brothers, I replied to Rinpoche saying that I felt very honored by his trust in me and that I would do my very best to fulfill the vision of our Master.

In the beginning I was somewhat overwhelmed by everything, as I actually did not know the wide field of all my responsibilities. There are several branches of the Shang Shung Institute under the umbrella of the International Shang Shung Foundation which I have been put in charge of coordinating: in Italy, in the USA, in London, in Russia, in Argentina, in Australia, in the Netherlands, and also in Austria.

As I have been the Director of the Shang Shung Institute of Austria for the last 17 years, I already knew many of the people collaborating with the various Institutes, but I did not know about the different aspects and details of all these international bodies. In the beginning I thought: "Wow, what a job, I don't know anything ... how can I manage this enormous responsibility and task?"

But then I had a dream in which I received some information about how I could do my new job. It became clear to me that my way of acting should be based on four principles:

- on respect and trust,
- on transparency,
- on precise and intensive communication,
- and on diligence.

So since then I have followed these principles in my work.

First of all, I had several Skype meetings with the Board of Directors of the International SSF, and with the specific people responsible for SSF Italy and in the USA. Then I went to Merigar in Italy for one week, where I had several meetings every day regarding the main areas of activity that take place in Italy, including Shang Shung Publications, managing the Archive & Library, IT, etc. By having many intensive discussions with all the people already collaborating with the SSF, by the end I had a good understanding of the present situation and an idea for the best way forward.

A few weeks later I went to Dzamlung Gar, Tenerife. I understood that for several reasons, no legal base for the SSF had yet been established in Tenerife. So again I had many meetings, first of all with Rinpoche, but also with many of the different people who were involved in Dzamlung Gar and the wider community. Together we worked on a plan regarding how to create a legal base for the SSF in Tenerife and we also worked on a plan of action for the future.

After returning to Austria, I had several Skype meetings with the International Gakyil about a good and fruitful collaboration, as well as many Skype meetings with Italy, UK and the USA.

Three weeks later I returned again to Tenerife, and after having made a precise proposal for setting up a legal base for the SSF in Tenerife as well as a precise plan of activities starting in 2018, I finally met with Rinpoche and he approved all our suggestions and proposals.

So now this situation is in the hands of our lawyer, who will work out all the formal details for the new Shang Shung Foundation located in Tenerife and in the very near future Rinpoche will be able to sign all the official papers making it an official legal entity.

I am often asked, "What is the relationship between the International Dzogchen Community and the Shang Shung Foundation?" Well as you know, the founder of the IDC, of SSF as well as ASIA is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. That means the origin, the root, is just *one*. Each of these organizations works in different fields, but we all

follow the principles of the Dzogchen Community taught by Rinpoche: all our work is based on three principles:

- on presence & awareness, which means not creating more confusion or problems.
- on the understanding of the Teachings and not on mere fantasies.
- on dedication to the Master and the Teachings, rather than on egocentric desires.

We all understand our extraordinarily fortunate situation of having met our Master, who has been tirelessly transmitting the most direct and highest teachings for total realization, for many decades now. We all just follow one aim: to apply the Teachings to the best of our ability and to work together to put into action the vision of our Master.

I want to express my gratitude to the Board of Directors of the International SSF: Yuchen Namkhai, Julia Lawless and Kirill Shilov, for their wise support and excellent collaboration; to the International Gakyil: Mark Farrington, Roberto Zamparo and Libor Maly, for the collaborative meetings and talks that we have had; to Gaetano Ruvo and Ilaria Faccioli from Merigar and Dzamlung Gar respectively, for their wonderful and very fruitful collaboration; to Elio Guarisco for the many clarifying talks and discussions we had; to the four international teachers of the IDC: Adriana, Fabio, Laura, and Prima, for their support and help; and finally to all collaborators of the SSF who are working in different fields of responsibilities for their very warm welcome and for their excellent work that they are doing for the SSF and DC.

I would like to invite you all to come to Merigar at the end of June 2017.

There will be a retreat with Rinpoche from June 30th to July 4th.

On July 5th, the AGM of the DC Merigar in the presence of our Master and hopefully with many members of the IDC, will be held.

On July 6th, we will hold the first "ALL HANDS MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL SSF" again in the presence of our Master, where all information about the recent developments of the international SSF will be

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The Birth of The Shang Shung Foundation in Spain

Ilaria Faccioli

Dzamling Gar, June 10th, 2017



Left to right: Ilaria Faccioli, Oliver Leick and Anna Diogene.

On June 1st, at Vesak, 2017, Oliver Leick, Anna Diogene and myself went to meet Mr Raimón Bergos, an advocate and specialist for foundations in Barcelona. We had a meeting for about ninety minutes and clarified all our last doubts regarding the new foundation that we will set up as the legal base for the Shang Shung Foundation in Spain.

Thanks to Anna Diogene, who made the first contact with Mr Bergos, Anna and I were able to go to meet him for the first time in September, 2016. At that time, supported by the former director of SSF, Enrico Dell'Angelo, we wanted to know if it was a good idea to open a Spanish delegation of the Italian foundation. Also on that occasion, Mr Bergos was very nice and available and he clearly explained to us that a delegation would imply a lot of additional paper work, besides the fact that a delegation would have not have any tax benefit in Spain. He warmly suggested us to think about opening a Spanish foundation.

Due to the very sudden and sad passing away of Enrico, we couldn't carry on any action despite the fact that Mr Bergos

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presented and where various teams can work on new ideas and suggestions for the future.

Please become a part of our activities and collaborate with the SSF in an active way.

Thank you for all your participation,

Best wishes,

Oliver Leick

Principal Director of the

International Shang Shung Foundation

May 2017

©

seemed very interested in our project and really willing to advise us. From October on, I had several contacts with him, but all I was able to say was to renew our interest to work with him without being able to give him any other indication.

In February, 2016, Kirill Shilov, Julia Lawless and I went to Rinpoche and Rosa to present a possible proposal for Shang Shung activities in Tenerife, asking their suggestions for future plans. At that time the new director, Oliver Leick, has just been selected, and Rinpoche wisely advice us that it was not the proper moment for big decisions. He clearly said to us that Shang Shung was still "in the bardo" but soon something was going to manifest, and that in the meanwhile we should use what we already have.

After a few months Oliver came twice to Tenerife and together we were able to put together a plan of activities and a budget for a possible Shang Shung Spanish Foundation 2017 and 2018. Oliver presented the proposal to Rinpoche and Rosa in May 2017 and it was approved. Finally we could contact Mr Bergos again, who was really surprised to hear from us.

After this last meeting with him we were now able to figure out the set up of the new foundation that has already been approved by Rinpoche and Rosa.

The new foundation will be registered in Barcelona, but will have all activities in Tenerife.

The name of the foundation will be: Shang Shung Foundation, International Institute for Tibetan Culture.

We will have only two Founding Members:

Prof. Namkhai Norbu

Rosa Namkhai

We planned to have more founding members, but Mr Bergos made us understand that it will be really very difficult to have, for example, the IDC as a founding member, and that it also will be much more expensive and will take a very long time. So for that reason we decided to follow the advice of the advocate and to have just two founding members.

The foundation will have a patronage which will be responsible so that everything in the new foundation is done in the correct way according to the statutes, which will be very similar to the Italian ones.

The Patronages will be.

- 1, The International Gakyil of the International Dzogchen Community represented by Mark Farrington,
- 2, The International Dzogchen Community Dzamling Gar represented by the director of the gakyil,
- 3, Yuchen Namkhai,
- 4, Oliver Leick,
- 5, Julia Lawless,
- 6, Kirill Shilov.

The Honorary President will be Prof. Namkhai Norbu

The President will be Oliver Leick

The Vice-President will be Yuchen Namkhai
Executive Manager for the new foundation will be Ilaria Faccioli

The mandate to Mr Bergos was officially given on June 8th, 2017, and now we are waiting for further indications to sign papers.

We would like to deeply thank Rinpoche and Rosa for this opportunity and we hope that having taken the decision on Vesak, Buddha's birthday, it might be auspicious for the future of the new born Shang Shung Foundation in Spain.

©



Gaetano Ruvolo
Director of Shang Shung Publications

The coordinator of this newly created Spanish SSP will be, starting from today, Alessandra Policreti, who has been for many years the Italian translator of Rinpoche's teachings in Italy. Alessandra



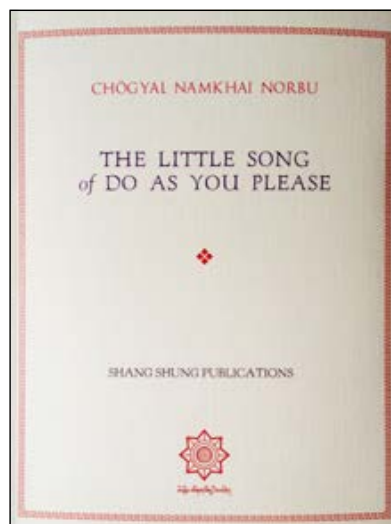
Alessandra will be in charge of organizing and supervising the translation and editing processes, in collaboration with

We would like to congratulate Alessandra for her new appointment and thank Daniel for his commitment over the last 12 years to help spread Rinpoche's teachings in the Spanish language world. ☉



SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS
မာရှပ်ပယ်ရီကုမ္ပဏီလီမိတက်

From the colophon by Chögyal Namkhai
Norbu:



May this be auspicious!

THE MIRROR · No.136 · June 2017



The 4th Annual Symposium on Western and Tibetan Medicine

Stanford School of Medicine,
Stanford University, California

Adam Okerblom, Lac, Tibetan Medicine
Practitioner

This May, in Palo Alto California, Stanford School of Medicine hosted the 4th annual Symposium on Western and Tibetan Medicine. This dynamic integrative medicine event provides a context for establishing a cohesive intercultural and interdisciplinary field of seminars, research, roundtable discussions, and continuing education for diverse practitioners. The Symposium was developed by the Kunde Institute of Traditional Tibetan Medicine based in Daly City, California, and co-hosted by Stanford School of Med-



Seated: center, Dr. Yangdron Kalsang, to her left, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo.

icine. The event is the inspired project of Dr Yangdron Kalsang, Traditional Tibetan Doctor, Licensed Acupuncturist, Doctoral Fellow and founder of the Kunde Institute.

Over the last several years, Dr Kalsang has brought together an exciting team of big players in the worlds of both Tibetan Medicine and Western Medicine, to

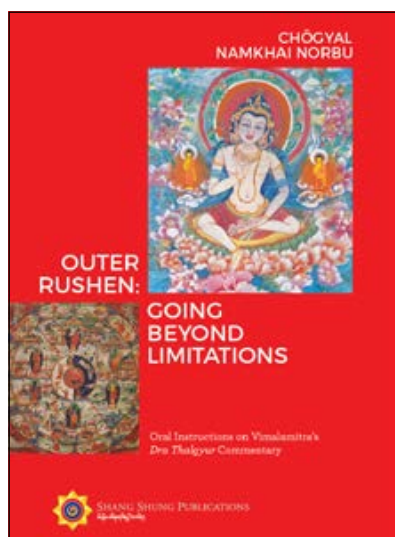
produce this symposium. This event has helped to draw interest in Traditional Tibetan Medicine from the high levels of Western Medicine. Each year this unique event gains momentum, important connections and collaborations are born. Practitioners discuss new ideas for future research proj-

» continued on the following page

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Outer Rushen Going Beyond Limitations

Oral Instructions on Vimalamitra's
Dra Thalgyur Commentary

The ultimate essence of Atiyoga practice is abiding in contemplation. In the beginning, for the authentic state of contemplation to arise, it is indispensable to "separate," or distinguish, mind from the state of pure instant presence, the nature of mind. Numerous upadeshas have this aim, but one that stands out as par-



In Outer Rushen, the practice is to spontaneously enact anything whatsoever with the body, the voice, and the mind, without any choice or restraint as what to do and what not to do. At the end, exhausted from all the activities, you simply relax in the natural state that is your primordial condition. This book presents Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teachings on Outer Rushen based on Vimalamitra's commentary on the Dzogchen Upadesha root tantra known as the *Dra Thalgyur* (*sGra thal 'gyur*), *The All-Penetrating Sound*. It includes Vimalamitra's commentary in Tibetan along with a translation into English. ©

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<http://shop.shangshungfoundation.com>

ticularly simple to apply is Khorde Rushen, the separation of samsara and nirvana. Three forms of this practice are generally presented: outer, inner, and secret.



» continued from previous page

ects, techniques for patient care, and other exciting collaborations.

The symposium was enthusiastically attended by a range of healthcare professionals including Medical Doctors, Tibetan Doctors, Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Acupuncturists, Chiropractors and medical students. Continuing education units were available for licensed acupuncturists. Each year so far has seen the scope and breadth of the event increase. Our venue reached maximum capacity this time around. We will need a larger conference hall next year!

The headline topic for this year's Symposium was integrative pain management. The presenters and panelists expounded the facets of this theme at length. We learned of pain management techniques and medical theory from Western Medicine and Tibetan Medicine traditions. Pain management was approached from the most ancient philosophical ground to the most recent, ground-breaking research. With these streams of knowledge, the symposium worked to advance the understanding of the concepts of pain and disease that inform medical traditions, along with healing modalities to reduce suffering and enhance the mind-body balance, that is not adequately addressed by the current Western medical model.

The opening salvo of the symposium, Friday April 14th was oriented towards medical professionals. We began with a guided meditation and dedication of intention with Lobsang Partsang, Geshe Ngarmampa trained at Gyudmed Tantric Monastic University in South India. In the following presentation, Dr Sakti Srivastava spoke on the framework of integrative medicine. He presented fascinating research on imaging of the body's subtle energetic signatures in response to extreme stress or disease states, comparing a fatigued doctoral candidate to a well-rested person.

Dr Jennifer Daubenmier, Assistant Professor in the Holistic Health Studies program in the Department of Health Education at San Francisco State University, presented an articulate introduction to Traditional Tibetan Medicine, its history and ba-



Conference Participants.

sic theory. The following panel discussions included Research on Integrative Medicine and Integrative Approaches to the Management of Pain. As well as Pain in Western and Tibetan Medicine: Concepts, Diagnosis, and Treatments.

The following day, Saturday April 15th was a day of presentations and panel discussions for the general public. The morning began with Tibetan Yantra Yoga and healing through breath, with certified Yantra Yoga instructors Matthew Schmookler, Menpa and Luke Karamol, AHC, RYT. We then proceeded with several keynote speakers and a lineup of experiential workshops.

Geshe Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, who gave a profound and inspiring talk on preventing and transforming suffering. He exhorted us to rise from our "rotten karmic cushion" and to effortlessly connect with our inner selves like recharging our devices. Dr Phuntsog Wangmo presented on aging and end of life care from the Tibetan Medicine perspective. We were treated to two dynamic presentations of the mental, emotional and physical manifestations of pain. One from the Western Medical perspective was presented by Dr Erica Weirich, Adjunct Clinical Professor of Medicine, Family and Community Medicine, at Stanford University School of Medicine, presented. Next the Tibetan Medical view of pain was presented by Tawni Tidwell, Menpa and doctoral candidate at Emory University.

Throughout the afternoon attendees participated in experiential workshops facilitated by the various keynote luminaries of the symposium. These workshops included Tibetan Medicine diagnostic methods, therapeutic mind training, techniques of stress reduction, hypnotherapy and healthy eating. These workshops preceded a panel discussion with some time for questions and input from the general attendees. Closing dedications and group photos brought this year's Symposium to completion.

The 4th Annual Symposium on Western and Tibetan Medicine brought together a diverse group of scholars and medical professionals from around the world. The event provided inspiration and education for a large and equally diverse group of local practitioners, students, and Dzogchen Community people in attendance. We shared exciting new research, expand our horizons to discover new ideas and medical treatment modalities. We reconnected with old friends and made new ones. For presenters and attendees alike, the event was a platform to celebrate the work of integrative medicine, finding common cause to better understand and approach pain management from diverse medical and cultural perspectives. This symposium embodies integrative medicine in both theory and practice. Next year, I highly recommend, sign up early and come join me in the front row!

©



Live Auction in New York City April 26, 2017

for Shang Shung Institute of America and Kundrolling

Shang Shung Institute of America and Kundrolling, New York City collaborated on a live art auction and benefit for both Shang Shung Institute of America and Kundrolling with world-renowned calligrapher Tashi Mannonx and three other local Community artists, Michela Martello, Mariano Gil and Michael Katz. The very successful New York City evening included a wonderful Jazz Duo made up of Mariano Gil and Yotam Silberstein, food, wine, beautiful artwork and good company! Thank you to our auctioneers Tashi Kaiser and Mandarava Bricaire for their charming and beneficial activity! Thank you also to the NYC Dzogchen Community for their positive support, effort and enthusiasm, especially Curzio Aloisi and Gleitia Dushku. ©



Mariano Gil and Yotam Silberstein.



Tashi Mannonx making calligraphy with projection.

Khaita in the 11th Annual New York City Dance Parade

May 20, 2017

Even though the Khaita group was small, they were enthusiastic and dedicated! The dancers, Mandarava Bricaire, Carisa O'Kelly, Will Shea and Gleitia Dushku danced down the many blocks on a joyful excursion through New York City. Amanda Pollock was our unstoppable driver and music provider in her lotus mobile. Thank you to all for keeping our presence in the great occasion of the New York City Annual Dance Parade. Thank you also to Steve Korns for the photos!



New York City Annual Dance Parade.

Shang Shung Foundation · International Institute for Tibetan Culture

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The Tanggan School

At a height of 3,700 meters, the Tanggan School stands in the middle of mountains covered with grasslands, where sheep, goats and yak accompanied by shepherds (together with children and women) are the only form of life that you encounter for miles and miles. The children, dirty yet always smiling and very curious, belong to families of nomadic shepherds who often see them only once a school term because they are too far away and too poor to be able to afford travel expenses. The territory here is wild and magnificent, uncontaminated: there is no electricity or water, and women travel tens of kilometers to bring provisions from water wells.

In this area of Qinghai Province, in the isolated and remote prefecture of Hainan, Tibetan traditions and customs have been maintained and mark the rhythm of the daily lives of the inhabitants of the villages in the County.

ASIA has been active at the Tanggan School since 2001 when it intervened by restoring the old buildings, and building new classrooms and dormitories, in keeping with Tibetan architectural style and respect for the environment.

In 2003, the long distance sponsorship project was launched with the first 25 children who, through ASIA, had the opportunity to learn how to read and write Tibetan thanks to support from their long distance parents.

Today, thanks to the improved living conditions within the school and the increased quality of teaching, the school now hosts 167 students, of which 130 are long distance sponsored.

To live up the students' lives and to make school learning more enjoyable, the Tanggan School teachers organize games and competitions supporting traditional educational activities: competitions of traditional dances and songs, of reading, writing and performing poetry in Tibetan, Chinese and English, and drawing contests. The class that comes first wins a certificate and notebooks and pens for each child.



In all these years we have been able to verify the important impact of the long distance sponsorship project. Not only has the rate of school attendance in the Tanggan area increased along with requests for enrolment every year, but above all the children are growing up well-rooted in their culture, knowing their own language and maintaining a strong sense of identity based on traditional values.

To see the Tanggan school, watch the video <http://www.adoptibet.org/wp/progetti/la-scuola-di-tanggan/>

The Tanggan children still need us. You, too, can become a long distance parent. ©

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Presentation of the New Project of the Dzamling Gar Gönpa

at Dzamling Gar on Friday,
June 16, 2017

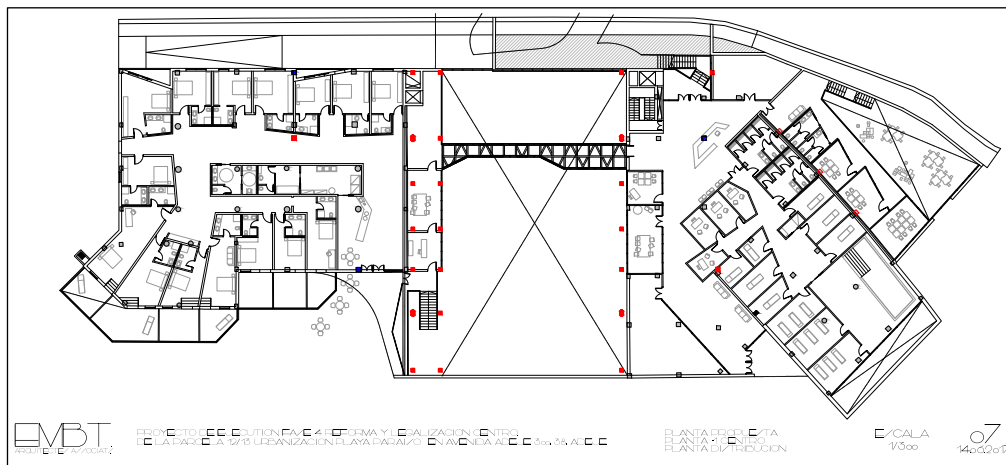
Giovanni Boni

Today there will be a very short presentation to give an update on the state of the project for the construction of the center and the Gönpa.

After a long time we have finally received the permits so that we can start work. However, this period of waiting was very useful because it allowed us to study the previous project better and led us to a decision to simplify it. We have done that, with the result that it will also cost less, and we are planning to finish construction by the end of 2018 so that it can be used.

I'm going to explain a little about the changes that have been made. Fundamentally there is no longer the wavy roof covering of the previous project. The roof has been made in a more simple way with rectilinear laminated beams, which made the whole structure more simple. The surface area of the roof covering will be approximately 1860 square meters, while the closed area of the Gönpa hall will be about 1100 square meters.

The large terrace [on which the Gönpa will be constructed] is about 2500 square meters. There will be an area that will be garden dedicated to the children and for children's activities. The external part of the construction will be filled with earth



sloping up to the level of the terrace. There will be a set of central stairs from the paths in front of the houses to access the level of the terrace.

The first phase of the project will be finished in December 2018 and will only include the closing of the entire construction, the terrace, and the Gönpa, but not the internal parts underneath the terrace.

We have prepared some designs of the new project.

The design above shows the lower floor when the second phase of the project has been completed. On the right there will be a medical center where there will be treatments such as massage, balneotherapy, moxa, etc. and which will have two en-

» continued on the following page

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Asks Everyone to Collaborate to Finish the Project

I would like to thank you firstly for the project that you have drawn up. Finally we have decided on it and are putting it into action. This is very important because it is not just something to talk about or show to people. It is something concrete. We are developing it and doing something concrete at Dzamling Gar day and night. It is my wish that this program is realized and that everybody can see it become concrete.

I, personally, am working for this project, doing what is necessary, doing my best in order to realize it. It is not only for me but for the whole Dzogchen Community and it is important that everyone participating in the Dzogchen Community, all the Gars and all the Lings, should understand that.

Up to now we have had a lot of collaboration and I would like to thank everyone for that. Our work, our program, is not yet finished, but we should all try to do our best. We would like to realize it as soon as possible because life is short and time is passing. Everybody should be aware of this. This is the only thing that I wanted to ask everybody.

And I would really like to thank all the people working for this project because I'm very satisfied for everything that has been done. And I know that they will keep on and continue until the end. And this is what we do. Thank you.

Transcribed and edited by Liz Granger



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Conference and Khaita Show in Gran Canaria

Jana Loughran

Over the last weekend of April 2017, on the invitation of Terapia Integrativa and Ayuntamiento de Telde and in collaboration with Shang Shung Foundation and the International Community of Dzamling Gar, a three day event on Tibetan Medicine and Culture was held on the island of Gran Canaria in the Canary Islands, Spain.



At 8 pm, the main event opened at the Teatro Municipal Juan Ramón Jiménez, with an introduction from the Alcaldesa of Telde and the Secretary of Culture, Mrs. Marta Hernandez. Next our host, Dr. Juan Carlos Duran, founder of Asociación Terapia Integrativa and vicepresident of the Federación Española de Medicina Integrativa, spoke. It was thanks to his in-

» continued from previous page

trances: one from the road above and the other from below from Dzamling Gar. The part on the left will be made up of 14 small rooms each with a bathroom and will accommodate the people doing treatments and other people.

Below this floor, there will be a basement with a garage and a storage area.

There is a plan of the roof in sections, and another cross-section design of the Gönpa showing the two levels. The highest part in the center of the Gönpa will be 5.5 meters, more or less the height of the central part of the tent at Dzamling Gar. Under the Gönpa the center will be more or less the size of the tent.

In another design you can see the main central stairs from the level of the paths at the Gar leading up to the terrace of the Gönpa. The terrace will go all around the Gönpa and there will be terraced gardens on each side of the stairs. There will also be ramps going up in order to give access to wheelchair users. The interior of the Gönpa will be painted.

In the last months we have created a new Project team – I won't mention all the names – in which we have a project director, a bookkeeper, and architects Benedetta Tagliabue and Salvador Gilabert directing the work. We are doing our best to bring the project to fruition in the timeframe I mentioned earlier.

Thank you everyone, particularly our Teacher and for the possibility he has given us to realize this great project.

Perhaps Rinpoche would like to say something. ©



From left to right: Alexis Rodriguez, Ayuntamiento de Telde, Carolina Romero, Asociación Terapia Integrativa, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, Ilaria Faccioli, Shang Shung Institute, and Dr. Juan Carlos Duran.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu travelled to the venue by boat the day before the conference and, at his hotel, held a press conference and two exclusive interviews that were published in the local newspapers (Canarias 7 y La Provincia) the following day.

On Friday, April 28th Rinpoche and representatives of Shang Shung had a formal meeting at Ayuntamiento de Telde to meet with the authorities and exchange gifts. The local Authorities were very open and friendly towards our Teacher and all the community. Rinpoche declared his wish that this event could be like a door opening from Tenerife to all the other Canary Islands. The Mayor (Alcaldesa), Mrs. Carmen Hernandez, presented Rinpoche with a statue of the native Goddess of Fertility, Tara, made of bronze, and he gave her a book on the Temple of Liberation signed by him.

terest in Tibetan Medicine that Rinpoche and the community were invited to Gran Canaria. Dr. Duran has participated in the Integrative Medicine events held in mainland Spain, organized by members of Kundusling, Barcelona. In his presentation, he talked about the development of this relationship and his commitment to bringing Tibetan Medicine to local universities, hospitals and therapeutic associations.

After Dr. Duran's presentation, the word was given to the Shang Shung Foundation representative in the Canary Islands, our dear Ilaria Faccioli, who invited people to learn more about Dzamling Gar in Tenerife and showed pictures of the activities of the community, including the Shang Shung Foundation and ASIA Onlus. Ilaria had the honor of introducing our Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to everyone in the theatre.

Rinpoche gave a wonderful one hour conference on "The Relation between Body, Energy and Mind within the view of Tibetan Medicine". Once the conference finished



Rinpoche and the Khaita dancers.

with great ovation, Rinpoche took a seat in the audience and enjoyed the well prepared Khaita Show.

Our team of dancers, directors and technicians did an amazing job, preparing a 40 minute show with lights, projections and very special costumes designed by a group of dancers, under the supervision of Rinpoche himself. It was a joyful evening with over 570 people in the audience. Tickets had already been sold out one month

tendeeds were taught the 9 breathings and the 8 movements.

On Sunday morning, April 30th at the same location, the Khaita team of dancers gathered to offer a Khaita workshop.

Throughout their stay in Gran Canaria, Rinpoche and the whole team had time to enjoy walks along the beach, visit an archaeological site, have lunch in the park and take part in other enjoyable activities that made everyone feel like one big family.



Fabio Andrico giving an introduction to Yantra Yoga.

before! The Gran Canaria public was very responsive and curious about the teaching, Khaita and Yantra Yoga and wanted to learn more about the activities of the Dzogchen Community and its continuity on the island.

The following days, two workshops were held at Ciudad Deportiva Martin Freire. On Saturday morning, senior instructor Fabio Andrico gave a half hour conference on the benefits of Yantra Yoga followed by a two and a half hour workshop with yoginis Stella Runge and Nataly Nitsche. The at-

On Sunday afternoon the whole team returned to Tenerife in elevated spirits. Shang Shung Foundation and The International Dzogchen Community of Dzamling Gar have established excellent relationships with our hosts in Gran Canaria and we will be working together to make more events like this possible.

Events at Dzamling Gar During the 2016–2017 Season

Since the end of the last season, from October 2016 – till May 2017, there have been more than 30 events at the Gar:

- Retreats and events with Rinpoche (10)
- Various courses with Dzogchen Community instructors: Santi Maha Sangha Base and First Level courses (9), Yantra yoga (6) and Vajra Dance trainings and courses (5) of different kinds and levels
- There were also trainings and events related to Khaita (3), Communication training, Representatives of Dzamling Gar participated in a public interreligious event and collaborated with La Laguna University as well
- There have also been regular daily and weekly practices of Khaita, Mandarava, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga and different kind of meditation classes

Our heartfelt thanks to Rinpoche for giving to us so many great and unique opportunities to develop our experience!

And thanks to all instructors, project managers, Karma Yogis, work exchangers and everyone who has taken part in our events, without your collaboration it would not be possible to manifest all of these activities!

For next year – we plan to continue organising

- Retreats and events with Rinpoche
- Courses of secondary practices with Dzogchen Community instructors
- Practice retreats, leisure time, art and workshop activities
- Events connected with the public, mainly Tibetan culture events in collaboration with Shang-Shung Foundation
- According to circumstances – support other positive activities for the development of Dzamling Gar

©

New Gakyil at Dzamling Gar

Dear Vajra Family,

After approval from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the Annual General Meeting, we would like to inform you about the new members in the Gakyil of Dzamling Gar (new members – marked in bold):

Blue Gakyil

Michał Gibowski (president)

Ján Kompiš

blue.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net

Red Gakyil

Alejandro Acuña (vice-president)

Dragana Lukic (secretary)

red.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net

Yellow Gakyil

Inna Ossinkina

Nadia Yermakova

yellow.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net

We would like to thank the gakyil members who are leaving: Richard Steven (blue),



upper row from the left: Richard Steven, Dragana Lukic, Nadia Yermakova, Yana Korpan, Inna Ossinkina, Nataly Nietzsche (+Samantha), Marek Riesz, Yanchi Kompis; lower row from the left: Michał Gibowski, Alessandra Policreti, Thupten Rabgyi (Gekö).

Nataly Nitsche Di Gaetano, Cinderella Perina, Alessandra Policreti (red), Yana Korpan and Marek Riesz (yellow)

We are so fortunate that we are close to such a precious Master who is giving us great opportunities to be free and happy – connected with him and collaborating with each other. We can really evolve together and bring concrete benefit to all beings. It is nice to remember and appreciate it. That's why we want to thank everybody who collaborates – without you what we have now would not have manifested.

And a big thank you to the gakyil members who are leaving! We feel that it is not just a moment when six people are leaving

their positions. We are like a family, they are also our friends. And there is a huge amount of work behind them. Sometimes it is not possible to see everything from outside but they really offered to others years of work of body, speech and mind from their lives, doing the best they could. We would like to thank them from our hearts even though it is just a few words, and wish them all the best in their future lives. Everything they dedicated will stay forever within them. May all their good actions manifest their fruit at the Global Gar and for the happiness of all beings!

Thank you.



Summer at Merigar West

For the summer at Merigar West it is with great joy that we will have our beloved and precious Teacher with us for a retreat on a text from the Semde series "The Great Garuda in Flight" from 30 June to 4 July, 2017.

We have prepared a rich program of events around this important event taking into account the different needs of the many people who come to Merigar: we have practitioners interested in deepening their knowledge and practice, people who ask for basic courses, and many curious people who would like to visit Merigar and take part in shorter events in order to understand what we do and decide whether to get involved.

At www.dzogchen.it you can find more details. Here we summarize some of the courses that we hope may be of interest to you.

For Practitioners

Dance of the Vajra

7–9 July

In-depth Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra (Part Two) with Prima Mai.

The course is reserved for those who have already completed basic courses.

Khaita

July 17–23

In-depth Course with Salima and Lena

Yantra Yoga

August 26–29

Instructors meeting coordinated by Laura Evangelisti

30 August

Course of Yantra Yoga in pregnancy with Laura Evangelisti

For Beginners

June 24–25

Seminar on "Lucid Dreaming" with Michael Katz

28–30 July

Meditation and Yoga with Fabio Risolo and Tiziana Gottardi

August 19–25

Yoga Holidays with Laura Evangelisti, Tiziana Gottardi, and Gino Vitiello

For everyone we would like to mention that from 6 to 8 August there will be a Music Forum, 3 days during which we invite all Community musicians to come to Merigar and share their experience by offering lessons and / or short performances. Those who are interested can write to giovanna.natalini@gmail.com www.dzogchen.it



Cycle of Conferences

In Collaboration with the Museum of Asian Art and Culture and the Municipality of Arcidosso Merigar West May – June 2017

In May, a cycle of conferences organized by Merigar West in collaboration with the Arcidosso Museum of Asian Art and Culture began. The purpose of these meetings is to introduce, in common terms and to a broader audience, some of the topics of the Tibetan and Buddhist world, such as an in-depth study of the itinerary proposed at the Museum, inaugurated last December.

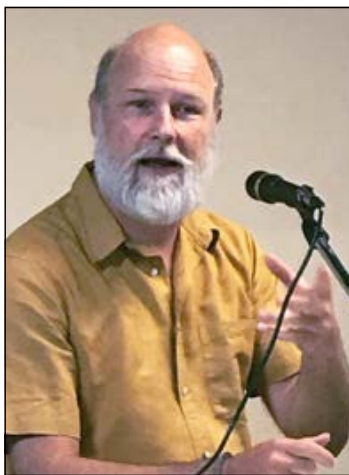
On April 1, the first conference in the cycle was held: **"Birth, Life and Death"**, given by Dr. Gino Vitiello, who gave an extensive introduction to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's book with the same title. In addition to being a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu since 1977, Gino Vitiello is an instructor of Yantra Yoga and Santi Maha Sangha, a physician, psychotherapist, and expert in Tibetan medicine. During the conference he spoke about, among other things, the importance of birth as human beings, and the causes of the conception of life in the womb, with advice on behavior for the pregnant woman. He explained how to live in good health, describing how imbalances of the humors lead to illness, and how important it is to relax tensions in order to live in a healthy way. And finally, with regard to death, he spoke about its nature and explained how it is faced following the deep knowledge of Tibetan culture. The public responded warmly to his presentation that had more success than expected. The audience, made up mainly of people who were new to the subject, filled the Arcidosso town hall and there were many questions addressed to Gino Vitiello. Given the many requests, at the end of the meeting there was a plan to reintroduce the subject in a broader and more articulate manner in the autumn.

On May 6, at the Arcidosso town hall, Professor Fabian Sanders gave a conference entitled **"The Life of the Buddha"**. Fabian Sanders, a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, teaches Tibetan language and literature at Ca' Foscari University in Venice. The conference presented the life of Buddha Sakyamuni: his birth as an extraordi-



nary being, a Buddha, the attempt of his father, the king, to keep him safe from the pains of the world, the moment in which the discovery of human suffering pushed prince Siddharta to look for its origin, and

Prof. Fabian Sanders (left), photo by Marco Almici, and Gino Vitiello, photo by Liz Granger.



finally the spiritual path that led him to the achievement of perfect illumination.

The talk was enriched by the iconic support of *tankhas* from different periods.

There were many local people at the talk with particular interest in the topic and questions went on for an hour after the end of the conference.

The next day, Professor Fabian Sanders held the third conference in the cycle, **"The Figure of Guru Padmasambhava"** at Merigar in the Mandala hall. Sanders described the historical situation of Tibet when the dominant religion was Bon and how, following a specific wish of the then Tibetan King, Buddhism was introduced. Within these historical events the story of the great practitioner Guru Padasambhava was introduced, invited by the king to appease all sorts of hostile forces in order for Buddhism to spread to those lands. Guru Padasambhava is a well-known figure among Dzogchen Community practitioners, many of whom participated in the conference and found the many details of the story interesting. People who did not know about this great Guru also appreciated the in-depth

explanation of the origin of Buddhism typical of those areas within Tibetan culture.

On June 3 at the Aldobrandescan Castle in Arcidosso, the series of three conferences by Professor Sanders ended with his talk on **"Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism"**.

The professor described from a historical point of view how Buddhism spread outside India, its land of origin, taking on very different connotations depending on the places where it was established in central and eastern Asia. In particular, he focused on the form it took in Tibet, due to the historical period in which it was established and to the inclusion of peculiar



elements of cosmology, symbology, and expressiveness throughout the Himalayan area. The conference room was also full for this meeting, and many people enjoyed the way Sanders showed the differences between the various Buddhist schools whose names are known in the West, but people struggle to distinguish them.

This first cycle of conferences will end on June 23, at the Aldobrandescan Castle in Arcidosso, with Michael Katz talking about **Lucid Dreaming**. Michael Katz, a psychologist, is also an instructor of Santi Maha Sangha and authorized to teach dream yoga and meditation by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Lucid dreaming means dreaming knowing that we are dreaming. We spend many hours of our life in sleep and developing the ability to have lucid dreams allows us to understand the meaning of the illusion of human life and be beyond space and time. It is a practice that promotes a better awareness of life and of the relationship with the self and, therefore, of behavior in daily life. It allows us to explore the cre-

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In the Face of Death

At Merigar West with the non-profit association Tutto è Vita (Everything is Life)
April 8, 2017

Pia Barilli

Being a Dzogchen practitioner means also and above all integrating teaching in everyday life. For this reason at Merigar we are proposing meetings or seminars on topics only apparently not closely related to the teaching, in order to compare our experiences with those of other groups or schools and make them an experience of growth. In April we organized a seminar on how to face death.

The day had some lectures and moments directly experienced by the participants, some fifty people who were interested for professional reasons (doctors, nurses) or even simply for personal reasons to acquire some tools in this special assistance through terminal illness and death.

The events of the day were led by a person with a long experience in assisting the dying: the monk Guidalberto Bormolini has been working with this topic for many decades and has made it a structured teaching course of study, at both the Universities of Bologna and Padua. Due to his great experience and expertise, he is often requested by the health service or public places like hospices, to train people who assist the dying.

Three young women, experienced in the field of thanatology, who have been working with Bormolini for a long time for the association Tutto è Vita as counselors or

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» continued from previous page

active potential of the mind deeply. Since ancient times it has been an integral part of different spiritual paths. Based on the instructions of wisdom and experience that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has been transmitting in the West for several decades, Michael Katz will describe the basics of the technique and its beneficial effects.

This conference will be followed by a course on lucid dreaming to be held at Merigar West. ©



psychologists, contributed to the program of the day.

Bormolini's words were striking as he recounted how the perception and culture of dying, which has been alive for millennia, has greatly changed in the last 30 years in Europe and 50 in the United States. Nowadays, dying is denied and hidden as something negative. The dead are not shown to children, they are not part of our lives as they have been for centuries and in all cultures, east and west.

There are no more rituals, dying is a taboo, and even the language of those accompanying death can no longer be insightful. Bormolini reminds us that the language of nature and its rhythm, from which we have turned away in meaning and symbol, is very related to the language of dying - the sun that dies every day and is then reborn, the plants that disappear in winter, seeming to be dead and then are reborn in the spring. They are no longer images and symbols that are meaningful for us and for those who assist us to help face the moment of our death.

In just a few years, a notion, a language, a culture that made it natural and therefore easier to die, was swept away.

This profound and drastic denial has its effects on the social level: teenagers do not know death and therefore without this awareness they play with high-risk games, suicide, or homicidal aberrations

with extreme attitudes. Or they create psycho-physical pathologies that arise from the negation of death.

We no longer have familiarity with death, a familiarity that, Bormolini says, does not create depression, but gives immense life energy.

This was the premise, is the premise for those who want to assist the dying.

We must rediscover the sacredness of the time before death, instead of making the useless discourses of denial and false reassurances that everyone makes, firstly the physicians, then relatives and other health professionals. While the spiritual path, which does not mean confessional, but means precisely to make sacred and aware, can lead to acceptance, it sometimes also acts as relief to symptoms, like a real painkiller. It also helps the dying to be truly dead in the Latin meaning of the word: one who has done all he has to do, who has accomplished his mission, and thus gives meaning to his death.

The tools that were proposed during the experiential part of the day were essentially of two types: various forms of meditation, a fundamental tool for Bormolini and his Florentine Community and used here to relax, to get in touch with one's condition, and to prepare to meet the other, as a tool of personal evolution.

And then various exercises with other people in the group of participants to help us know each other, to understand how we can or cannot assist or be assisted, to learn how to use silence, how our listening ability is, our capacity for understanding, because, as Bormolini says, in communication the invisible prevails over the visible and thus we must nourish the invisible both of us and of those we want to help.

Among the instruments used there was also yoga and especially breathing, the first expression of our entry into the world and also the last. We know how in the Dzogchen community we have always used consciousness and presence as tools of evolution, and yantra yoga with its deep breathing techniques as a powerful practice. Thus we have valuable tools in our hands to use on the path to assisting the dying, making possible the tools for a resurgence of naturalness and simplicity that our world needs today when we approach death. ©

Paris Vision

Recipe for a Good Integration of the Teachings

Elisabeth Dong

To make it short: imagine a retreat without Rinpoche, let's say in Paris. You take a big bowl, you put emotions, hopes and regrets, egos – small and big – all that is pleasant and unpleasant, in brief you put the samsaric condition of each of us and you cook all this under the fire of the words of Rinpoche's Teachings. You get a beautiful session inspired by our Precious Master. You get collaboration!

Now I will explain. We were hopeless when we got the news that we should cancel our retreat with Rinpoche in Paris from June 9–11, 2017, when somebody proposed a B Plan, some kind of second chance. We all joined and jumped again in our ICD boat and started to work together on this new program. We quickly communicated, gathered people who couldn't cancel their trip and all those who wanted to share practices with us. More or less seventy people came to join us.

We danced Joyful Khaita dances, we attended an introduction to meditation, and we practiced Yantra Yoga and Harmonious Breathing. We made a presentation of the Vajra Dance that Benefits to all Beings and danced the Dance of the Song of the Vajra a



whole afternoon. We dedicated a Ganapuja on the very auspicious day of June 9 and two Mandarava practices for Rinpoche's Long Life.

You see, a kind of best of guided by some of our precious instructors who could join us. From Dejamling came Stoffelina Verdonk, Sébastien Rémy and Sandor Dani. Palriling was adorned with Jésus Martinez

Merigar East News

Bulgaria

In our community we now have a certified Yantra Yoga instructor Level 1. His name is Orlin Karaivanov. His supervision took place in Sofia in October 2015 (supervised by Laura Evangelisti). He successfully passed the exam in front of Rinpoche in November 2017, although he had an accident. His knee was injured and is still recovering.

Two retreats with certified instructors are planned for this year in Bulgaria, one with Elio Guarisco and one with Elias Capriles.

The first one, with Elio, will take place between the 12th and the 18th of June in an idyllic village near the capital city Sofia. We will concentrate on Rushen practices,

and Nadia Poureau and Tengyaling with Nicolas Brenon. Thanks to Raphael Khalef's translation everyone could follow explanations. We thank each of them as well as each member of Dejamling, Palriling and Tengyaling Gakyils who acted as a team, a Dream Team!

The sun was shining, the atmosphere was relaxed and friendly, everyone had adapted his/her rhythm at his/her own pace. We just enjoyed moments together, which were made possible thanks to the



Sangha Rimay of Denys Rinpoche in Paris who generously offered their venue so that we could fulfill our commitment. May all be auspicious for them.

We thank our precious Master to have given us the opportunity to apply his Teaching according to new circumstances and do our best to collaborate and we pray for his Long Life. ©

based on Vimalamitra's commentary of the Dra Thal Gyur Tantra.

The second one, with Elias, will be between the 4th and the 8th of October. We still have not specified the topic, but in any case, with such an experienced instructor, we are sure that it will be of great value and help to the participants.

Everybody is welcome and in case of interest, please contact us on our email contact@dzogchen.bg.

Greece

Stamatia Rori, Yantra Yoga Instructor

I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1992. I started to practice Yantra Yoga and follow courses with Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti whenever the conditions were there.

I am deeply thankful to the Greek community that supported my expenses so I had a great opportunity to complete my supervision and final exams. Thanks to Laura and her trust, I have learned and learn many things.

For the last two years we have been living with my family in Kalamata, south of Greece.

I do Yantra Yoga with people of different ages (20–70 year olds), in different places. The best reward for me is to see how people benefit from this.

Once a month I give courses in Athens where yoga teachers from other systems are really inspired by Yantra Yoga and many of them order books, DVDs and have the wish to meet Rinpoche.

I would like to have conditions to ripen my Yantra practice and go to more courses and dances with the Sangha and would like my daughter to meet and dance with other two year olds.

Romania – Live from the Gar

After a long stay in Tenerife (5 months), I returned to Merigar East, in the middle of sunflower fields, near the Black Sea shore. The silence here is incredible and I've already had time to notice it in the few days that went by before Migmar and the rest of the crew arrived to paint the two vacant Vajra Dance mandalas.

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Updates on Rinpoche's Residence at Samtengar, China

The construction project of Rinpoche's residence is nearing completion. After months of dedicated hard work led by Wes Guo, Tracy Ni, Xiao Lan, and project manager Ming Xiao, the building is almost ready for move-in. With final works on plumbing and electrical going smoothly ahead, it is expected to be completed within coming weeks.

The four-story building will be home to Rinpoche and Rosa, as well as their attendants during the summer retreats in Samtengar. The ground floor will be Rinpoche and Rosa's resident, while Rinpoche's attendants will stay on the second floor. During retreats, the third floor will house the Gar personnel as well as regular residents, while the fourth floor will host donors who made significant contributions to the Gar.

Construction of the pavilion in front of the building is currently being planned and should commence in the coming weeks. ☺

your channels in the morning before going to the wild beach.

Also, August will be a very busy month, with three retreats taking place in Merigar East. Please let us know if you would like to participate in any one of them so you can have a most enjoyable holiday here.

Communication Course

with Gianfranco Brero
4-7 August (only for instructors)
Register here:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1LvUkcizWiyu2l4j5qMpPogncHwbYrILGwDnjvJ5H6ao/viewform?chromeless=1&edit_request-ed=true

Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra

(the full dance) with Zoli
11-20 August

Register here:

<https://goo.gl/forms/hNdna6fMtQOGIEJt1>

21 Semdzins Practice Retreat

with Elio Guarisco
(minimum 20 participants!)

21-27 August

Register here:

<https://goo.gl/forms/5XazO3wfyM0lluog1>

With best wishes,
Alexandru Anton for ME Blue Gakyil

PS:
the Black Sea is already good for swimming

» continued from previous page

So far the fresh bright colors of these two are attracting pilots to fly their hang-and para-gliders around and pretty much above the Gar.

Now the Gar is quiet, but preparing itself to be a host again soon. We will be having some increased activity in a few weeks, when the **Merigar East General Assembly** takes place. On that same weekend we will be hosting Robert Czabanski from Poland to teach the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings and also inaugurate the two new mandalas. We still don't know what the standard procedure is, but for sure we will be offering some high-quality home-brewed plum alcohol to appease the local guardians.

You are most welcome to join us and, if you are a Merigar East member, you can also send us your questions and comments to blue.me@dzogchen.ro. There will also be a possibility to connect by Skype during the assembly, if you wish.

I hope many of you who are reading this will come and visit Merigar East this summer. We will be having an on-site Yantra Yoga instructor from 6th July to 20th August, just in case you would like to sort out



Namgyalgar News

From May 19–21, 2017, Namgyalgar held a Song of the Vajra practice retreat led by Cosimo Di Maggio and Arnaud Coquillard. During the retreat we alternated the Vajra Dance of The Song of the Vajra and the Semdzin of The Song of the Vajra with periods of teachings, practice, and study. ©



The 2nd Annual Tsegvalgar East Summer Celebration

Monday, July 17–
Sunday, July 23, 2017
For more information contact:
secretary@tsegvalgar.org

You are invited to participate in the second annual Tsegvalgar 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 Tuns taught and led by Santi Maha Sangha teachers, Khaita, and Karma Yoga opportunities.



Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Courses with International Instructors Laura Evangelisti and Prima Mai

Tsegvalgar East Summer 2017
At Khandroling

Supervision of First Level Yantra Yoga Candidates

with International Instructor
Laura Evangelisti
July 24–29, 2017
Open to all to participate in the course.

Yantra Yoga Second Level Supervision

with International Instructor
Laura Evangelisti
July 30–August 4, 2017
Open to all with transmission.

Registration

Please reserve your space as soon as possible! https://www.paypal.com/donate/?token=RUODLhJAYELzp33POyleaCsUKTEhekFn7mdOTVaoHstl3_z16EPM2BaOTypzRkf5mvwAG

One needs to have received transmission to attend.

Housing

There are a limited number of spots for camping on the land. If interested, contact the Gekö, Jeremy, at geko@tsegvalgar.org. Other options for local accommodations: <http://tsegvalgar.org/localcenters/tsegvalgareast/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



Kumar Kumari – Yantra Yoga for Children with International Instructor Laura Evangelisti

Training for instructors and practitioners with transmission and would like to teach to children.

Vajra Dance Courses

with International Instructor Prima Mai
From approximately mid to late August.
More details TBA

- First Level Vajra Dance Teacher Training
- Advanced Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra
- Supervision Course of the Dance of the Three Vajras
- Supervision Course of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra that Benefits Beings

For more information contact: secretary@tsegvalgar.org or call 413 369 4153 ©

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.

Hearty Eats will be providing lunch.

We hope that you will join us! Please 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.

See you soon!

With love and appreciation,
Tsegvalgar East Gakyil ©

Gönpa Painting at Tsegyalgar West

Marta Lopéz

The nakedness of the Gönpa at Tsegyalgar West has been transformed. The gray of its walls and ceiling have become a beautiful mixture of colors which, according to the painting project, symbolize the base of the Dzogchen Teaching – essence, nature, and potentiality.

How have we represented this?

The ceiling is blue, the color of the sky, symbolizing the essence of bodhicitta and hence representing the first of the three primordial wisdoms, the essence (*ngo bo*, རྟོག་པོ་).

The ceiling beams, in turn, have been painted with a sixfold color scheme – white, yellow, red, green, black, and multi-color – inspired by a teaching of Sattvavajra regarding the real nature of the six colors (*kha dog drug gi rang bzhin pa*). This teaching is referred to in the *Bang mdzod 'phrul gyi lde mig*, one of the principal tantras of the Dzogchen Semde, in the *Man ngag thams cad kyi sdom pa zhes bya ba'i dbu* section contained in the collection of tantras by Vairochana (*Bai ro rgyud bum*).

This teaching describes six aspects of bodhicitta by way of the real nature of the six colors: white symbolizes that bodhicitta is not obscured by emotions, yellow indicates that it causes the wisdom of greatness (*che ba'l ye shes*), red represents the all-pervasiveness of its potentiality, green signifies that it has no impediments and penetrates all, black implies that it is not modifiable by anything else, and multicolor shows that it manifests everywhere and in various modes. The sixfold color scheme was therefore selected to represent the second of the primordial wisdoms (*rang bzhin*, རང་བཞིན་).

Various representations appear beneath the beams, including the syllables of the three Vajras, various seed syllables, and the twenty-four syllables symbolizing the self-liberation through seeing (*imthong grol*) that Vajrasattva transmitted to Namchö Mingyur Dorje. All of these represent the infinite potentiality (*thugs rje*, ཐུགས་རྟེན་), the third of the primordial wisdoms.

During the month of April 2017, some practitioners from the Dzogchen Community had the wonderful opportunity to

embark on an intense adventure guided by our tireless friend Migmar and the energetic yet quiet presence of Shuyang Zhong who both surprised us with their amazing talents.

We never imagined how contagious the rhythm of work and the unfolding creativity of this great Tibetan artist could be. Some participants had to overcome a kind of irrational fear when working up on the scaffolding, while others really took to it like fish in water. But really, the only thing that mattered, was the joy of our undistracted presence, painting the Gönpa throughout the day. This was, undoubtedly, a vital collective practice accompanied by Rinpoche's teachings and sometimes by a variety of good music.

When you have the opportunity to come to Tsegyalgar West and contemplate the main crossbeam of the Gönpa with the mantra painted in golden letters – the Tronde – just remember it was placed there so that each one of us may obtain a cause for realization. In strategic places around the Gönpa you can also observe other syllables such as the Three Vajras and the Longsal. These syllables and other elements like the classical Tibetan clouds were first sketched on long sheets of paper, then had to be pierced, and later were traced onto the walls. This is an ancient technique that has been done traditionally in Tibetan monasteries. Piercing the syllables was also a perfect practice for contemplation – it needed a fast movement of the fingers and an OM AH HUM with each and every little hole pierced.

Please come to Tsegyalgar West. Come and practice in the Gönpa. Its beauty and harmony seem like a miracle, although it

is not just a miracle. It was actually the presence of Migmar and Yushang. It was the Dzogchen Community members who collaborated and financed this project. It was the karma yoga of practitioners who were able and had the honor to participate. It was also the collective practices of Green Tara, Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Joyful Kaita Dances, that opened or closed each full day of work with a golden seal.

It is important to mention other activities that took place in and around the Gönpa: windows and wooden doors were installed and the main entrance to the Gönpa was renovated. Trees were planted, a new garden in front of the dining room was created, and maintenance work on the various fences around the Gar was done.

Every day wonderful food was prepared by the fantastic chefs we are lucky to have in our Community. We even enjoyed Momos and Chinese dishes thanks to Migmar and Shuyan. This was also very special. The Gar always offers everyone great opportunities to practice, collaborate, and learn.

Thank you Rinpoche.

To make donations to the Gönpa Project
Go to <https://tsegyalgarwest.org/donate-2/>
and specify on your donation "Gönpa Project"
Cost of Gönpa Project: \$19,400 US
Funds collected: \$15,001 US
Fundraising: \$4,399 US
For more information contact:
2000.giorgio@gmail.com
Giorgio Minuzzo
Tsegyalgar West Yellow Gakyil





Tsegyalgar West Dzogchen Community Staff

In May 2017 the International Gakyil approved the new Gakyil and new Geko of TW

Giorgio Minuzzo, Yellow, Gakyil President

2000.giorgio@gmail.com

Lach Elting, Red, Vice President

lelting@igs.com.mx

Monica Patiño, Blue

monica_patino@hotmail.com

Veronica Torres, Geko

deepbluedakinita@gmail.com

In June 2017 Marta López took the position at the Secretary of TW

tsegyalgarwestsecretary@gmail.com

TW Gakyil thanks: Lizabeth Morell, Laurie Bauer and Lol Kane, who terminated their collaboration with TW respectively as: Blue Gakyil, Secretary and Geko. ©

Tashigar South

Dear Vajra Family,

A new gakyil has been formed in our Annual Assembly in Tashigar South. We have just received Rinpoche's approval.

This is the list of new members and colors:

Red Gakyil: Marcelo Frischknecht, Gabriela Sánchez, Martín Pissano

Yellow Gakyil: Sara Hanono, Rubén García, Ulises Moreno

Blue Gakyil: Cristian Cabral, Paula De Raedemaeker, Alejandra Martínez (President)

Gekod: Daniel Altamirano

Secretary of the Gakyil: Soledad Mariani

We want to thank especially the gakyil who is leaving, **Elena Gastaldi**, for her huge service to the Community.

With best wishes and many Tashi Delegs!

New Gakyil of Tashigar South

Contact: secretaria@tashigarsur.com

©



From left to right: Rubén García, Paula De Raedemaeker, Cristian Cabral, Marcelo Frischknecht, Alejandra Martínez, Daniel Altamirano, Ulises Moreno, Gabriela Sánchez, Sara Hanono, Soledad Mariani.

Not in the picture: Martín Pissano.



THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the
International
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The Reopening of the ISIAO Library

(Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente)

Margherita Pansa

On February 24, 2015 we published a news item in *The Mirror* regarding the closure of the Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente (ISIAO) and fears about the future of its patrimony (<http://melong.com/-tibetan-treasure-at-risk/>). There was particular concern about the library, containing about 140,000 volumes, 2600 periodicals, and rare and valuable collections, including the collection of Tibetan texts donated by Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci, which consists of nearly 2000 manuscripts and xilographs collected during his various expeditions to Ladakh, western, and central Tibet. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



The re-opening ceremony of the ISIAO Library.

also studied this collection during his first years in Italy. Fearing that this patrimony could somehow be lost, while several uncontrolled rumors – founded or not – went around about taking apart and even selling it, a proposal was made to join the Tucci collection to that of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Merigar West, with the support of the municipality of Arcidosso. Later on, the Municipality of Macerata, the hometown of Tucci, also expressed interest in the management of the patrimony of the Institute.

In 2013, in order to safeguard the library collection of the ISIAO, the Lazio Region formally declared its exceptional cultural

interest, and on May 9, 2017, about six years after its closure, the texts of the library became available once again in Rome, at the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma.

It is not, therefore, the reopening or re-founding of the ISIAO / ISMEO, closed not without controversy at the end of 2011 and put into liquidation by joint arrangement of the Ministries of the Economy and Finance, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is making the library, the photo library, and the collection of maps of the ISIAO available within the consultation system of the BNCR, where the computer catalogue has already migrated. The BNCR has, in fact,

signed an agreement for the safeguarding, valorisation, and use of the ISIAO Library with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (MAECI), which is in charge of the liquidation of institutions and thus deals with the remainder of the patrimony of the ISIAO such as the archive (partially deposited in the Foreign Archives) and the museum collections (which, like the collections of the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale, will instead become part of the recently founded Museo delle Civiltà).

The following people participated at the re-opening ceremony of the ISIAO Library at the BNCR: Andrea De Pasquale (Director of the BNCR), Armando Barucco (MAECI Analysis Unit), Elisabetta Belloni (Secretary General MAECI), Antonia Pasqua Recchia (Secretary General of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities and Tourism), Rossana Rummo (General Director of the Directorate General of Libraries and Cultural Institutes) and Mr. Mario Giro (Deputy Minister MAECI). Most of the interventions focused on the importance and value of the patrimony of the ISIAO library, on its renewed usability, and on the various steps that were needed to achieve this, in addition to thanking people for their collaboration. In particular, the Director of the National Library, Andrea De Pasquale, praised the rapidity of the completion of the re-opening project (the project was awarded



The large bookcase housing the Dubbiosi collection that now contains some of the publications promoted by ISIAO during its history.

in November 2016), the professionalism and care in moving the material, the re-ordering of the shelving, the cleaning and, where necessary, mold disinfection and restoration that involved not only the books but also the photographic and map collections. There were also speeches about promoting the library, the need to resume acquisitions and subscriptions to magazines, collaboration with MIUR (the Ministry of University Education & Research) to launch study programs in collaboration with universities, and the possibility of setting up a bibliographic and documentary Center for Studies on the East and Africa with the Library. Mario Giro's (Vice-Minister MAECI) conclusion was slightly different in tone and particularly stressed the waste and time lost in the whole of the ISIAO story, so that this reopening could not, in his view, be seen as anything more than a breaking even. He then expressed shared concerns over the future, accompanied, however, by some unkind comments aimed at the scholars.

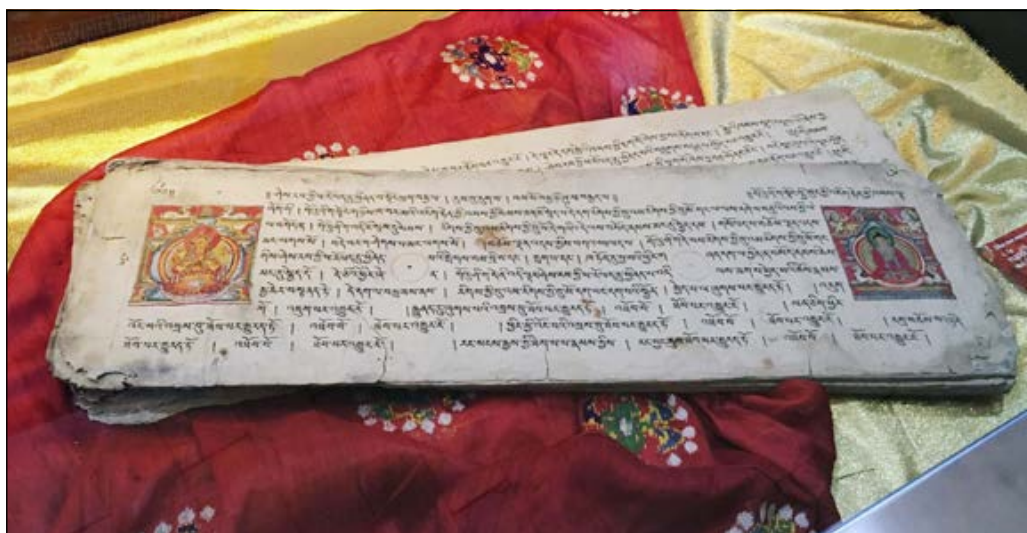
All of this was done not without some unavoidable slipups. First of all the Tibetan texts projected on the screen were upside down and, instead of arousing expected interest in the magnitude of the patrimony acquired caused some grumbling and laughter among the many Tibetan scholars present among the public.

Aside from the speeches, it was possible to visit the actual library, or at least its beginnings. Inside the Manuscript Room they had placed the large bookcase housing the Dubbiosi collection that now contains some of the publications promoted by ISIAO during its history, flanked by a plaque of ISIAO, a photo of Tucci, and a bust of Gandhi. The impression is, of course, that there is not much in comparison to what was an entire library, but there is, of course, the

possibility of expanding the section displayed. In addition, although not visible on the shelves, the texts will be available on request in the inner rooms. As mentioned, the collection will remain a separate section within the BCNR with plans to create a study center around it.

happy to hear the news. During the years it was closed, Tibetologists from around the world continued to write and ask Elena De Rossi Filibeck, the scientific director of the Collection, and me, information about accessing the texts of the Collection, and news on the reopening the Library. Especially in recent years, we lost hope of being able to work again on the texts. Italian Tibetology, which started with Giuseppe Tucci and Luciano Petech and became an institution with Elena De Rossi Filibeck, has always been characterized by studying the original texts, and having the chance to access the huge and precious collection preserved at the ISIAO. We are very happy that this tradition can be finally resumed and carried on by us and future Tibetologists."

In fact, over the years many institutions and scholars have requested and continue to request access to the Tibetan collection. This attests to its uniqueness and value that, even though the availability of



A detail of one of the Tibetan manuscripts on display at the National Library.

Thanks to the kind and helpful guidance of Dr. Pasqualino Avigliano, in charge of the manuscript sector, it was possible to visit the room (usually not accessible) where the collection of Tibetan texts is kept. The texts, arranged on mobile racking shelves, appeared to be in good condition and well-kept, as evidenced by the visible joy of Prof. Elena de Rossi Filibeck and her collaborator Michela Clemente, PhD, who have been involved in cataloging and rearranging the collection for decades when it was at the ISIAO and had not had access to it for years. Michela Clemente (University of Cambridge) commented: "We have been waiting for the reopening of the ISIAO Library for six years, and colleagues abroad have been

Tibetan texts both online and printed has increased exponentially, remains remarkable. Tibetan texts can be consulted by making a justified and referenced request.

Overall, one can hope that this is a good starting point for what has been a troubled affair.

There is also an emblematic exhibition of the treasures of the ISIAO at the National Library, which can be visited from 9 May to 30 June. ©

Tibetan Coins and Paper Money

An Introduction to Tibetan Numismatic History with a Description of its Symbolism and Calligraphies

Giorgio Dallorto

During my several trips to Nepal and India (early 80s-present day) I had the opportunity to find several coins and notes from Tibet. I was particularly struck by the beauty and richness of their calligraphy and symbolism. From that time I became interested in Tibetan numismatics as an example of the depth and richness of Tibetan civilization, and as a testimony of its autonomous history.

Brief history

From earliest times most purchases were made by means of barter, mainly with barley grain or raw gold traded by weight. Shells were also probably considered as currency and, even today, are still used as gambling counters. They can be seen stitched on the back of traditional women's costumes. Bricks of Chinese tea, hard blocks of compressed tealeaves and crushed twigs, were often used as a universal currency all over Tibet and in the monasteries, too.

Starting from the Mongol Yuan Dynasty in the 13th century, the Mongols started to send large donations of silver to the monasteries so that silver gradually replaced gold as the basis of Tibetan currency. The silver was in the form of ingots cast in China and valued by weight. The first coins used in Tibet from around 1650 were the so-called *mohar*, silver coins produced in the three Newari kingdoms of Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur at the time of the Malla dynasty. These new coins were named after Mahendramalli, the king who first struck silver coins in Nepal.

Due to issues over the Nepali production of debased silver currency, a first Nepali/Tibet war broke out in 1788. After losing the war, the Tibetans were forced to sign a treaty in which they were obliged to supply silver, or pay in gold, for the Nepalese to produce silver coins made especially for Tibet. At this time there were two types of currency circulating in Tibet: the silver



The obverse and reverse of the 100 *srang* banknote.

coins made in Nepal especially for Tibet, and the normal silver Nepalese currency. The Nepalese *mohar*, called *bal-tang* by the Tibetans, was officially confirmed as acceptable currency in Lhasa. The Nepalese supplied coins in equal weight to the silver supplied, however, the coins were not pure silver but an alloy with only 50% or even 30% silver mixed with copper. This latter coin became known as the *nag-tang*, or black coin because the alloy was so bad that it turned black with use.

When the Tibetans needed small change, they used to cut the full coins into fractions of one third, half, or two thirds. Some Nepalese coins were particularly suitable for cutting as they had a design with eight petals on the reverse. These pieces were readily accepted for their corresponding value merely by counting the petals. Coins of this type were called *chō-tang* or coins for cutting.

In spite of the Nepali mint's old habit of decreasing the percentage of silver in the coins, in Tibet all coins, whether Nepalese or Tibetan and whatever their silver content, were valued as if they were pure silver, on a basis of one to one. However, when the Nepali king, Prithvi Narayan, started to change the Tibetan coins against the Nepali coins in good silver, on a basis of two to one, many problems arose, leading to a second war between Tibet and Nepal in the year 1792.

With the help of the Chinese, the Tibetans won the war with the result that the previous agreements with Nepal regarding striking coins for Tibet stopped. Tibet started to strike its own currency called

tangka, like the famous silver *kong par tangka*, and *zho*, which became the main units of currency. The *tangka*, meaning a coin in good silver, was derived from Malla coins and started with a 10 gram coin, that, with the passage of time, went down to a standard weight of around 5 grams.

At the end of the 17th century and the beginning of the 18th, Chinese influence during the Ming dynasty became more dominant in Tibet and the Emperor Chiang Long set up a mint in Lhasa which produced some silver coins with Chinese inscriptions bearing the Emperor's name on one side and Tibetan on the other.

In 1836 Tibet resumed the autonomous production of its own coins. The most famous Tibetan silver coin was the so-called *gaden-tangka*, weighing about 5 grams and struck in considerable number until 1911. From 1850 the India rupee gained a lot of importance in Tibet and became the second currency there. It was also widely diffused in Eastern Tibet. Like some Nepalese coins, the rupee was cut into two, three, or four parts and used as change.

When the exiled 13th Dalai Lama returned to Tibet in 1912 from exile in China and India, he initiated a new era that emphasised the importance of Tibetan autonomy reflected in the production of pure Tibetan currency. Under his auspices, banknotes were issued for the first time, and a large number of fine Tibetan silver and copper coins were produced. Between 1918 and 1921 the Tibetan mint near the Norbulinka struck the unique and famous 20 *srang* gold coin, a very rare and precious collector's piece. However, due to the lack

of government control of the money supply and the devaluation of the Tibetan currency, most of them were exported to India as bullion.

During the Second World War, because of the lack of metals being imported from India, no new coins were struck in Tibet. In 1946 the issue of silver coins was resumed but since the price of silver increased, its production was replaced by poor quality debased coins (14% silver) valued at 10 *srang*. In the mid 50s, due to the assertive policies of the new Chinese government, Chinese coins with a high silver content called the *Yuan Shikai* dollar were struck in Chengdu for exclusive use in Tibet. The last coins struck under the Tibetan authority were between 1953 and 54 and the last 100 *srang* banknotes were issued in 1959. After this, the Chinese *yuan renmimbi* took the place of Tibetan currency.

Tibetan Currency Units

There were two different currency units used in Tibet: the earlier system based on the *srang* and the later system based on the *tam* or *tangka* coming from Nepal in the 16th century. *Srang* is a unit of measure to weigh gold and silver equal to 37 grams and was used even before the time of the famous emperor Songtsen Gampo. This unit is frequently mentioned in the 'Blue Annals', a famous historical work, primarily as a silver weight.

Over the passage of time, the weight of the *srang* was gradually reduced and, for example, by 1909 a *srang* coin, the largest silver coin produced in Tibet, weighed around 18 grams. In 1919 the value of a *srang* was equivalent to one Indian rupee. With inflation, in 1933 a unit of 3 *srangs* was issued that had the same weight as the rupee, about 11.66 grams.

This was more or less the value of the sterling silver *srang* when the 100 *tam srang* notes, the notes of greatest value to have appeared in Tibetan currency, were issued in 1937. From these examples it is easy to see how much the Tibetan *srang* was devalued, particularly over the 30 year period, 1909–1937.

The second system was the *tam*, or *tangka*, or *tamga*, introduced into Tibet from Nepal and originally corresponding to about 10 grams of silver, which gradually went down to roughly 5 grams. The coins struck to this standard in Nepal were called *mo-hars* as previously mentioned, and exported to Tibet in large numbers. They were called *bal tam* since Nepal was known as

'*bal yul*' or wool country. After the Tibet/Nepal war of 1792, only coins struck in Tibet were available under the name of *tangka* and its subdivision called *zho*.

Dates on Coins

The Tibetans used to write the date of minting on coins using a sixty-year astrological cycle called *rab byung*, which started from 1027 AD, the year in which the Kalachakra was introduced to Tibet. Hence, this was the year the first *rab byung* cycle started. The number of the sixty-year cycle and the number of the year (*lo*) within the cycle was indicated on each coin. For example, in 1927 the sixteenth *rab byung* cycle started.



The reverse of the *kalsang tangka*.

Banknotes

The first banknotes issued by the Tibetan government were dated Tibetan Era 1658 which corresponded to the year 1912–13 when the Dalai Lama arrived in Lhasa from India. He decided to support the paper currency with a large deposit of gold imported from India and stored in the Potala Palace in Lhasa.

The early Tibetan paper notes were not received with great enthusiasm by the population possibly because they had to compete with the Indian currency notes that were already circulating in Lhasa. In any case, in the early 20s, Tibetan silver money and bank notes from Lhasa circulated throughout Tibet.

The early notes were printed by hand from wood blocks, and the ink for the printing was imported from India. The notes were printed on special paper that was very durable and resistant to insects, made in Tibet, and different from that used for books. The obverse and the reverse (the two faces) of the early notes were printed

on separate sheets and then pasted together after a third smaller sheet had been inserted between them. A hidden phrase was printed on this sheet that showed like a watermark when the notes were held up to the light. After printing, the paper notes were numbered by hand by specially trained calligraphers. The last and most important step was the application of two seals, a red one on the left and a black one on the right. The red seal, which represented the authority of the Dalai Lama, did not show any script and was purely ornamental. Its design was called *yig man*. The central part of the black seal was filled with *phags pa* characters in which was written 'gzhung dngul khang', meaning 'government bank'.



The reverse of the three *srang* coin.

The earliest Tibetan banknotes had a two-line inscription that could be translated as, "In the year 1658 of the establishment of the religious and lay Government of Tibet in the land of the snows". The banknotes were produced in amounts of 5, 10, 15, 25, and 50 *tam (srang)*.

Dates on Banknotes

One or two different dates may appear on the banknotes: the date according to the Tibetan Era most probably starting in 254 AD, and, at times, the *rab byung*, the number of the sixty-year cycle, plus the year or *lo*. One tradition states that the year 254 AD corresponds to the year in which Tho tho ri, the first historical Tibetan king of the Yarlung Dynasty, was born. Another tradition considers it to be the year when the first Buddhist scripture fell from the heavens on the roof of Yum Bu La Gang castle, built by the first Tibetan king Nyatri Tsenpo. In the Tibetan astrological calendar (*Jungtsi* or elemental astrology)

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Details of the 100 *srang* note showing the red and black seals on either side of the central panel and also the handwritten serial number of the note.

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used in the Dzogchen Community, the system of counting the years starts with the year of the coronation of the first king of Tibet, in 127 BC.

The 100 *srang* note

The 100 *srang* note, popularly called *brgya lor* meaning a 100 banknote, was issued from 1939 up to 1959. It was the banknote of the highest value produced in Tibet. The specimen show here was produced in 1958.

The Obverse

For printing this banknote, it was necessary to use three different blocks for the obverse and seven for the reverse for the different colors. The whole surface of the obverse was printed in yellow with a leaf design and the syllable *brgya* (100) in *phags pa* script remaining in white. The whole design of the note was printed in red while the government seal and all the writing was in black.

The central panel displays a pair of standing snow lions in red holding up a large dish filled with the seven precious objects or gems (*rin chen dun*). The rectangular panels above and below each contain a line in Uchen script. Above: *gnam bskos dga' dan pho brang phyogs las rnam gyal* – Gaden Palace, 'Having the mandate of heaven, victorious in all directions'. Below: *chos srid gnyis ldan gyi shog dngul srang bryga tam pa* – 'One hundred paper silver *srang* of the religious and lay government'.

The inner panel contains four flower decorated squares in the corners with the word *srang* above and the number 100

below. On the left and right of the central snow lions there are two seals. On the left there is a round one in red with the sun and moon on the top that represents the Dalai Lama. On the right the rectangular black seal in *phags pa* displays the writing *srid zhi dpal 'bar* – 'The rising glory of the religious and lay government', surrounded by a *dorje* on each side.

The frame surrounding the central panel bears the eight symbols of good fortune (*bkra-shis rtags-brgyad*) with a flower at each corner of the frame, two containing the Bhujinmol (ancient Nepali calligraphy) letter 'a', and two a cross design. In the same frame there are two cartouche, one in the upper left corner, the other in the lower right corner, containing the handwritten serial number *zal 07943*. The outer frame consists of a rhombus design with the letter 'a' in Bhujinmol characters within the rhombi above and below, and swastikas within the rhombi on the left and right. The Bhujinmol script (fly-headed) is an ancient form of Nepalese rounded calligraphy used until the Middle Ages.

The Reverse

Seven different blocks were used to print the reverse. The yellow background of the outer frame has the same design as the obverse with the Bhujinmol letter 'a' and the swastika. The inner frame is green on white and contains floral decoration in the corners and above and below. In the center of the flowers in the upper right and lower left corners there is the Bhujinmol 'a'. On the left side of the green frame there is the legend in vertical *phags pa* script '*dga' ldan pho brang*' and on the right '*phyogs*

las rnam rgyal' – 'Gaden Palace, victorious in all directions'.

In the four corners of the central panel there are red rhombi with a cross design overlaid with a black design showing a stylized dragon in each corner. In the central part with the yellow background there is a scene printed in red representing an old man holding a vase in his right hand and a mala in his left. He is accompanied by a boy sitting on the left, under a pomegranate tree, symbol of fertility. On either side of the tree a bat is flying, a symbol of good fortune. There is a plate decorated with lotus, filled with fruit, plus a couple of cranes and a couple of deer. You can notice a small dot with a yin-yang in the upper right part of the scene as a sign of its authenticity.

This note has a watermark printed in two lines, which can be seen when the note is held against the light: '*gnam gskos dga' ldan pho brang phyogs las rnam rgyal*' – 'Gaden Palace, mandate from heaven, victorious in all directions'.

Kalsang tangka

This coin was struck in 1909 and distributed to the monks by the 13th Dalai Lama during the Monlam. It took its name from the palace, the summer residence of the Norbulinka, where it was distributed the first time. It is a coin of fine silver with a diameter of 25.5 mm and a weight of 3.6 g. On the obverse the coin is characterized by four trapezoids which include a three jewel design within a small square. Two syllables of a Tibetan legend are placed inside of the four trapezoids with the usual legend 'Gaden Palace, victorious in all directions'. On the reverse the flower with eight leaves is surrounded the usual eight auspicious symbols.

Three *srang* coin

The three *srang* coin in silver is equivalent in weight to the Indian silver rupee with a weight of around 11 grams and a diameter of 31 mm. On the obverse inside a circle there is a snow lion and on the external part enclosed by a circle of dots the legend '*dga' ldan pho brang phyogs las rnam rgyal*' appears interspersed by four eternal knots. On the reverse inside the circle there is the word *srang* and below *gsum*, which stand for three *srang*. On the external part enclosed by dots we can see the word '*rab byung bcu drug*' and '*lo bdun*', interspersed by three eternal knots. This is the Tibetan date 16th *rabjung* 7th year corresponding to the Western year 1933. ©

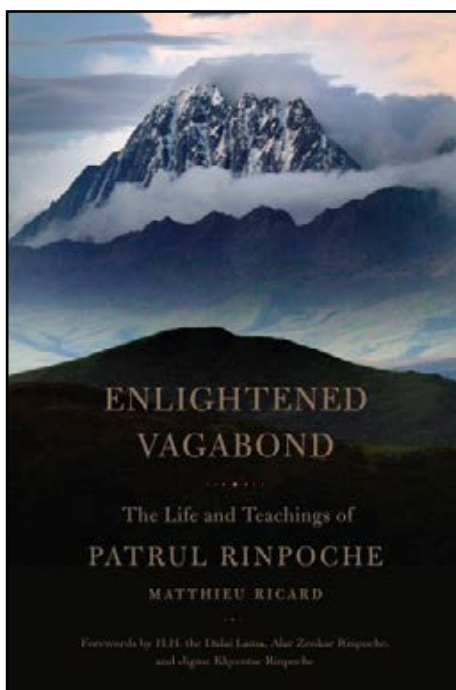
Enlightened Vagabond – The Life and Teachings of Patrul Rinpoche

Collected and translated from the Tibetan by Matthieu Ricard
Edited by Constance Wilkinson
Shambhala Publications, 2017

Review by Alexander Studholme

Patrul Rinpoche (1808–1887) was one of the most popular and influential teachers of the 19th century non-sectarian Rimé movement in Tibet, who inspires particular affection for the uncompromising nature of his renunciate lifestyle. Stories about his remarkable qualities and engaging eccentricities continue to be circulated and shared amongst Tibetans to the present day. In a labour of love going back to the 1970s, Matthieu Ricard – the French monk and former attendant of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche – has mined this oral tradition to collect some 130 tales and vignettes, originally with the aid of his old fashioned tape recorder. His new book is a monument of devotion to this amazing lama and a repository of pithy *dharma* wisdom, wrapped around in the cosy, bucolic atmosphere of pre-modern Eastern Tibet.

Identified in infancy as a tulku, Patrul wound up the financial affairs of his monastic estate at about the age of twenty and embarked on the life of a solitary wanderer, preferring to live incognito amongst the ordinary folk of his society. Dressed in a rough sheepskin robe, a number of these stories revolve around the humour of him being mistaken for an uneducated nomad. Delighting in his anonymity, he allows himself to be taught his own text – the celebrated *Words of My Perfect Teacher* (*kun bzang blama'i zhallung*), already by then considered a definitive introduction to the preliminary practices of the Vajrayana. He badmouths himself to others – “What’s so special about this Patrul Rinpoche?” – and, by turns, surprises his unwitting companions by eventually appearing on the teaching throne of a large *dharma* gathering, or by crying out in dismay – “You’ve ruined it!” – when his cover is blown after a passing lama recognizes him and starts pros- trating in his direction.



He kept monastic discipline throughout his life, observing strict celibacy, preferring never to have more food with him than was immediately necessary and displaying in a very straightforward way a strong aversion to worldly life. He mimics the disciples of the Buddha, who called money “poison”, habitually leaves silver given to him as alms behind in the dirt, and even, on one occasion, informs a robber where he might find one of these discarded offerings. His gruff manners and strikingly literal embodiment of the virtues of the path could be both inspiring and unnerving. Recognizing that all creatures have, at one time, been our own dear mother, he once took off all his clothes and allowed a swarm of horseflies to settle on his body and gorge on his blood. As he said: “Maybe some people love me because I continuously cultivate compassion and loving-kindness. Maybe others fear me because I regard self and phenomena to be equally empty of intrinsic nature.”

This stream of reminiscence is leavened with selections taken from Patrul Rinpoche’s advice to his students and his vajra songs of realization, verses which are often characterized by earthy, colloquial language. For instance:

I feel like roaming around like a stray mutt.
I feel like nestling in my den like an old fox.
I feel like doing whatever and making no plans.
I feel like rambling around like a tramp.

I don’t need a lama, as I’m aware of my own mindstream.
I don’t need a servant, as I can look after myself.
I don’t need a mind buzzing with plans, since I know how to take refuge.

Now, whatever happens, however it happens, let it be!

Like a corpse,
I am steadfast
And without ambition,
An “old dog” who looks like he’s going downhill.

In this way, may all be auspicious!

This book also contains two tables showing, respectively, the lines of descent of Patrul’s *dharma* and biological family lineages, together with a long appendix containing biographical sketches of many of the lamas associated with his life. Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, one of his main teachers, was a lama who lived like a nomadic chieftain, maintaining a huge flock of sheep and possessed of such a fearsome manner that Patrul’s terrified disciple assumed him to be a dangerous bandit known to be at large in the locality. It was he who dubbed Patrul Rinpoche “Old Dog” – a name that he rejoiced in – and famously introduced him to the nature of the mind by hurling rocks at him and dragging him around by the hair. Patrul Rinpoche studied alongside Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, the two great hierarchs of the Rimé renaissance, who were both amazed by Patrul’s powers of memory and flawless recall of the detail of sacred texts. Teasingly, these two grandees are said to have remarked of their free-spirited, gypsy peer: “That Patrul’s really much *too* simple. If only he’d do something *useful*!”

Patrul seems to have been particularly close to Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, sending him annually a freshly-minted long life prayer and new statue of Amitayus. In re-

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Art=Life=Art

Babeth Mondini-VanLoo:
From Beuys to Buddhism

Foreword: Matthieu Ricard;
Introduction: Antje von
Graevenitz

Texts: Dorothea Franck,
Lene Gravesen, Christina Svane,
Meredith Monk.

Hardcover, 12x8 cm, 257 pages,
2016 Samsara Editions

Reviewed for The Mirror by

Louise Landes-Levi, Amsterdam, May, 2017

I'm the least likely person to review the book about this famous lady, yet I've been somehow around, almost like a shadow, since the early 80's when both of us relocated to Amsterdam. I watch her, in awe, at the headquarters of One World Poetry, where Ben Posset organizes the poetry festival on Nieuwmarkt in Amsterdam. I had the strange impression that I had been her foolish servant on some kind of Tibetan high land pilgrimage – she's the aristocrat, I'm the dumb awkward one following just behind, protecting her, interested in those she studies with.

And yet, I am also the first person to bring the Ganapuja and its accompanying mudras, learned of course from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to her household. She is thrilled, literally ecstatic, to see these mudras. Christina Svane and Dorothea Franck are also there, both of whom, thirty years later, write the texts of the lavishly illustrated art book I am about to review. I remember that Babeth's first reaction is to ask if she can film the mudras.

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turn, Khyentse Wangpo composed a prayer in Patrul's honour, recounting his life story, which became the basis for one of two brief written biographies of Patrul Rinpoche. Khyentse was one of the few high lamas to openly criticise or berate Patrul, calling him "crazy" and "lunatic". Once, he felt strongly that Patrul had misguidedly and disastrously influenced a gifted young yogin, the son of the tertön Chokgyur Lingpa, to cut off his long hair and become a monk. On another occasion, he wrote to



Babeth is a true and rare documentary filmmaker; a major figure in the field, in both the USA and Europe. On PBS she co-founded the Buddhist Broadcasting Foundation, the first in the Western world, and is also the founder of the European Buddhist Film festival, a yearly event in Amsterdam. She is a phenomena, in a man's world, she has been able to reflect major trends in the artistic underground and in the media infused 'Alte Kultur' – she has known how to break boundaries and to set new standards. She is also a devoted practitioner. It has been a great, even a profound pleasure, when in Amsterdam, to sit with Babeth at her altar and to practice Om Tara Tam Swaha.

From Beuys to Buddhism Life=Art=Life

With numerous photographs in both black and white and color from the major periods, artistically and personally in her life, this volume, gorgeously illustrated hardback, is a must for those who wish to investigate the ways in which the Buddhist philosophy and its most profound practitioners (the exiled lamas who brought the teachings from their homeland Tibet to the West), gradually influenced and transformed not just one film maker – in this case the subject of the book Babeth Mondini-VanLoo, but an entire trajectory of European and American artists and their art.

Babeth began her life in Limburg, a small Dutch city near the German border; she studied art in Germany, and then film

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Patrul advising him to have proper respect for the offerings he was given and to put them to good use.

In response, Patrul Rinpoche dedicated himself to paying for the upkeep and expansion of a huge mani wall: a wall made of stones carved mainly with *Om Manipadme Hum*, but also with other mantras and texts. "In short, making other kinds of sacred objects is like trying to hold up the branches of a tree; to build a mani wall is like making the root of the tree," he is reported as saying. "Even if this whole coun-

try were to be filled with invaders, there would be no need to worry about these stones being stolen or destroyed." The wall was, in fact, dismantled during the Cultural Revolution. But, it is heartening to learn, however, in one of this book's many footnotes, that since the mid-1980s it has been reassembled and further enlarged. In the 1990s, Akong Tulku commissioned the carving of stones containing all 103 volumes of the Kangyur, the Tibetan canon of the teachings of the Buddha. Today, it is about 1.8 km long, 4 m high and 18 m wide. ©

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in New York City and San Francisco. Her art teacher Joseph Beuys (1921–1986, see below*) introduced her to new principles: motivation is at the outset of art. Beuys was rescued by shamans following a WW II plane crash and he emerged from his healing process with an entirely new and revolutionary sense of personal, artistic and national destiny and motivation, not just artistic 'products', with function being a measure of excellence. Beuys introduced Babeth directly to an energetic principle, profound and new to her at the time. In Buddhist terminology, she has entered a kind of Sambhogakaya, an energetic field from which all else will emerge, beyond the subjects it produces, a gateway to the Dharmakaya, absolute being and source for activity and manifestation in the Nirmanakaya, our world, the world of transience and of form.

Babeth was raised in a religious tradition, indeed trained in a stern Catholic school. She says, however, that she knew, even in her childhood and childlike supplication to the Virgin Mary, that the Mary she 'worshipped' and to whom she prayed, the Madonna, was actually an internal entity, her innate being. She has therefore, before formally studying the Buddhist methods with such masters as Ven. Dilgo Khyentse, and our master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, already understood at least some of its tenants. She also integrated the teachings of Beuys – the profound implication of his social or Invisible Sculpture, prevailing artistic attitude to conscious perception of all beings as Buddha, or, inversely, to perceive Buddha nature in all beings.

Babeth followed a career in documentary filmmaking, in which she collaborated with such luminaries as the Kuchar Brothers in San Francisco and Jack Smith in New York, as well as the many poets, William Burroughs, Ira Cohen, Gregory Corso, and as a personal filmmaker she portrayed His Holiness the Dalai Lama in numerous locations, worldwide.

I consider Babeth's early great film of Dudjom Rinpoche's reincarnation rites a masterwork. She also produced light-sculptures incorporating film for exhibits at the Anthology Film Archives in 1991. She goes on, for the next decades, to represent major Buddhist teachers of our era in her work, a dedication that will prove invaluable to future generations. Together with Jean Karel Hylkema, she establishes at the beginning of the new millennium, the BOS Buddhist

Broadcasting Foundation, a TV network devoted to Buddhist themes. She merges the revolutionary cry of Joseph Beuys, with the Buddhist view and teachings.

As students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, we are very fortunate, indeed encouraged, to consider our work, as well as all aspects of our daily life, as our path, practicing secondary methods, when needed, but trained to view Guruyoga as a primary method and thus to accomplish all action. Enrico Dell Angelo said to me, as I was about to travel reluctantly to a poetry reading in Rome, unwilling to separate from the site of a retreat and the Master, that the transmission develops according to the potential of the individual. Babeth has dedicated herself to this potential and to the situation with which we are faced in this world, with an absolute sense of her own gift and her rare ability to interact in the world of major media and prestigious individuals, at the same time, to maintain her private practice, her family and her friendships.

For lovers of Art books, for those who seek to observe the transformation of aesthetic formula in the late 20th and early 21st century, I highly recommend *Art = Life = Art*. Kazuaki Tanahashi, author of *Brush Mind*, commented:

"As a filmmaker, director, producer and broadcaster, Babeth Van Loo has helped create, screen and broadcast hundreds of Buddhist films including eight on His Holiness the Dalai Lama. Her contribution to the spread of global Buddhism is enormous. Art = Life = Art reveals fascinating accounts of her art, filmmaking, and Dharma."

Her contribution lies not in visual beauty, but compelled by an inner search for truth she intends her projects to be vehicles of meaning as life-process. Each life/work section of this book, whether it is about art studies, cultural input, filmmaking, punk or Buddhism, tries to expose some of the energies that led to the creation of her antidotes: female healing for a more compassionate world in which we are all artists, and all Buddhas.

Dr. Dorothea Franck, former professor of philology at the University of Amsterdam and a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, has written in this volume on themes of artistic resonance and philosophy. Her extremely well researched essay on Maya Deren, the NYC experimental filmmaker and an early influence on Babeth, constitute an entire chapter of this multi-faceted volume. She quotes Deren (fr. Anagram), as follows, regarding the comportment of the

artist: *The Theory of relatively can no longer indulgently be dismissed as an abstract statement true or false of a remote cosmology whose pragmatic action remains in any case, constant. The phenomena, which were once the manifestations of a transcendent deity, are now the ordinary activities of man.* Dorothea herself writes, in this essay, *the innocence of perception plays a fundamental role in art.*

While Maya Deren and other artists in this book, each a decisive influence on its primary subject, do not maintain a specifically Buddhist understanding, one can observe their formative and cognitive influence on Babeth and moreover her capacity to integrate them in her later practice.

Equally fascinating in this regard is Christina Svane's extremely well written essay on the filmmaker's involvement with President Aristide in Haiti and her documentary *Haiti, Killing the Dream*, co-presented by Jonathan Demme, which revealed the injustices of the coup that befell the former priest and his people.

This book, in both its visual and discursive formula, will be invaluable to those interested in tracing the aesthetic roots of the late 20th century and early 21st century in Europe and the USA and the profound influence the Buddhist teachings have had upon the fundamental principles of space and time, continuity and commitment in the artistic milieu of the west. ©

Note. Joseph Beuys (1921–1986) was one of the most influential German artists of the second half of the twentieth century. His expanded notion of art relates to all people and to their creativity, the capacity that exist in everyone as a free creative power. Beuys also foresaw the emerging feminine and the role of the female voice in the artistic life of the future.

Artists in the Dzogchen Community

Peter Makela

I first connected with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and the teachings during one of the darkest times of my life. I was working through a severe heartbreak with someone who I had known since I was thirteen and I was also recovering from helping both her and my mother go through cancer treatment at the same time for over a year. At that time I was in a deeply fractured state and was attempting to piece myself back together through making hallucinatory paintings and drinking too much, which wasn't very successful.

Fortunately in the heart of this despair in the spring of 2012, Louise Landes-Levi appeared in my Brooklyn studio. We connected over art and she insisted that I attend Rinpoche's Jnana Dakini retreat at Tsogyalgar that summer.

Rinpoche's deep compassion, the blessings of the transmission and the warmth of the International Community changed my life that summer. Over the last 5 years through practice and deepening connection, the transmission has helped me integrate, have a more spacious mind and live more gracefully.

These are all elements that I seek to bring into my paintings and drawings. When I paint I usually work for many hours straight. I open myself to a free and spontaneous state of mind and let whatever arises out on the canvas. Sometimes the vision is clear and manifests spontaneously, sometimes there are multiple internal images that fight and embrace on the canvas until they create their own world and sometimes the process is like being lost in the woods until a vista appears and all the inactions on the canvas create their own rules and logic. I am completely open to the Bliss and Madness of the creative process, and I am skeptical of a set limited style. The more different and varied the canvases are from one to the other the better. I seek to have an open and free approach where my modes of expression and stylistic languages are as varied and multifarious as my thoughts and experiences are.

I have been very fortunate to travel to Europe many times when I was younger and I have a deep love for the many Mas-



Peter Makela.



Elementals in the Park; 152 cm x 152 cm, acrylic on canvas, 2017.



Samantabhadra; 76 cm x 56 cm, pen on Arches, 2015.

ters of the painting lineage there. I feel the deepest connection with those who have vivid internal worlds and who work with a dancing color and shifting spatial dynamics. Hieronymus Bosch, Piero Della Francesca, and Paolo Uccello are deep heroes of mine and I always feel blessed when I can sit in front of their paintings and visually travel through them for hours.

I am also inspired by certain Surrealist thought, The Hairy Who and Chicago Imagists who were my professors from Undergrad, and Persian Miniatures and Rajput painting.

I am grateful for Rinpoche's life changing teachings, but I am also very grateful for his perpetual blessings which I believe have ripened other specific karma in my life.

There was a coffeeshop near my studio where I would frequently go to and draw and in 2014, where a nonprofit organization decided to have a fundraising raffle. The winner would receive a free plane ticket to Kathmandu and a month of lodging and food to volunteer in orphanages in Boudhanath. Miraculously my lottery ticket was chosen which started an eight month personal odyssey in Nepal and India. Practicing in the Himalayas, volunteering painting murals with the young monks at the Sakya Monastery of Kagbeni, painting in Mumbai and taking in the masterpieces of

sought to convey luminosity through bliss and emptiness. These pieces were exhibited numerous times in Los Angeles, Chicago and Tibet House in New York City.

I later wanted to combine these aspirations and states of mind in paint with less traditional iconography and more experimental approaches which I've been able to explore in Artist's Residencies in Arizona, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin in 2015 and 2016.

In 2016 I was given a very generous opportunity to return to school where I am now currently an MFA candidate at the LeRoy E. Hoffberger School of Painting at MICA in Baltimore.

Upon graduating next year I aspire to leave the US and be able to go on long journeys again where I can continue exploring my mind inspired by new friends, new cultures, deep artistic traditions, and fresh experiences.

I am deeply grateful to the master, the teachings, the lineage and all of my generous and thoughtful Vajra brothers and sisters and all of the incredible blessings and opportunities that spontaneously arise from all of these beautiful causes and conditions. ©



Peter painting murals with the young monks at the Sakya Monastery of Kagbeni.

Ajanta and Ellora affected my mind greatly and are always fresh in it.

Upon returning to the States after this journey I embarked on a series of work where I combined traditional thanka proportions and compositions with highly detailed pen and ink line drawings where I

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Anna Neyman

I lived in St Petersburg, Russia, and practiced Tai Chi, Chi Gong, and Chinese martial arts for some years. Our teacher invited a Chinese master, Master Chang, to give two retreats in Russia but then, since he was very old, he did not come to Russia anymore. The Chinese path is difficult, you need to have a master, you need to have discipline, and all these sutra style things. Somehow at a certain point the practice was no longer alive for me and without the master coming anymore, it became difficult to practice alone. Then I felt that my practice was missing something and I started to look for something else.

I went to a Theravada retreat that was ten days of silence, men and women were separated, no single word or contact with anyone, and you sit all day in *zazen*, without moving. It was really very strict. It was a very good training but I still felt a desire for a master since I had already had an experience of the Chinese master in front of me. Master Chang was really great and you could feel when he entered a room. The Theravada training was good, but I missed the presence of a master because it was just instruction from a tape. It was a big group and a great organization, but it was missing the main point. It was missing the master.

So I spoke to a friend living in Moscow who did yoga and knew about yoga and yoga societies in Moscow and Russia. Relatively speaking, for Russia, Moscow is close to St. Petersburg, only one night by train. My friend called me and said that she had not heard of a master coming to Moscow, but there was a master called Namkhai, who was coming to Crimea. So I asked her what the dates were because we were already planning to go to Ukraine and also to Crimea on vacation. We loved Crimea (at that time I was with my first husband). This was in 2002. We already had a ticket to Crimea so when my friend told me the dates, they coincided exactly with the dates of our vacation.

When we arrived at my husband's parents' place in Ukraine, my husband thought it was so nice that we didn't need to go anywhere else. I insisted that we go to Crimea. I don't know why I felt so strongly about that, because I knew nothing about Nam-

khai Norbu or Dzogchen. So he agreed and we continued our trip and came to Crimea. Rinpoche was already there and most of the people were already there, but we didn't know Rinpoche yet so we were just there. We registered a few days before the retreat began and we left the place of the retreat and went some place else in Crimea for a few days because we loved it there and it was our favorite holiday place.

It was so nice in this place, so beautiful, so peaceful and we were alone. And again my husband said, "Oh maybe we just don't go. Let's stay here." And again I said, "No, no, no, we need to go to the retreat." I didn't know why I felt so strongly to go. So we came to the retreat which was in a resort place. There was a stadium there, and it was full of people, more than a thousand people. But when we came to the retreat I was shocked. I didn't like anything. People were drinking, smoking, having sex, doing very strange things, and for me, it was a disaster. I came from the Chan community, and the behavior was very different - you control yourself and behave. Coming into this, I was shocked and wondered why I had come there, what I had in common with these people?

But somehow I liked Rinpoche. I understood some of his words because we had printed some books from the internet and read them on the train coming to Ukraine. But most things were absolutely not clear. Also I was frightened. First of all there was a crowd and a very loud one, not behaving the way I was used to having a community, so it was really shocking for me. But my husband was hooked right away. He said that this was what he had been looking for all his life. My husband was also a Chan practitioner; he was very spiritual and even more so than me and he was always looking for something. I was very suspicious of all the people and all the strange things. I was used to sitting *zazen* basically. But my husband was happy. He gave our contact information to the St. Petersburg Community. The Community there would call and email and have a lot of activities after the retreat was over.

There was already a big Dzogchen Community in St. Petersburg; they had their



place and so on. I was still not interested, but I did like Rinpoche, he seemed to me a very nice man and I also liked the translator. At that time I understood very little English and I understood he really translated very well; if the translator is very good you feel some kind of presence. Also there was one moment during the Ganapuja at the end of the retreat, it was night and a strong wind came and started such a shaking energy at that point. In general I did not like the Ganapuja and had been vegetarian for eight years, so coming into this scene of drinking and eating meat was not easy. I was very devoted to my husband so I went with him to the collective practices in St. Petersburg.

So that is how I met Rinpoche in general. Also one more detail is that during the retreat with Rinpoche, the local St. Petersburg Community went to meet with him. I did not want to go, but my husband wanted to, so we went. Somehow it happened that people were talking and I didn't really pay attention to anything and it was the moment of the group photo. All the people were running to be next to Rinpoche and in the end they squeezed me right next to him. In that moment I was shocked because Rinpoche manifested like a mountain, huge, something not human. I did not believe he was a person. Really I was shocked. And I looked at him and he looked at me and started to laugh. Obviously he got my thoughts. The only thing I wanted to do was to touch him to make sure he was a human.

When we went back to St. Petersburg I was still not really interested in the teach-

ings, and if it had not been for our old practitioners who invited us and really took care of newcomers, I would not have pursued the teachings. They would make a personal invitation to come to somebody's house and the old practitioners would explain as they could. They probably did well but also our understanding was below zero. This was before there were Santi Maha Sangha instructors.

Now I see how wise it is to have Santi Maha Sangha instructors. It really helps you to understand. Old practitioners can explain things but sometimes they are missing key points. Igor Berkhin came to our city and gave a retreat of Santi Maha Sangha. Then we understood that the main practices of Dzogchen are not the Ganapuja and the Medium Thun as we were thinking – even though after six months of doing only these practices we knew them by heart. But we learned from Igor Berkhin that the main practice is to be in the state of Dzogchen, in Guruyoga, and in presence. Before that we really did not get the key point. I also liked Yantra Yoga because it was easier for me to understand and to do. I had a background in martial arts and movement so it made sense.

A turning point for me, since I still was not really connecting to the practices, was when there was a webcast of the retreat of Mandarava from Margarita Island in the spring of 2002. The Community decided to prepare for the retreat and started doing Mandarava practice and they were doing it at our home. They had lost the physical

space, so we were going to people's houses, and our apartment was quite large and nice and we liked to host people. They had become our friends, and for me more friends than Vajra family since I still had not really connected.

I was always running from Mandarava practice until then because it seemed so difficult, so many words and mudras, so I closed the practice book and never went back to it. Here I could not escape because people were coming to my home and I could not escape from my home. One girl explained it very quickly and in a disorganized way, and in the end she said here is the book, in a very relaxed way, just follow and do it. I thought oh my, no structure, I can't understand, but what can I do, I cannot escape anyway. So we started the Mandarava practice and something really happened and I started to feel energy. Without really understanding the practice, I definitely felt a connection to the transmission. Then we were fortunate to have the Mandarava retreat webcast afterwards and through this practice I really connected to the transmission and it became alive in me.

Something similar happened to me with the Vajra Dance in terms of not connecting and trying to escape from the this practice. For four years I ran away from the Vajra Dance, and now I am an instructor. Previously the only instructor we had in St Petersburg was a Vajra Dance instructor. Luda Kislichenko came to teach and I would host her, although I did not attend her courses. Maybe I was too proud, and

maybe it was a kind of resistance to what became my main practice.

At a certain point we were organizing a retreat with Jim Valby, and my husband and I were busy all the time and running around, to prepare. I was also passing through a heavy moment in my life, and I came into the hall where people were dancing and for some reason this time it was a very strong experience for me. I dropped all my organization papers, my dog sat down, I was mesmerized and paralyzed. I had never felt this before with the dance, but I felt something very strong, similar to what I had felt with Mandarava. I cannot even find the right words for this feeling, but it was really a big something.

And then I kind of woke up from this state, and the people finished dancing and Jim Valby came to me and said, "Anya, why aren't you dancing?" And at this point I had no explanation. And he said, "Well maybe you should try." And I said, "Yes, yes, I will." And from that moment I waited for a course in the Vajra Dance. Then a course came along in the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, but I was sick. I had many obstacles, as this was also the heaviest point in my life, getting a divorce, losing my job, and also my place to live, so it was a very insecure time. Then finally there was a course in the Dance That Benefits Beings and it seems I just stood on the Mandala and I felt some kind of release and all tensions started to release somehow. This was for me really like the beginning of a new life and I started to feel joy and life again. ☺

Meditation in Motion

The World of Tibetan Dance
Video installation and photo exhibit

July 8th–July 14th 2017
Chili Art Gallery
Dimofontos 13-15, Thissio 11851, Athens
Tel: +30 210729564 www.chiliart.gr

The Chili Art Gallery, in Athens will host "Meditation in Motion", a photographic exhibition and video installation exploring the world of Tibetan Dance, curated by the Museum of Asian Art and Culture of Arcidosso, in Italy.

The exhibition, Meditation in Motion, has been planned specifically to enrich the dance related research being presented at the CID Congress on Dance Research, being held at the Dora Stratou Theatre, creating a cultural context for the performances of the modern Tibetan dancers, from The Khaïta: Joyful Dances Project.

The exhibition "Meditation in Motion" features photographs by world renown dance photographer, Herbert Migdoll, from the Joffrey Ballet and his recent field research in Bhutan, traditional Cham masks and costumes from Bhutan and video installations featuring, both traditional Tibetan folk dances and secret Tibetan sacred dances, never before presented to the public.





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