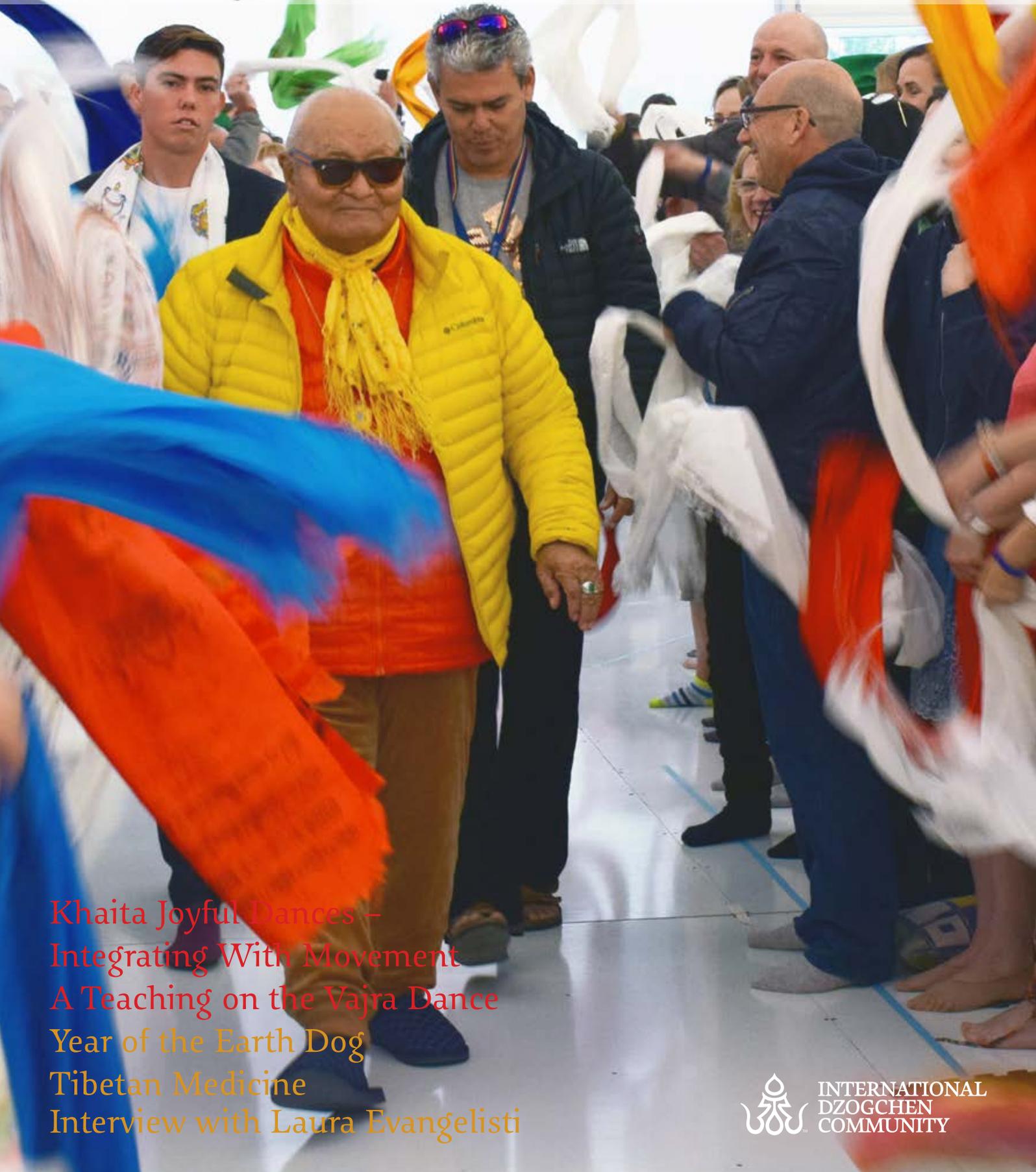


THE MIRROR

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*Khaita Joyful Dances –
Integrating With Movement
A Teaching on the Vajra Dance
Year of the Earth Dog
Tibetan Medicine
Interview with Laura Evangelisti*

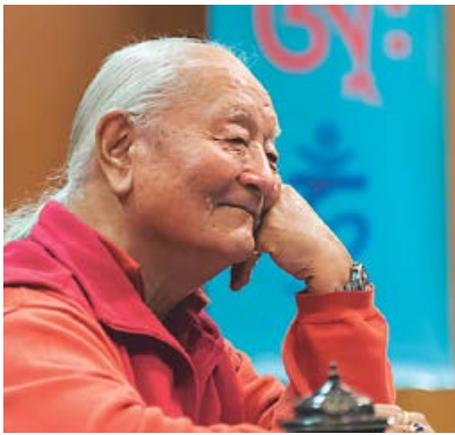


Photo: P. Fassoli

2018

March 23–30, 2018
Santi Maha Sangha 1st Level
Training

Africa, Reunion Island
May 25–27, 2018
Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat

France
June 1–3, 2018
Paris Retreat

Italy
June 8–12, 2018
Merigar West Retreat

Germany
June 22–24, 2018
Munich Retreat

Austria
July 13–15, 2018
Vienna Retreat

Russia
July 19–23, 2018
Kungsangar North Retreat

Worldwide Transmission
July 21–22, 2018
Anniversary of Padmasambhava

Romania
July 27–31, 2018
Merigar East Retreat

Italy
August 10–14, 2018
Merigar West Retreat

China
September 3–6, 2018
Visit to Gyal-mo Tsha-wa Rong

September 8–13, 2018
University Work

September 15–17, 2018
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Yunan, Dali Lake
September 21–23, 2018
Dzogchen Teaching Retreat

Beijing
September 29, 2018
Visit to Jamyangling

Yichun, Jiangxi Province
October 4–8, 2018
Samtengar Retreat of
Longsal Longde

October 11–15, 2018
Samtengar Retreat – Teaching and
practice of Guru Amitayus's Long
Life Practice with Chüdülen

Hong Kong
October 27–29, 2018
Initiation of Zhitro Korde Rangdrol
of Changchub Dorje

Worldwide Transmission
November 2, 2018
Anniversary of Adzom Drugpa

Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur
November 2–4, 2018
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia Retreat

more dates on www.melong.com

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Front cover: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu entering the gönpa at Dzamling Gar on Losar, Tibetan New Year, February 16, 2018.
Photo by Lucian Maidanuc
Back cover: The Wood Dogs on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's table at Dzamling Gar. Photo by Lucian Maidanuc

An Update on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Health

Half way through the Mandarava Drubchen held at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, in February 2018, our dear Master contracted the heavy flu that was going around the retreat and retained some additional complications that required him to stay in the hospital for a few weeks.

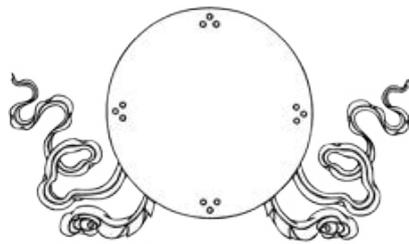
He has been under the excellent care of a pool of specialists in urology, nephrology, internal medicine, and cardiology, all coordinated by a very respected doctor known at the national level.

Rinpoche is now at his home in Dzamling Gar resting and recovering with two professional nurses taking care of him 24 hours a day in coordination with the doctors.

Rosa Namkhai, Thubten Rabgyi and others have also been tirelessly taking care of our Master throughout all this time and we are so grateful for their infinite dedication.

We wish for Rinpoche's speedy and complete recovery. ©

The Mirror



A Message from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Personal Assistant, Thubten Rabgyi

At the end of the morning practice session on Wednesday, February 28, 2018, during the Mandarava Drubchen at Dzamling Gar in Tenerife, the Gekö of Dzamling Gar and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's personal assistant, Thubten Rabgyi, gave an update on Rinpoche's health and added a personal message to those present and those following the retreat by webcast.

Iwould like to share with you is some of my personal feelings about Rinpoche. We know very well that he is 80 years old according to the Tibetan calendar, 79 (according to the Western). We also know that his health is not very good. This is my personal feeling, from my heart. Last year he couldn't travel everywhere on his teaching schedule because he was sick and had to cancel it.

This year he made a very intensive schedule and, for me, it is kind of impossible for him to do that. Why did he do this? He feels very heavy responsibility. He feels he has the responsibility for the Dzogchen Community, maintaining it everywhere in the world. The Lings and the Gars send messages and emails to him saying that they are sorry that he couldn't come (last year) but are happy that he can come (this year) and they are waiting for him. When he receives these kinds of emails, he feels that people are waiting for him and that he must go. He is making a sacrifice. We should know that.

Now the Dzogchen Community must understand this and not give this kind of feeling to him. We should come to Rinpoche to receive teaching. We should show him that we really have the responsibili-

ty to maintain the continuation of this Community, economically, financially, and practically. We can show him. We can take care of the Community, not depend on him. This is something we really have to do. This is my feeling and people must know that individually, particularly the International Gakyil, the local Gakyils, the Santi Maha Sangha teachers, the Vajra Dance and Yantra Yoga instructors, etc. We have a lot of responsible people (in the Dzogchen Community) and many senior students of Rinpoche.

Rinpoche has been building this Community for more than 40 years. Now it is time for him to rest and we should take the responsibility, not waiting for him to come to us. We should come to him to receive teaching. This is something we have to do otherwise I feel that it is really impossible.

Of course all of us have this kind of feeling that he is beyond everything, he is beyond today and tomorrow, beyond life and death, right or wrong, beyond everything, he is like space. But this is another question. We are talking about Dharamakaya, Sambhogakaya. But he has a human form, he is Nirmanakaya and we want to see him physically. We want to listen to his oral transmission from his mouth. We want to enjoy with him. We want to touch him. We want to see his human form, and the human form is material. We must work with that. It doesn't matter how much capacity he has, there is the limitation of his body.

He wanted to finish this two week retreat (Mandarava Drubchen) without interruption, I'm sure, but we can see it wasn't possible. So this means we must take responsibility in different ways and every individual person, responsible people, should think how to show to Rinpoche how they can take responsibility for the continuation of this global community in the world. Otherwise he feels that he has this responsibility and makes a heavy schedule, follows that, and he has these continuing problems. That is not good for anybody, particularly for him.

So thank you very much. I wanted to share this. This is just from my point of view. It could be 100% wrong or it could be right, but we have to think very well. We know now how the situation is. Thank you. ©



Khaita Joyful Dances – Integrating With Movement

Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, December 31 afternoon, 2017

Good day for everybody and everywhere. Today while we are waiting for the coming New Year we are going to do some Khaita Dances. But before we start, I want to explain just a little about Khaita. I have already told you what Khaita is and how important it is for practitioners of Dzogchen. We are aspiring to be Dzogchen practitioners and in this case what is most important is that we integrate all the aspects of our body, speech, and mind in contemplation. The number one method for integration, the most effective, is to be present. If we try to be present when we dance Khaita, this is practice. It is much better than sitting somewhere for one or two hours chanting some mantras, because it is directed to the state of contemplation.

All of the Tibetan songs I have chosen [for the Khaita dances] are particularly meaningful for protecting Tibetan culture. In order to learn these dances, first of all we have the related transcriptions [of the songs] which I have included for Westerners because we know very well that you cannot read Tibetan. The transcriptions I made are not different for each country. For example, in Dharma centers each different country does transcriptions in their own way. However, it doesn't correspond to the Tibetan pronunciation. In Tibetan if you do not pronounce correctly you can be misunderstood. Particularly when we do the Rites of the Guardians, we read in Tibetan what we are offering, what we are asking for, what actions we are requesting, so it is important we pronounce the words very well. There are many words in Tibetan that have a similar sound, but when you listen carefully they are different. For example, *phag sha* means the meat of a pig, but a very similar word, *pha sha*, means meat of the father. So you see, if we pronounce in a wrong way, the guardians may misunderstand. So it is very important that we pronounce in a perfect way.

Then some Westerners say, "Why don't we translate prayers into the English language for English people, into the Italian language for Italians, and so on?" For prayers it does not work that way. Take, for example, the Seven Line Prayer. Originally they were words coming from Guru Padmasambhava. Then for centuries and



Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

centuries important Tibetan practitioners used them. They used them in the Tibetan language, not in English or Italian, and even if it had been necessary, they wouldn't have known [how to translate them]. So this is one reason. When we do prayers, invocations, etc., it is very important that we use them in Tibetan because this is related with the blessing of the lineage of all of those practitioners. Secondly, when something is translated it becomes very strange.

I remember many years ago when we were doing the Chöd practice one of my Italian students said, "I've translated the Chöd practice that we are doing into Italian, so we can sing it in Italian." Then I listened. It sounded really very strange, even though he had succeeded in creating the same rhythmic structure as in the Tibetan (he did a lot of work!). The words said, "Oh, now we become a wrathful dakini; now we cut off our head; now we put it in the *kapala* on the top of three skulls." Maybe that is the meaning in the practice, but in Tibetan when we do this kind of practice, there is a way of using the meaning that we can understand, and when we listen we don't feel that strangeness. This is the reason that I don't like it when you translate and sing things in a Western language. First of all, it is not connected with the transmission, and secondly, it doesn't work that way.

For that reason when I started Khaita I tried to transcribe the pronunciation of all the words in a universal transcription for everyone in the Dzogchen Community. I did not invent it because I am not that kind of expert in language. When the government in



East Tibet asked Kangkar Rinpoche and me to teach Tibetan language to Chinese officials working in offices, at that time we had two groups. One group of thirty or so students came from Beijing and already knew Tibetan language quite well, having studied it at university. They only needed to advance to a higher level with the help of Kangkar Rinpoche. This was the first class. Then, in the second class, I had more or less 130 students who were completely new to Tibetan. I had no experience in teaching language in that period. There was also a professor from Beijing with great expertise in language working with these students whose name was Yüdachao. He made a very precise transcription of Tibetan pronunciation in Latin characters and for many days I studied this and learned to use and write the Tibetan sounds using these characters. Then later I prepared all the teaching and study books for my students using this form of transcription.

I remember this transcription very well and when I started the Dzogchen Community, I used this transcription for all practices like Chöd and so on. A few sound combinations were missing since Yüdachao had developed the system for the general language only, so I invented and added a few symbols for words that are used in the teachings to make it more complete. To learn this transcription it is sufficient to study it for two or three days, then you can understand everything you need to apply. But you always have to practice to be able to read well.

Later, when I started collecting Khaita songs, I thought that this system of transcription would also be very good for learning and training. When we sing we can understand the meaning a little and the reason that we are singing. And above all, day by day, we can learn how to use the transcription system. This becomes very useful for many practices that we need to use that are in the Tibetan language. This is the reason why I prepared the first book of 108 songs, the same as the number of beads on a *mala*.

Later I prepared a second book, containing 180 different Tibetan songs. About a third or a quarter of these songs already had corresponding dances, so we can learn how Tibetans dance and sing. Some of these songs have a wonderful meaning but no dance, so I asked our expert dancers to try to invent some new dances. Why did I collect this second set of 180 songs? When I started to research ancient Tibetan history, I discovered that in order to calculate how many years had passed from the beginning of Tibetan history, Tibetans use a specific way of counting years that is part of Tibetan elemental astrology. For example, a short cycle consists of twelve years and is represented by twelve animals, as you already know. This is expanded into a cycle of sixty years (combining the twelve animals and five elements), called *metreng*, which is the more official cycle. Then, when we combine the *mewa* (9 numbers with the animal-element cycle) there is a greater cycle of 180 years called the *mekhor*. This is a very important method to understand how many years have passed.

So I wanted to do this second book equal to the quantity of a *mekhor*, a *mewa* cycle. I transcribed all of these songs for Westerners, put them in Tibetan, and also in translation. But if you only read the transcription and the Tibetan you won't be able to sing them, because the singers always add many ornamental words to make the songs sound more beautiful. Most of these words are not writ-

ten, so you have to listen, understand, and add them. Then, I also developed a kind of system of symbols indicating the way to sing and if you look at the book you can understand them. I prepared everything very well.

In the last years we have had so many new dances – like the ones we were dancing the other day – that are easier and simpler. So I am preparing a third volume: about 72 songs are already ready, but even when I am no longer working on that, if we hear some interesting new music with dances, then I want to add these. For that reason I have set up the possibility for [this other group of] 180 songs, of which we already have 72. We can use this group and add to it for many years.

This is not working directly with Dharma teaching like Dzogchen. Nor is it like researching Tibetan history, which is also very important. But I understood it is very important that people learn and for that reason I have dedicated myself day and night working with transcriptions and so on. It takes me a long time to prepare just one of these songs, but I dedicate my time. However, when I dedicate myself and people are not interested then I feel upset. Why don't they understand how much I am working and that we are singing when there is the possibility? This is something very useful that people should understand. In general, almost every day we have Khaita: we sing one hour and then we dance. This is above all for practicing in reading the transcription. And then we can also understand the real sense of these songs. That way we are developing Khaita.

As I already said, we are aspiring to be Dzogchen practitioners. In Dzogchen practice we need to integrate everything, we don't focus on the principle of rules or systems like in monasteries. In monasteries we cannot dance, we cannot sing, and if you do then they ask you to purify that. I remember one Tibetan who came to my retreat and asked me, "But how is it possible: you are in a Dharma center, a spiritual path, and you are singing and dancing, which are forbidden in the monastery!" I replied that our way of seeing is different from that of the monasteries. This is an example: if we have knowledge of how we should integrate, then integrating with movement is one of the best methods. When we integrate with movement physically, that is also related to the energy level, to the breathing, and to the mind as well.

So it is a very simple practice. We consider it a kind of practice, it's not just that we enjoy and dance. Of course, when we dance together with people we know, it is nice. I don't feel bad when I am with many people and we are doing something. I enjoy it. But sometimes I can't enjoy because of my age and the condition of my health. When it is possible I do my best for integrating as much as possible. So singing and dancing are a very good method for integrating. How do we sing? We sing with the breathing, with the melody, and this is related to our energy level. We can also learn and understand a little the language of music because in Tibetan there are many words related only to dance, for example.

When I started to write down the Dance of the Vajra I did not know a single word of Tibetan terminology related to dance. Then little by little I looked in Tibetan books, and also thought how it should be, and I developed the book of the Dance of the Vajra. To-

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day when I see the books on the Dance of the Vajra I am surprised about how I succeeded in writing down all these things! For example, when I learned a dance in a dream sometimes I did not remember everything precisely. Then I felt sorry that I couldn't write it down. And when I felt sorry, later I would have another dream repeating it, or someone would dance with me while I was learning and would explain in detail how I should dance. That way I developed a lot. In particular, in Tibetan books there is a Kalachakra dance. It is not an ordinary dance, but with a mantra, a long mantra, and is also called a Vajra Dance. So when I was writing down the Dance of the Vajra I searched for this Kalachakra book. I had never studied it but I remembered that it existed. And when I was dancing and had to turn to the right and left with different kinds of turnings, I found and learned the names for them with this book.

Later, when I was writing down the Khaita songs, some of these songs explain how the melody is, how the movement is, etc., and I started to understand many different terms I had never heard before. This is an example of how we developed slowly slowly. And when we thought that we needed to make these Khaita dances available, we called them 'Khaita'. *Kha* means "space"; *khai* means "of space." For example, my name is Namkhai, not Namkha, so it means "of space" or "of the sky." Then for the word melody we used *ta*. *Ta* is very diffused in Tibetan songs and dances. The full form of the word is *yangta*. At first I did not know that *ta* also means melody because it is written just like the word for 'horse,' so I thought it meant only that. But in songs and dances *ta* means melody. Then I had the idea to create this interesting name, Khaita. Many Tibetans who have never studied dance and are not familiar with that aspect of the meaning, even if they are scholars, do not understand that it means "Melody of space." Instead they think it means "Horse of space" and then they wonder, "What is 'Horse of space?'"

In the word *lungta* [Tibetan prayer flag], *ta* is written in the same way as the word for horse. Everybody knows this term, because *lungta* is very diffused. It doesn't mean horse, but *lungta*. In the center of a *lungta* is a horse. In ancient times, in the pre-Buddhist Bönpo era, the horse was a symbol of energy. When they wanted to say that something was very quick they said "just like a horse." Today we would not use horse, but perhaps an airplane or a rocket going to the moon, for example. They are superior to the horse. But in ancient times the symbol of energy was the horse and it was also related to the four other elements. In the ancient Bön tradition the four elements were not earth, fire, water, and wind. Earth, fire, water, and wind were simply considered dimensions in which there was movement and life.

If you look closely, on a small *lungta* in the center there is usually a horse and in the four directions there are four animals - the tiger, lion, dragon, and garuda - that are the symbols of the elements. In ancient Bön times the garuda was basically the symbol of energy. A flaming garuda is also just like a deity that represents fire, because that animal moves in the dimension of fire. The tiger is the symbol of the air element because tigers live in the forest where there is a lot of wood. In elemental astrology, also in the Chinese tradition, wood corresponds to the air element. The snow lion represents the element of the earth. Tibetans believe that this

animal lives in very high snow mountains, so in the dimension of earth. How does earth correspond with a mountain like Kailash or Everest? We have very soft earth, which then becomes like a rock, and the rock then becomes just like crystal. For that reason very high mountains remain like that for centuries and centuries. And in high mountains the snow always remains as well. So this is the dimension of the earth element. Then we have the dragon, which is considered a water animal. In general in a Tibetan *mandala*, the *chusin* is presented as a powerful water animal, but in the real sense the *chusin* and the dragon are the same principle. So the dragon represents the water element because its origin, its real dimension, is water. Since we all have these elements, we need to develop them, so that is why we prepare the *lungta*. ❁

Transcribed by Rita Bizzotto

Edited by Rita Bizzotto & Liz Granger



A Teaching on the Vajra Dance

Dzamling Gar, December 31, 2017

“Somehow, one day, you can discover your real nature.”

If you learn and understand what is contained in Santi Maha Sangha, you might not become a teacher, but even so, you will become a treasure of knowledge of the Dzogchen Teaching. It is very important to understand that. Related to teaching Santi Maha Sangha, I told you already yesterday, it is the same with Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. Vajra Dance is something very important. In Vajra Dance we are dancing and dealing with the Song of the Vajra.

The Dzogchen Tantra of the Upadesha says that if you received direct introduction in an authentic way, but you remain in doubt, then what can you do to overcome that? You remember how the Teacher gave direct introduction; you repeat this many times by yourself. And somehow one day you can discover your real nature. Then the Upadesha Tantra says, “If you do not discover your real nature, despite a lot of effort, then what should you do?” In this case, it is not sufficient that you repeat the practice you learned with direct introduction. You should do Ati Guruyoga and be in the state of Guruyoga; you should sing the Song of Vajra and integrate with it.

The Song of Vajra is not like ordinary mantras, it's not the same. For example, in higher tantras such as the Kalachakra, there is a root mantra. The root mantra is HAM KSAH MA LA VA RA YA. That is the Kalachakra mantra. Similarly, maybe you follow Hevajra or Chakrasamvara, or any of these kinds of high tantras. To succeed in realizing the development stage, the accomplishment stage, and the non-dual development and accomplishment stage, you need to chant a great quantity of mantras. By doing this, you can get in the non-dual state called Mahamudra. In order to do this, it is very important to know how it works in general with those mantras. But the Song of Vajra is different from those kinds of mantras, which are for chanting for that purpose. It is explained that there are three ways of learning and knowing the function of the Song of Vajra.

First, the Song of Vajra is from the Oddiyana language, or some language of other dimensions. Those who have knowledge, realized beings, for example, can understand a kind of translation of the words. We have a translation of the Song of Vajra in Tibetan done by Longchenpa. This translation shows the meaning of the Song of Vajra – it introduces the knowledge of Dzogchen in a very essential way. This is one way we can study the Song of Vajra.

Another way to study the Song of Vajra is to understand all of the seed syllables. E MA KI RI KI RI, etc, governs our Vajra Body. The Song of Vajra represents our Vajra Body; the principle of the Song



of Vajra is very important for understanding the Vajra Dance. When we learn the Vajra Dance, and when I learned this Vajra Dance in my dreams in the beginning, I understood and also introduced that we need to dance on a Mandala.

There is a Mandala that is a symbol of the globe where we live. There is also a Mandala of the solar system, which is a little bigger and is also danced on a little differently. Then there is an even bigger Mandala of the universe. So then we know how the Mandala corresponds to our existence. You see in the center of the Mandala, there are six or seven circles of different colors. After the circles there are many triangles and corners, etc. In particular, the triangles and corners are even more developed in the Solar System Mandala. The Mandala of the Universe is very big. All of this is in our chakras and in our physical body. We have a chakra of the head, chakra of the throat, chakra of the heart and other chakras. These chakras correspond to the circles in the Mandala.

Also we can understand that in the globe, for example, we have the north and south. We have the Northern Hemisphere with a North Pole and we have the Southern Hemisphere with a South Pole. So there are two different dimensions. When it is summer in the Northern Hemisphere, it is winter in the South. We know very well these situations are different. But we know only the idea of this kind of difference intellectually, not concretely. When we are dancing on the Mandala of the Vajra Dance, however, we can understand this completely.

For example, in our dimension, everything is more developed in the North. Our official calendar represents the North more than the South. We say, “Oh this is the period of the Natale - Christmas time” and we know there is falling snow. People who are from the Northern Hemisphere don't need any effort to imagine this – there is always snow at Christmas. In the Southern Hemisphere, however, when they have Christmas, people put out fake snow as a deco-

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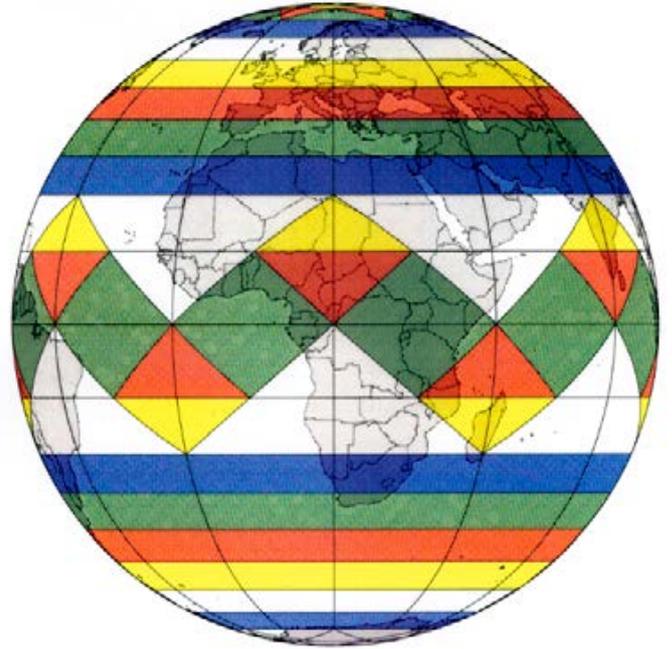
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ration. It's the same moment, but why don't we have two different calendars for the two different experiences in these dimensions? Today we cannot do that because the North dominates the South. We can understand that also the Mandala is configured with a Northern and Southern Hemisphere. Each Mandala has a Northern and Southern Hemisphere can fit on top of a globe. The center of one Mandala is the North Pole, the center of the other Mandala is the South Pole and where they meet is the Equator.

All of this is very important in order to understand our individual condition and this is all related with the Mandala. In the Dzogchen Teaching it is very important. Why is it important? It is important because you know very well when we have knowledge of Dzogchen, beyond doubt, and we have discovered our real nature, what should we do? We integrate. So how do we integrate? I told you already that it is not so easy to integrate on the material level. So we have knowledge of the Vajra Mandala when we are dancing, little by little, step-by-step, we are walking. What does it mean? It is a method of integrating and in that way we can develop much more with the Mandala. This is the second argument and it is very important.

This is the third argument. The Mandala, which is a symbol of chakras, OM A HUM SVAHA, is all governed by seed syllables. Each of these chakras contains secondary chakras for the head, for the throat, etc. All are dominated by the seed syllables of the Song of Vajra. For example, when we are pronouncing E MA KI RI KI RI, there is a shorter sounding KI RI, then a longer sounding KI RI. Our bodies have a right and left side – solar and lunar. We have a front and a behind. Also this is connected with solar and lunar. So for that reason, there are longer and shorter sounds. It is not necessary that we do visualizations for that. We are not working with a Vajrayana type situation of the Teaching where we create something. We don't need to create anything – it already has its real nature. We need to understand and discover that nature. There is this outer Mandala and there is also the Mandala of our inner side. It is not sufficient that we understand this intellectually, in a dualistic way. We are here and something else is there – that is dualistic vision.

You remember, any kind of real realization, high level realization, is with integration. I've explained the teaching of the Four Visions before. I can't explain it all again now, but it is necessary I explain the First Vision to you. In the Dra Thalgyur Tantra it says that for someone fortunate to be able to follow the Dzogchen Teaching, even if it is outer, not the inner teaching, but the Teacher has knowledge of *chönyi ngönsum* (chos nyid nmgon sum) – *chönyi* in Tibetan means "dharmata" in Sanskrit, or how the real nature of the mind is, *ngönsum* means a concrete experience, what we see, we hear, or we have some experience of through the senses - that Teacher should introduce what that is to the students. It is not said in the Dra Thalgyur Tantra that we need to keep this secret. It is very important that when we have *chönyi ngönsum*, when we really have that experience, then we have a very high level realization compared to experience related to Sutra teaching.



When we are following Sutra Teaching, first we say, *tsoglam* (tshogs lam), which means Path of the Accumulations. We start with the lower *tsoglam*, then medium, and then we arrive at the higher one. After, we advance to what is called *yor lam* (sbyor lam), which means the Path of the Application. First there is *drö* (drod), then *tsemo* (rtse mo), then *zöpa* (bzod pa), and then *chökyi chog* (chos kyi mchog). We are going slowly, step-by-step. By doing practice we are having experiences and we are getting in that level. The third level is called *zöpa*, which means something like patience. This means something like a Bodhisattva in Sutra Teaching. Until we arrive in *zöpa*, this third level of the Mahayana Sutra, we are not free from *samsara*. Normally we are just like a bird's feather floating in space; whether we go west, east, etc., depends on the wind. Here the wind is an example of our karmic potentiality. But when we are getting in this third level called *zöpa*, Sutra Teaching says that we will not be reborn in the three lower states. So we will not be reborn in the realm of the animals, or with the *preta*, hungry ghosts, and we will not be reborn in hell. So this is the concrete fruit, the effects of the three root emotions. So, in Sutra Teaching, this means the arrival at a little higher level, but in Dzogchen Teaching, if you have knowledge of the *chönyi ngönsum* and you are getting in that state, then you will no longer fall down to the three lower states. But just because you aren't reborn in the three lower states doesn't mean that you are realized. What it does mean is that you have the possibility to follow the Teachings and develop.



So how is *chönyi ngönsum* explained and how can we have that experience? For example, in the evening, during sunset, you can look at the sunrays. The sunrays are not strong in that moment. It's not necessary to look directly at the sun, but rather you gaze a little lower at the sunrays and you look at the sunrays with half closed eyes. And in these rays there will be many manifestations of many *thigles*; *thigles* of the five colors, sometimes bigger, sometimes smaller, sometimes not only one, can be many. It doesn't matter. Something is manifesting in front of us, but it doesn't mean the *thigle* is physically there. We might think, "Oh this is a production of the sunrays!" Sunrays do not produce the *thigle*. Sunrays are only the secondary cause. The real cause is that everybody has the condition of the self-perfected state of *lhundrub* (lhun grub). So that qualification, which is related to our nature of mind, is now manifesting something like an object. For example, when you are seeing this, its potentiality, you will no longer transmigrate to the lower states. This is called *chönyi ngönsum*. You can have this experience. It's not necessary to gaze only at sunsets, it's also possible when you are looking into the sky, you can have this experience then also.

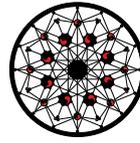
In the real sense when we are developing the four states, which are called the Four Visions, when we arrive at the fourth level called *chöze* (chos zad), in this state when we are dying, our body will no longer remain. Instead, our body manifests the rainbow body. Why is it manifesting this way? You remember that when we are introducing *chönyi ngönsum*, when you are seeing *thigles* in the sunrays, this is the potentiality of your real nature. And when you are gazing in this *thigle*, and your practice is developing slowly, slowly, you will have the capacity to integrate your impure body production of the five elements. When you succeed to integrate into this *thigle* when you are dying, you will manifest the rainbow body.

In general, in traditions like the Sakyapa and other traditions, sometime people say, "Oh this is a rainbow body, that is a rainbow body." Even some practitioners may have their physical bodies disappear and they consider this a rainbow body. But that is not a rainbow body. In the Dzogchen Teaching this is called *lū dultren du tengpa* (lus rdul phran du denga pa). That means the physical body is entered into *dultren*, very, very, very tiny atoms, and we cannot see it. Someone is at a high level of the practice and they can reach the state of the *dharmakaya*. That is the reason it is becoming that kind of *lū dultren du tengpa* and rainbow means it is active, something concrete manifests. You see there is a painting of the Guru Padmasambhava and at the center of the Guru Padmasambhava there is a small *thigle*. From this *thigle* the lights of five colors come out, bigger and bigger, until the dimension of the Guru Padmasambhava has become filled with this light. Most people like this thanka, or painting, very much. This painting was originally painted by someone in the Sakyapa tradition. But whoever painted this has no knowledge of the rainbow body. The rainbow body isn't like that. The rainbow body means our physical body, for example, our nose, our face, our front, everything is integrated with the five elements.

Some people may have the capacity to see someone who has attained the rainbow body. The nature of our bodies, when they are truly integrated with the five colors or five elements in the rainbow body, appear in just the same way for these people as our bodies would appear in the physical or relative dimension. For example, the rainbow body of Guru Padmasambhava would appear to someone with sufficient capacity just as he is, and without his dimension being filled the five colors. So it is very important you should know that. Nobody knows if some one of you will realize the rainbow body. When the rainbow body manifests, only the hair and nails remain. Everything else disappears. This is very good because if there is no body, then there is no problem with the police! So why then do the hair and nails remain? It is because these are the two aspects of our impure physical body. Hair is always growing. We are cutting it again and again, and still it is always growing. The impure aspect of our physical body is like that. It is the same with the finger and toenails. So this is the symbol of the impure. This is very important to understand. If you realize the rainbow body then you have no problems! Ok, now we finish and dedicate merits. ☸

Transcribed and edited by Edmond Hayes

Tibetan editing with the kind assistance of Jim Valby



12.00–14.00 – lunch break

14.00–16.30

International Coordination Committee (ICC)
Meeting of all Gakyil Members of the International Dzogchen Community

Schedule for the AGM/ICC

The International Dzogchen Community will have its Annual General Assembly and International Coordination Committee meetings, hosted by members of the International Gakyil in Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, on April 1.

April 1, 2018, Dzamling Gar Gonpa
10.00–12.00

International Dzogchen Community Annual General Meeting (IDC AGM)

Agenda:

- Registration of voting members
- Presentation of 2017 Annual Report
- Approve 2017 financial statement
- Proposed 2018 IDC priorities and budget
- Overview of IDC's History and Proposed Mission for 2018
- International Gakyil Succession
- Approve 2018 IDC mission and budget

Proposal of topics to discuss:

- The role of Gar gakyils in coordinating the Ling Alignment process.
- How to make the Affiliation Agreement Requirement for new Ling gakyil members less complicated
- Membership renewal process – how to make it easier for members
- Educational programs for Gakyil Members – what we would like to improve in the field of communication and collaboration in IDC
- Open Question & Answer session. ©

First Meeting of the Founders and Directors of the New Foundation

Oliver Leick

Director of the Shang Shung Foundation
International Institute for Tibetan Culture

On March 13–14, 2018, Carlos Ramos and Nancy Simmons, who with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu constitute the three founding members of the new foundation, Alex Siedlecki, the director of MACO (Museum of Asian Art and Culture, in Arcidosso, Italy), Oliver Leick, the director of the Shang Shung Foundation, Marco Baseggio, certified Yantra Yoga instructor for ten years and the lawyer of the new foundation, and Pia Bramezza, the financial director of the Dzogchen Community at Merigar, Italy gathered in Venice for a first meeting.

Ester Escudero, the fifth director of the new foundation, could not attend this meeting in person but was connected with us via Skype.

The meeting was extremely harmonious and we discussed various aspects that need to be clarified.

On April 5, 2018, the three founders will sign the legal documents for the new foundation and after this date we can officially begin work that we have actually already started.



L–R: Alex Siedlecki, Pia Bramezza, Carlos Ramos, Marco Baseggio, Oliver Leick, seated Nancy Simmons.

In the near future we will inform you of precise details and planned activities. ©



School for Tibetan Language and Translation

Ka-ter Project

Do you wish to study Tibetan (colloquial, classical or Tibetan calligraphy) and Drajyor? These are our offers, at Merigar West (Italy), in Florence, London, Venice and online!

Contact us (m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org) also if you want to organize a course at your Gar, Ling or other institution.

At Merigar we will soon have Lobsang Zatul with us (see below), who will give an intensive week on Colloquial Tibetan. Register soon!

Online

2-hour meetings every two weeks (Tuesday or Wednesday) 5–7pm (Italian time)

We will focus on some excerpts from the Tibetan text of “The Precious Vase” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

The “Precious Vase” is a perfect text for the study of Tibetan language. It features numerous quotes from a variety of classical texts linked by passages written in modern literary Tibetan. The topics discussed are ideal for the student to form a basic vocabulary of Buddhist terminology.

Next meetings:

March Tuesday 6 and Tuesday 20,
5–7pm CET

April Wednesday 4 and Tuesday 17,
5–7pm CEST

May Wednesday 9 and Tuesday 22,
5–7pm CEST

June Wednesday 6 and Tuesday 19,
5–7pm CEST

July Wednesday 4, 5–7pm CEST

Students need to be able to read Tibetan and must have basic knowledge of Tibetan grammar. The working language is English. For more info write to

m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org

In Florence, Italy

Introductory Drajyor

14–15 April

The Drajyor phonetic transcription system was devised by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for students who do not know Tibetan to be able to correctly pronounce the Tibetan practice texts of the Dzogchen Community. In this course, the Drajyor system will first be explained in relation to the Tibetan alphabet, drawing detailed examples from commonly used practices of the Dzogchen Community. This course is open to all who are interested in the Teachings and practices of the Dzogchen Community.

The working language will be Italian.

For more info write to gakyilfirenze@gmail.com

At Merigar West, Italy

Tibetan language for beginners – Module 2 continues!

The second module is dedicated to the study of Tibetan Grammar, along with a workshop on calligraphy, *uchen* and *umed*, and exercises. At Merigar we divide this module in a series of weekends, one every month or two. Everyone who has a basic knowledge of the Tibetan alphabet and syllable formation can participate.

21–22 April with Fabian Sanders and Lobsang Zatul

19–20 May (to be confirmed)

23–24 June (to be confirmed)

Colloquial Tibetan

with Lobsang Zatul

23–29 April

A 7 day course dedicated to those who know a little Tibetan and want to deepen their knowledge of the colloquial language, Lhasa dialect, learning simple sentences and the underlying grammatical principles under the guidance of a native Tibetan with extensive teaching experience.

Full price: 155 Euro.

Early bird price by registering before

10 April: 110 Euro

Introductory Drajyor

16–17 June

The Drajyor phonetic transcription system was devised by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for students who do not know Tibetan to be able to correctly pronounce the Tibetan practice texts of the Dzogchen Community. In this course, the Drajyor system will first be explained in relation to the Tibetan alphabet, drawing detailed examples from commonly used practices of the Dzogchen Community. This course is open to all who are interested in the Teachings and practices of the Dzogchen Community.

Full price: 65 Euro

Early bird price by registering before

5 June: 45 Euro

16th Training for Translators from Tibetan

16 August–7 September

Join us and learn to translate ancient texts from the Tibetan tradition. If you are already skilled you can deepen your knowledge, discuss techniques, compare with others, and train your ability in a collaborative environment inspired by the ancient practice of translating in groups. The training for translators from Tibetan is an initiative of the Shang Shung Institute Austria and first started in 2003. In 2018 we will have the 16th edition.

Full price: 255 Euro

Early bird price by registering before

30 July: 195 Euro

For more info write to

m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org

In London, UK

The Introduction to Classical Tibetan Language continues!

Part IV: 16–18 March 2018

It is possible to follow via Skype

And then, some dates in autumn to be confirmed:

5–7 October: Introductory Drajyor

9–11 November: Tibetan Language Weekend

7–9 December: Tibetan Language Weekend

Contact: kathy.cullen@shangshunguk.org

» continued on the following page

The Dzamling Gar Bookstore

Amely Becker

Here at Dzamling Gar we have had a bookshop all along and it has undergone a few changes and developments since its presence in the Gar, roughly from the start of the existence of the Gar in 2012.

I am introducing Alessandra Policreti, who has been managing and running the Shang Shung bookshop for about two and a half years. She says that first of all up until about 2015 the bookshop was run by the Gakyil. It is only roughly in the last six months that the bookshop has become part of Shang Shung again.

The collection has expanded so that titles are now available in English, Spanish, Italian and a few books are available in Russian. Alessandra says that they would like to have more languages available, but right now the space is limited on the premises where the bookshop resides: in the Jyagyip of the Gar below the Cafeteria. This location is only temporary and the hope is that a larger space for the bookshop will be available in the future when the Gömpa is ready to be occupied.

The larger part of the books on display in the bookshop are published by Shang Shung Publications. However, Alessandra points out that she has titles by Rinpoche published by other publishers, she says that they also have books by other teachers available, and I am guessing that they are mostly concerning the teachings or biographies of Dzogchen Masters.



Alessandra in the Bookstore.

Photo by A Becker

Alessandra tells me that the basic big change as far as publication goes is the Spanish side of the publications. Until a few months ago the Spanish section of publications was run by Tashi Pedep in Argentina, which is a very small publishing house connected with the Dzogchen Community. It was set up by Daniel Simonelli in Argentina and Tashi Pedep has been in charge of books in the Spanish language for many years. However, since it is somewhat decentralized and far from Europe and very small, it was not keeping up to date to the same standards especially in terms of quantity of books. And so recently Shang Shung Publications decided to incorporate this Spanish branch. Therefore, from now on, the Spanish language books will also be published by Shang Shung Publications. The first book published not long ago in Spanish has been the Santi Maha Sangha Kumar Kumari book, the Santi Maha Sangha for children. It is available in Spanish, Italian and English as well.

Soon more and more books will be available in Spanish. Up to now there have been fewer Spanish titles available than in English or Italian and a lot of work lies ahead in catching up with this imbalance. It will take some time to catch up. However, it will be done, since after all we are here in Spain and we need to have books in Spanish equally on display.

Alessandra and I discussed the expansion in merchandise offered in the bookshop extending to jewelry imported from Nepal and also some very colorful book covers. This helps the fundraising aspect for the bookshop. If people need to get a little gift before they get back home for example, they can find something here. Also on offer are pens, stickers, pen drives and photos of Rinpoche. The bookshop also offers gift cards, so that if people want to buy a gift for someone, those can buy their own books with that. Gift cards for Kunye Massage offered here in the Gar for the season are also available. CD's and even videos are still sold, although most people these days will get audio and video downloads directly from the website.

A new display of various products of Tibetan Medicine offered in tincture and the traditional pill can be found in the bookshop. Quite a large variety is available with detailed descriptions and explanations for their use. A percentage from the sale will go to Shang Shung.

I notice that the shelves for the books have been renewed and they look quite elegant. Alessandra says that they have decided to change the look to a more professional one. This way people have more space to look around in the bookshop and the books are more protected by sitting on the shelves rather than being stacked on tables. ©

» Ka-Ter continued from previous page

In Venice, Italy

December 14–16

We are also very happy to announce an initiative of the Fine Art Department. Tashi Manno, the well-known artist calligrapher, is coming back to Venice for a weekend workshop on the Traditional Art of Tibetan Calligraphy.

Contact: giovannacarraro@gmail.com

Tel. +39 34 60 291778 ©

Shang Shung Foundation · International Institute for Tibetan Culture

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Updates from the Merigar Library

Margherita Pansa

You may remember our article, An Inexhaustible Treasury of Knowledge (<http://melong.com/an-inexhaustible-treasure-of-knowledge/>) published in The Mirror in October 2015, on the treasure trove of books at Merigar West, and the project of the new online catalogue to improve their availability, both physically and online. So we are back once more to give you some good news on this project.

In summer 2017 the Catalogue of the Tibetan section of the Library was completed, including both the books in traditional Tibetan format (PECHA) and in Western format (DEB). Now, in 2018 the Tibetan journals and newspapers (DUS DEB) have also been included. Please have a look at the catalogue here (direct link for the online version <http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/signin?libraryname=SSI%20ZIKHANG%20LIBRARY>) (<http://opac.libraryworld.com/opac/home.php>), the library name is SSI ZIKHANG LIBRARY, no password required. You can perform searches by title, name, subject etc, but also starting from the TBRC Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center Resource ID (now BDRC, Buddhist Digital



The librarian Margherita Pansa.

Resource Center) and LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number). They are added to the records when available.

And please help us to improve! If you see any mistakes (and I'm sure there are several!) please write to m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org so we can fix them. The librarian is also available for bibliographic research and scanning texts if needed.

We are currently going ahead with the labelling of the Tibetan books in Western format, using different colours according to topic, and we are organizing a work-station to complete the photographic documentation of our more precious and rare texts. As you know, Changchub Dorje's text collection has been indexed and scanned over the years and this work was completed in 2015. The final version only requires some technical updates and a final check. We have also produced a preliminary doc-

umentation on the other manuscripts kept in the library, which we plan to complete soon.

Apart from this, we are always very happy to guide interested people to visit the library and get a glimpse of the Tibetan book world and culture, exhibiting the traditional Tibetan book format, the xylographic techniques used, and the different calligraphic styles found in printed books and manuscripts, as well as the Tibetan and Sanskrit ornamental scripts.

In addition we host courses and study groups, mainly on Tibetan Language, in our beautiful reading room on the ground floor of the library. The reading room is as usual open for readers, with a good collection of books in different languages on Buddhism, Tibet, India, Mongolia, China etc. We also have a nearly complete collection of Shang Shung Publications books in all languages. The catalogue is available locally, but you can make enquiries via email. And if you are staying in Merigar or you are a frequent visitor, many books are available on loan.

All of this has been done to grant access to the library to practitioners, scholars and Community members in general. You are very welcome to use our services! If you would like to offer your ideas, contributions or pertinent books to help us to grow, please contact us. ©



SHANG SHUNG INSTITUTE
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ ИНСТИТУТ ТИБЕТСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ

Stress Management in Tibetan Medicine Seminar

On January 11, 2018, a seminar on Stress Management in Tibetan Medicine with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo was held at the First Medical University of Moscow, Russia, in collaboration with the Russian branch of the Shang Shung Institute.

In the theoretical part the fundamental concepts of Tibetan medicine, such as the 5 elements, the 7 body constituents, the 3 humours and others, were reviewed. In the practical part Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo explained working with stress by means of

external therapies and Ku-Nye massage elements, including explanation of the most important points and methods of dealing with them.

Besides Ku-Nye massage, participants were introduced to the breathing practices from Tibetan Yantra Yoga explained by authorized Yantra Yoga instructor Oleg Tanakov.

We express our gratitude to Dr. Phuntsog, Vladimir Belyaev, Oleg Tanakov and other participants for this interesting and important event! ©



The Genesai Nomad Children's School

Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Yushu – Qinghai Province, China

At an altitude of 3500 meters, the Genesai school is located in the mountains covered with grasslands where nomadic shepherds, mainly women and children, graze sheep, goats and yaks. Here the landscape is magnificent and nature is still untouched.

The province of Qinghai is the second poorest province in China and the fourth largest territory. In rural areas there are mainly Tibetans, but also Hui, Tu, Salar and Mongols, whose average income is about half that of the urban population. The plateau, on the other hand, is exclusively populated by Tibetans, dedicated to sheep farming and small dairy activities. The Tibetan people of the Prefecture of Yushu preserve the cultural traditions of nomadism, based on pastoralism and limited agricultural production. Social practices, rituals and religious beliefs are influenced by it and are intrinsically linked to the local ecosystem.

The rate of illiteracy in Genesai is very high. There are not many schools accessible in the area and nomadic families are unwilling to have their children study in distant cities, partly because of expensive school fees and huge housing costs.

The Genesai primary school was built in 2005 in a grazing area, east of the municipality (Nangqian county) and is the only educational center that respects and passes on Tibetan traditions. It is the only school building within 50 square kilometers and 537 families live in its surroundings. The school goes from the first to the sixth grade and currently has 95 students, 8 teachers and 3 cooks. Genesai students work very hard and their teachers organize various extra-curricular activities to make learning more enjoyable and liven up the children's lives: competitions of traditional



dance and song, of reading, of writing and recitation poems in Tibetan and Chinese, of drawing and calligraphy, and hiking in the mountains.

As of May 2011, ASIA has renovated part of the school and built the second floor of the building for the classrooms. Now the children have new classrooms and new rooms and life at the school has improved significantly. However, the level of education in the whole municipality is still very low and the school lacks a sufficient number of books and notebooks, a library, a canteen and educational workshops to facilitate teachers in the preparation of the program and to enrich lessons.

This is why it is essential to start long distance support for the children of this school through ASIA. In addition to ensuring that the children who are supported have better living and study conditions within the school, the long distance support project actually contributes to raising funds for the improvement of the general conditions of the school, thus benefiting all the children of the area.

Discover the Genesai school. Click on this link and watch the video.

<http://bit.ly/GenYouTM>

If you want to become a long distance parent of a girl or boy from Genesai, write to adozioni@asia-onlus.org or visit our website www.adoptibet.org ©

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Khaita dancers gave fantastic performances of several dances to celebrate Losar at Dzamling Gar.
All Losar photos by Lucian Maidanuc.

Illustration by Ingmar Pema Dechen

Year of the Earth Dog

In Poetry by Jacqueline Gens
2/16/2018

Oh you Earth Dog come
Now happiness wagging
Your familial greeting
That cheers us up as I bend to you my lovely
In display of your canine Sagacity
Ever Loyal –
Ever Reliable.
Follow your keen scent
For sniffing out what's apparent
Bury the bone of your content
Within our breast
For Safe Keeping
Humanitarian sustenance of justice
With your nose to the grindstone
Bark at shadows wrecking havoc at our door
Growl baring teeth to terrify
Cowards who roust our peace
Lift a leg to leave your mark
While yet you enliven our joy lest we forget
The great companion you are
Forever by our side



A group of Dzamling Gar Children present a short play based on a story from the chapter "The Vision" from the Santi Maha Sangha Training for Boys and Girls. Director: Lourdes Velaochaga.



The Khaita dancers with Rinpoche on Losar at Dzamling Gar.

Photo Lucian Maidanuc

The Mandarava Drubchen at Dzamling Gar

February 16–March 2, 2018

Alfredo Colitto

This year's Mandarava Drubchen retreat, starting at Losar and ending at full moon, was divided into two very different halves, reminding us once again of how everything is impermanent.

After a difficult year for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's health, we were all very happy to see the Master in good health the day of Losar, when he presented the new Ati Foundation, with public signing of documents, and illustrated all the progress made in the construction works, mainly the new Gönpa, which is starting to look very majestic and beautiful.

Dr. Phuntsok Wangmo gave a moving speech on the Tibetan medicine program, recalling that this was Rinpoche's idea, and also remembering some people who helped her very much and now are no more with us.

We had a wonderful lunch outside the gönpa, then played many games and there were Khaita dances.

The next day the Drubchen started. Rinpoche gave the *tridlung* of the practice and many additional explanations, and every morning we did the long practice together, with Nina Robinson and Steven Landsberg alternating in guiding it. This year Rinpoche again gave explanations on the various *tsalungs* of Mandarava and we had the great opportunity to practice them with him. Rinpoche also gave the initiation, and that was an added blessing.

So, in the afternoon there was usually no time for another session of practice, because we all needed further clarifications on the *tsalungs*, kindly given by Fabio Andrico and Elio Guarisco, who also managed to ask Rinpoche questions on some key points, and then reported his answers back to us.



Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov



Nina Robinson.

Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

On the 23rd of February, just as we were beginning the practice, there was a big rainstorm, quite unusual for Tenerife South. Then the next day two splendid rainbows appeared above the Gar and everybody was snapping photos with their phones and getting in a celebrative mood, but again we had two whole days of rain and cold and many people fell ill. Even Rabgyi, our tireless gekö, succumbed to the germs.

In the meantime, the Gakyil and all the staff did a very good job of caring for people, distributing surgical-masks and giving cough-relief tea for free at the entrance of the gönpa. We had some more sun and a lot more rain, plus strong winds and weather alerts of every color. Rinpoche got the flu and had to stop coming to the gönpa, then everybody got worried when we knew that he had been taken to the hospital. Anyway, the drubchen went on without stopping

under the lead of Nina, and was dedicated to his health.

Rinpoche couldn't even come for the Worldwide Guruyoga transmission, or for closing the retreat and giving the *lung*s of all the practices. Everybody was saddened and worried by Rinpoche's health condition, but as a community we took on the responsibility to finish what we had started, and everything went on as planned.

That we were able to react well to such a critical situation is surely a good sign. But probably the message to be taken from this unprecedented Drubchen is that if we really want to put into practice the precious teachings we have endlessly been receiving during the last 40 and more years, there is no time to lose.

Let's express our heartfelt wish that our beloved Master will get well soon, and let's do our best! ©

Update on the Dzamling Gar Gönpa

Giovanni Boni, in charge of the Project for the construction of the new Gönpa at the global Gar in Tenerife, gives some information about the ongoing work on the building.



The Gönpa roof at the end of February.

The structure of the roof of the Gönpa has been completed. The finishing work – the insulation and a covering layer with roof borders in copper – should be finished in about a month (beginning of April). The roof will be made of a layer of flat traditional Catalan earth tiles. The tiles will be in orange and yellow and will form the Longsal symbol that will be seen from above.

Once we have finished the insulation and covering layer of the roof, we will do the finishing work on the terrace. This will be done in colored cement with designs. The terrace floor will be insulated underneath and be gently sloping in such a way that the rain water will run off. It will be quite simple because it is a very large area and we cannot afford to do some type of super pavement outside.

However, inside the Gönpa we will have an excellent floor. It will be a special floor in wood made with a particular material (in blue) under the cross pieces that acts as a kind of shock absorber and is used for flooring in places where people dance or do sporting activities. The floor is also quite hard and will not be marked easily. The Gönpa flooring is around 1,100 square meters, large enough to hold at least 1,400 people comfortably.

The Gönpa will be closed with walls and windows, not just above the terrace but also below. All the external landscaping should be concluded – not including the gardens since there is not enough time – in order to comply with building standards so that it can be used by November and can be inaugurated in December of this year.

On the east side of the Gönpa running along the road at the back, where one can access the building by means of two walkways that connect the street to the building, there will be a wall. This will be a closed wall for problems of noise from the street or noise from the Gönpa affect-

ing the houses above. The wall will run for almost the whole length of the building while the other three sides of the building will be transparent, in glass, and open towards the sea.

As far as the timing goes, we expect to complete the roof with all the finishing in a month to a month and a half. Mounting the doors and windows will take four to five months to complete and should be ready by the end of August/beginning of September.

We have sufficient funds to conclude this first phase of the project but in order to complete construction on the entire building we will have to raise more funds.

The inauguration will be held on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's birthday, December 8, 2018. If someone would like to organize this event in the role of project manager they should get in touch with me bonig1950@gmail.com. ©



The roof beams before being erected.



Detail of the flooring.

Dzamling Gar Accommodation Program

Margarita Supe, General Manager

Many people have already had the experience of staying at Dzamling Gar, the global Gar of the International Dzogchen Community in Tenerife, Canary Islands, for a particular retreat or for a longer period of time. The possibility of living at the Gar is a very special and precious gift given to us by our Master,



Aerial view of Dzamling Gar courtesy of Palzom Films.



Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

Chögyal Namkai Norbu. Considering this, we can participate in various activities and retreats at Dzamling Gar, but also contribute to its maintenance and development. For example, the residential service enables all Dzogchen Community members to contribute financially and support the entire Dzamling Gar project.

What does it actually mean to reside at Dzamling Gar? All members of the Dzogchen Community can contribute to the project with three considerations: awareness of our own and others' circumstances, respect for others, and the intention to participate according to our individual capacity. Basically, what is the meaning of these three? On the first day of the Mandarava Drubchen, February 2018, Rinpoche spoke about the Dzogchen Community as a family. This helps us to understand what Dzamling Gar and all its facilities really is to us. If we are family, then we should see the Gar as our home and be responsible for keeping it going. We should not see these

houses as hotels or holiday rentals in Tenerife. The Gar is a place where we can receive the Teachings, practice them, develop ourselves, collaborate and, most importantly, stay near the Master. Everything we see at Dzamling Gar was created and is maintained by Dzogchen Community practitioners according to Rinpoche's vision. So it does not work as a hotel system - we all participate and offer what we can.

Dzamling Gar has thirteen houses, and most of them can accommodate members of the Dzogchen Community. Each house relates to a particular Gar. Practitioners can reside in the following houses: the two Dzamling Gar houses, the houses of

Tashigar, Samtengar, Merigar, Kunsangar, Tsegyalgar and Namgyalgar, and the Tibetan Medicine house. Their location is shown on the map.

There are several types of accommodation. Each house offers four or five apartments that have been planned differently, but almost all of them have one or two bedrooms. Some rooms have one, two or three beds, and some houses have just dormitories with beds. The recommended contribution covers the expenses for construction, furnishing and maintenance of the houses. The amount of this contribution depends on the season - when Chögyal Namkai Norbu stays at the Gar and gives

Contacts for Reservations

House #3 Dzamling Gar

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House #5 Tashigar

Clara Bordeu clarabordeu@gmail.com

House #6 Samtengar

Elena Kalistova samtengarhouse@gmail.com

House #8 Tibetan Medicine

Lesya Cherenkova tibetan.medicine.house@gmail.com

House #10 Merigar

Salvatore Pironti dzamling.house@dzogchen.it

House #11 Tsegyalgar

Domink Niceva dzamling.house@tsegyalgar.org

House #12 Kunsangar

Lesya Cherenkova kunsangar.house@gmail.com

House #13 Namgyalgar

Thuy Nguyen namgyalgarpom@gmail.com

General Manager

Margarita Supe, dzamlingghoa@gmail.com

<https://dzamlinggar.net/en/contact-with-manager>

Tibetan Medicine Programs

Dzamling Gar 2018

Carl Stepath

This article is about Tibetan Medicine programs that Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo taught in Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, at Dzamling Gar in 2018. These teachings were organized and sponsored by the Shang Shung Foundation (International Institute for Tibetan Culture), and are part of a continuing program to develop and increase the availability of Tibetan medical healing techniques around the world. Tibetan Medicine, is known as *Sowa Rigpa* in the Tibetan language (meaning “science or wisdom of healing,” ATMA), and is an ancient form of natural medicine indigenous to the Tibetan people. It is still practiced today throughout Tibet, the Himalayan regions, India, Mongolia, Siberia and in the Western world.

I have all ready written about the Kunye massage training course that took place from January 19–21, 2018, so now I will



Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo, the International Director of the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine. www.shangshung.org/TMedu/ Photo by I Faccioli

cover the doctor’s other courses and presentations. These were a presentations on Behavioral Awareness as the Basis of Preventive Medicine (which was an open talk with Menpa Phuntsog and Elio Guarisco in the city of Santa Cruz, S.C. de Tenerife, Spain on February 2), as well as Dzamling Gar workshops on Mental Illness according to Tibetan Medicine (Feb 3–4), and Diet and

Behavior according to Tibetan Medicine (Feb 10–12).

The second course taught was a workshop about Mental Illness according to Tibetan Medicine, February 3 and 4. As a person who attended all three workshops, and a few previous workshops with Menpa Phuntsog, I found this course particularly interesting. It started with a lot of basic

» continued on the following page

Teachings, and the rest of the year with smaller events.

Accommodation at Dzamling Gar is available only for active members of the Dzogchen Community. Normally people are asked to stay no longer than 30 days during the retreat season in order to give others the opportunity to be here. It is also possible to stay for a longer period in the low season, and this must be settled with the people in charge of each Gar house.

How to make a reservation? Any member of the Dzogchen Community can reserve accommodation by sending a request to the booking manager of his own Gar. If the particular house is already full, the booking manager forwards the request to the General Manager in order to check availability in other houses. The General Manager can also accept direct bookings, but not more than 14 days before arrival. The contacts of all the booking managers are on the web page of Dzamling Gar, so you can email your booking manager any time. If there are any additional questions, you can also email the administration of the houses.

Residing at the Gar requires certain norms of respect. We should always respect others in terms of their space. This is especially important for the dormitories and for the areas where many people reside. So nobody should make noise from 9 pm. until 9 am. Also we must respect the property of the houses, for it is the property of the Dzogchen Community. As members of one family, we can also contribute when we see that something is missing or not working. Of course we have people responsible for that, but this is not a staff working for salary – these are people that kindly give their efforts, and there are not too many of them. So everyone is welcome to help, especially when something needs to be improved or repaired. If someone wishes to offer karma-yoga to the accommodation program, the General Manager is available.

Then, we must respect security. This is Rinpoche’s home so normally at 9:30 pm. the gates are closed, and the back entrance must be well secured. Regarding water and electricity, we should not use it excessively. During their stay all residents should be responsible for keeping the houses clean

and taking care of all the things and furniture. If there is any damage, please inform the person in charge of the house. Garbage must always be separated, and there are many garbage bins inside the Gar and across the street.

The Dzamling Gar houses still have many things to improve in terms of furniture, facilities and decoration so if you would like to donate for any particular improvements, you can contact the person in charge and the General Manager.

Of course everybody is welcome to Dzamling Gar, even in periods without Chögyal Namkai Norbu’s retreats. In other seasons, especially in summer, you can always come and do personal retreats with special discounts for contributions. The area of the Gar and its surroundings, including the amazing garden, swimming pool, cafeteria and other facilities will make your stay unforgettable. And if we keep our awareness, we will really see Tenerife as the Island of Eternal Spring, with its blue skies and roaring ocean. ©



Photo by I Faccioli



Photo by I Faccioli

» *Tibetan Medicine* continued from previous page concepts of behavioral types, then provided us with a more thorough understanding of Tibetan Medicine and how it relates to basic personality types, and then provided students with various treatments for a limited number of personality disorders.

These are treatments that are available to use through the use of our Dzogchen teachings and knowledge corresponding with what we learned about diet and herbal remedies. With Tibetan Medicine being one of the five major Tibetan sciences, it has a well-developed theoretical foundation and sophisticated diagnosis methods. It also has complex therapeutic treatment methods, and uses a variety of ingredients such as herbs, metals, and other naturally occurring entities in the treatment of various health problems. "Compared to biomedicine, Tibetan Medicine has been particularly successful in its treatment of chronic diseases such as chronic digestive disorders and nervous system problems" (ATMA).

The last program that Menpa Phuntsog taught at Dzamling Gar in 2018 was Diet and Behavior according to Tibetan Medicine, from February 10 to 12. This workshop covered our eating habits and some related effects on our behavior that we can be addressed in our daily life. "We need to know the conditions adverse to life; the primary and secondary causes through which these conditions arise, and the methods to overcome them" (Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, p.17). The concept of health involves a com-

plex philosophy and theory of integration of mind and body, but to make it very simple, we could claim that the basic theory of Tibetan Medicine is to keep four elements in balance: *rLung* (air), *mKhri-pa* (fire), and *Bad-kan* (earth and water). The fundamental causes of the imbalance of these four elements are the three poisons of *Dod-chag* (attachment), *Zhe-sDang* (hatred) and *gTi-mug* (delusion). This indicates that Tibetan Medicine and Buddhist philosophy are integrated to form a unique notion of interdependence of mind, body and spirit as a holistic theory, (ATMA).

When observing situations of ill health, we must look for related situations or reasons for these problems. The immediate causes of imbalance are time and seasons of the year, the influence of spirits, improper diet, and improper behavior. A very brief idea of what can cause these types of imbalances are with regard to a person's improper diet. Where if someone eats excessive amounts of light foods such as pork, goat's meat, goat's milk and yogurt, strong tea, strong coffee, and vegetables they could suffer increased *rLung* problems. If someone drinks lots of cow's milk and alcohol, and eats lots of meat, fatty cheese, nuts, sugar, ice cream, butter, chocolate, and cooks with lots of oil – these can cause *mKhris-pa* problems. When someone eats lots of raw food such as uncooked meat, salad, raw fish, as well as cold water and milk, they could possibly suffer from problems related to *Bad-kan*, (ATMA). There are many such types of relationships, and they

all need to be studied for many years, and a certified Tibetan medicine program can last up to twelve years or so.

Our course was just a short introduction to how some of these processes have an affect on our lives, and has helped many of the students identify some related problems in their own lives. A more complete and sophisticated study of Tibetan Medicine takes many years, and needs to be done at a certified and appropriate educational facility. There is such an institution in Conway, Massachusetts, USA, as well as in Russia (at Kunsangar North, not far from Pavlovsky Posad town, Moscow Region; www.kunphenling.ru/), with more information about these facilities in the following paragraph.

The Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine in Conway, MA was the first Tibetan medicine school established in the West, and it offers a four-year curriculum. The tradition of Tibetan medicine integrates the highest aspects of the culture's science and spirituality into a magnificent system of health and healing. It is an ancient form of natural medicine indigenous to the Tibetan people. The Shang Shung Institute was founded in 1989 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and inaugurated in 1990 by His Holiness the Fourteenth Dalai Lama. There are currently related Tibetan Medical institutes in the USA, Russia, on-line, and the Institute is also currently working to establish another school of Tibetan medicine at Dzamling Gar, in the Canary Islands of Spain. For more information about these workshops and future programs please contact: tibetan.medicine2018@gmail.com, or go to their website at www.shangshung.org/TMedu/. ©

References:

- ATMA (American Tibetan Medical Association, PO Box 278, Conway, MA, 01341 USA; http://american-tibetanmedicine.org/?page_id=10; viewed March 5, 2018)
- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2008, *Birth, Life and Death*, Shang Shung Institute, 58031, Arcidosso, Italy)

Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine Celebrates First Group of Certified Teachers

Adam Okerblom

Introduction

The Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine recently celebrated the certification of four alumni as First Level Teachers of Tibetan Medicine. Rinpoche awarded these certificates at a brief ceremony held at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, during the Mandarava Drubchen retreat, on February 19th, 2018 in the first week of the Earth Dog year.

The Certification Ceremony

The ceremony followed the morning Thun practice, in the Dzamling Gar Gömpa, with hundreds of practitioners from around the world in attendance. A few brief speeches presented the occasion and its significance. Speakers included Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo, Director and Head Instructor of the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine, Will Shea, Shang Shung Institute Board Member, and Matthew Schmookler, Shang Shung School alumnus and recipient of the Teacher Certificate. The Shang Shung alumni recipients included Matthew Schmookler, Yeshe Tsomo, Anasuya Weil, and myself, Adam Okerblom.

The four Alumni approached Rinpoche, offering prostrations, khatas and gifts. Rinpoche personally awarded each of us our certificate, along with warm handshakes and smiles of encouragement. The four newly-certified teachers then offered gifts and thanks to their beloved teacher of Tibetan Medicine, Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo. We offered our heartfelt gratitude for her years of tireless dedication to teaching us the wonderful healing science of Tibetan Medicine. Dr. Wangmo has been our guide and mentor for many years. She is a constant inspiration and a shining model of the conduct, skill and compassion of a true Tibetan Physician.

The ceremony concluded with congratulations and photos with Rinpoche, Dr. Wangmo, the now-certified teachers, and some of our long-time supporters on the Shang Shung team. These included Will Shea and Naomi Zeitz, SSI board members, and Oliver Leick, SSI international director. This was a beautiful occasion for us



Four new teachers from left to right: Adam Okerblom, Anasuya Weil, Matthew Schmookler and on Rinpoche's immediate left Yeshe Tsomo.

Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

alumni. My heart overflowed with joy and gratitude for this time with our teachers, colleagues and our Vajra Family. Rinpoche set in motion the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine from the beginning, and Dr. Wangmo worked for many years to bring the project to life. For me, the chance to shake their hands and offer my sincere thanks in person, was a magical moment!

What are the qualifications for this certification?

My colleagues and I graduated from the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine, among the first-ever cohorts of students. After completing this four-year degree program, we all completed at least three months of clinical internship at the Tso Ngon Tibetan Medicine Hospital in Xining, Amdo region, Qinghai Prefecture. We have since then applied Tibetan Medicine in professional practice for at least five years. These are our credentials in preparation for being authorized teachers of Tibetan Medicine.

What are the practical applications of this certification?

The certificate of First Level Tibetan Medicine Teacher enables us to organize and teach courses on some, but not all, of the teachings of Traditional Tibetan Medicine. First level teachers are authorized to teach courses on the foundations of Tibetan Medicine, Tibetan Medicine basic theory, and the application of external therapies such as Kunye massage, Tibetan moxibustion,

herbal baths and compresses. We will offer courses for the general public and also for medical professionals. We are very excited about the opportunities made possible by this certification.

Conclusion

Tibetan Medicine is gaining recognition and popularity internationally. In this exciting time, the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine's Certified Teachers will help to pave the way for a bright and busy future for Tibetan Medicine. We hold the sincere intention that Tibetan Medicine will become available to many more people in many places. We hope that it may help ease the suffering and improve the lives of many people. With the great potential of this ancient healing science, may we all realize the fruits of long-life, health and happiness! ©

For more information about the School of Tibetan Medicine contact: secretary@shangshung.org

Study Group for Developing the Khalongdorjeikar of the Song of the Vajra

The Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra
Led by Prima Mai at Dzamling Gar 12–18 March 2018

Carisa O'Kelly

For more details about this dance and its origins please see the interview with Prima Mai 'Geometry in Movement' published in issue 137 of The Mirror.

Brief Introduction & Background

In a sense, it is early days, still, for us with the Khalongdorjeikar of the Song of the Vajra. We are not at the point of having courses in this Dance. As Prima Mai has reiterated many, many times, these meetings are study groups where we learn and study together. There is no one authorized to teach this Dance. In fact, Rinpoche has not yet seen what we are doing with it* (see Update below). So, it is important for us to remember we are in a sort of development and discovery stage. Accordingly, what we are doing with the text, on the Khalong, could change, considerably, greatly or only a little. This we do not know yet.

What we do have is permission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the source, for us, of this Teaching; permission to study together, and to work on our understanding of this practice. As mentioned above, Rinpoche has not yet* (see Update below) had the opportunity to review and comment on what we are doing with it, and so we move along with all due haste and care, applying our collective understanding and practice to hopefully arrive at some semblance of what was shown to Rinpoche in his dreams of clarity concerning this Dance. These dreams started around 1991 while Rinpoche was on a personal retreat of Mandarava at Merigar West.

From the earlier Mirror interview. Prima Mai speaking. "In 1997 or 98, Rinpoche gave a photocopy of the text of the root tantra of this Dance of Space to Adriano Clemente and me. It was written in his handwriting, which Adriano is able to decipher, so for many years it was in our hands



Photo by Alexander Popov

but there was no translation. Then in 2013 Adriano and I met in Tashigar North and he decided that he would directly translate the text. So I helped with the diagrams and the digital formatting to help him understand the text, and we went ahead like this. So by 2013, Adriano had more or less translated the root text."

So far these study groups have ranged from a few days to over a week and the locations have been Dzamling Gar, Merigar West and Tsegyalgar East. All of these have been led by Prima Mai, one of the two main international teachers of the Vajra Dance.



Measuring and cutting the tyvek. Photo by Carisa O'Kelly

In order for it to be possible for us to engage in this study, Prima has spent who-knows-how-many hours, based on the root text, preparing diagrams, concise working notes and an elegant and moving Forward, all presented for us in the Shang Shung Publications booklet: Working Notes and Essential Diagrams for the study of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra, available from Shang Shung bookshop.**

This was the 5th meeting of the Study Group. Previous meetings were held at Dzamling Gar, Merigar West and Tsegyalgar East. For some this was their first, others had attended one or more. We began on Monday, March 12th 2018, the second of two days numbered the 25th of the first month of the Tibetan year. (In the Tibetan way of calculating the lunar calendar, sometimes a day (the number of a day) is omitted, and sometimes a day (number) is repeated). As most of The Mirror readers will be aware, the first Dakini Day of the Lunar year is the Anniversary of Ayu Khandro, and a Worldwide Vajra Dance Day. While the "official" Ayu Khandro Day was observed this year on the Sunday the 11th, we can perhaps consider that we began our study group on the second Ayu Khandro Day of the year! In any case, the minor combination, double water, indicated: "Combination of nectar: it is favorable for growth and life, and so forth. It is excellent for doing long-life practice and developing capacity (wang!)."

Preparing the Space

In the weeks prior to the study group a search was on. Finding tyvek (the material being currently used to make the *Khalong* Mandala) on the Island of Tenerife is not an easy proposition. Inquiries were made, and over what seemed like a considerable amount of time and resulted in a what was to become a long chain of phone calls; each one ending in "No, lo siento, pero ¿por que no preguntas en...?"; a roll of Tyvek Housewrap (2.8m x 50m 9kg Material Number: D14496924) was located and shipped from Gran Canaria. Auspiciously, arriving faster

than projected. This afforded the space and time; (in the breaks between the Mandarava Tsa-lung course with Fabio Andrico in the gönpa between sessions, and thanks to everyone cooperating with clearing the gönpa floor between sessions); for the preparation of the material for drawing the Khalong. Then on Sunday, Ayu Khandro Day, Prima painted the outline of the *Khalong* with blue paint, while some practitioners sang the Song of the Vajra.

In 2014, a *Khalong* Mandala, which was later discovered to be too small, was made on the back of a Vajra Dance Earth Mandala. With so many people eager to participate, study and learn (the numbers stayed well above 60 the entire time) this small *Khalong* Mandala proved very helpful, especially for studying the pathway. By the end of the second day, the idea was to make another of these (on the back of an Earth Mandala (here at Dzamling Gar we



After hours t-shirt factory. Photo by Carisa O'Kelly

have at least five Vajra Dance mandalas. In fact, generally the evening Vajra Dance takes place on five (very often) full mandalas.) But wait! In the meantime a better suggestion came up, that we could perhaps make another larger Khalong, like the one we had just made. The secretary took on the (now familiar) task of procuring another roll of tyvek. And Lo! One was located quickly and was even located on the north of the island. It soon arrived and by the 16th, we had another *Khalong* Mandala available. This time the lines were painted in gold.

Day by Day

On the morning of the first day more than eighty practitioners showed up to hear Prima Mai give an introduction to the Va-



Photo by Ans Swart

jra Dance in general, and the Khalongdorjeikar of the Song of the Vajra in particular, explaining many and various details. The Vajra Dance, part of the Upadesha teaching, is connected to the Longsal Cycle

study, stay up-to-date and apply ourselves to help ensure that this is how it is and how it continues.

In 1991, in the Gönpa at Merigar, Rinpoche, while talking to Prima Mai about



Setting up for filming. Photo by Carisa O'Kelly

of Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Prima Mai emphasized that for participating in the study group it is very important: to know well and be confident in both the Song of the Vajra and the Dance of the Vajra.

She spoke briefly about the 3 considerations, which we are familiar with from the Khalongdorjeikar of the 12 As and No Doubt, the second and Continuing, the third statement of Garab Dorje. The Vajra Dance is a practice of continuing in the State of Contemplation.

She talked about how Rinpoche has expressed how the Vajra Dance is to develop, unmodified, unchanged for now and for future generations...and she pointed out how important it is for us, to dedicate ourselves to this end and to take the commitment to

this Dance, said one must do the *tsom* movement very, very well. And so, especially in the beginning days of our study group, we trained in this movement – which is the main movement of this Dance. We spread ourselves all around the mandala, and danced, singing together the Song of the Vajra and dancing each syllable with the *tsom* movement.

Sound

In that same conversation mentioned above Rinpoche "...also emphasized that the Vajra Dance of Space is closely connected to our inner energy, our inner sound." (Working Notes and Essential Diagrams... p.7) And so when we dance together how is the sound? For now we sing to accompa-

» continued on the following page

» *Study Group* continued from previous page

ny our steps and use some external sound as a support. This week we used a variety of sounds, including: a simple beat which sounded like the “tock” without the “tick”, a tabla sound with a drone (not the aerial kind) in the background, a bell and chimes sound, and a multi-layered composition prepared by Adriano Clemente.

There is a precise pathway along which one dances on the *Khalong* and that is one of the first things to study and know well. The Pawo and Pamo dance along this specified pathway, the one mirroring the other. The first days were spent outlining where each step in each line of the Song of the Vajra is located, together with some key foot points. The above-mentioned booklet proved an invaluable tool for studying and learning. Later in day 3, one could see many people on and “off” the *Khalong* studying the steps and Prima and some others who had studied the Dance before, studying the mudras. By the end of the third day we had gone line by line and step by step through the complete Dance and all along the pathway of the *Khalong*, a symbol of the expanse of the universe, internal and external.

On the fourth Day, Prima began to show and explain how (to the best of her understanding at this point) the mudras are. We formed an arc across the expanse of the gōnpa and went step by step, mudra by mudra for the length of it and then back to the top again, as a way to train in this aspect, later applying all or some according to where we were in the progress of our personal study as we danced together on the *Khalong*. In the above mentioned interview with the Mirror, how each couple enters the *Khalong* is discussed, so we won't go into it here.

So, we went along like that, spending a joyful week together at Dzamling Gar on the *Khalong* Mandala which is a symbol of the vast expanse of the Universe. We met twice a day and most people were able to attend both sessions.

On the final afternoon we recorded a group of numbered-t-shirt wearing Pamos and Pamos dancing from beginning to end.* In this way it was possible to see something of how the moments of closer meetings and passings occur (the interval between when each couple of Pamo and Pawo start to dance is a crucial factor in there not being collisions). In addition, we saw how a smooth flow can manifest when we apply the *tsom* movement in various



Practicing mudras.

Photo by Carisa O'Kelly

ways – sometimes wider, sometimes more shallow, sometimes with the body turning more to one side or the other. What a delight!

As we dance on the *Khalong* Mandala we are very much (and can see clearly how we are) interconnected with one another; each step and movement revealing vividly our relationship to all others on the *Khalong*. When we move without doubt, there is an ineffable flow and harmony.

Not unlike the Universe, this week long study group was vast and profound, so it is not possible to encompass even a fraction of what transpired in these few days in a few words. Hopefully this has provided a taste of what it was like.

Next

For those Vajra Dancers who are interested to join, as there surely will be, in the next study group, it is important to note that the next Study Group will NOT start from the very beginning, that is, learning the pathway. This one can do with the aid of the SSP booklet mentioned already. And if one is close to Merigar West, Dzamling Gar or Tsegylgar East, there one can find a *Khalong* to study on and some other students who are also doing so.

Here are some tips that hopefully will serve as an aid to those who wish to start to study with the aid of the Working Notes and Essential Diagrams...

To participate in the next study group it is necessary to have studied and learned the basic pathway taken by the Pamo or Pawo (according to which you identify as). The next study group will NOT include this.

Study Tips

Know very well the Song of the Vajra and the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. Pay attention to the way the syllables and the steps go together in this Dance and the

differences from the Song of the Vajra Dance which we do on the Earth Mandala. Train well in the timing. Go beyond doubt.

*Update

Rinpoche dedicated his time and attention to watching and observing attentively the whole dance which we presented to him in this video lasting around 20 minutes. And soon thereafter we heard that, yes, very good, it corresponds. ... and that he is very content with the outcome.

** to purchase this booklet or download it one needs to have received the transmission of Ati Yoga and transmission of the *lung* of the Song of the Vajra. ©

Outer Rushen in the Saratov Forest in Russia

Anna Kobylchenko

Translation by Ekaterina Miroslavskaya

In summer 2017 I participated in an Outer Rushen retreat. It was my fourth retreat and this time I managed to dedicate the whole two weeks to this practice. The Rushen retreat took place for the sixth time over the last seven years since 2011, each time at the same location – in the secluded forest of Central Russia in the Saratov region. This special place for the practice was found thanks to the efforts and cooperation of communities of practitioners from Moscow, Saratov and Volgograd and thanks to the active involvement of Santi Maha Sangha instructor Gregory Mokhin.

More than one hundred people from all over Russia as well as from Latvia, Turkey and Ukraine could touch the very core of Dzogchen Teaching practicing in the most suitable and favorable way in this practice place. This beautiful and ecologically clean site corresponds fully to the words of Jigme Lingpa (Highest Wisdom), which Rinpoche refers to in his book “The Precious Vase”.

“So, to stop the actions of the body, speech and mind, generated by karma and its hidden tracks, and also to prevent them in the future, (first of all) go to a place where there are no people and where you will be sure, that no one will see and hear you, so as not to violate the seventh tantric commandment about the non-disclosure of secret practices ...”

During his visits to Russia Chögyal Namkai Norbu often talked about the importance of this practice for going beyond one’s limitations. He also mentioned how challenging it might be to find a place where all the conditions suitable and favorable for this practice would be met. From all the Gars of the Dzogchen community, those conditions can only be found at Tsegylgar West although even there it is not so easy to be completely alone and you can still be disturbed by local fauna.

Due to its remote location far away from any settlements, the forest in the Saratov Region proved to be an ideal place for holding the Outer Rushen practices. Quietness, favorable weather, breathtaking sunrises and sunsets allowed us to let go the busy-



ness of the big cities and to surrender completely to nature and to the practice.

Following the responsive guidance of the retreat instructor, Gregory Mokhin, finding ourselves in the most suitable location for this practice, each of us managed to complete our Outer Rushen practice as much in accordance with the words of our Precious Teacher as possible.

Referring to the Teaching, we realize that the Outer Rushen is one of the preliminary practices of Dzogchen which allows a practitioner to discover the Nature of the Mind by virtue of applying its perfected method. However, during the retreat itself we managed to ascertain that this kind of practice is the main practice as well. We all know that the path of Dzogchen is not a gradual path, and by obtaining the Base and by resting in it infinitely we also obtain the Fruit at once.

This year thirty-four participants took part in the retreat, some of them attending not for the first time. Following the tradition, in the very beginning of the retreat all participants talked a bit about themselves and shared the reasons that brought them repeatedly to the Outer Rushen practice in the Saratov Region. All of us felt in a similar way and this is what we wanted to share with all the other Dzogchen practitioners. Participation in the Outer Rushen retreat held in the forests of the Saratov Region is an unique opportunity to truly feel and to strengthen connection with our Teacher and to get real experience from the practice that can become (and for some already has become) the base for developing the state of Contemplation and for obtaining full Realization for the benefit of all sentient beings.

These two weeks deepened our understanding of what Guru Yoga and Dzogchen

Teaching are and the Vajra connection between practitioners. Many participants observed that after the Outer Rushen retreat the circumstances of their lives had improved – there had been less tension in relationships, financial situations had improved and had become more favorable for the practice, and the practice itself had become more vivid. For all this, we are endlessly grateful to Rinpoche whose compassion is boundless.

We also must mention the retreat instructor, Gregory Mokhin. Thanks to his guidance, the participants managed to have valuable experiences and to discover their verity as well as to create the base for deepening the understanding of the Dzogchen Teaching. We are all truly thankful to Gregory for the most precious moments of our practice, which led to strengthening connection with our Teacher. Gregory’s guidance, sincere attention to each participant, his devotion to the Teaching and our Teacher made the time spent at the retreat an invaluable gift for us all. We ask Gregory to continue holding these retreats in the future and we hope that all the circumstances will develop favorably. The practice of the Outer Rushen can be compared to a breath of fresh air. It fills our life in *samsara* with true understanding and appreciation of what our Teacher conveys. Having completed the retreat, we are taking away with us not only valuable experiences but also a significant base for our further practice – continuous connection with our Teacher.

The way we lived during these two weeks of the retreat is a jewel that is mostly unavailable to the citizens of the big cities. The conditions created for the retreat allowed us to immerse ourselves in practice to the fullest. We want to express our

» continued on the following page



» *Outer Rushen* continued from previous page
 deepest gratitude to Marina Luzhina and Alexey Mizinov, members of the Dzogchen community in Saratov, whose altruistic activity helps to hold these retreats year after year with the maximum convenience for all the participants. Marina and Alexey take complete responsibility for preparing the site, for all the supplies, all the transfers to the site, and for organizing the meals. That allows the participants to devote themselves fully to the practice. Moreover, they demonstrate the most important qualities that we can all learn from them – dedication, humility, sincere desire to serve for the benefit of the Teaching and of all sentient beings, and their joy that accompanies everything they do. This approach supports and inspires all of us. A deep bow to you!

This is what Marina Luzhina says about organizing this retreat.

“The Outer Rushen for me is a continuous connection with Rinpoche. I can sense his support in everything we do. I do it all for the benefit of all sentient beings and that makes me happier. Rushen inspires me a lot. When you put your soul into what you do and when it resonates in the hearts of other people it brings an enormous feeling of intrinsic value. Your soul opens up and that is the key for self-realization”.

We would like to mention in this article a project carried out by Marina and Alexey – construction of a retreat center called Dechenling situated in Lopuhovka village. The center is designated mostly for dark retreats but also for any other retreats. Construction of the dark retreats house is expected to be completed by 2018. A fund raising campaign for building the dark re-

treat house is currently running. You can find the details here:

- on the website of the project <http://dechenling.ru/>
- and on a Facebook page www.facebook.com/dechenlingrc/

The story of finding this place is extraordinary in itself. Back in 2010 during the SMS Base Level retreat in Saratov, Gregory talked about the Outer Rushen practices and shared his own experience of this practice. One of the retreat participants suggested visiting his friends’ apiary and checking whether the place is suitable for the Outer Rushen practice. It was decided to go. The owners of the apiary, whose son even received a direct introduction from Chögyal Namkai Norbu, sympathized with our idea to practice at their site. In August 2011 we held our first practice there with twenty-five practitioners. The day we arrived at the site it had just stopped raining and there was a big rainbow above the sunset. We considered it as a truly good sign. Despite the fact that it often rains in summer in Russia, during all the six retreats already held the weather has been very favorable for the practice. For the time of the retreats the rains would stop, the sun would shine during the day and the moon during the night and all that time the blessing of our Teacher would shine above us.

Our first outdoor Rushen retreats lasted for a week. We gained experience in organizing the retreats and living in Dzogchen camps. We realized, however, that one week is not sufficient for letting go of tensions of the big city life and for opening up to spontaneity beyond limitations. That is why the retreats of 2016 and 2017 lasted for two weeks and all the participants observed that it was the most appropriate

time frame for such kind of practice. During these two weeks of intensive practice, we could not only have concrete profound experiences but also recognize ourselves as Vajra brothers and sisters united in our Teacher’s *mandala*. This awareness is highly valuable and cannot be compared to anything else. We wish more of our Vajra brothers and sisters could get this precious experience by attending such retreats.

We hope that comments from the retreat participants will encourage others to attend.

Galina Surmina, Russia, Saransk

“That was already my third Outer Rushen retreat and each of them was rich with memories and experiences. This year the retreat was no exception. It was so warm and joyful. At all times I felt the support and care of my Vajra brothers and sisters. It was truly inspiring. So was the relaxed manner in which tensions and emotions related to misunderstandings of the state of the mind dissolved. I am convinced that it would be impossible to appreciate truly the worth of Santi Maha Sangha simply by reading a book. When I got a real experience of this incredible connection among us, the Sangha, my faith in the Teaching with its inclusiveness and in our Teacher with his perpetual blessing became unshakable”.

Victoria Zosimova, Ukraine, Kiev

“It was a full fourteen days of Korde Rushen practice in the company of thirty-five yogis guided by Gregory Mokhin. Wonderful organization, secluded place, comfortable camping site, showers, WC, spring water and delicious food. And the most important thing was the professional guidance of an experienced instructor, which significantly shortened the path. There were so many nuances and hints, correctly placed accents and so much support. The group work enriched me greatly with experience of reciprocity, helped me to gain more clarity and awareness. That was a strong restart for the body, the speech and the mind. I will definitely be back! Back to my home, to my family. Thank you and see you again very soon!” ©

The Development of Dzogchen Teaching and Vajra Dance in the Baltic States

Galina Bobrovskya

In 1990 I had just become a Buddhist following my friends, and soon after Fabio Andrico appeared in 1991 and showed us Yantra Yoga. It seemed that only our children were good at the exercises, our own bodies were clumsy and did not obey.

The new Buddhist community, which was hardly formed, split into two. In 1992, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu made his first tour through the territory of the former USSR, beginning with Lithuania. After the Vilnius retreat, Rinpoche put a condition about coming to Latvia, and that was that he would only come if the two divided Buddhist groups came together again. Thanks to their leaders, they promised to reunite, and so they did.

It was decided to hold a retreat in a coastal resort town called Jurmala, on the Baltic Sea beach, in a former military sanatorium. The sessions took place in the so-called Winter Garden. From the beginning I felt that this teaching was for me, but it was challenging since there were so many unknown words and concepts, and a lot of running back and forth between the retreat in Jurmala and my job in Riga. While Rinpoche was speaking, sometimes I would fall asleep, and my head would fall on the cactus. I would wake up and listen again with double the attention.

At the end of the retreat I learned that dances on a Mandala exist. Here, the Mandala was drawn with colored chalk on the dance floor outside. The place was round in shape with a tree growing right in the center. There I saw for the very first time Rinpoche dancing with those who came with him: Fabio Andrico, Jim Valby, Martha Heinen, and Naomi Zeitz.

A course on the Dance of the Song of the Vajra was organized, welcoming Adriana Dal Borgo to Vilnius in cold December 1994. It was the first opportunity for me and I was there. Back in Riga, we had enough room to draw a half of the Mandala, and in a hurry not to forget, we practiced the steps we had just learned.

After that there were all kind of things happening. For a while, almost all our Com-



Arriving in Riga.



Jurmala 1992.



Dancing on the Mandala.

munity was dancing, but after some time I was all alone. Then I was lucky and had some support from the dancers from Lithuania. Algis, a Vajra Dance instructor, was at the helm. They would come to dance with me on weekends. After sometime Liga Z. came, and she fell in love with the Vajra Dance. Now there were two of us.

Then some people started to dance in Daugavpils. I went there to dance on weekends, alone or two of us together. And so it was until Alar Kukk, another Vajra Dance instructor, appeared in Estonia, and now all of us, from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, come together at least twice a year in Riga (on Rinpoche's birthday and the International Vajra Dance day) for a Dance retreat, and we enjoy these meetings greatly. New

people come on the Mandala, and some of the "old dancers" came back. All in all, we are not so many as in the beginning, but I'm not alone anymore. The Dances are going on and we try to dance twice a week.

There is a Stupa here near Riga, built by the Drigung Kagyu Community. They invited us to dance at the inauguration of the Stupa and we performed the Dance for the Benefit of All Living Beings. The people there were so touched, they now try to organize the conditions to dance by themselves. It's not there yet, but the process began. And all of this is thanks to our Teacher Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. I'm enjoying these precious gifts and I don't even want to think how my life would be if we had not met in 1992. ©



3rd Annual Tsegyalgar East Summer Sangha Retreat

On Khandroling – The Land of the Dakinis
Saturday July 21–Sunday, July 29, 2018

Dear Vajra Brothers and Sisters,
Come practice with us this summer during the 3rd Annual Tsegyalgar East Summer Sangha Retreat. We have planned a 9 day gathering on Khandroling – The Land of the Dakinis.

Learn and practice along with our International Dzogchen Community authorized instructors. We are fine tuning our program of practices and activities, and

our intensive practice retreat will include daily collective practices, Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, Khaite, community collaboration, dancing, music, food, Karma Yoga opportunities and more.

Transmission is required to attend.

3rd Tsegyalgar East Summer Sangha Retreat schedule TBA

Registration/Cost: The recommended donation for the full retreat is \$300 if paid

by July 7, 2018. From July 8, 2018 forward the recommended donation for the full retreat will be \$450. For participants paying on a daily basis, the recommended donation is \$50 per day.

Please offer a \$50 pre-planning deposit, or more, to indicate your commitment and interest. If you cannot participate please consider a donation to help our efforts, and to support our community's principle of sponsorship.

Your pre-planning deposit will be deducted from the total donation requested for the Summer Sangha Retreat.

Housing: There are a limited number of spots for camping on the land. If interested, contact Bret Bourman, at geko@tsegyalgar.org. Other options for local accommodations can be researched here.

Lunch Menu TBA

Any questions or concerns please contact bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org

We are looking forward to another summer of practicing together & enjoying each other's company.

Save the dates, we await you!

Tsegyalgar East Gakyil

©

Passages

Ingrid Lücke passed away on May, 3rd, 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Ingrid was a very serious Dzogchen practitioner and an active member of Tashigar South.



Photo of Ingrid and Rinpoche.

Dear Community:
In the evening of January 20th, 2018, we got together at Ingrid Lücke's house in the Mandala of Tashigar South. Before scattering her ashes, we shared the warmth of her home, her memory and her presence. We did Guruyoga together and sang the Song of Vajra. It was a very lovely meeting, like the ones we used to spend drinking tea with Ingrid.

We want to express our gratitude to the members of the Sangha of Buenos Aires, who accompanied her until her last moments, and to those ones who shared our meeting that day.

We also want to share the beautiful words written by a dear practitioner.

Affectionately,
Gakyil of Tashigar South

We all die,
and no one dies.
In any case, nobody dies
until the last heart who loved us
dies,
the last sound
of our words,
the last image
of our smile
in the memory
of those ones who loved us, die.

It is difficult for me to say good bye,
Ingrid,
because I feel you here
with me .

I see you smile
as always.
And I hear you telling me :
– Don't worry , my dear.
If you want, say good bye.
If not, don't.
Do as you wish .
Everything is fine –.
Then,
with a picturesque and smiling
gesture ,
you say : – Good byeeee ! –
A tear drop is born
and slides
from my eyes
slowly,
while you dissolve
in the mysteries
of the light .

By: Griselda Gálmez – Tashigar South – May 5, 2017



Members of Tashigar South at Ingrid's house.

An Open Letter to Ingrid Lücke

Paula Raedemaeker

Translation by: Laura Yoffe

Dear Ingrid: This last weekend we went to visit your home in the Mandala. A farewell visit was our intention.

The house was warm and had the neat and careful look of always, as if you were there.

After a few minutes in which we all seemed comfortable in silence and a cup of tea, someone brought back the memory of the times when the Gar saw you walking its earth and suddenly, your laughter, your wisdom, your death and your way of facing it were among us.

Moving backwards in time, we remembered your hospitality and your way of offering your house that was always open for practices or meetings, and for sharing something tasty; your long emails with proposals for the Gakyil (that sometimes made us protest), your generous ways of donating silently, and the times during retreats when you offered yourself to clean the camping's bathrooms, a task that nobody wanted to do. So we went on sharing anecdotes that joined our feelings and, all of a sudden, we were all a single heart that was remembering.

Spreading your ashes was the symbol of a farewell, but a farewell that turned into a meeting: a meeting with you and with all of us too.

We were there, in the warmth of your house, with the feeling of brotherhood, our ineffable Vajra brotherhood, beyond space, time and conceptual mind. ©



Course of The Vajra Dance That Benefits Beings at Namgyalgar in February, taught by authorised instructor Rosemary Friend.



World Wide Vajra Dance day at Namgyalgar on 11 March with some dancers in costume including instructors Cosimo DiMaggio and Rosemary Friend.



Yantra Yoga weekend course taught by instructor Mathew Long in Sydney during January.

The Prajna Paramita Heart Sutra

Translated from the Chinese version by
Daniel Reid

Deep within the practice of the Prajna Paramita,
the Bodhisattva Kuan Yin
saw with radiant clarity
that the five aggregates of human existence
are all essentially empty,
and thus transcended all suffering and strife.

Sariputra, form differs not from space;
space differs not from form;
form is essentially space;
space is the essence of form;
sensation, thought, memory, and consciousness are
all the same as this.

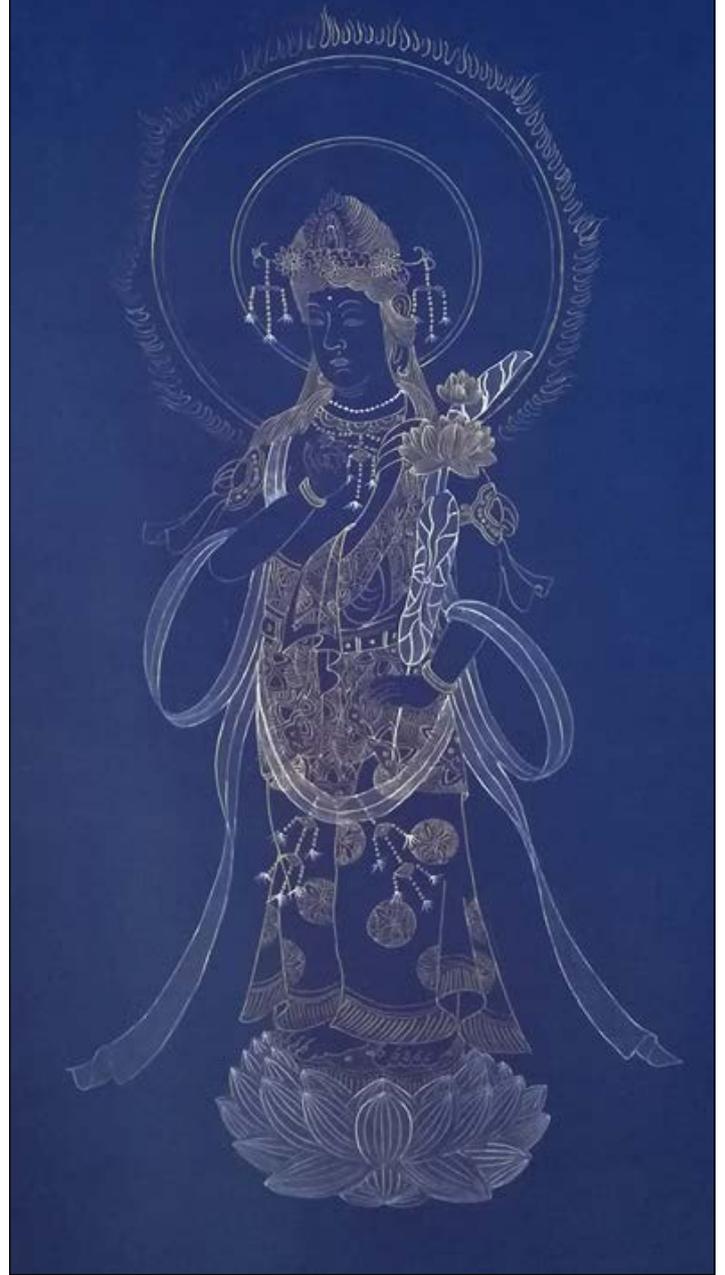
Sariputra: all things are empty of qualities;
neither born nor destroyed;
neither polluted nor pure;
neither increased nor decreased.

Therefore within space there is no form,
no sensation, thought, memory, or consciousness;
no eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, or mind;
no shape, sound, smell, taste, touch, or thought;
no dimension of sight,
nor even a dimension of thought;
no ignorance and no end to ignorance,
nor even old age and death,
nor the end of old age and death;
no suffering, no cause of suffering,
no extinction of suffering, and no path;
no knowledge and no gain.

Because there is nothing to gain,
bodhisattvas rely on the Prajna Paramita
and build no walls in their minds;
because they build no walls,
they have no fear,
leaving distorted delusion far behind,
including the idea of nirvana.

All Buddhas of the past, present, and future
rely on the Prajna Paramita
to attain the Great Perfection
of fully awakened awareness.

Thus we know the Prajna Paramita
is a great mantra of spirit,
is a great mantra of light,
is a mantra unsurpassed,
is a mantra without peer.
It can remove all suffering and pain.
It is true; it is real; it is not false.



A painting of Guanyin, in Chinese Buddhism synonymous with the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara.
Courtesy of Giorgio Dallorto

Thus we recite the Prajna Paramita mantra,
And say the mantra like this:
“Om Gatay, Gatay, Para-gatay, Para-sam-gatay.
Bodhi Svaha!”

!“Gone, Gone, Gone Beyond, Gone Completely Beyond. Awaken!”

The Prajna Paramita sutra, “The Perfection of Wisdom,” is thought to have first been composed during the first century A.D. in the region north of India, in what is today Afghanistan and Pakistan, based on earlier teachings that originated in Southern India in the first or second centuries B.C. The earliest surviving version we have today is a translation into Chinese from now missing Sanskrit texts made by Kumarajiva around 400 A.D. Also known as the Heart Sutra, it is the most revered Buddhist teaching throughout China, Korea, and Japan. This translation into English was made from the Chinese translation done by Kumarajiva. May it inspire awakened awareness in all who read it! ©

Interview with Laura Evangelisti

About the Supervisions
of Yantra Yoga
Tenerife, February 27, 2018

The Mirror: Can you tell us the history of how supervisions began, their function and what they mean in terms of the continuation of Rinpoche's lineage of Yantra Yoga?

Laura Evangelisti: This system of supervising people who feel they are ready to become instructors started in 1995. In December of 1994, Rinpoche sent a letter to all Gakyils and Fabio and me, saying that he decided to have four people responsible, two for Vajra Dance and two for Yantra Yoga. For Vajra Dance the two people are Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo and for Yantra Yoga are Fabio Andrico and myself.

Rinpoche wrote a letter to the Gakyils and also guidelines on how to proceed with this system of training prospective teachers of Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. Rinpoche advised Fabio and me to lead teacher trainings for all Yantra Yoga practitioners and to make sure that Yantra Yoga continued to be communicated and taught without changes or modifications.

At that time we were still working, although almost finished, on the translation of the original Yantra Yoga book that Rinpoche wrote with the root text and commentary, the Trulkhor Nyida Khajor by Vairocana, the root text, so that is why we went through many details with Adriano Clemente, the translator, and Rinpoche himself. We asked Rinpoche many questions and showed him the movements and he would correct us. We, Fabio, myself and Adriano, were mainly working with Rinpoche on the veranda of Merigar (West). The translation of the book had started already in the 1980's.

We went very carefully through the book, checking the root text and the commentary, and sometimes there was a slight discrepancy, Rinpoche would tell us we cannot change the root text at all, so if there is some small discrepancy, he told us to follow the root text.

So that is why Fabio and I became a little more expert, and also because we were already practicing Yantra Yoga. At that time there were already quite a few people teaching Yantra Yoga within our Dzogchen



Community, because at that time Yantra Yoga was mostly taught within the Community. Some of the people who learned directly from Rinpoche when he was teaching in Naples started to teach.

After maybe ten or fifteen years Rinpoche started to notice that Yantra Yoga was being taught in different styles, so that is why he appointed Fabio and myself, since we had worked a lot on the book directly with Rinpoche and Adriano, of course. Rinpoche decided to appoint us as the supervisors of prospective teachers and also of the teachers who were already teaching. That was not easy because some people felt they knew better than we did.

M: Was the supervision/authorization situation in place yet?

LE: No, not yet. Rinpoche then told us that the people who want to teach have to follow a teacher training with me and Fabio, and then be supervised, meaning to organize a course in their own place or location, and we should go there and supervise how they teach. So this was in a very personal way. Then he said he would give them authorization when we presented them to him.

So from 1995 we started to lead the Teachers Trainings and we had the first Teacher Training in Merigar (West) in 1995. It was a two-week teacher training and we went through all the Yantras and it was very nice. We were very young also. These teacher trainings were attended by people who had already been practicing Yantra Yoga for quite a long time.

The first people who were supervised were already people who had been in the Community for a long time, so the first authorization Rinpoche gave was in Margari-

ta in 2002. So after this first teacher training we started to travel around and supervise people who were organizing Yantra Yoga courses.

M: One reason we decided to do this interview was to explain the value of attending supervision classes for people interested in Yantra Yoga to learn from the base, for new people as well as experienced ones, and also for aspiring teachers. Can you talk a little about that?

LE: First let's give some background. When we do teachers trainings we usually have limited time for different reasons. One is that people cannot take long periods of time off work and if it is too long it becomes too expensive, so usually our teacher trainings are ten days long. In the beginning, the people who were participating and willing to become Yantra Yoga instructors were very different, people who were old practitioners and we were already familiar with. Now there are people we do not know, and they have been learning Yantra Yoga for not such a long time, maybe only a couple of years, but it takes quite a long time to really integrate the practice of Yantra Yoga in oneself; to go really deeply into the practice.

So there are many different levels when we do teacher trainings and since the teacher trainings are not very long, we do not have the time to go into the didactics, how to teach, etc, so that is something we have to develop. What I am doing more and more during supervisions with aspiring teachers is collaborate. The aspiring teacher leads the course, but we collaborate. That means that when there is something to add that they don't explain, I do. Also sometimes I correct. I cannot do too much correction, especially because when we do first level supervisions the courses are open so new people come.

That is actually the most difficult situation. To teach to completely new people and to really communicate something to them about the essence of Yantra Yoga or what Yantra Yoga is about is not so easy. That is why I usually have to add a lot. So, I do not say don't do like this or that, also for people attending the course it is not the nicest way. So that is the collaboration and people find this very useful; the people attending are guided by people who are not so experienced, but they have the chance to meet and learn from us who have more experience. I think it is

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Yantra Yoga authorizations at Dzamling Gar.

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quite useful for people who participate in a supervision course.

If there are too many things I have to correct, I usually do that after the class, privately, or at the end of the course, or the end of the day, I correct and I register everything in my mind and sometimes people ask how I can remember what they did with their knees, but for me it is quite natural.

I also like to collaborate with prospective instructors at supervision courses because I like to talk with them on a personal level, to have some kind of relationship, to know each other; during a teacher training there are too many people for us to get to know everyone. But during supervision courses we enter in a very close relationship and this is very nice.

Of course, the day before supervision starts many people are kind of nervous and afraid and I know sometimes I can quite strong, but I always say this is a way for us to collaborate, so that is also very important on the personal and very human level. I also like to develop this, not only to be seen as the main teachers, something like that.

M: Can you explain the different levels of Yantra Yoga?

LE: We have three levels. First, second and third levels. The first level supervisions and courses can be more open because that is about the five series of Yantras mainly, and the first and second series pranayamas. The second level is more in depth for the Yantras of the third, fourth and fifth series, but especially the pranayamas of the third, fourth and fifth series, which are very profound methods. The second level we can

only teach to people who have transmission. Then the third level supervision we only did once, we don't have many people who reach that level. The third level comprises everything, not only the five basic Yantras and the pranayamas, but also all the movements, the twenty-five movements for training and progressing, which are quite difficult, many of them but not all, and the seven lotuses. Up to now we only did one complete third level teacher training, so we have a lot to do. I hope we will be able to do more and have more committed teachers.

One more thing I would like to say, especially for first level supervisions, we don't know the people so well who we are going to supervise because maybe we only saw them in one or two Teacher's Training. In the beginning it was very easy because we knew the people very well, but nowadays the Community is so big, so often we do not know people very well. So I prefer when I have time, and I have more time than Fabio, to go locally. That is very important for me to see how a person teaches in the place where this person will teach with local people. Also to see how a person organizes, their capacity to organize, also the attitude of the person in a place, which is not a Gar. It is very different.

For me it is very important to see how a person is in his or her own place. It is not only about how much people know about Yantra Yoga but also the attitude towards people, with the organization, there are many aspects. I prefer to do the first part of the first supervision locally, when possible. At the beginning Rinpoche asked us to go locally.

In some countries it is very difficult and there are many people, so sometimes we do the supervisions in the Gars; not only with one person but possibly with two to maximum six people. Larger groups are a bit too much to be able to focus on each candidate.

Also another important aspect is that the Gakyils should collaborate with the prospective teachers, sometimes it is not easy to organize a course, and that is another point to observe, how the person collaborates with the Gakyil, and vice versa of course, but also the attitude towards the Gakyil, and towards the Community in general. That is very important. It is also important that the Gakyil supports the training of the people, when really needed they can even support economically, because the teachers benefit the Community locally.

M: Do you think it is also useful for aspiring teachers to attend supervisions?

LE: Yes I think this is very important and useful because if someone wants to organize a supervision course for themselves I really advise them to participate in a supervision course before so they can know what it is about, what to expect and they can correct many details and they can see what is indispensable during a supervision. It is also helpful for those who want to be supervised to see what it really means to be an instructor.

M: What kind of advice do you have for people who are interested in becoming Yantra Yoga instructors?

LE: The best way is to start by taking regular courses with our instructors, and then when one feels quite stable in the personal practice, they can participate in a teacher training. It is better to attend more than one teacher training, but sometimes we do not have that possibility. Then before presenting themselves to be supervised, they continue with their personal practice and collaborate with our instructors and be pre-supervised by our instructors. That is very important.

So, for example, one thing that is often lacking is to know how to teach and how to lead a class, because if you are not an authorized teacher you cannot teach. That is why it is very useful if you can collaborate, participate in regular courses with an instructor, sometimes help or guide, this is very useful and I really hope that in the future the people who want to present them-

selves to be supervised will do this, because it is not enough to attend one teacher training and practice only personally.

M: What can you recommend to people who live far from a center or local instructors, or people who are not really involved in the Community, who have another kind of yoga practice, but are interested to become a Yantra Yoga instructor?

LE: Up until now our first level instructors need to be members of the Dzogchen Community. If they do not have any instructor to work closely with, they should attend weekend or intensive courses with authorized instructors. Of course they can also start to practice to lead with some close friends, or with people from the Community, or for example, invite an instructor to give an intensive course of one weekend where they live. And when the instructor leaves they can lead regular practices based on what the local instructor has been teaching. That is a way to continue.

People need to train on how to introduce Yantra Yoga. What to say to introduce Yantra Yoga, especially to new people, is missing in the supervisions; the important things to say and what not to say. It is important to introduce in a very simple and accessible way.

M: Are you and Fabio planning to come up with some kind of way or training for just this?

LE: Well one way someone can do is to attend a beginner's course with an experienced instructor, so you see how the instructor introduces. Of course we could develop more this aspect of how to communicate. We have the communication courses with Gianfranco, which are very useful for instructors at the level of how to not be shy, how to use the body and how to look at people. Content that is another thing, so we may have to develop that part. Maybe it would be useful if people who want to be supervised were required take at least one beginner's course.



Supervision of two candidates at Merigar West.

M: There was a certain aim you had in talking to The Mirror about supervisions and informing the readers about supervisions in Yantra Yoga. Do you want to summarize what that is?

LE: I wanted to do this interview to make people understand the importance of supervision. That has been my main focus and that is what Rinpoche asked me to do, to form new instructors, and I have been dedicating to this, so now I feel I have developed some capacity to collaborate and help people to become Yantra Yoga instructors through these supervision courses.

Of course I hope in the future we will have other people to help us do this. A couple of years ago Fabio asked Rinpoche if someone else could do the supervision courses and Rinpoche said no, the two of us should continue to do that. So I do my best to continue to do that. We hope more and more people will commit to become instructors. Of course it requires a lot of time.

Another thing I would like to say regarding candidates is that even if someone is super flexible and they maybe do a lot of hatha yoga, they may miss the capacity to collaborate with the people in front of them. So personally I prefer someone is maybe not super, hyper flexible, or doing all kinds of positions in a perfect way, but they have the capacity to really help people. You should have the capacity to really help people - to understand what they are doing and how they are doing it. Also the attitude of how you present yourself in front of people, it is important to be not too shy or too self-effacing, but to be humble and open, not to present yourself as if you are someone special in the sense of feeling superior or whatever.

M: How has the experience of supervising impacted your practice of Yantra Yoga?

LE: I learn a lot about how to teach. Also going into details I learn more and also I see that maybe something that is obvious to me is not so to others. I have learned to go deeper into the capacity to explain, being more precise, and going into details. I have also learned on the personal level, how to deal with people, because sometimes you need a lot of patience, and that is very

useful, and then also you have to correct people and sometimes that is not easy depending on the person you have in front. Some people accept to be corrected and some people don't. I have also had a few very challenging experiences especially when I have to tell someone they are not ready, that is not easy and not easy for the person, but it is also something for me to work on. I have a responsibility to present these people to Rinpoche, so for me this is a huge responsibility. We also have to make sure these people continue to do and teach Yantra Yoga in the correct way, without changing or modifying it. I still have to learn a lot, especially on this personal level.

So to finish I would like to say that to train instructors is a long process and not easy. At the end when we present the candidates in front of Rinpoche, it is the completion of our job and our commitment. I must say at this point there is a lot of satisfaction, usually Rinpoche is very happy whenever he sees the group of people practicing and presenting Yantra Yoga in front of him. That is a really wonderful experience for both Fabio and me and for the candidates. The fact that for now and for a long time ahead Rinpoche himself gives the diplomas is worth all the hard work. ©

Emotions and the Application of Presence

Ego Loves Certainty

Steven Landsberg, Public Talk,
Northampton MA, April 2016

Sometimes we try and explore what other possibilities there might be other than what we can see with our own limited vision. Sometimes we find we are just anxious about things and we don't know the cause of that anxiety, and we are just hoping that things will go better and perhaps just afraid that they won't. We want to relax but we don't exactly where to begin. So we may be flooded sometimes with streams of hope and fear, and a kind of grasping tension that accompanies that particular kind of dynamic. We are governed by emotions, and we act and react with impulse, we think about happiness and we all want it, but we don't know where to begin.

So there could be other kinds of conditions and this is often times the case, where this condition I am describing may be a little bit exaggerated, some people don't think everything is more or less ok, things are either too good, not too bad, people are satisfied with their vision or what they see, perhaps they choose not to see many things, there may be some occasional hiccups, a few glitches along the way but, in general, things are just all right. The question arises, why should we even bother to get into a spiritual path? Why not just go for an occasional yoga lesson or a little pilates, maybe go to the beach, do the spa thing a bit, and relax. Because the truth is, a genuine spiritual path is not a kind of joy ride, or something like entertainment. If we are just looking for our own personal happiness, which may be the initial motivation, that may work for a while, but ultimately to continue on the path, it's going to require some kind of motivation that is a little deeper.

In any case, we find that we must participate in the path, in some very positive and energetic way. It's not like a teacher or spiritual master is going to come flying up to our doorstep and knock on our door and say join with me, I can help out, that may be the case nowadays in some instances when



you are driving along the road and you see some advertisement that says, Freedom in a Weekend, or Happiness Overnight Guaranteed, and you go into one of those places and all you have to do is one, two, three and you're fine. This is not the kind of path that is being addressed here at this talk.

A genuine spiritual master never tries to seek any students. He never proselytizes and says come and join me. As you may or may not know, the Buddha didn't do this either. The reason a genuine master does not do that is because he knows from the beginning that the teaching does not really function that way. It functions on the basis of our genuine motivation and our participation right from the outset. So we must seek the teacher, in some way or another. We must discover something about existence that is not satisfactory, that motivates us to seek out a teacher. It's a very personal thing. It's not politics. You know politicians proselytize, and politicians indoctrinate, and they say look at this and this and this, and just jump on board with me and everything will be fine.

And when it seems a politician is addressing you, he is not really talking to you, it seems like he is talking to millions of identifiable people. But maybe you have noticed or have had the kind of experience where a spiritual master could be talking to a million or thousands of people, but it always seems like he is talking to your personally. And why is that? It is because he is addressing something, something within you that is very personal, so that communication seems to be very very direct.

In any case there has to be this kind of participation. You know the Buddha didn't, when he first taught, he did not set down a set of beliefs, and say this is what you need to follow and you can call yourself a Buddhist. He never asked any of his students to believe anything he said. He said, "Ok, you listen, you see if it has any meaning, you check it out and taste it a bit, and you see of what I am saying has any kind of validity. But you have to put it in your mouth, you have to chew it, and you have to swallow it. Otherwise it will not work. So we may hear many kinds of wonderful things about the spiritual path, but that is kind of like the first step. You listen to something, and the next step is actually like ingesting it, swallowing it and doing something with it.

So when the Buddha first starting teaching he did not teach about the quality of his realization, if he had spoken to his students about the quality of his realization, it is very likely there would not have much for them to understand. The reason for that is that we are very much controlled or conditioned by our own particular vision. The Buddha's realization didn't really have to do with our karmic vision. It was something that transcended that. So what he spoke to them about was something that they could relate to rather easily. He spoke to them about something characteristic of their existence. He spoke to them about suffering.

So you know very well that the first noble truth of Buddha is the truth of suffering. He did not mean that it is noble to suffer. He meant that it is noble to acknowledge this truth. Otherwise if you do not acknowledge this as a first step then there is really no where to go. It's like being in denial of one's particular disease. We first have to recognize there is a kind of problem somewhere. So it may be difficult for some people to be convinced of that if we feel somehow that we are enjoying our lives very well. But what the Buddha was saying was that although we may be alive now and having a good time, this good time is subject to time, but all is impermanent and one day we will grow older, we are going to have various kinds of diseases. And we are going to become sick. And we are going to die. This is called natural suffering. This means if we are born with a human body this kind of issue comes naturally. It's not something that we have to cultivate or do, there is nothing like that involved, it just arises.

So we may get used to our comfortable vision, but it will always involve pain when there is some kind of change, whenever some kind of change occurs. We have natural resistance to change, to impermanence. Things are going well, we have a cozy home, our families are well for awhile, we are enjoying things, but we know somewhere in the back of our minds that this situation is not going to last and things are inevitably going to change. As far as impermanence is concerned, again we don't have to do anything, it is just something that is naturally just like that.

There is another kind of suffering the Buddha addressed too, and that is related to no matter how well things are going, no matter how we are today or tomorrow, there is always something that isn't quite right. For example, we could be sitting in our chairs, and we are comfortable for about ten minutes, and then we find we need to shift our position, we need to change, we are laying in our bed, everything is fine for the first ten minutes and then we notice oh I need to change my position, and it's like that with everything. No matter what kind of condition we find ourselves in, no matter how well things have been advertised that everything is going to be just fine, we always find that there is something that is not quite right.

Many aspects also related to repression and concealment, sometimes we get angry and we just release our aggression on some object that has nothing to do with our anger. Sometimes we can unleash anger upon ourselves and we develop some kind of heavy behavior, related to some kind of persistent abstinence or some kind of self mortification, and sometimes we project our anger on other people, like imagining they are harboring some negative feeling towards us. So in any case, whatever form of anger we experience, even if it only basic ill will, it is always considered negative, as far as the spiritual path is concerned. It never forms the base for nurturing any kind of happy feeling, or any kind of spiritual feeling.

In fact, we may sit down and do some spiritual practice and we may feel great sitting in our room, and then maybe after something happens and we may get annoyed and angry, and then we discover everything is kind of cooked, finished. We can also notice that anger is accompanied by a kind of sense of self righteousness. Whenever we get angry we always think we are right and whoever is interrupting our vi-

sion, they are wrong. So we discover that anger burns hot, at least in the moment, and burns whatever gets in its way. And then after there is a kind of cold isolation, where one is left with a kind of feeling that there is no victory anywhere. So it seems like anger is a great soldier for conquering anything, whatever there may be, but after we have recruited that soldier we discover there is not too much victory in it after all. It leaves one with a kind of self destructive loneliness, that is the cold side of anger.

Just as in the case of desire and attachment, there is nothing that is inherently there is nothing really essentially negative within any object, this anger and hatred is something that arises within the mind and just projects negative qualities upon the object or the person.

So the third emotion is related to ignorance. We may wonder, how can ignorance be considered an emotion. Ignorance is related to indifference or boredom. We may feel that our vision, the way we see things, is not sufficiently entertaining. We may feel that things have lost their vibrancy, their dynamic quality, everything has been reduced to a kind of lifeless concept. Everything seems to be a routine, and kind of technique. So whenever that happens, even if it is related to something along the spiritual path, then whatever methods we have used, they become tiresome, they become burdensome, they have been reduced to a concept, and they lose their vibrant quality.

We may feel we did meditation yesterday and it was fantastic, and then we sat down today and we discovered, oh it is just not happening. A likely cause of that is that we have just become conditioned by that method. Whatever yesterday's method was, doesn't work today because now is now and yesterday was yesterday. And a perfect meditation is only something that manifests in the present moment. It's not memory of yesterday's possibilities. So although things may feel boring, indifference can just be a kind of protection, a kind of shield, a thick crust that prevents anything from getting in. So the distinctive quality of this ignorance is coldness. A kind of indifferent neutrality.

So Western psychology does not see anything particularly unhealthy about any of these emotions as long as they are measured and they have not led to any kind of vindictive or compulsive behavior. When it becomes some kind of pathological situation, then it is necessary to apply some kind of psychological methods. But when

we talk about the spiritual path, Buddhism or whatever it may be, then right from the beginning, we are trying to establish a field of positive feelings, so that happiness can grow and flourish, and through that we can develop some kind of understanding of what we call the self, what we call I, what we consider me, and what we consider mine.

We have a false understanding of what we consider "I" to be. It is based on an idea of permanence, solidity, something independent. We see "I" in everything. If we see a car that has a dent in it, it doesn't really matter to us. But if it is my car, then we go uh oh, I have a problem. So the car with the dent in it is sort of the way we experience everything. It's all about me. And as a result of that, we don't see all of our experience in an interdependent way, we see all objects of experience as something that is related to me. Everything seems solid and permanent to us. Everything seems independent. So in order to recognize some kind of interdependence of all experience, it requires some kind of training, that is not our habitual way of seeing things.

As a result of seeing things in this independent way, we react with anger towards things we don't like and attachment and hope for things we do like, and fear about losing what we have, or getting something that we don't want. And a vague general anxiety about everything. So ironically that anxiety is related to our general habit of grasping to our limited understanding of the self as being something solid or permanent, thinking that it can give us some security, and certainty. Ego loves certainty. And since the spontaneity of nowness or the present moment is so uncertain, ego tries to conceal that always, and instead relies on a hopeful future or the torment of the past.

So we grasp at things as being permanent and real. And somehow we have a general dissatisfaction that something is not quite right. The problem is we cannot just let things be, we have difficulty knowing how to relax. We have some anxiety about facing the real condition of ego-lessness or that it's not about me, sometimes we see the word ego-lessness and we don't know what that means. What that means is that it is just not about me. We don't take it so personally. We are learning how to relax.

Our anxiety is not so much about the real condition of this egolessness, but it's about losing the grip, the kind of clinging

» continued on the following page

» *Emotions continued from previous page*

that we have to our own vision. We generally experience our vision as something solid, real, independent, and we have this idea that the subject of this experience, that means "I", is also solid, permanent and independent. So our issue here is we don't see this interdependent relationship between ourselves and our vision.

An example of recognizing this interdependence and is that if we both walked down a street, let's say in Northampton, and somehow we have the idea that everyone is seeing the same thing. But actually that is not the case at all. We are each having our own particular vision of that situation and it is not the same for everyone. It's very difficult to do any kind of practice, let's say, of calm abiding, visualization or transformation, like there is in tantra, if we have this kind of sense that there is this independent, fixed reality external to ourselves. And the only way we can loosen our grip on that particular kind of vision, is to practice some form of meditation.

Meditation relies upon two things. One is focus and one is relaxation. So if there is too much focus, that means there is too much fixation upon something, that means we may be fixed upon an object but we cannot relax. And if there is too much relaxation, we may become easily distracted. When there is too much focus we find we are something like a cat and a mouse. We are never quite sure we have gotten the point and we are a little doubtful about it and always trying to reinforce it with our minds somehow. If we are too relaxed maybe we get distracted with whatever is around us or whatever thought is arising in our minds. So establishing this balance between focus and relaxation is something we have to cultivate ourselves. It's not like baking a cake where you say two spoonfuls of this and that, add some milk and we can do it. So this is not something we can measure but we have to discover that kind of internal chemistry ourselves through practice. So I would like to invite you now for a moment to do a little bit of practice. ©

Steven Landsberg is a long time student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a Santi Maha Sangha instructor. He was Gakyil President at Tashigar North in Venezuela for several years and has recently been appointed president of the Gakyil of the International Dzogchen Community by Rinpoche.

Transcribed and edited by Naomi Zeitz

The Spiritual Odyssey of Freda Bedi – Norma Levine

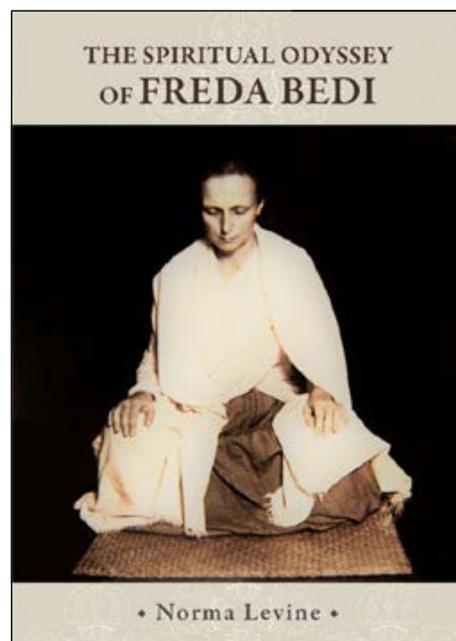
Shang Shung Publications
318 pages

Alexander Studholme

Norma Levine has continually mined the experience of her own life in the *dharma* to become one of our foremost chroniclers and interpreters of Tibetan Buddhism's entry into the modern world. Like many of the Americans and Europeans drawn irrevocably into the orbit of the Tibetan lamas, the turning point in her life appears to have been her encounter with the 16th Karmapa, the majestic Rangjung Rigpe Dorje. In 1977 in a farmhouse in Wales, she attended one of his celebrated Black Crown ceremonies and never looked back. In a sense, her life's work as a writer seems to have been to figure out exactly what it was that hit her that day.

In *The Spiritual Odyssey of Freda Bedi*, she turns her considerable literary talents to someone she at first considered to be a peripheral figure in the entourage of the 16th Karmapa: an English nun, "a great organizer, a doer of good deeds", whose death in 1977 had passed without much mention in Buddhist circles. But remarks made about that death – indicating that it showed the signs of the passing of a realised yogin – prompted Levine to reconsider the stature and role of this woman. The result is this very striking and wonderfully enjoyable piece of spiritual biography, which convincingly presents us with a new icon of recent Buddhist history, a western woman who was absolutely vital to the preservation of Tibetan *dharma* in exile and whose life embodied Tibetan Buddhist spirituality in the very fullest sense: according to Tai Situ Rinpoche, she was indeed the first western woman to attain enlightenment.

The bare bones of Freda Bedi's remarkable story are already well known. Born in 1911 into a working class English family, she was educated at Oxford, where she met her Indian husband, subsequently joining him to become a significant figure in her own right in the struggle for Indian independence. On friendly terms with members of the ruling Nehru dynasty, in 1959 she accompanied Indira Gandhi on a tour of the



northeast border of India, where the Tibetan refugees were arriving in their droves. Grasping the urgency of the situation, she founded a Tibetan Friendship Group to find foreign sponsors for the refugees and more or less single-handedly set up a special school for the young tulkus. Thereafter, she dedicated herself to spiritual practice, becoming the first western woman to take ordination as a Tibetan Buddhist nun. A close disciple of the Karmapa, she accompanied him on his first epic journey to the west.

What Levine does is to reassess this narrative from the point of view of the *dharma* and to argue, ultimately, that this was a life of "mythic dimension". Freda – or Sister Palmo, as she became as a nun – was a nurturing mother figure to the Tibetans in their hour of greatest need, universally known as "Mummy-La", even to the Dalai Lama. People spoke of her as an emanation of Tara. Without her instinctive appreciation of the special quality of the Tibetans, things could have gone very differently for the impoverished refugees. Many of the tulkus who became the first great teachers of Tibetan Buddhism in the west – including Chogyam Trungpa, Akong Rinpoche, Tarthang Tulku, Geleg Rinpoche and Lama Zopa – went through her school. She it was who cajoled and entreated the Karmapa, initially reluctant, to travel abroad and turn the wheel of *dharma* so dramatically.

Her inner life makes for equally compelling reading. As a child, she had a yearning for a direct experience of the divine, studying the lives of the saints and St John of the Cross, regularly stopping to meditate in a church on her way to school. When she met

her husband, she showed him a drawing she had made as a little girl: he identified it as a picture of the Buddha, intuiting that she had been a Buddhist in a past life. On a United Nations mission to Burma in 1953, she practiced vipassana meditation and had a shattering awakening experience, leaving her catatonic for three months: "I was walking through the streets... when suddenly I experienced the first real flash of understanding – the interconnectedness of everything that changed my whole life."

When she met the Karmapa in 1961, she was already spiritually quite mature. "She had not only very high knowledge but also a kind of inner realization," His Holiness Sakya Trizin tells Levine. The Karmapa seemed to recognise her worth immediately, promptly taking her into his inner circle. He asked her to set up a nunnery in the Indian foothills, allowed her the singular honour as a woman to live within the precinct of his monastery and even entrusted her to act as a lama, giving initiations and conferring refuge on westerners, their new Buddhist names written on the back of photos of Sister Palmo herself. According to Ayang Rinpoche, a Drigung Kagyu master who taught her *phowa*, her death showed the hallmarks of a successful *dharmakaya-phowa*: meeting the moment of death sitting in meditation, her corpse remaining fresh and malleable for several days afterwards.

This is a warm and inspiring book. Levine combines reportage – visiting the sites of Freda's English and Indian life – with extensive interviews, as well as transcripts of hitherto unpublished recordings of Freda herself. We hear from all three of Freda's surviving children and numerous Tibetans, often conveying an intimate, cosy atmosphere: Kabir Bedi (her second son and now a famous Bollywood actor) playing a practical joke on Chogyam Trungpa; Ringu Tulku remembering hot chocolate with Mummy. It is also full of superb photos, including many of the 16th Karmapa, but mainly of Freda, or Sister Palmo herself, in all her many arresting and often rather lovely guises (as an undergraduate, she was nicknamed "the Mona Lisa").

Levine is a romantic and this for her is clearly a record of a kind of golden age. But, she has such good material and she assembles it so well – a photo, for instance, of a beaming Sister Palmo feeding pigeons in Milan illustrating the "glorious '74 spiritual road trip" – that it is impossible as a reader not also to be touched by the beauty and the joy of the events she describes. ©

Wisdom Rising – Journey into the Mandala of the Empowered Feminine

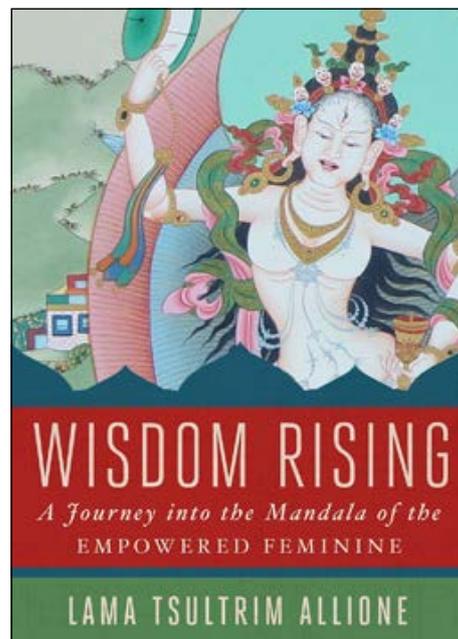
Lama Tsultrim Allione
Enliven Atria Books
Simon and Schuster, Inc., 2018

Jacqueline Gens
Tsegyalgar East
March 2018

Wisdom Rising – a Journey into the Mandala of the Empowered Feminine by Lama Tsultrim Allione is a multi-layered chronicle of the feminine principle and its importance for both personal and global evolution of the planet at this moment in time. The book illuminates this point of view through emphasizing the role of dakini, an embodiment of the feminine energy of Wisdom drawn from Tibetan Buddhism as a change agent within the mandala of the five buddha/dakini families and their varied encumbered/enlightened energies as the means to enact these changes.

Interwoven into this central theme is the personal story of an American woman who followed her heart towards Asia to meet her destiny some five decades ago. There she received first hand the passing of the baton from one culture into another. We now call her Lama Tsultrim Allione. Tara Mandala Retreat Center, a 700-acre oasis in southern Colorado with a three-story temple ornamented by Tibetan and Bhutanese artists, is a physical blossoming of this journey never before seen in the annals of Buddhism, while *Wisdom Rising* is the fruit of her own spiritual journey and a continuation of her unique collected works.

In this latest publication, *Wisdom Rising* follows upon Lama Tsultrim's ground breaking *Women of Wisdom* (1985) and bestseller, *Feeding your Demons* (2008). Here she continues her brilliant commentary on the historical and scholarly aspects of her spiritual roots within Tibetan Buddhism enlivened with her own personal story in conjunction with the emergence of ancillary practices she created to compliment more formal aspects of her training. More importantly in *Wisdom Rising*, she locates the feminine principle of daki-



ni and mandala as universal themes deeply embedded in the collective psyche of all beings beyond cultural bias, citing numerous scholarly works.

She is particularly adept at expressing traditional and complex aspects of the Tibetan canon in fresh and innovative concepts that portray their meaning with clarity and practical application. Undoubtedly, this is because she has trained with some of the greatest teachers of our era, as well as among the most innovative, such as the late Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche (1939–1987) and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1939–present), paying homage to both for their deep influence – the former for his genius for introducing the psychological basis of mind training to Westerners and the latter, for his liberating the experience of primordial awareness from the clutches of staid ritual and cultural bias and for his introduction to Machig Labdrön. She is now recognized as an emanation of Machig Labdrön. As such, Lama Tsultrim Allione widely disseminated Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's condensed version of Chöd to thousands – an extraordinary compilation of all Chöd lineages from his terma. She also spent decades recovering the main Chöd lineages associated with Machig Labdrön.

When Tibetan masters first came into contact with Westerners naturally the result would eventually be Western teachers, translators, and scholars. This evolution includes the presence for the first time of many female practitioners who are educated and independent. Michaela Hass's fine book *Dakini Power* is about many of

» continued on the following page

» *Wisdom Rising* continued from previous page these female teachers fully established along with the emergence of a whole new generation of academic teachers and practitioners who are transforming how Buddhism is introduced to Western culture.

Wisdom Rising unapologetically suggests the importance of the feminine principle (Wisdom) as manifested through the mandala of the five energy families. Trungpa Rinpoche in his forward to *Women of Wisdom* over thirty years ago cited that her work was not “mere feminism.” His comment is interesting yet subtle in its denial that such an emphasis would be a “political” diminishment of the Teachings – a topic that sets most religious hierarchy’s teeth on edge including Buddhist. Feminism, as Lama Tsultrim points out is now emerging from the shadows into the forefront of change as seen by world-wide expressions and social activism not excluding unmasking patterns of feudal behavior within the patriarchal remnants of Buddhist social structures.

What sets her apart from other teachers is her humble expression of personal journey through loss, grief and struggle as a woman, mother, wife and teacher. Lama Tsultrim’s fierce determination to forge a path through outmoded patriarchal norms has created a fresh and bold revamping of how Vajrayana might be taught successfully in the West for future generations. While some will dislike this orientation, I applaud her staying true to her original vision—that being born in a woman’s body is not an impediment to realization but profoundly suited.

In these Kali Yuga times, the rising of a secular feminist perspective is an important ally to revitalize societies through raising the bar of awareness about sexual harassment, rape, arms possession, income disparity, climate changes and environmental ills detrimental to the global well being of all sentient beings. However, its greatest use is not gender politics but to empower both men and women to discover their potential for wisdom. Social activism need not be adversarial to the origins and transmissions, but becomes a container

from which sacred Teachings can flourish. Lama Tsultrim boldly takes this on.

These are challenging times, and we are met with chaos and change at every turn. To find the powerful dakinis now, and to be able to dive deeply into their Mandela and to hold it as a centering template from which you live, creates a stabilizing and empowering source to draw from in whatever activity you find yourself. The dakini represents the secret mystical quality of absolute insight. She is an ally and a wise companion. And my aspiration is that by communicating with her and honoring the dakini, we will begin to heal our inner and outer world. My journey to and with the dakini has been going on for half a century and has paralleled the rapid changes on earth, changes that have become more devastating daily. I have become convinced that it is her wisdom that we need now.

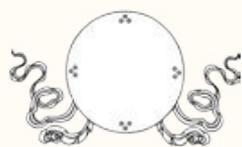
Wisdom Rising represents the journey of one person whose impact may appeal to both beginners and to more seasoned practitioners. Beginners will find the introduction to the Mandala of Five Dakinis as a great healing method. It identifies one’s neurotic styles in a method that embraces rather than rejects the rich potential of experiencing our lives more holistically by incorporating minute elements, psychological styles in the form of habitual patterns that hinder evolution, and the release of these blocked energies to experience one’s natural wisdom qualities. More advanced practitioners can utilize their training to include the deeper meanings particularly in connecting to the energy work of the subtle body.

Fortunately, Buddhism in all its manifestations has an exceptional plasticity across cultures that draws on a deep well of renewal rather than static entrenched traditions. The creative impulse is closely linked to a non-conceptual base from which gestures, words and any multiplicity of insights arise.

Dakinis are not just pretty girls dancing in the sky with cantaloupe shaped breasts and tumescent bhagas as depicted in countless images, but sometimes appear as old women, scholars, or protectors of the Dzogchen teachings.

The metaphor of nakedness represents unadorned naked mind fully awakened and no longer frozen in concepts or deep attachments, but liberated into the vast space of endless possibility where she dwells. Every moment then is a summons to come join the dance. The feminine principle is beyond all form, the ground of being itself, which is clearly elucidated in the chapter, “One Ground, Two Paths, Two Results.”

Lama Tsultrim Allione’s *Wisdom Rising* is yet another ground breaking publication filled with resources and guidance for realization. ©



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Artists in the Dzogchen Community

“What Can You Do?”

Interview with Catherine Simmonds from Australia

Actress and Director for Community Development
Dzamling Gar, February, 2018

The Mirror: We know you have an interesting beginning that helped for where you are today, so can you tell us a little about your early life?

Catharine Simmonds: I was born like everyone, and then put into a babies' home for adoption, I was adopted at six weeks old by two people who then became my mother and father. We lived in the country a few hours from Melbourne/Australia. My parents divorced when I was five years old and my adoptive father got custody however I still saw my adoptive mother. I remember thinking as a child “something must be nothing and nothing must be something” was it an inkling that led me to the teachings?

My father remarried another woman with two children and they became my sisters, so I grew up with them through my teenage years. My father was a writer, played the guitar and also a taekwondo instructor, so the whole family did taekwondo, my mother, sisters and I all became black belts, and once I was even the runner up Australian champion. My other passion was ice skating and I eventually became a professional ice skater

M: Were you interested in acting or theatre at that time?

CS: I'd always been interested in the arts, writing stories, drama, painting, and illustrating, and I thought I wanted to write and illustrate children's books, so I studied graphic design. I remember at the time a friend's mother saying to me, “Being a visual artist is quiet solitary I think perhaps you're too social for that” and her words remained with me.

I continued with my studies and the place where I ice skated was approached by the Miss Victoria Quest to raise funds for the disabled in Victoria and they asked



me to represent them in the Quest (of course at 18 my ego was flattered.) To my surprise I actually won Miss Victoria which attracted some media attention, front page of newspapers etc. A few months later, my father and I received a letter from the Catholic Family Bureau (adoptive agency) saying that my biological mother was looking for me. Generally speaking, I try to hide the fact that I was once Miss Victoria, but I mention it as it relates to what happens next. My biological mother was trying to find me and the adoptive agency had been looking for almost a year for a Catherine Simmonds but to no avail, and then they saw the name on the front of the newspapers and the age corresponded, they thought perhaps this is the girl, and it was, it was me. The agency asked if I wanted to meet my biological mother and my adoptive parents were supportive so I said ok. I met my mother, who actually married my biological father five years after giving me up for adoption, and they went onto to have six other kids. So suddenly I had acquired a full biological family which meant that accumulatively across my families I had three mothers, two fathers and nine brothers and sisters. Like water flowing, life circumstances were changing course

After this period my interest started to shift towards acting and I left the graphic design course. I auditioned for the National Institute of Dramatic Art where they accept only 20 people across the nation for their acting degree and I was second on the waiting list to get in. I'd had no formal acting training yet almost got the lead in a

TV mini-series, so I felt very encouraged by these experiences. I auditioned for the Victorian College of the Arts, where I was accepted and studied acting for three years. Studying acting required you to investigate yourself, a journey of sorts into the inner world, exploring your motivations, impulses, desires, imagination and senses. It's about developing a capacity to observe, interpret and communicate human behavior. The investigation starts with oneself as in some ways acting school strips your ego, challenging you to confront uncomfortable aspects and to open a range of human emotions, it's a kind of journey toward self-understanding.

Body work was core to the acting training and I became interested in yoga, I started Oki Do Yoga classes and the teacher invited me to come and listen to a Tibetan teacher. Rinpoche was giving a lecture at Melbourne University, I went but did not have the experience nor the language to really comprehend, I didn't really know what was going on. I left and didn't think much about it, but I did pick up a little brochure that said there would be a retreat. Every so often I would glance at this brochure, attracted by the words, “primordial state” wondering “what does that really mean?”

I ended up going to the retreat in the Blue Mountains near Sydney. When I arrived, I thought, “Oh my god what have I done?”, there was a woman with bright blonde hair, a leopard skin leotard and bright red lipstick doing these hand gestures outside the tent (now I know they are mudras) I went into the tent and many people were sitting on cushions with straight spines, some had malas in their hands and I sat feeling like the bad girl at the back of the bus. For three days, I listened but didn't really have a clue, I was struggling between wanting to know and wanting to run away, then someone suggested I go to speak with Rinpoche. I saw everyone lining up and I thought okay I'll give it a go and went up to him. As I got closer to him and it was my turn I burst into tears and he kind of laughed and looked away and I felt a little angry on the inside and then he looked back to me and said, “If you relax, the first thing is to relax, it's like going fish-

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A Different Sky postcard.

ing, if you relax you might catch one." And I instantly thought "Oh yeah, you're right, that's simple and true, so then I kind of relaxed after that point"

As the days went on I started to participate, trying to learn the different practices, purification of the elements was a good place to start. Towards the end of the retreat, we came to this thing called a Ganapuja, it was raining outside, I'd relaxed a bit and even though I didn't know all the words, energetically, with the soft rain outside, I felt like gold inside. In my heart, something had happened, there was a deep feeling of peace and of home. I remember one moment when Rinpoche walked past me and spontaneously said "What can you do?" It felt so random at the time as I didn't know to what he was referring but somehow those words have stuck in my head, yes what can I do? At the time the question felt like it came from nowhere but today I've interpreted it to mean you have to be active in life, not passive, what can you do?

When I graduated from acting school I saw a small notice about scholarships being offered to work with international companies. On the same board, there was another notice about workshops with an Italian theatre director, Renato Cuocolo. I'd seen a theatre piece of his, the year before I started acting school and was inspired by the dream like poetry of the work. It appeared coincidental and I thought wow perhaps I could apply to work with his company. I met him and he was making a base for the company in Melbourne, I participated in his workshops and he immediately invited me to join the company. He explained how the training would require total dedication, meaning I probably wouldn't have time to pursue other acting work, I accepted. We trained intensively, every day, engaging in strong physical experiences, such as running toward walls and opening the body just before contact, we'd sometimes explore one gesture for hours,

we'd meditate and improvise sometimes for 24 hours non-stop. The purpose of the training was to reveal an authentic expression of freedom through discipline, to develop the presence and energy of the actor by stripping away the masks and exploring movement beyond the normal rhythms of everyday life. Movement was viewed from an anthropological point E.G the root of all



Catherine Simmonds after a performance.



At Immigration Museum.

cultural dance and movement understood as coming from a knowledge of the "hara". This work helped to develop my concentration and a deepen my expression of body and voice, it helped me to build confidence in myself as an artist. I acted with the company for twelve years, displacement, identity and cultural minorities were central performance themes and we performed as part of some really important national and international festivals.

It was around 1990 and Rinpoche was coming to Australia again, the retreat was in Kyenton and without any doubt I knew I must go. After this retreat I became more connected and active in the community. We organised a teaching tour for Fabio Andrico and I had the privilege to travel around and learn more through Fabio and his teaching, in particular I became very

interested in Yantra Yoga. As passionate as I was about my work as an actor I knew the pathway was limited in terms of making money so I was aware I may need to develop something else. Not long after Fabio left I was in my home town waiting at the bus stop and incidentally there was a local paper I turned the pages and there was this advertisement, Community Artist Wanted to work with migrant women working in factories.

My art form was theatre and although I'd never really directed before I thought why not formulate an idea and go for the position and I got the job! I went to neighborhood houses, health centers, shops, English as a second language classes and factories to meet and talk with migrant women about their experiences. The local council invited women to join the project and I ended up in a room with a diverse group of women and said ok, let's start let's play! Slowly, slowly

I built their trust and confidence through theatre games and methods, encouraging them to connect with each other through movement, voice and their stories. Working in factories the conditions were often harsh, loud machine noise, physical repetition, the pressure to produce, the fear of losing one's job, daylight hours spent away from the sun, limited English, etc, all these factors contributed to a kind of numbing of the senses, whereas as the creative work was about reconnecting to the senses. After many months of creative consultation with the women, I scripted and directed a performance, each woman became the protagonist of their own story. The performance was called "She of The Workplace" and it wove women's stories of exploitation within factories, racism and tales of migration. Audiences were a mix of people



Asylum Seeker Rehearsal

who'd never seen theatre (friends and family of the women) as well theatre goes and my artistic peers. The response was overwhelmingly positive and people urged the performance work to grow. Through this I founded the Brunswick Women's Theatre, with the core mission to engage, empower and express migrant/refugee women and their stories.

Participation was not premised on the notion of talent as the only requirement was the willingness to participate and respect toward others. This project also founded my future as an artistic director of community cultural development.

Coming back to the main point here, the teachings and Rinpoche's influence upon me and my work. The following statements "collaboration" "work with the circumstances" and "relax" have resonated at all levels of my work.

As I was working with people of different cultures it was important to foster a space of collaboration, where respect for difference was practiced. It was not however about sanitizing difference and making everyone the same but rather connecting through stories and common human emotions and then using the power of theatre to communicate and create empathy. Mid-career I was a recipient of a two-year fellowship from the Australia council for the arts and I lived in Brazil following the work of the late and legendary leader of community cultural development "Augusto Boal" who founded the Theatre of the Oppressed. I also received an Asialink scholarship and worked in the villages of East Timor with elders and youth exploring cultural knowledge and creativity as a tool to peace building and a means to explore community issues such as education, domestic violence and child labor.

It's now 25 years on and my work has helped to powerfully engage diverse communities in addressing some of the most pressing issues of our time, including, in-

tercultural relationships, changing values across the generations, public and private violence, trafficked women, changing futures for indigenous people, mental health, addiction, the asylum seeker story and the potential of an intercultural world. One of my performances 'Journey of Asylum – Waiting' was published in an anthology of plays about asylum seekers.

Navigating issues with people who come from very different countries, together in the one space can be tricky at times due to contentious histories, perhaps it's like working for the UN. I learnt to keep politics out of the creative work, and to focus only through the personal narrative. I never tell people what to say, I ask lots of questions, the main one being if you thought someone would listen, really listen what do you want to say? I consider each person to be the expert of their own experience and facilitate people's confidence to tell their story. When directing a story, I look for the humor, tragedy, love, anger, desire, contradiction in fact all the emotions. The process of scripting means I listen to everyone, and script accordingly and then through ongoing improvisation and rehearsals I throw out ideas and rescript again, sometimes the idea I want to reject is the key to the creativity and things keep cycling this way until the performance is ready

My work provides marginalized people with a creative space in which to 'discover the need to speak and to speak the unspoken'. It is about helping people to share their experiences, which are then liberated through the act of theatre. I am not confusing the theatre with the teachings as it's an art form, but there is something special that can happen in the ritual of theatre. There is the heartbeat of the audience and the heartbeat of the performers in one space called the theatre and in this exchange, there is an opportunity to create empathy and understanding. Creating dynamic authentic theatre with the com-

munity about their stories has the capacity touch hearts, to challenge stereotypes and to reduce stigma and ignorance around many relevant social issues, perhaps I could call it documentary theatre!

M: Do you think the teachings help you to develop your capacity to handle such challenging emotions?

CS: Rinpoche is my teacher, my hero and I know the teachings have encouraged my capacity to not to be afraid of anything, to let all manifest. Self-liberation, not denying experiences, allowing stories and feelings to manifest without judgement all the while cultivating an intention to benefit others is the aim of my creative work. The teachings are my reference and frame-work, they support me to be present to others. Simply said, I do my best to craft with what I have.

I am the facilitator and the art of the theatre is the vehicle, but the content is the people. The methods are there for the people not the inverse. I am not the content and I have to work with where people are at, because of course as you can understand, I am frequently working with very vulnerable, challenging issues, so people have to be ready, I have to respect their limit and shift their limit. When constructing drama, the aim is to express pathos but to find a point of liberation and transformation. Many participants have experienced trauma and when rendering their stories, they can touch moments of pain but equally it is about celebrating and motivating their resilience. In the end the theatre work is about giving respect and dignity to people and it is very transformative, especially when an audience truly applauds, and they are acknowledged.

People learn to work with their body, voice and mind, and when I say mind I don't mean the nature of mind, but their story telling mind. The space of creati-

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How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Loek Jehee
January 6, 2018
Dzamling Gar

I think I should first start with how I got into contact with the Teachings in general. First of all, I want to pay homage to White Tara because she is the great Mother, beyond birth and death, and she is non dual with our Master. White Tara removed many of my obstacles. Before I met the Master I was already practicing White Tara. For me she is a symbol of the continuation of the spiritual path, from past lives into the present life, into the future.

In Amsterdam, in the roaring 70's, I was in the Gay Liberation movement. We made cabaret, and it was really a very nice period and a lot of fun. I wrote music for this cabaret and we did all kinds of performances which were quite provocative, attracting attention to the situation of gay people. It was very successful and nowadays the situation is much better in many countries.

So I was quite active there and was not so much into spirituality at all. This activist political group was quite radical left wing and the idea was that religion was the 'opiate of the masses'. So I was a bit anti re-



ligion or spirituality. The 70's were a very exciting time for young gay men and I was very successful in making friends. Yet after a while, I got fed up and I had a deep feeling of: "Is that all there is".

I wanted to find a deeper meaning to life. I was introduced by a friend to meditation practice, something like Zen meditation. That was before I met any Tibetan lama. My friend went to an initiation of White Tara with Dagpo Rinpoche (a Gelug lama from Paris) and he brought back a pill for me. So I received the pill and a picture of Tara and I received the basic mantra, and

this pill then instantly removed all my obstacles for spiritual practice. So that's why I think that contact with White Tara was so important for me.

Then I started to do the Tara mantras and started to meet lamas, first some Gelugpa lamas and then I met my root Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who introduced me to the nature of mind. That was in 1984.

In that period, my partner Roland and I, we owned a café in Amsterdam. That bar was very nice and popular, a mix of gay and straight people and artists; it was a punk and new wave bar which was very success-

» *Artist continued from previous page*

ty is a visible and invisible space, as I don't know what will happen, I don't have a formula, each time when I start I think I don't know and that is creativity, because if I know then it becomes a formula and I am not discovering something. To link it back to the teachings I could say that creativity is another way of saying "work with the circumstances" For example, I am working with the community, they are not paid to turn up, maybe somebody doesn't turn up, what do you do then? They come in different mental emotional and physical states and it is about keeping the work buoyant, in every moment, you have to work with the circumstances because nothing is particularly stable. Everything has to be flexible, it is not only about the performance itself it is about the process, what ends up on the stage is the result of a whole process, a process that has responded to every element of circumstances. That is why there isn't a formula.

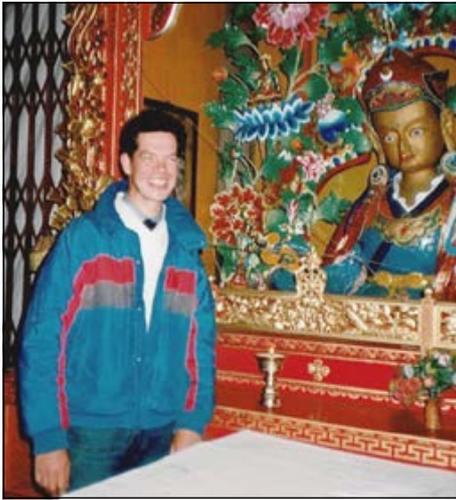
M: How do you see going forward now?

CS: It has been over twenty-five years I have been doing this work. The arts are always in vulnerable position in our society but I recognize that I'm now in a relatively good position because as an artist I am making a living and helping the voice of people to be heard and have influence in the education, health and government sectors. I love what I do as I learn about the world through the people.

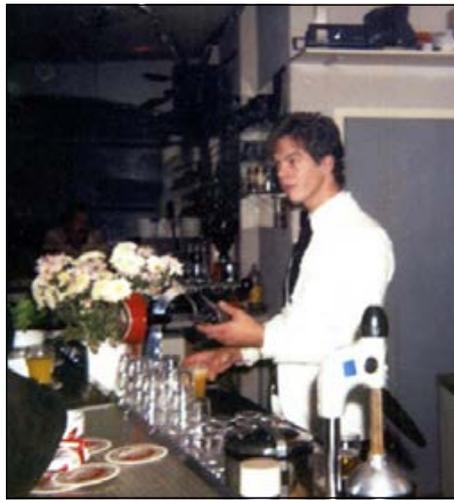
M: So, the question Rinpoche posed to you all those years ago, what can you do? Look what you've done! You certainly have achieved a lot.

CS: I never talk about the teachings directly in my work and I never use any terms, but for example when I do an exercise to connect and build people's confidence, I sometimes use an exercise called the mirror. You face a partner and you mirror each other, you act the other person, you follow their actions, if you really do it well then

you need to be aware of many things, the feelings, the rhythm of the breath and not just mimic external actions, and to do this you have to be very present and in the moment. I often ask people when they are doing it, "When you're in the mirror, who's judging, does the mirror judge you?" and they inevitably say "We judge ourselves" and I say "Yes it's not the mirror that judges, the mirror does not judge anything, the mirror is just the mirror, it reflects, it sees everything, so let's try to enter the mirror" ©



At Dudjom Gumpa in Boudhanath.



In his café.

ful. In those days I was alerted that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu would give teachings at the Kosmos, and the person who told me said that certainly “it would deepen my meditation experience”. Well, indeed that has been the case!

I went to this course. It was very nice. Rinpoche arrived there and I saw him wearing just an ordinary jacket, and I thought, “Well is this guy really a Guru, he looks so ordinary!”. Then Rinpoche started teaching and instantly I knew this was very special, because Rinpoche started to give a complete overview of all nine yantras and I thought, “Gee, this guy knows everything!”, and I was immediately impressed.

There were about seventy people at the Kosmos and it was very nice because in the evening we went to someone’s house and Rinpoche was there and every evening we did the Chöd practice together and that was very special. It was also very special for us after the teachings to walk together with Rinpoche on the streets of Amsterdam, in all those dangerous neighborhoods with a lot of drug addicts in that period.

I think that Rinpoche wanted to convince me a bit more, because several kinds of interesting things then happened. So, for instance, we went into a coffee shop and there was a lot of cigarette smoke. Rinpoche clapped his hands, said some mantras, made some movements with his arms and instantly all the smoke was gone. And then later we walked past a bar and Rinpoche smiled at me, letting me know he knew that I also had a café. So he showed me that he knew my circumstances without being told. I would be walking with him on the street and all these thoughts and doubts would arise in my head, like “Is he a real Guru and what is all this Guru

stuff”. He suddenly looked at me strongly and said: “That is not good at all!”, and then I knew he really could read my mind! So I was convinced.

On another occasion I had to drive Rinpoche and he was in the back seat of my car. I was thinking: “what a very large responsibility I now had because I had this important master in my car”. Amsterdam is dangerous and I wanted to be careful. I started to do White Tara mantras internally for protection and then from the back of the car I heard: “Mmmm!!!”.

There were some strong things going on in Amsterdam around that time, and when I wanted to attend the Chöd practices in the evening, suddenly, one evening there was an incident in the bar. A very aggressive man entered and he beat up a person so badly that he had to go to the hospital. This happened the first day after I met Rinpoche. I was quite upset so I went to Rinpoche and told him what had happened and asked how we could be protected against this violence and then he gave me the Guru Dragpo mantra. I had also read that when you meet a master your karma can ripen and I felt that this was an example. I also understood that if you have such strong experiences upon meeting a master, you should definitely follow that teacher. So that is what I tried to do since then.

After Rinpoche left we continued to do collective practices at my house, which was above the café. I always tried my best to participate in the Community. On October 9th, 1996, we started Norbunet and until today it is handy and has a function. In August, 1998, I was a yellow member of the first International Gakyil with Fabio Andrico and Christiana Fiorito. We did a lot of good things and the best thing that we did

was that we started the webcasts. At first we tried to do the webcasts by telephone, which was very expensive. With the help of Shang Shung Institute and Jacqueline Gens, we started doing the webcasts by internet. Also one of the most important discoveries I made as a yellow gakyil person was that most of the Gars were fully reliant on Rinpoche for their financial survival and that we needed to change that. That is still a challenge for our Community.

I had quite a turbulent life that relaxed after meeting Rinpoche. For me Rinpoche and the Teachings are incredibly precious. The more you continue on the Dzogchen path the deeper it becomes and the more experiences you have. I am very pleased to have been able to contribute a little to the continuation and communication of Rinpoche’s work. That is what I would like to say. ©



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