



THE MIRROR

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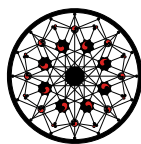


Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat
Annual Sangha Retreat
The Gars
The Primordial Masters



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY

ཕྱི་ལོ་



International Gakyil

Annual Sangha Retreat (ASR)

March 28
to April 8
Dzamling Gar

4 Series of Collective Practice

Guru Amitayus

Vajra Dance

Guru Yoga of the White "A"

Green Tara

The IDC Annual General Meeting (AGM) will also take place during the retreat and is scheduled for Sunday, the morning of 7 April

It is with great joy that the International Gakyil (IG) announces the dates and plan for our first ever IDC Annual Sangha Retreat (ASR). This is a new event – one of the last IG decisions confirmed with Rinpoche in 2018 – which we hope will become an important tradition within the Dzogchen Community in years to come.

The IDC ASR for 2019 is scheduled for 28 March to 8 April at Dzamling Gar and will consist of 4 series of Collective Practice:

- 1) Guru Amitayus
- 2) Vajra Dance, mixed with sitting practice thuns
- 3) Guru Yoga of the White "A" and
- 4) Green Tara

The IDC Annual General Meeting (AGM) will also take place during the retreat and is scheduled for Sunday, the morning of 7 April. This IDC AGM will be webcast as per usual in order to link in all our Gars & Lings around the world.

While the IDC ASR event is not a teaching retreat, it is meant to be an opportunity for the older students and those with most training and capacity to mentor and support the newer students by leading and participating in Collective Practice. Our goal is to fill the Gonpa with as many of our authorized teachers and SMS instructors as possible so that we strengthen the Sangha energy through an empowered Collective Practice.

With this aspiration in mind, the IG would like to invite all IDC members from around the world to come join us at Dzamling Gar for this new and important event. Your presence in the new Gonpa will greatly enhance the positive spirit of the event. The IDC ASR is the event once a year where we wish for all of the global IDC Sangha to come together as 'One Family' and practice together. We hope that you will join us in this gathering and help us to create this inclusive atmosphere.

For additional retreat information please contact ASR project management team via the International Gakyil or Dzamling Gar Gakyil. ©



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hoto by Lesya Cherenkova

Opening Address to the First Annual IDC Sangha Retreat

March 28, 2019
Dzamling Gar Gönpa

Steve Landsberg

It is with great pleasure and satisfaction that I have the opportunity on behalf of the international Dzogchen Community, its Gakyil and all its members, to welcome everyone here to Dzamling Gar for this short retreat, as well as everyone who is connecting by webcast.

In a way it is a very important moment because we have a chance to be in this incredible space, and as you are all well aware we are passing through a rather

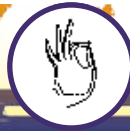
critical moment in the history of the Dzogchen Community. It's like we are almost orphaned at sea. For so many years whatever we did could somehow be self-perfected through the presence of the Master, and now in his absence we have this situation where we have to swim without a raft or a life jacket. It presents certain kinds of challenges for us, and at the same time maybe that is a great opportunity, because once we don't have that kind of external support for our practice, etc., it puts the responsibility on our shoulders. There is no way one individual of us could possibly shoulder all that, and so it is a great fortune that we have this Sangha through which we can share this responsibility and collaborate together.

So this is the first of many annual Sangha retreats, in which we can all practice together and during this retreat we will have several different kinds of collective practices we will be doing. ©



Front cover: Buddha Khyeu Ömitrugpa, one of the Twelve Primordial Masters, painted by Master Dugu Chögyal on the west side of the Temple of the Great Contemplation at Merigar West.

Back cover: Drone photo of participants in the Mandarava retreat at Dzamling Gar, February 5–18, 2019 by Elena Hill Ihilcik.



Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat

Excerpt from Day 1
December 28, 2017, Dzamling Gar

Introduction to the Retreat Teaching and the
Transmission of Ati Guru Yoga

Welcome everybody to this retreat. This retreat is not very useful for old practitioners, because old practitioners more or less know many things, so it would be more beneficial if they did practice. You cannot have realization only by listening to the teaching. First you should learn the meaning of the sense of the teaching, then you apply and integrate what you have learned. This is the reason I repeat the same retreats many times. I do this because there are new people who have no transmission and do not know what to do. For that reason, I have explained what I am doing in this program for these few days. It is very important that you try to understand what we are going to do. So, if you listened well, you can understand. Ok, thank you very much, and welcome everybody.

Good day for everybody and everywhere. We are in Dzamling Gar beginning our retreat. The title of this retreat is 'Ati Yoga Teaching'. This is something important that you should understand. People are always concentrated on the titles of books or teachings, but it is more important to understand the sense of the teaching, otherwise it doesn't work. In general I am teaching Ati Yoga. First of all, try to understand what Ati means. Ati is in the language of Oddiyana. In Sanskrit we say "Adi". Ati means the primordial state. Everybody has that state; so this is what we should discover and then we try to be in that state. When we say 'yoga', yoga you know very well, yoga is very diffused everywhere today. The origin of the word 'yoga' is Sanskrit. In the Oddiyana language it is used in the same way, but the meaning of the word yoga depends on what you are explaining. What you consider as yoga is different; we cannot say yoga is only one thing. For example, in Tibetan yoga has been translated from Sanskrit and Oddiyana in ancient times by very good translators, translators who are not going after a kind of book. These translators know what the real meaning, the real sense, is.

The translators are translating the real sense of the meaning, not only language. For example, when we say 'yoga', the translation into Tibetan is *naljor*. If you are learning the word *naljor*, then you can understand much more the real sense of the word *yoga*. In Tibetan when we say *naljor*, we must understand what it means. You cannot use it according to how you feel or how you want to use it. You see there are two words: *nal* and *jor*. *Nal* means *nalma* and *nalma* means the real condition. Maybe some of you learned



Photo by Pietro Borsi

what you sing when you dance the Dzamling Gar Song, the song that I composed. *Nalma*, *nal*, is repeated many times. *Nalma* means our real condition without changing or modifying. *Jor* means possessing that knowledge, not only in an intellectual way, but how it is related to our real condition. So you see when we say *naljor*, it means possessing the real knowledge of our primordial state. To learn the Dzogchen teaching means we are learning that. To apply the Dzogchen teaching means that we try to be in that state. So, if you are not doing that, you are not following in that way, the teaching is not working. These are very important points that we should remember.

Guru Yoga

In this retreat I am giving an introduction to this teaching called Ati Yoga. You can try to understand our real condition in a concrete way. I am explaining this for hours and hours and we are also doing practices addressing this. Then to apply, all people, new and old, can apply these methods. We should understand a little how we get into our real nature. Our real nature is not what happens when we are judging and thinking. In general when we speak our ordinary language, we say mind and nature of mind. What is mind? We can understand mind very well because we are judging and thinking continuously – that is mind. So even if we cannot touch, we cannot see something outside, when we observe a little how we are thinking continuously, one thought after another and then another thought arises, continuously, this is mind. But we don't have the knowledge of the *nature* of mind. This is the essence of the teaching. So there are two ways we will learn and apply that. That aspect I am not explaining today, I will explain that tomorrow.

In this case it is indispensable that the method, which the new people or the old people who are here must learn, is Guruyoga and what it means. Guru means teacher in Sanskrit. So, when we are learning and following a teacher, the teacher tries to help us understand the real sense is. We listen to the explanation and how to



apply what we have learned from the teacher. We need to go with this experience even if we really cannot discover our nature of mind. We cannot discover our nature of mind because our capacity is related with our mind. We can judge, we can think, etc., that is no problem, but those activities are related to time and space. When we say nature of mind, we cannot get in that state only by going after mind.

When we follow a teaching and go a little deeper, then there are many topics like “*madhyamika*”, “the state of the *madhyamika*” or “absolute truth”, etc., there are so many different names. That means we are discovering and learning with our mind and we have at least a little idea of what it means. When we follow a teaching we receive many things called instructions. Instructions are not only visualizing a deity or chanting a mantra; these are very relative. The real sense is when we say: “How is the nature of mind?” Even if we are not following a very high level teaching or the essence of the teaching, when we receive an example of Ati Guruyoga we can have a little experience.

With this experience you can understand, even if we have not discovered the nature of mind completely, we may discover in which direction to go. Direction is not only believing in something; it is not only learning how to do a visualization of a deity or how to chant mantras. I am not saying that these activities do not have benefit; there could be relative benefit because we live in the relative condition. These methods that we have learned and we know, should be applied related with our mind. Mind is totally in time and space and therefore limited. Mind has no capacity or knowledge going beyond that kind of limitation. This is the reason that when we say “nature of mind” – this is only a concept in our mind. We do not know what the nature of the mind is. To learn that, we should at least learn Ati Guruyoga. You remember that when we do a retreat I repeat a hundred times: “You try to concentrate on Ati Guruyoga.” Even if you are here on retreat and you have learned many things, the most important thing is related with Ati Guruyoga. The essence of the teaching given by the teacher is related with Ati Guruyoga. Now I am going to explain Ati Guruyoga and how we should do practice. People are not satisfied when I explain a very simple way to do practice.

Some people they say, “Oh, I learned Ati Guruyoga for many years, so there is no need to explain it again”. I know you can understand mentally what Ati Guruyoga is, but if you are not integrated with Ati Guruyoga, what is its function? This is the problem I always see so therefore I repeat it a hundred times. So when we do Ati Guruyoga, how do we start, for example? We can understand mentally by saying, “Oh, Ati Guruyoga is something to understand related to the nature of mind. Then I want to learn, I want to know that”. So, what is this? This is your mind. Your mind is thinking and judging that way. This is not Ati Guruyoga. Now you are thinking, “Now I want to do Ati Guruyoga”. Sometimes when you are thinking, “I want to do a practice”, then you are thinking, “Oh, I want to stay comfortably”. Particularly when people are starting, new people, when they start to learn the teaching and dharma, etc., they are very much interested to listen while sitting on the earth with crossed legs. These same people, after some months or years have passed, are going to find a chair when we practice. You observe

how we are developing. This is not development; we are always creating with our mind that way. I am not saying you should stay on the earth with crossed legs. If you feel better and it is easier and more comfortable, it is ok. You remember that Buddha Shakyamuni sat under a tree with crossed legs and remained for six years.

In this case, crossed legs are considered important because when you are sitting with crossed legs and sitting on the earth, etc., there is a bone in the right and left ankle that is always touching the earth and you have pain. When you have learned the Vairocana position, etc., crossing the legs by putting one leg above, then you can remain for hours and hours and there is no pain. You are also more able to keep the physical body straight. In all practices, in Sutra, Tantra, in any kind of practice, we always need to keep our backs straight. That is for balancing our energy. So, if someone has learned a little Yantra Yoga, you can observe that person always tries to keep a straight back. In this case, sometimes it is necessary, but we do not always need to do this way. In the Dzogchen teaching instructions, sometimes it says you should remain sitting comfortably. Maybe you are sitting on the earth with crossed legs and you are not comfortable. In this case, maybe you are more comfortable sitting on a chair. Sometimes Japanese practitioners sit on their knees – also that is comfortable. But it is important that we keep our energy balanced and that means we are going more into the essence. Then we think, “Oh, now I need to do Ati Guruyoga”. So, now you work with your mind. You have learned this from the teacher and the teacher explained how we should do Ati Guruyoga. This is called a transmission.

Maybe new people don't know how to do Ati Guruyoga. When you listen to the teacher and the teacher explains and you learn and apply – this is called transmission. The teacher explains and the students understand. We should do a kind of visualization when we do Ati Guruyoga. We need to do a visualization because we are living in time and space; we have that attitude and that experience. So when we are doing visualizations, it becomes easier. In Ati Guruyoga you should visualize white A and a *thigle* of five colors. You should imagine something just like this in the center of your body. So this is visualization. Also when you do this visualization, you sound “A” because in the center of this *thigle* there is a Tibetan character called letter A. A is considered something like all different kinds of sounds the origin of which is A. For example, in the Sanskrit alphabet first we have the vowels, which start with the A. There is also this influence in Western language. When you are doing also your alphabet you say “A, B, C, D”. A is the origin of all sounds. Then A becomes other sounds: I, U, E, O etc. And there are sixteen different vowels in Sanskrit: A Ā, longer and shorter. Then I Ū Ū Ri Ri Li Li E Ē O Ō Am Ah – all these are considered vowels.

After the vowels there are consonants; the consonants combined with vowels become infinite words. So the origin is the letter A. They say that the Buddha said, “A is the best letter”, because A is origin of all sound. So we are doing Guruyoga with this visualization. If you are a new practitioner and you don't know this letter, after one or two times you of doing Guruyoga, you can easily learn. It is not so difficult. In this case you can also do A just like in the Western languages. The symbol of the A is symbol of the sound.

» continued on the following page



» *Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat* continued from previous page

In the Dzogchen teaching, sound is particularly explained as the origin of all manifestation. So this is how we learn what the state of Dzogchen is. Dzogchen means our real nature, our primordial state. When we ask how that state is we should receive that information mentally. There is an explanation in the Dzogchen teaching that the state of Dzogchen, which is our condition, is called the non-dual of *kadag* and *lhundrub*. *Kadag* and *lhundrub* are words in the Tibetan language; *kadag* means emptiness. When we say *dharmadhatu*, *dharmadhatu* means all phenomena that has emptiness as its real nature. In the Dzogchen teaching this is called *kadag*.

What is the structure of this word in Tibetan, *ka* is the first letter of the Tibetan alphabet. The Tibetan alphabet is not like Sanskrit; it is different. The Tibetan alphabet starts with *Ka*, *Kha*, *Ga*, *Nga*, *Ca*, *Cha*, *Ca*, *Nya*, *Ta*, *Tha*, *Ta*, *Nga*, etc., at the end there is *Ha*, *A*, then there are thirty consonants. Sometimes this seems a little different and strange because at the end of the consonants there is *Ha* and *A*, *A* is final. All languages consider *A* a vowel. But in the Tibetan language *A* is a consonant, not a vowel. This is because in the Tibetan language vowels are used for adding something up and down and some signs. This is a vowel. *A* has its body and that is why it is considered a consonant. When we say “*T*” we are adding something on the top. When we say “*U*” we are adding something lower. When we say “*E*” then we add something on the top. Also “*O*”, there is sign on the top. So they have no body. This is called a vowel in Tibetan. That means that *Ka* is the first letter. That means also *Ka* represents “first of all”. *Dag* means pure. Pure means emptiness; emptiness is pure and impure, there is not this dualistic concept. *Kadag* means since the beginning pure. So, emptiness is *dharmadhatu*. *Lhundrub* means that if we understand that our real nature is only emptiness, our understanding is not complete.

If we know only emptiness, emptiness means there is nothing. For example, if you see some objects like a vase, etc., you look inside and there is nothing. Then you say “empty vase”. So, there is nothing. That really means emptiness. But it is not sufficient we understand in that way. Sometimes people think, “I understand everything is emptiness, *shunyata*”. Then you think, “I am realized, I know everything.” In the real sense that does not correspond; even emptiness has infinite potentiality – you should understand that. How does this infinite potentiality manifest and what are its qualities? This potentiality manifests through sound. Sound arises from emptiness. Sound slowly develops and then we can understand everything in the relative condition. For that reason we have the letter *A* in the center of the *thigle*. *A* represents only that sound. Also when we do practice, sometimes we transform like in the Vajrayana system, and we need to do a visualization like the three vajras: white *Om*, red *A*, and blue *HUM*, something like this. But the essence is not this form. Essence is sound, the sound of *OM*, *A*, and *HUM*. In the same way, when we transform with a seed syllable, sometimes we say *HUM*, sometimes *HRI*, etc. In Vajrayana all manifestations belong to the Five Dhyana Buddhas.

So these seed syllable sounds like *OM*, *HUM*, *TRAM*, *HRI*, *A*, with these sounds of the seed syllables, we can understand what belongs to which Buddha family. This is more related with sound. But if we are thinking only of sound, then we cannot see, we can-

not understand. Sound develops in light. When we say light, light means like light and dark. It doesn't mean five colors. Five colors are still more developed. So, white *A* represents the light of the sound *A*. This is very important to understand. So, slowly when we do visualizations, we should understand the meaning. When we have light, then you can see there is a *thigle* of the five colors. First the five colors develop and then the five wisdoms, etc. When we understand that the characteristic of these manifestations of potentiality is the five elements, then there is possibility. In the Dzogchen teaching we say *lhundrub*, *lhundrub* means the self-perfected qualification, which we all have. We don't understand this *thigle* and the white *A* inside as something in our stomach, this is not what is meant. We have this potentiality. When there is this potentiality, in Vajrayana style you receive initiation, instruction, etc., and then you can transform into any kind of form. What we have learned, for example, is how we transform divinities, colors, forms, etc. – these are the instructions. ❀

Transcription: Anna Rose

Editing: Naomi Zeitz

Refreshing the Importance of the Santi Maha Sangha

The Santi Maha Sangha Instructors
of the Dzogchen Community

Now that spring has arrived, it feels like a good time to refresh in our minds the importance of the Santi Maha Sangha. The Santi Maha Sangha training is a programme of study and practice created by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1992. The words: 'Santi Maha Sangha' literally means 'Dzogchen Community' in the ancient language of Oddiyana. Its goal is to train practitioners so they are able to attain a real, in-depth knowledge of the Dzogchen teachings based on personal experience.

The Santi Maha Sangha is something unique, as Rinpoche personally created this course for his own students by collecting together significant quotations from the works of great masters, together with his own comments and advice. Rinpoche considered it important that all his students have direct access to the insights and advice of these enlightened teachers so he dedicated much of his precious life to creating this special programme. Overall, it took Rinpoche many years to research and write the Santi Maha Sangha books, starting with the 'The Precious Vase', which constitutes the Base Level text.

A Dharma King, Rinpoche was one of the most accomplished and greatest Dzogchen Masters of our era, as well as being a living example of how to embody the Dzogchen teachings on an everyday basis. This is something truly amazing! As his students we are blessed with great good fortune. We are also extremely lucky have this unique opportunity to deepen our knowledge of Dzogchen due to his dedicated effort, through the Santi Maha Sangha programme. In fact, the Santi Maha Sangha training is something very significant not only for the present time but also as a guide for future generations.



Translators Adriano Clemente, Jim Valby and Elio Guarisco working with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Tashigar Norte, Venezuela, on the translation of the Marvellous Primordial State.

On many occasions, Rinpoche said that it was his sincere wish for all his students to study the base of the Santi Maha Sangha. He considered it a valuable foundation for every one, irrespective of their age, culture or their experience of the Dzogchen teachings. The main purpose of the base level of the Santi Maha Sangha is to broaden each individuals understanding of Buddhism as a whole, since it covers the main principles of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen, both from a theoretical and practice perspective. By following the Santi Maha Sangha programme it also helps to stabilise our own view, meditation and behaviour, by creating a broad framework of knowledge, which is something extremely valuable.

Each level of the Santi Maha Sangha is a complete path in itself. However, Rinpoche also transmitted many precious teachings on the Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha as well as many of his own Terma teachings during his lifetime. All of these teachings can also help us to further understand and amplify our knowledge of the Santi Maha Sangha. It is the responsibility of each person who received these teachings to practise them on an individual basis. However, we can also do this collectively since we are part the Dzogchen Community, whose main goal is to offer support to

one another and make the teachings come alive and grow within us.

The Santi Maha Sangha is therefore a vital aspect of the Dzogchen Community as a whole and a means to realize the principle of collaboration. The Santi Maha Sangha Training is very important to guarantee the continuity of the Dzogchen teachings, but it is also a way to come to realize the real value and meaning of the Dzogchen Community itself... the Master, the Teachings and the Sangha being indivisible.

To study and practice the Base level in depth, or indeed which ever level of the Santi Maha Sangha has been reached, presents a very stable and secure method for developing all the necessary experiences to proceed on the path towards complete liberation. It is a way for all practitioners to realize the state of Dzogchen within themselves and thus help to uphold the continuation of the Dzogchen teachings. For further inspiration, please refer to 'The Dzogchen Community Principles and Guidelines' and 'The Precious Vase', as well as by participating in the many Santi Maha Sangha study groups and courses which take place internationally. ©



The Relationship between SSF, ATIF and SSP

Marco Baseggio

On 5 February, 2019, the three remaining founders of the Shang Shung Foundation (SSF), Rosa Tolti Namkhair, Merigar (legal representative Tiziana Gottardi) and the International Dzogchen Community (represented by Roberto Zamparo) signed an important statement concerning the relationship between SSF, the Atiyoga Foundation (ATIF) and Shang Shung Publications.

After having mentioned the precious and essential role of Master Chögyal Namkhair Norbu for the Shang Shung Institute and then the SSF, the Founders pointed out that on July 2018 the Master founded the International Atiyoga Foundation, in Tenerife. According to Rinpoche's wishes, the new Foundation assumed the role of the main cultural foundation and reference point for the cultural activities of the Dzogchen Community. Therefore, many of the cultural activities of SSF have migrated to the ATIF, such as open courses of Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, Khaita Dances, and Meditation, as well as the Tibetan Medicine and the Tibetan Language departments.

Merigar's Archive and the Library, even though they formally remain within the legal structure of SSF, will be managed for many different aspects with the collaboration of ATIF (as a reference partner) and Merigar.

Instead, temporarily, and for practical reasons, the activities of the publishing house, Shang Shung Publications, will continue within the legal structure of SSF.

In the new context in which it is now operating, the publishing house will have to make a considerable effort to reorganize. The Founders are sure that this will bring good results in terms of sustainability, efficiency and work quality. The vision is to create, as soon as possible and, in any case, within two years, a new legal entity in a form most suitable to the activities developed by Publications.

In addition, the Founders' Council accepted the voluntary resignations of the members of the previous Board of SSF: Oliver Leick, Yuchen Namkhair, Julia Lawless and Kirill Shilov, in the shared awareness that it is appropriate to appoint a new Board of Directors which takes into account the birth of the International Atiyoga Foundation and the activity mainly developed by SSF at present and temporarily.

The voluntary resignations were done within a completely harmonious context between the Founders' Council and the outgoing Board of Directors, with the common intention to respect in the best possible way the vision of Master Namkhair Norbu.

The Founders also expressed their total thanks for the work carried out and the complete abnegation shown by the members of the outgoing Board of Directors,

Therefore, the Founders officially deliberated:

- to not appoint a new Honorary President of SSF, in respect of the memory of Master Namkhair Norbu;
- to accept the voluntary resignations of the members of the Board of Directors made up of Oliver Leick, Yuchen Namkhair, Julia Lawless and Kirill Shilov;
- to appoint Marco Baseggio, Pia Bramezza, Oliver Leick, Artur Skura and Giovanni Totino as the new Board of Directors. The first three members are also part of the Board of ATIF, the other two are more related to the activity of the publishing house.
- to appoint Giovanni Totino as the Chairman of the Board of Directors and legal representative of the SSF.

We hope that all this will bear good fruit!



THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the
International

Dzogchen Community of
Chögyal Namkhair Norbu

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Shang Shung Publications is looking for **English editors** and **Italian-to-English** translators to join the team to ensure that we will continue publishing the teachings of our beloved Master well into the future.

Because it is crucial that our publications are worthy of their precious content, we strive to meet high standards of editing and translation. Due to the unique and specialized nature of our work, we are launching an online training program to help interested editor and translator candidates familiarize themselves with the process of working with language and hone their skills.

Participants who successfully complete the training will have the opportunity to become part of the team and will also receive compensation commensurate with the volume and quality of work they are able to contribute.

Format: Independent work offline, on-line reviews and learning content presentation in three phases

Length: Six months, starting end of April/early May 2019



Literary Style (Line Editing)

Participants are given a sample assignment to be completed in the course of three months. They will be expected to edit approximately two pages a week and every two weeks meet individually with a mentor online (one on one) to review and discuss the ongoing progress.

Form and Consistency (Copyediting)

In the course of the following two months, participants meet online once every two weeks for collective sessions. Topics will include applying our style sheet for consistency in technical details such as punctuation and capitalization. We will also cover indexing, bibliographies, notes, and fact checking.

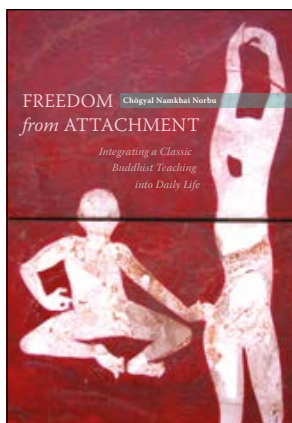
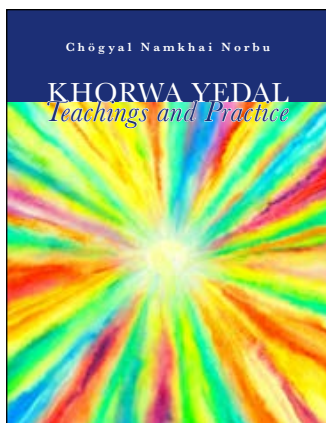
Treatment of Tibetan and Sanskrit Terms

One month, with one online presentation and two review sessions (collective). Since nearly all our publications include a high percentage of Tibetan and Sanskrit terms, it is helpful if editors learn how to treat them in a correct and consistent manner. Although at least basic knowledge of these languages is useful, it is by no means essential.

- Extensive familiarity with the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
- Three years' minimum membership in the International Dzogchen Community
- English or Italian mother tongue
- Excellent writing skills, good literary style
- Good computer literacy
- Ability to work independently
- Willingness to collaborate with other team members

If you meet these requirements and would like to participate in the training, please complete and submit our application form no later than April 15, 2019.

Best wishes,
Shang Shung Publications



New Releases from Shang Shung Publications

Shang Shung Publications is pleased to announce several new releases this spring. All three will soon be available in the SSP webshop. Go to shop.shangshungfoundation.com/newsletter to request regular updates on forthcoming publications.

Longsal Teachings, Volume Ten

Longsal, an abbreviation of *Longchen Wösal Khandroi Nyingthig* (*Klong chen 'od gsal mkha' 'gro'i snying thig*), or *The Luminous Clarity of the Universe, Heart Essence of the Dakinis*, is the cycle of Upadesha teachings that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu mainly received through the experience of clarity in his dreams. Over the years, Shang Shung Publications, with the support of the Kater Translation Project and the dedicated work of translator Adriano Clemente, has published many of these extraordinarily precious upadeshas. The Longsal Teachings series contains translations of selected original texts together with the histories of their discovery.

Volume Ten comprises *Khorwa Yedal* (*The Direct Introduction to the State of Primordial Pervasiveness in Samsara*); *The Way to Practice the Profound Path of Guru Kalachakra*; *The Instructions on the Outer, Inner, and Secret Rushen*; *The Annotated Instructions on the Twenty-Five Spaces*; and two brief upadeshas encapsulating the essence of Dzogchen.

Please note that the Longsal publications are restricted to those who have received the Longsal root initiation of Jñanadakini or transmission of the specific teachings.

Khorwa Yedal

Khorwa Yedal is an extraordinary method of direct introduction belonging to the Longsal cycle and transmitted to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by his root teacher, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje. Rinpoche taught this method in July 2014, in New York (also transmitted via webcast). The translation of Rinpoche's upadesha on this particular method of practice can be found in Longsal Teachings, Volume Ten, whereas the forthcoming booklet contains the oral commentary as taught in New York.

Freedom from Attachment – Ebook

Parting from the Four Attachments is a traditional Mahayana teaching transmitted mainly in the Sakyapa lineage, but its universal meaning makes it of great importance for all practitioners of Buddhism. As it is a very short teaching, consisting of only four verses, it is easy to remember. Originally taught by Mañjushri to Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, the founder of the Sakyapa school, it presents four different aspects of the path as related to the attitude of practitioner. In *Freedom from Attachment* Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presents this famous teaching and the way to apply it in modern world, emphasizing the last verse related to the view and combining it with the explanation of the path of Dzogchen.

The ebook version is available in Mobi and ePub formats and is suitable for reading on all ebook readers. ©

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Diet and Lifestyle with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

Dzamling Gar
February 2019

Chae Cramb

February in Dzamling Gar saw the exciting start of a new program in Diet and lifestyle according to Tibetan Medicine, offered by Shang Shung Institute's School of Tibetan Medicine. The program has been developed and will be taught by Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo, the International Director of the school. It is comprised of four levels, which will be taught in short intensive courses over the course of the next two years. This was level 1 and consisted of three days of intensive instruction by Menpa Phuntsog. Later this year she will teach level 1 at Dzamling Gar again, along with level 2, and then in 2020 levels 3 and 4 will be taught for the first time. Upon successful completion of the full two-year program participants will be qualified as diet and lifestyle specialists according to the Tibetan Medical system.

"According to Tibetan medical science, each kind of cure comprises four fundamental elements: diet, behavior, medicines, and diverse kinds of external therapies."

(Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,
The Practice of Tibetan Kunye Massage, 2003, p. 7)

The course began with a discussion about our intentions and our interest in the subject, along with an overview of the full two-year program. Menpa Phuntsog emphasized that this is an in-depth course for aspiring practitioners. Diet and lifestyle are two of the key pillars of Tibetan Medicine (*gso ba rig pa*) and it has been designed for those with a serious interest in learning to apply these aspects for the benefit of others, whether that be in a professional capacity as a health practitioner, or with friends and family. Of course it will also al-

low us to much better understand our own individual condition, and to use diet and lifestyle to maintain our own balance.

As Menpa Phuntsog explained, taking on the responsibility to work with others in a healing role is a serious responsibility. One of the Tibetan words for doctor or



Diet and Lifestyle Course with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo from February 1–3, 2019 at Dzamling Gar.

healer, *smān pa*, literally refers to 'one who benefits'; a practitioner of medicine is one who benefits sentient beings. To be in such a position requires good karma, but crucially a healer must be aware of their actions, as maintaining that karma is just as important. This requires a particular intention in one's work, the focus must never be on profit, but should be on benefiting others. Knowledge alone is not enough, Menpa Phuntsog Menpaove this point home with the poignant fact that "the world's suffering is created by those who have knowledge but wrong intentions".

So, with our intention firmly set, Menpa Phuntsog went on to teach the key foundation of Tibetan Medicine, an understanding of the body, which will serve as a solid base for the later levels of the course. She explained that the entire subject of Tibetan Medicine can be summarized under four categories:

1. The subject to be healed
2. That which heals
3. Methods of healing
4. The healer

The focus of this first level was on starting to develop our understanding of the first two of these, learning our body and its materials, and understanding the qualities of food and how it can heal. Menpa Phuntsog pointed out that these days our approach to health is often backwards. For example we might hear that going gluten free will do wonders for our digestion, fasting will boost our immune system, or that veganism would be of great benefit to everyone's health. These things can certainly be true in some cases, but as Menpa Phuntsog explained, we must begin from the individu-

al. Food can be medicine, but first we must understand what specific effect it will have in the individual, as what is beneficial for one person may be harmful for another.

"If we wish a complete knowledge of the basic nature of the body, it is indispensable to examine exhaustively the humours and the organic components, their natures, types, main characteristics, functions, and conditions, as well as the reciprocal relationship between the two: how through them the human body originates, forms and, having reached its full development, continues living."

(Chögyal Namkhai Norbu,
Birth, Life and Death, 2009, p. 17)

Tibetan Medicine begins from the perspective that a healthy body is balanced body. In order to balance the body we must have a precise understanding of its present condition. We began with an overview of how the body develops. Menpa Phuntsog gave an introduction to embryology according to Tibetan Medicine, from the causes of

» continued on the following page

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conception all the way through stages of embryonic development. Knowledge of how the human body develops is not only vital in understanding the basis of the body, but also in the important role of supporting women through a healthy pregnancy.

Next we moved on to a detailed introduction to physiology using the 'Tree of Tibetan Medicine', a graphical representation of the healthy and diseased states of the body using a tree with two trunks. In particular we focused extensively on the 'branch' of the three humours (*nyes pa gsum*). Understanding the humours, and their characteristics, functions and locations in the body formed a key part of the course, as it is through knowledge of these that we can really start to individualize our approach to health and wellness.

"The three humours sustain the formation, maintenance and destruction of the human body and therefore constitute the basis of each individual, male or female"

(Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, *Birth, Life and Death*, 2009, p. 17)

It is upon the basis of the humours, and their balance or imbalance, that the human body maintains its health or falls into disease. They can be affected by everything we do, and especially by the substances we ingest. So it becomes clear why Tibetan Medicine takes a holistic approach, and why the aspects of diet and lifestyle are so important. When trying to balance our condition presence and awareness of our diet and behavior are foundational aspects.

"Tibetan medicine identifies three humors, or energies, that arise from various combinations of the elements and form the basis for the functioning of the human body. Air



Public Talk on Integrative Medicine at Clinica integra Salud in Tenerife North with Menpa Phuntsog (fourth from left), Fabio Andrico (second from left), Dr Jordi Postius (first on left) and Dr Juan Carlos Durán (third from left) on February 16th, 2019.

and space combine for form wind energy, fire and water bile energy, and water and earth...When they are in balance and in proper relationship to each other, we have a perfect state of health. If they are imbalanced, in excess or deficit, or abnormal in their interaction with each other, we experience disorders and diseases."

(Chögyal Namkhai Norbu & Fabio Andrico, *Tibetan Yoga of Movement*, 2013, p.15)

After a deep dive into the humours, Menpa Phuntsog went through the details of some of the factors that can affect them, such as age, season, climate and time of day, before coming to the key subject of diet. This brings us to the second major category of Tibetan Medicine, 'that which heals'. As both Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Menpa Phuntsog emphasize, food can be medicine, but in order for us to work with food as medicine we must first understand its composition and characteristics in detail.

According to Tibetan Medicine, at the material level the body is composed of four elements (or five depending upon your perspective). The elements the body needs are regenerated by food. Menpa Phuntsog asked what we thought the healthiest foods are. This was of course a trick ques-

tion! Foods all contain different elements in different combinations, so it's impossible to say what is healthy or unhealthy without relating it to the condition of a individual. However once we understand this, we can use knowledge of the six tastes identified by Tibetan Medicine, *ro Menpaug*, and how they relate to the elements, in order to balance the humours of the body.

Menpa Phuntsog gave a detailed introduction to the elemental causes of the tastes, as well as the qualities of the individual elements, and the actions of the tastes on the humours. This also involved practical work in identifying how the elemental combinations of the tastes affect the specific qualities of each humour. This was both fascinating, and showed us how important it is that we do our homework, to memorize these details before the next level! As there is such an array of complex factors going into the interaction between food and our bodies, it's important for practitioners that these are committed to memory.

We concluded by starting to look in-depth at specific foods. We studied grains, first in general as a food group, and then in detail, looking at the subtleties and variations of a wide range of individual types of grains. We will continue to look at the specifics of different foods in level Level 2, which will also mark the start of the highly-anticipated practical work, food tasting! This will focus on raw foods. Cooking changes some of the properties of foods, so it is necessary to understand foods in both their raw and cooked states. Level 3 is where we will begin to go into cooking – both the theory of its effects on food, and practical sessions. In the final course, level 4, Menpa Phuntsog will introduce the mixing of foods, and how foods combinations affect us differently.

It was amazing just how much information Menpa Phuntsog was able to pack into three days. With her rigorous, methodical



Ku Nye First Level Course with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo from January 22–27, 2019 at Dzamling Gar.

School for Tibetan Language and Translation

The School for Tibetan Language and Translation is happy to announce the upcoming initiatives on Tibetan and Drajjor. Come and study with us!

During the Mandarava retreat at Dzamling Gar we introduced an online tool for learning Drajjor. This is still a work in progress and an updated and upgraded version will be published soon. Stay in touch!

In addition to that, we are preparing a massive online tool for learning Tibetan. If you are interested in collaborating or as a fundraiser please contact f.sanders@atiyogafoundation.org or m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org

Upcoming events:

March 22 to 24 *In London and Online*
Deepening Tibetan Grammar
with Fabian Sanders, continuing the study of Classical Tibetan grammar.

We will focus on grammatical and syntactic connectors, verbs and verbal suffixes, complex sentences.

All grammatical elements will be clarified using examples from classical texts and already covered grammar will be explained when encountered.

This makes the course suitable also for students who just know how to read.

Schedule (GMT +00):

Fri: 6.30–8.30 pm

Sat + Sun: 10 am–12 pm and 2–4 pm



April 3 + 16

Tibetan Language Course with Excerpts from The Precious Vase

with Fabian Sanders

A 2-hour online meeting every two/three weeks from 5–7 pm (Italian time) in which we will focus on some parts of the Tibetan text “The Precious Vase” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and of extended excerpts from texts quoted therein. The “Precious Vase” is an ideal text for the study of Tibetan language.

It features numerous quotes from a variety of classical texts linked by passages in modern literary Tibetan. The topics discussed are ideal to form an important basic vocabulary of Buddhist terminology.

Write to m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org to get the link for the zoom meeting.

Please note that this is a Tibetan language course, not a Santi Maha Sangha course. Students need to be able to read Tibetan and must have a basic knowledge of Tibetan grammar. The working language is English.



Online

April 24 to 26

At Merigar West

Deepening Khaita Songs

with Lobsang Zatul

From April 24 to 26 Lobsang will teach us how to pronounce some of the

Khaita songs correctly and he will explain their meaning. It will be an opportunity for all, whether students of Tibetan language or not, whether experts of Khaita or complete beginners, to deepen the pronunciation and meaning of many songs which we will then sing and dance together under the guidance of Adriana Dal Borgo and Salima Celeri.

Indicative schedule:

April 24 + 25 10 am–12.45 pm

April 26 9 am–10.50 am



April 28 to May 4

Colloquial Tibetan

with Lobsang Zatul

From April 28 to May 4 Lobsang will lead a 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 implied grammatical principles under the guidance of a native Tibetan with extensive teaching experience.

Indicative schedule:

April 28 3 pm–5.30 pm

April 29 to 30 10 am–1 pm

May 1 Pause

May 2 to 4 10 am–1 pm



July 13–August 8, 2019 At Merigar West

17th Training for Translators from Tibetan

with Fabian Sanders

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.

More details coming soon!

Follow us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/SchoolforTibetan/>)

Contact us also if you want to organize a course (Drajjor for practices and Khaita, Tibetan Language for beginners, intermediate or advanced) at your Gar, Ling or other institution also for the general public). ©

and kind approach she ensured everyone understood the details of these intricate theoretical systems. She was also able to blend her deep training in the Tibetan tradition with an understanding of modern medicine and dietary habits, and even the ethical issues surrounding food consumption today. This helped us to connect deeply with her teachings, and led to some interesting discussions around topics such as factory farming. It was apparent throughout the course just how valuable this material is. Our own condition is something of interest to us all, and everything we do affects our condition, particularly the substances we ingest as food. When viewed from such a perspective it become clear

just how important diet and lifestyle are. With the tools and understanding that Tibetan Medicine provides we can begin to see food as medicine, and work with it in a way that supports a balanced condition. This is of great benefit to anyone, Buddhist or otherwise. Without balance in our body, energy and mind it is difficult to flourish either as practitioners or in daily life.

“We all have body, energy and mind, and sooner or later we discover just how much our health and happiness depend on the three working together harmoniously.”

(Introduction to Tibetan Medicine by Phuntsog Wangmo, from: Phuntsog Wangmo and Elio Guarisco with excerpts from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Healing with Yantra Yoga, 2016, p.17)



The First Six Months of the Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund

Sept. 11, 2018–March 11, 2019

Exactly 6 months ago, on 11 September 2018, Enrico's birthday, we launched the Fund dedicated to his memory, the Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund.

Those who knew Enrico were aware of how great and passionate his commitment was to preserving and keeping Tibetan culture alive. The creation of the Fund was therefore the most natural way we found to honor his memory and to carry forward our mission to safeguard the cultural identity of the Tibetan people.

What is the Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund?

It is a fund based on private donations that aims to guarantee the university and post-university education of young Tibetans in Tibet, India and Nepal.

The goal is to train capable young Tibetans, with a high level of education, who are able to assume decision-making roles in the societies in which they live, to shoulder the challenges that await them both in their own land and in their host countries, and to contribute to improving the living conditions of the communities in which they live. Young people who continue to feel that they are Tibetan and speak their own language, aware of the cultural context from which they come.

In these six months four young women have been awarded the first scholarships, which has filled us with joy. Yeshi was able to enroll in the Ranjung Yeshe Institute in Kathmandu (Nepal), to begin to deepen her study and understanding of Buddhist philosophy and to learn to translate Buddhist texts into English. Tsomo, on the other hand, is attending the specialist degree course (MA) in Public Health and Prevention (Tibetan medicine) at the University of Qinghai, in Xining (China). Then there is Tenzin who studies Computer Science (BCA)

Tashi.



at the University of Bangalore (India), and finally Tashi who was able to enroll in the course she had longed for, a specialized degree (MA) in Tibetan Literature in Lhasa.

Four different stories of young women who could not have continued their studies because they came from poor families. Some of them are the first people in their village of origin to enroll at the university, and they are the pride and hope of the whole community.

How to participate in the Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund

To give more and more young Tibetans the opportunity to access university studies and realize their professional dreams we need to nurture and help the Fund to grow with the contributions of all those who care about the future of this people and this culture.

You can participate with a donation, starting with a minimum amount of 250 €. Donors will be periodically informed about



Tenzin with her grandmother.



Tsomo.

the number of activated scholarships and the results achieved by students.

You can donate by

- credit card/paypal on <https://asia-ngo.org/en/what-you-can-do/donate/>
- bank transfer

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Remember to mention "Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund" as reason for payment

Participating in the Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund means giving an extra tool to the new generations of Tibetans to be creators of their own future, and to hope for a more worthy future for their community and their people.

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Yeshi with Roberta, Long Distance Sponsorship Responsible.



In this issue we feature the eleven Gars of the Dzogchen Community around the world to bring our readers up to date on their activities as well as some of the challenges they are facing: Dzamling Gar in the Canary Islands, Merigar West and East in Italy and Romania, Kunsangar South and North in Crimea and Russia, Samtengar in China, Namgyalgar in Australia, Tsegylgar East and West in the USA and Mexico, and Tashigar North and South in Venezuela and Argentina.

Dzamling Gar Canary Islands, Spain

Where to Go for Your
2019 Vacation?
Dzamling Gar, of Course!

Anca Rus

As any member of this big Dharma family that is Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Dzogchen Community, you've probably traveled a lot around the Globe and found temporary homes in many of our Gars. It is also assumed that you have wonderful memories from each one of them (and some not so nice, but well... samsara is about getting bitter bites of chocolate from time to time): that you've made friends for life and some who taught you a precious lesson and then departed, that you fell in and out of love, that you partied and practiced a lot, getting more and more to the

core of your wonderful and wondrous being.

But if it is one thing I am sure about is that Dzamling Gar has a special place in your heart because there is no Gar like Dzamling Gar!

A good friend once said the Sangha practice gatherings are like immersing yourself in a sandalwood forest: even if you are a nothing-special kind of timber, you will still get some sacred scent just from being there.

This is Dzamling Gar, the sandalwood Dharma forest of the Dzogchen Community, the place with all-year-round amazing retreats of all kinds, with the best kitchen team, designer style decorated apartments with huge terraces so you can fully enjoy "Alix & company" amazing gardens (great support for meditation, by the way), daily joyful Khaita dancing, and least but not at all last, the new beautiful Gönpa, the dream-come-true of our dear Rinpoche, a place where you will Vajra Dance as never before (sea sunset guaranteed).

And don't worry about your budget, our accommodation team will have a custom-made offer ready for you in no-time (a bed in the dormitory, a shared room or apartment or a whole quiet condo for a more relaxed you). You can get the e-mail addresses of the house managers here: <https://dzamlinggar.net/en/contact-with-manager>.

Come and practice with sun, sea, palm trees and a nice baraquito

But not only the quality of the practice should make you pack the luggage ASAP, also the setting: the deep blue Ocean, the colorful exotic plants with a strong scent

that make you feel intoxicatingly in love with this island, Teide, the majestic volcano which seems like a little brother of Kailash when its crater is decorated by pristine snow, the small mountain villages or the charming towns with Colonial architecture that you just have to see.



But usually you won't get to do intensive sight-seeing as you'll be too enchanted with Dzamling Gar's effervescent life. Here you have a lot on your Dharma plate even if it isn't any retreat going on, but usually you'll be lucky to participate to at least one no matter when you come. This being said, we can tell you what we have geared up for this year...

In April is the IDC Annual Sangha Retreat (March 28–April 8), an event you can't miss because it is an amazing opportunity to intensively practice with the Dharma family. We will start with Guru Amitay-

» continued on the following page



» *Dzamling Gar* continued from previous page
us practice for several days, proceed with Vajra Dance and Guru Yoga of the White A and end with prayers to Green Tara.

And if you are not convinced to come to Dzamling Gar in April, here is a piece of news that might get you going: from the 9th to the 17th of April there is a course of The Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra lead Prima Mai followed by a Communication workshop with Gianfranco Brero (April 18–21) and “fresh” Yantra Yoga retreat, Eight Movements and Kumbhaka, with our second level instructor Naomi Zeitz.

Let us give you some highlights on what we are preparing for you from May on (we will announce instructors in due course; dates will be announced on <http://dzamlinggar.net/summer-2019>): In the first month of summer you will get the opportunity to refresh your know-how on the sacred Tibetan art of Namkha making, the beautiful artifact that protects and restores your elements and further strengthen your energy by improving or deepening your skills as a Vajra dancer during two courses: Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings (open course) and Gomadevi and Vajra Dance practice retreat (June).

In July we will host the second Tenerife Yoga Holiday project! You must admit,

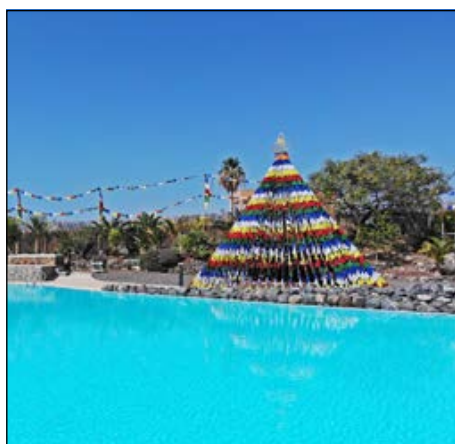
there is no better spot to get fit and sun-kissed than Tenerife!

And if you are body-ready, you might just stay longer in Dzamling Gar to get also your mind in tune with some one week intensive practice retreats: Purification of Six Lokas, Recitation of Guru Drapghur mantra, Recitation of Guru Padmasambhava mantra, Recitation of Dakini mantra with dates to be set according to the Lunar calendar (May–August).

In October, Dzamlingar will host a very interesting photography and visual arts workshop, Contemporary Buddhism in Photography, with Izabela Jaroszevska, Ph.D, Visual Artist, Fine art Photographer and Filmmaker, a hands-on open meditation workshop and an intensive SMS practice retreat.

In December you will be able to attend again “Dynamic Space” workshop led by Migmar Tsering and end the year with a Gomadevi retreat.

Don’t worry if you can’t come in a relaxed way to Dzamling Gar as the Master was always was saying. Here you will get all happy and relaxed in no time! ©



Dzamling Gar Accommodation

The Base of a Perfect Vacation Mandala

As a Dzogchen Community member we are sure you are planning at least one of the yearly vacations depending on Dharma events and the others you set aside for exploring new places along with family or friends. But why would you separate Dharma from sight-seeing when you can have them both in each holiday? You are wondering where and how? Well, we have only two words for you... Dzamling Gar!

Here, in Dzamling Gar, you can have it all, the leisure, the practice and the family and friends with you, all enjoying the wonders of this Dewachen small kingdom carefully planned by our dear Rinpoche!

Each Gar is represented here with a house where its local community members can book their stay for retreat. So firstly enter Dzamling Gar website, choose the house belonging to your Gar (<https://dzamlinggar.net/en/dzamling-gar/accommodation-in-gar>) and contact the manager to get an accommodation offer.

For your information, the contribution for expenses you’ll pay for your stay is set in the current moment at the lowest rate possible, covering only the construction costs and not even the maintenance fees, therefore be generous if you can so we can further improve the accommodation services hence you can enjoy even more the next Dzamling Gar vacation.

By the way, recently we opened a new residence, the IDC/ASIA House, which hosts the offices of IDC upstairs and four apartments downstairs, two of them having double beds, the only house in the Gar featuring this type of accommodation.

You will benefit of a generous discount for longer stay: 20% for one month and 25% for more than 60 days no matter if you choose to book a bed in the dormitory, a bedroom (with or without private bathroom) or an entire apartment just for yourself.

Take a virtual tour scrolling through the beautiful photos showcased on the website to see that we will host you in the best conditions, worthy of five star lodging.

Each Gar decorated its house in the best way possible complying with the interior



Photo by Paolo Fassoli

design concept of the whole Dzamling Gar project based on a minimal contemporary approach for a clean, spacious and bright living space. Most of the accessories and small furniture are wooden, ceramic or made from other natural materials or by hand so you can delight in a cozy and homely apartment that can become (we hope) your home-away-from-home.

But it is not only the accommodation that you will enjoy during your stay in Dzamling Gar, you have an amazing vaca-

tion package here, in this small paradise: a beautiful pool, a gourmet cafeteria, the new Gönpa and a garden worthy for a zazen sitting. Let us guide you through Dzamling Gar so you can get a small taste of the perfect vacation mandala...

You won't even believe what lies behind the fence when you'll park the car... but once you'll set foot inside, a whole colorful and exotic world will unravel in front of your eyes. The first thing you will see is the open-air cafeteria, the perfect spot to hang out with friends over a cup of tea, to delight in the yummiest dishes with a plating worthy of a posh restaurant or just lay in the hammock reading a book and listening to the mellow lounge mu-

sic played by the guys in cafeteria. After a good lunch, plunge in the huge clear blue swimming pool to cool down and fully enjoy this exotic heaven and maybe do some energy-strengthening practice in the flag tent near the pool.

With a mellow mood after so much sun, swimming and practice, it is time to recharge your batteries with a Kunye massage done by certified specialists in the relaxing atmosphere of the Tibetan Medicine house, the place where you can also book a consultation with one of the Tibetan doctors who usually can be found here at least half of the year.

downstairs, in the Jyagyip (a great place to practice Yantra Yoga, by the way, where we offer daily morning sessions for people familiar with Yantra Yoga).

After a lazy afternoon, get your energy up with some Khaita in the new Gönpa or further relax with a Vajra Dance Thun, an amazing experience, as you will dance while watching the leisurely gliding of the sun into the arms of the red Ocean. Integrating with the environment has never been so grand!

We also opened Dzamling Gar house last year which is meant for housing instructors in the downstairs apartments and work-exchangers up in two beautiful dormitories featuring an open-air kitchen and a huge terrace to admire the sea and the beautiful setting. So, in case you don't have the means to come in Dzamling Gar, we offer a work-exchange program for you to enjoy this little paradise. We need help



for the summer period, so don't hesitate to apply for work exchange!

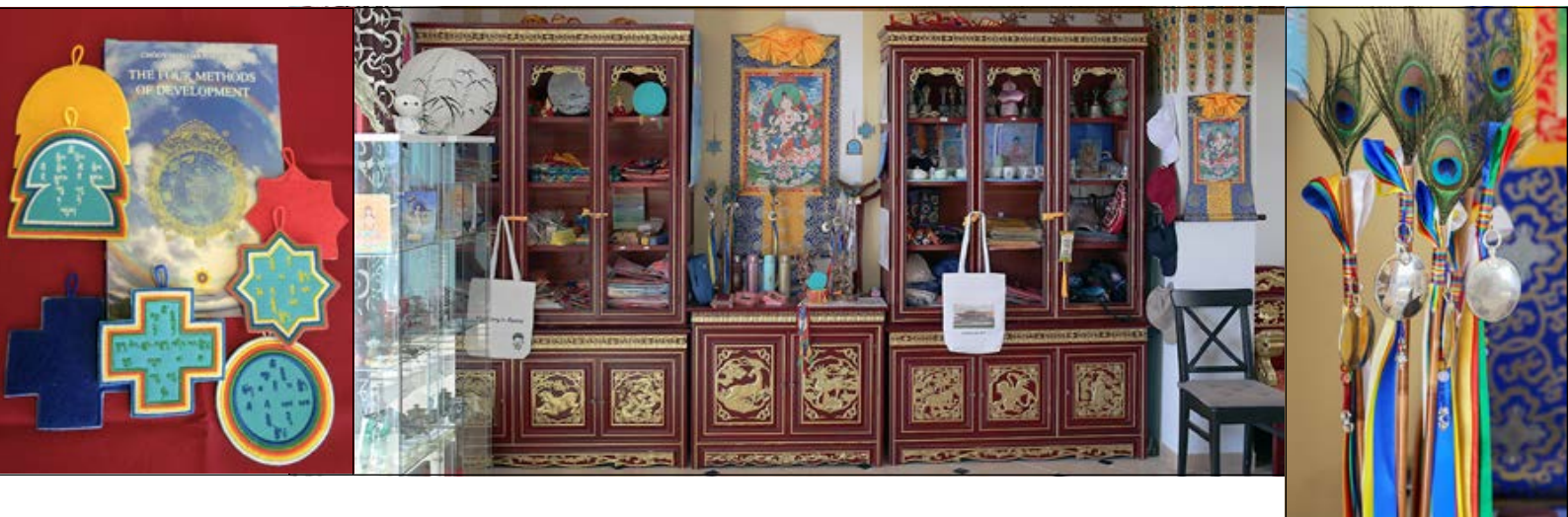
We do hope we convinced you to give Dzamling Gar a vacation test-drive. Believe us, you will love it here as we really know how to spell relaxation! ©

Tibetan Room and Shop in Samtengar House

Text by Elena Kalistova & Lena Dumcheva
Photos by Thomas Simoen



This year the Samtengar Community has also helped to prepare some branded Khaita gadgets to support the Khaita fund – while 90% of Khaita activities are run on a karma yoga basis, we still need funds for many projects like songs translations, performance costumes, video shooting and editing, promotional materials, etc. Thanks to the Samtengar Community we now have nice Khaita thermoses and other gadgets that you can buy here in the Shop to support Khaita projects.



As many of you probably know, Samtengar house in Dzamling Gar is easily recognizable by its' prayer wheels and prayer flags. It also has a beautiful Tibetan Room and Shop on the first floor.

Inaugurated by Rinpoche and Rosa in December 2016, an occasion assisted by more than 100 Samtengar Community members [<http://melong.com/tibetan-room-samtengar-house-dzamling-gar/>], over the past years this beautiful space decorated in traditional Tibetan style became a very special place of practice, workshops and gatherings. Here one of the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level exams took place, various Santi Maha Sangha courses, a dadar making workshop with Nina Robinson and Chöd practice with Steven Landsberg. Elena Kalistova, the house and shop manager, organizes regular Green Tara practice here. Many Khaita dances and performances were created in this room, as well as new costumes.

The Shop

In addition to the practice space, the Tibetan Room has a wonderful shop with a variety of items from thankas, to ritual instruments, including dadars, vajras and bells, bigger damarus for Chöd practice

and smaller ones for Mandarava, malas, incense, gaus, jewelry, Chinese tea sets and much more.

The Four Development Methods Amulets

In the shop you can also buy the Four Development Methods amulets, prepared by the Samtengar Community with Rinpoche's permission. These amulets have the same function as the t-shirts, which is that by wearing them in contact with your body, you can overcome the conflict with the current year's life, capacity, body and fortune elements. Each amulet has its own symbolic shape with the mantra on the front side and one of the five colors on the backside that corresponds to your protective "la" energy.

Special collaborations – Khaita & Maratika Fund

When preparing for the Gran Canaria performance back in Spring 2017, it was Samtengar Shop that literary brightened up the Khaita costumes – many of the Khaita signature decorations come from the Shop, while some other parts of the costumes were specially sourced in China by Xiaolan, the Samtengar secretary, and sent to Tenerife for the performance.

Another wonderful project supported through the Shop is the Maratika Foundation <https://www.maratikafoundation.com> that helps to preserve the Maratika cave and monastery. In the Shop you can



buy "Long Life and Prosperity" incense produced by the monastery, that include Maratika herbs, nectar and other blessings, and all profit goes to support the Maratika project.

So when you are next in Dzamling Gar, make sure to visit and explore the Tibetan Room and Shop in Samtengar house! © <https://www.dzamlinggar.net/en/samtengar>

Merigar West, Italy

While 2019 remains a year of reflection and mourning throughout the whole Dzogchen Community and particularly at Merigar West, which hosts the bodily remains of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, there are important projects that are going ahead such as the renovation of the Gönpa and the transformation of the Stupa of Illumination into a sanctuary.

Renovating the Gönpa

In recent years we have had some problems at our Gönpa due to the form of the roof extension, which encourages rainwater to enter and leaves the external part of the building exposed. Apart from some structural damage, the paintings and decoration both inside and outside have suffered. For the last two years we have been doing studies with professionals to find solutions. We have checked with geologists and structural experts who have analyzed the building from top to bottom: the roof, the wooden roof beams, the supporting



wooden columns, the foundations and the rock under the foundations. The company that built the Gönpa, Holzbau, has studied the report and come up with a project to resolve the problems.

We have approved the new project and restoration work will start in April and should last for about two months. This will include replacing the entire copper roof and replacing the external wooden decking with paving so that rainwater will be drained away from the building. The glass windows and sliding doors will be removed in order to check the supporting beams and then replaced with new ones that will be safer. We expect the Gönpa to be open once more by the summertime. We are



asking for sponsors to help cover the renovation costs which they can do through our new website www.merigar.it.

New Merigar Website

Our new website is up at www.merigar.it. There is lots of news about the 2019 program of events at the Gar with two separate sections: one for the general public

Work to clear the area has begun, also to be able to plan the interventions in a precise way. At the moment we are developing a project to find a solution to channel the rainwater, so that it does not create further damage and landslides.

The Stupa

There will be a special opening of the Stupa of Enlightenment on Saturday August 10, 2019 from 7:00 in the morning to 21:00 in the evening for those to wish to pay homage to the bodily remains of our Beloved Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The entire day will be dedicated to the practice of Guruyoga. Previous to this there will be five days of practice at the Gar from August 5–10.

The Stupa will become a Sanctuary, a place that is considered sacred since it is home to the bodily remains of our Teacher. The natural hollow in the area in front of the Stupa will become a special area of respect where people can come to pay homage.

Supporting the Gar

In the early years of Merigar, most of the support for the Gar came from Rinpoche's retreats. However, over the years, Merigar has become self-sufficient and has created various sources of income. The greatest financial support is always through membership and so we ask our members to continue to support the Gar in this way. The courses at the Gar also help to support the Gar as well as donations.

Last year we were able to receive a substantial amount of money from the Italian Buddhist Union (UBI) – of which we have

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» *Merigar West* continued from previous page
 been a member for some years – for the expenses of maintaining the Gar. The UBI has recently become entitled to receive what is called “8/1000” which means that individuals paying income tax in Italy (only) can delegate a part of it to the UBI as it is now officially recognized as a religious institution. There are around 50 members of the UBI and the UBI invites tenders from its members for some of their necessities such as specific projects, management costs, etc. In this way the UBI passes on the money it receives from the “8/1000” for various expenses and projects at the different Buddhist centers.

This year we are asking for a contribution for part of the management expenses of last year. We are in a situation to receive

contributions from the UBI not only because we are members, but also because Merigar has become a complete legal entity. So while we have considerable expenses for accountants to maintain our legal status and fiscal transparency at all levels, there are also financial returns for us, such as from the UBI and the 5/1000.

From last year Merigar has also been entitled to directly receive “5/1000”, which is a part of individual income tax in Italy that people can delegate to an association, since the Gar has become a legally recognized cultural association. People making their income tax returns in Italy just need to specify this when they make their returns.

We also receive some small amounts from renting out the Gönpa to different

groups from time to time, from the Merirooms, which is a large apartment in Arcidosso belonging to Merigar, the Dzam shop at the Gar, as well as the Merigar House at Dzamling Gar.

A Year of Reflections

This year the program at Merigar is dedicated more to intense collective practice as a continuation of the intense practice done in the autumn of 2018. In particular there is the Easter Retreat April 20–22, and Collective Practices August 5–10 and September 26–29, as well as the big summer retreat August 11–15 based on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's text *Birth, Life and Death*. In addition, each month we will also have activities that are for people who are not from the Dzogchen Community. ©



Upcoming Events at Merigar West

5–7 April
Collaboration and Communication
 with Laura Borel
 12–14 April
Yantra Yoga – Focus on the Preliminaries
 20–22 April
Easter Retreat – Collective Practices
 24–26 April
Deepening Khaita Songs
 with Lobsang Zatul
 26–29 April
Retreat of Gomadevi combined with Vajra Dance
 led by Prima Mai
 28 Apr–4 May
Colloquial Tibetan
 led by Lobsang Zatul
 1 May **L'ultimo viaggio**
 3–5 May
Chöd Explanation and Practice Retreat
 led by Nina Robinson
 25–26 May

Santi Maha Sangha – Base level
 31 May–2 June
Explanation and Practice Retreat
 led by Elio Guarisco
 14 June
Standing Ovation
 led by Valentina Lo Surdo
 20–23 June
Meditation in Movement
 led by A. Dal Borgo & S. Verdonk
 12–17 July
Study group on Khalongdorjeikar or Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra
 13 July–8 Aug.
17th Training for Translators from Tibetan
 17–25 July
Harmonious Breathing Teacher Training
 led by Fabio Andrico
 19–25 July
Course of Vajra Dance
 led by Adriana Dal Borgo
 25–31 July
Deepening course on Yantra Yoga first level
 led by Fabio Andrico
 26–28 July

Khaita Joyful Dances
 led by Salima Celeri
 5–10 August
Collective practices
 5–8 August
Deepening Khaita Songs
 with Lobsang Zatul
 10 August
Special Opening of the Stupa of Enlightenment
 11–15 August
Merigar Summer Retreat
 17–25 August
Yoga Holiday
 7–8 Sept.
Lucid Dreams
 led by Michael Katz
 26–29 Sept.
Collective practices

Merigar East, Romania

The Sunflower Gar at the sea shore

There is no better way to start talking about Merigar East than with a sincere warning ... be aware as you will most probably fall in love with this Gar and its surroundings: with the sunflower fields that "marry" the sky and earth, with the small and rocky fisherman beach, the best place to meditate gazing at the sun rising from an infinite red sea, with delicious fresh vegetables handpicked by the villagers of 23 of August and especially with that wonderful feeling of spaciousness that gives you the freedom to practice as (most probably) you never did before.

And the list of qualities that will make you most certainly fall for this Gar continues with its three beautifully colored external mandalas (plus an interior one), two pristine white stupas and a golden Gōpa, all of which make Merigar East a place taken out of a post-card.

Merigar East is like a multifaceted realm, it can be a quiet and open space that invites



tains itself very active, offering an all-year-round retreat schedule which comprises of the most diverse practices and workshops to satisfy any Dharma need the sangha members might have. In spite of the great loss we all suffered last year with the passing of our beloved Rinpoche, Merigar East remained the center of activity of all Eastern European practitioners who gathered for karma yoga in spring to extend and improve the camping area and prepare the Gar for what was a lively year with special Santi Maha Sangha Base intensive study with Gabriella Schneider, Semzin retreat with Elias Capriles, lungta workshop, Chöd retreat with Steven Lansberg, intensive SOV retreat with

to develop the Gar's activity by giving the sangha the opportunity to take on sustainable plant growing at home but also to give it a try directly in the Gar.

Afterwards, Gabriella Schneider, the first Romanian SMS instructor, will host the second part of the SMS Base retreat (28th–31st May) which started last year and has been welcomed with open arms by the Romanian sangha and not only. Do join via Skype as well if you are interested in deepening your SMS knowledge.

And if you are looking for an active vacation, look no further than Merigar East. We need your skillful hands to prepare the Gar for this year's retreat schedule and to further improve the camping facilities. You will



you to deepen any practice you might fashion, reminding you, at the same time, not to dismiss the simple joy of gathering around a fire with friends, old and new, over coffee and watermelon at the long table in the camping lounge (blissfully cool during hot days) or just dance in the living room of the multifunctional house that serves as a big dorm for any Dharma traveler who is not into camping.

But it is not only the location that should make you give it an intensive practice test-drive, Merigar East main-

Zoli Cser, practice of the Inner and Secret Rushens by Elio Guarisco, several autumn workshops and an intensive inner heat 7th Lojong practice retreat for the New Year hosted by Zoli Cser.

2019 in Merigar East. Retreats galore, spa and a wild beach a walk away

This year, Merigar East is coming stronger than ever with a schedule that debuts with an out-of-the-box course of permaculture (23rd–29th April) with the community's specialist, Saviana Parodi, an initiative meant

be rewarded with camp fires and jam sessions, amazing fresh food, intensive practice, yantra yoga and a Tsa-tsa workshop (1st–9th June), a perfect chance to make your own tsa-tsas and harmonize your energy. Don't hesitate to enroll for our karma yoga gathering! By the way, the sea water has an ideal temperature around that date.

The retreat season will be opened with several Dakini related practices: the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings with Eleonora Folegnani (21st–23rd June) followed by a

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Kunsangar South, Crimea

Since 2005 practitioners in the Russian-speaking Dzogchen Community had been looking for a place in Crimea to establish a gar, which was supposed to be Merigar East. In the end Merigar East was founded in Romania in 2007. Then after viewing a few options, in 2009 Rinpoche announced that Kunsangar South would be founded in Crimea, not far from Sevastopol.

Crimea is a peninsula with a unique climate, a warm sea, low mountains, green fields, canyons with rivers all around, and ancient towns. The Black Sea beaches are



snow from time to time. The best time to visit Crimea and the Gar in particular is from May till October.

With the blessing of our Teacher we constructed a Longsal Stupa at Kunsangar South. Improvements to the surrounding area concluded in 2018. This year we will be working on the green area around it.



15 minutes from the Gar as is the city of Sevastopol. The airport is about 2–2.5 hours from the Gar, which borders on Goncharnoe village and is in a rather isolated position, far from any neighbours, so it is private and quiet.

Our area is situated in a very picturesque cup-shaped valley surrounded by low mountains on all sides with wonderful views. On a summer day the air temperature sometimes reaches 35–40°C, but there also can be a significant change in temperature at night – up to 10–15°C. In winter there can be sub-zero temperatures and



» *Merigar East* continued from previous page
Green Tara and Ödzer Chenma Retreat with Oliver Leick (27th June–2nd July) and a course of Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra Beginners' in two parts led by Stoffelina Verdonk (7th–14th July, part 1) and Elisha Koppensteiner (17th–24th July, part 2).

You will be very happy to hear that this time you will have no less than three external mandalas to dance on so a great occasion to finally learn well the steps and mudras as you can practice on your own whenever there isn't the course going on.

Merigar East will welcome Elias Capriles in August, an instructor who returns every year to Romania and is already regarded as an Eastern Dzogchen family member. Elias will host an open event on the Six Special Mind Trainings (Lojong) (4th–8th August) in his captivating style of merging Eastern knowledge and esoterism with Western philosophy.

Autumn is very dynamic at Merigar East, opening with a Drajyor and Khaita Course hosted by Fabian Sanders and Monika Walczak (28th August–1st September)

Upcoming programme:

May 1–12

Santi Maha Sangha

with Grigoriy Mokhin

June 10–17

Chöd

with Steven Landsberg

June 24–July 8

Tsalung Practice of Mandarava

with Fabio Andrico

July 17–25

Discovering natural awareness

with Elio Guarisco

After July 25

Vajra Dance retreat may be held

September 10–22

Santi Maha Sangha and Yantra Yoga

with Aleksandr Mochalkin

and Kirill Mironov

followed by an intensive Tibetan Language Beginners' Course with Fabian Sanders (2nd–7th September).

And this is not all, we have many more surprises for you along this auspicious year, so keep your eyes open for fresh Merigar East news!

Last but not least, do come to the Sunflower Gar, you can rest assured that you will love it here! We also have a spa with healing mud and waters a quick drive away, so what are you waiting for?

<https://www.dzogchen.ro/>



According to the wishes of the Maestro, Migmar Tsering and a group of artists decorated the Kunsangar South gönpa in 2012. This project was based on a similar one at Merigar East, which is why the two gönpas are alike architecturally, although the windows are much bigger in Crimea. The considerable glass area gives an almost panoramic view and a wonderful opportunity to do Longde practice. There is under-floor heating, thus we can practice in comfort in any season. This winter for the first time we had a Vajra Dance retreat during the New Year holidays.

In 2014 Crimea became part of Russia so we didn't have many practitioners visiting the Gar until 2017. During those years 4 or 5 small retreats (for 10–20 people) took place annually with Russian and Ukrainian instructors mostly for local practitioners.



Since 2017–2018 the situation has started to change: international instructors such as Fabio Andrico and Elio Guarisco have led retreats at Kunsangar South even though we still don't have so many people for our activities, usually 30–35 people. Everybody, however, considers this to be a bonus since we can do practice retreats and get personal attention from an instructor.

There are two retreat houses on the land, a small bungalow and dark-retreat house, built in 2012–2014 thanks to the help of sponsors. The Gar camping facilities are open from May till September. There is also a kitchen area where karma-yoga cooks make lunch for everybody during the retreats. We also celebrate holidays, have music sessions and play board games there. Since 2018 a guest house with 3 rooms for 9 people and a shared kitchen has started to take in guests. During our retreats we have a rather cosy and relaxing atmosphere: everything you need is at hand, the weather is nice, we spend time in a close family circle where everybody

Kunsangar North, Russia

When you buy a piece of land, you need to build something there. For two or three people it will be very hard to do. But if everybody participates, it will be very easy. For that reason I ask you all to remember this and cooperate.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, on the building of Kunsangar North, 1998.

Kunsangar North was established on the territory of a former Soviet Pioneer camp, in a pine forest near the river Klyazma, 60 kms from Moscow. The site is rather big and contains houses for habitation, cottages, retreat houses, a dark retreat house, the Gönpa (the Vajra Hall), three halls for collective practices, the Stupa of Ultimate Conquest with a heated room for practice inside, the School of Tibetan Medicine, and also a canteen, coffee bar, bakery, library, bookshop, sauna, gym and swimming pool.

We are happy to organize retreats with local and international instructors of the Dzogchen Community. In addition, with the approval of Chögyal Namkai Norbu, the Gar is open to all Buddhist sanghas and other friendly groups, which allows us to be self-sufficient. Thanks to this and to the help of sponsors we are able to keep donations for Dzogchen Community retreats unfixed, following the principle of Generosity recommended by our Master.

.....

knows everyone. The accommodation places in the houses are not still enough and the Gakyil is doing its best to enhance this number in the coming years.

At the beginning the Gakyil chose sustaining SMS practices as the specialization of the Gar and Rinpoche approved that choice. From our personal experience of practice at the Gar we have found that Kunsangar South is a perfect place for personal retreats in a relaxed and profound way.

We have prepared a rich program for 2019 and in the upcoming summer season we will have a Geko who is fluent in English. We are happy to welcome practitioners from all over the world at Kunsangar South.

kunsangar.geko@gmail.com
kunsangar.blue@gmail.com



For the past months our main goal has been to strengthen cooperation, so we have prepared programs of active communication with other Gars and Lings, and we are also trying to be more open towards the local population and all the people that are interested in Teachings. That means not only open courses such as Khaita Dances, Yantra Yoga (including Kumar Kumari and Yantra for the pregnant), Breathe, meditation and mindfulness, but also workshops of thangka painting and crafts such as ceramics, leather work and gastronomy.



Since 2013 Kunsangar North has been one of the homes for the School of Tibetan Medicine founded by Chögyal Namkai Norbu and led by Phuntsog Wangmo. Each year in winter Dr. Phuntsog provides courses of Ku Nye and Dietology, along with the foundation of Tibetan pharmacy. In 2013 the School offered a Four-Year Tibetan Medicine Program that had more than 30 graduates in 2017, with many of them also visiting Xining Tibetan Medical Hospital in 2018 for practical study.

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» *Kunsangar North continued from previous page*

Kunsangar North has already held two Conferences for Conscious Cooperation with discussions of problems and solutions for the Community, its members, Gars and Lings.

The atmosphere at Kunsangar North is always warm and friendly. Perpetual intensive practice is always going on, individually and collectively.

Through the blessing of our Teacher the Stupa of Ultimate Victory (Namgyal Chorten) was erected at Kunsangar North. It contains various relics from our Master and from many important Teachers of the past and the present, and is an official object of pilgrimage for all Buddhists and those interested in the Teachings. In 2018, following a contest, the Gakyil of Kunsangar North chose a project of paving around the Stupa and completion of the neighboring territory. Sponsors are covering the costs of all the landscape and architectural works. The project is 90% completed, and will be finished in 2019.

We are currently developing a project for targeted sponsorship and donations for the Gar's future programs & projects. You are free to donate to any of our projects at <https://kunsangar.ru/fundraising>

We already have our Dzogchen Community retreats planned till the end of the summer of 2019.



April 5-14

Intensive practice retreat on the 7th Lojong (Seltong)

with Evgeny Rud'

April 19-29

Intensive practice retreat on Santi Maha Sangha First Level

with Elio Guarisco

April 27-28

Yantra Yoga for pregnant women

with Mira Mironova

May 1-9

Intensive retreat on Guru Amitayus long life practice with Chudlen of the Three Kayas

with Elio Guarisco

May 1-8

In-depth Khaita Dance course

with Adriana Dal Borgo

May 9-13

Advanced Vajra Dance Course

with Adriana Dal Borgo

May 23-June 2

Intensive practice retreat on the 7th Lojong (Parlung)

with Evgeny Rud'

June 8-24

Yantra Yoga deepening course

with Fabio Andrico.

Exact topic and dates to be specified

June 24-27

In-depth study of Santi Maha Sangha

with Steven Landsberg.

Subject and exact dates to be specified

July 6-14

Big Dzogchen Community

Summer/Sangha Retreat

with Igor Berkhin, Elio Guarisco and

other DC instructors. Anniversary of

Guru Padmasambhava

August 3-10

Enzo Terzano with an extensive program:

The Practice of Gomadevi + Vajra Dance, the practice of Santi Maha Sangha.

Subject and exact dates to be specified.

You are always welcome at Kunsangar North. We have very beautiful summers!

<https://kunsangar.ru/>

Samtengar, China

Yichun, Jiangxi Province

In 2017 Samtengar completed the construction and decoration of a new four-storey building mainly intended for Rinpoche's accommodation. This building was fully used when Rosa Namkhai, accompanied by the main international teachers of the International Dzogchen Community, visited the Gar in November 2018 shortly after Rinpoche's paranirvana.

A swimming pool and man-made hotspring (we heat up spring water from the mountain) were also prepared originally for Rinpoche and all.



At the end of 2018, Samtengar's new Gakyil was elected. Both new and old Gakyil members cooperated well and the transition was smooth.

For years we have been organizing on-line practices, both morning and evening sessions, via QQ (a very popular Instant Messaging Software in China) and other social media software which allow several hundreds of people to join in simultaneously.

We use QQ's powerful group video function for webcasts and practice. Practitioners can also download encrypted e-books, videos and other material in Chinese from the group files. People have said that they feel our Master is still with us when they participate in the practices.

During the Mandarava and Ts lung Practice Retreat 2019, Samtengar organized intensive Mandarava practices at the Yichun center (4 long practices per day including the webcast of the morning session from Dzamling Gar).

©



Dzogchen Community members in Beijing, Deyang and other cities also got together or participated online for the Mandarava practice. We also have a yearly plan to have the following courses in 2019 just like we always did before. Practitioners all over the world are warmly welcome to participate.

For more information, please contact the Samtengar secretary via email 2857749959@qq.com.



Upcoming Courses at Samtengar Yichun Center

April 7–13

Tibetan Astrology and Namkhai
with Maria Rita Leti

April 18–22

**Dance of the Vajra that Benefits Beings
and Dance of the Three Vajras**

with Tracy Ni

Apr. 28–May 4

Vajra Dance of Song of the Vajra
with Wes Guo

May 10–12

**SMS Base Level – view & practice
of Eight Vehicles**

with Wes Guo

May 15–21

Ku-Nye Level 2

with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

May 22–26

**Level 1 Vajra Dance &
Purification of Six Lokas**

with T. Ni & W. Guo

Namgyalgar, Australia

News, February 2019

Greetings to all from Namgyalgar in the new 2146 year of the Earth Boar! Following the Christmas season the Namgyalgar Gakyil and members have been turning their attention toward the many practical matters up for consideration such as retreats to organise and on-going all important discussions about how to make our Gar function on a self-sustaining and autonomous level. This includes the possibility of running an Air BnB site at Namgyalgar to generate a consistent monthly income, the idea of building a small retreat cabin on the Gar to fulfill Council requirements, as well as conducting retreats both large and small. Other ideas may also be explored.

In February several practitioners gathered at Namgyalgar to celebrate Losar and enjoyed delicious traditional Tibetan Guthok soup, playing games, swimming in the pool, and doing Ganapuja, Odzer Chenma and Vajra Dance practice. A lovely time was had by all sharing, relaxing and being together.

May 29–Jun 2

Yantra Yoga series 1 & 2

with Tracy Ni

Sept. 25–29

Yantra Yoga series 3, 4, 5

with Tracy Ni

Oct. 1–6

Yoga of Prana for Clarity & Emptiness

with Elio Guarisco

Oct. 8–10

Attaining Immortal Vajra Life –

Mandarava Tsalung

with E.Guarisco

Oct. 12–13

SMS Base course – view & practice of

Eight Vehicles

with Wes Guo

Oct. 15–20

Tibetan language course based on

Mandarava text

with Khenpo Trashi Choepel

Oct. 25–31

Dance of Song of the Vajra

Deepening Course

with T. Ni & W. Guo



On 1st March our Gekö, Topgyal, will end his three year term of management of Namgyalgar, and so it is with much thanks that the Gakyil wished he and his family good luck as they ventured into the broader community of south eastern Queensland. The Gekö position is still vacant so if anyone wants to apply please obtain information from: namgyalgar.secretary@gmail.com

Events coming up in the Oceanic region include a Deepening Song of The Vajra Dance Course with Cosimo DiMaggio at Namgyalgar on 1–3 March, whilst at the same time a Chöd retreat will be held in Canberra with SMS teacher Angie Gilbert. During March and April in New Zealand there will be a Harmonious Breathing workshop and a Yantra Yoga Retreat with instructor Patrizia Pearl. And in Tasmania a retreat with SMS teacher Sam Pearson is being planned to be held in mid April. While regional groups in various locations across Australia-Oceania continue to meet regularly for Ganapujas, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga and Khaita practice.

In the mean time the Gakyil is considering what retreats to have at Namgyalgar for the remainder of the year, including possibly inviting an international SMS teacher to teach, and have invited input from members via an online questionnaire. Additionally the Gakyil is thinking to trial an online forum platform to help facilitate online collective practices, and enable input about activities at the Gar, and collaboration with specific projects.

The Namgyalgar Gakyil wishes all Dzogchen communities and practitioners world wide the very best for 2019 and beyond, and extends an invitation to vajra kin, nearby and afar, to join us in retreat at our beautiful Gar one day!

<https://www.dzogchen.org.au/>

©

Tsegyalgar East, USA

2019 has brought renewed energy and a flurry of activity to Tsegyalgar East, as we prepare for spring and summer, our busiest times of year at our sacred land of Khandroling, situated in Buckland, MA.

For the past year, the fall and winter activity level at our schoolhouse Gönpa in Conway, MA, has increased exponentially to include not only our weekly practices, but also monthly movie nights, public talks, recurrent practice retreats along with the growing of our public programs.

Our Community at large has become ever closer through the wonders of technology. We are now able to reach out to all members near and far by means of webcast and videoconferencing of Ganapujas, sitting practices, Santi Maha Sangha Base and First Level study groups, and numerous courses.

Thanks to Rinpoche, the Teachings and the generosity and active support of our membership – our programs are flourishing, our instructors are teaching us, our practice leaders are guiding us through our practices, and our webcast/videoconference team gives us the opportunity to join in practice with our far away Vajra family.

Furthermore, through our collaborative efforts Rinpoche's cabin, The Fortress of the Dakinis, has now been renovated, the Khandroling Stupa is being repaired, the webcast equipment and set-up will soon be updated, and we have numerous other projects in the pipeline as well.

Please note our current program below or visit our website, www.tsegyalgareast.org and check back regularly for updated course and retreat information.

April brings Global Yantra Yoga Instructor Fabio Andrico who will teach Kumbhaka, Parlung and Tsalungs of Mandarava from Sunday, April 21 through Thursday, April 25, 2019, and Chair Yoga Saturday, April 27 through Sunday, April 28, 2019.

May follows with authorized Vajra Dance instructor Ed Hayes teaching the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings on Saturday, May 18 and Sunday, May 19, 2019.

Authorized SMS instructor Lynn Newdome will teach Body, Mind, Heart on Saturday, June 8, 2019.

Starting July 2019, our courses and retreats will move to Khandroling for the summer, unless otherwise noted. Our offerings will be as follows:



Performance of Khaite at the 250th Anniversary of the Town of Conway.



Friends with Evolution Creations. Top photo left to right: Ed Hayes, Dominik Niceva, Gerry Steinberg.

Bottom photo left to right: Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo, Sarale Lidzas, Amanda Pollock, Yuchen Namkhai. Photos by Paula Barry

- Introduction to Yantra Yoga with authorized Yantra Yoga instructors Nataly Nitsche and Max Leshchenko from Friday, July 12 to Sunday, July 14, 2019 (location TBA).
- Tsegyalgar East 4th Annual Summer Sangha Retreat from Saturday, July 20 to Sunday, July 28, 2019 with authorized instructors: Paula Barry, Mariano Gil, Michael Katz, Bodhi Krause, Kyu Kyuno, Max Leshchenko, Lynn Newdome, Nataly Nitsche, Carisa O'Kelly, and Naomi Zeitz.
- Advanced Yantra Yoga with authorized Yantra Yoga instructor Max Leshchenko from Monday, July 29 to Wednesday, July 31, 2019.
- The Dance of the Song of the Vajra with International Vajra Dance Teacher Prima Mai from Thursday, August 1 to Friday, August 9, 2019. A course for both beginners and advanced dancers.
- The Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra (KDK SOV) with International Vajra Dance Teacher Prima Mai for

Tsegyalgar West, Mexico

The Retreat Center

At the end of his retreat, "Awake in the Wild – Meditation in Nature Teaching Training" a six day Vipassana retreat at Tsegyalgar West by the teacher Mark Coleman, Mr. Coleman said he was very satisfied with the place and the people he met at TW, and he was considering the TW Center among the three best retreat centers in North America for this type of retreat. He required bookings for two groups in 2020.

Mr. Coleman's comment came as no surprise for people who already know Tsegyalgar West, and was very appreciated. It was recognition of the work done by different Gakyils, volunteers and donors since 2003, when a large piece of land in the rural mountain area of Baja California South, Mexico was donated to the Dzogchen Community of Tsegyalgar West.

At that time the Gar was almost without any infrastructure. Located far away from any village and populated areas, all services at the Gar had to be developed locally. Today Tsegyalgar West has water supplied from a private natural spring, its own electricity produced by solar panels, and satellite internet connection. Infrastructures include a beautiful Gönpa, an outside/covered Mandala platform, a big open kitchen / dining area "Ranchero style", 16 casitas with shower, flush toilets and fully equipped (4 of them with internal kitchens), 4 more casitas for the services needed at the Gar, a camping area with water, toilets and shower, as well as several natural spots easy to reach where you can meditate in the outdoors.

.....
Wednesday, August 14 to Sunday, August 18, 2019

· Tsegyalgar East 2nd Annual Dance Dance Instructor led practice retreat from Monday, August 19 to Sunday, Sept 1, 2019.

We hope that you will come to Tsegyalgar East this summer, and join us in practice throughout the year.

Tsegyalgar East Gakyil
18 Schoolhouse Road,
Conway, MA, U.S.A.
<https://www.tsegyalgar.org>



For the last two years TW has offered complete independent facilities for personal retreat in four casitas furnished with private kitchens and a few Dzogchen Community members visit the Gar, mainly in the winter season, for personal retreats. More people are inquiring and we expect a substantial increase of IDC members visiting TW for this purpose. The Center can comfortably host groups of 15 to 40 people. The TW Gakyil organizes 2–3 retreats/workshops a year, especially a long group retreat with an instructor of the IDC during the period of winter vacation, which is very successful and appreciated. At that time all the casitas of the Center are occupied and a few more people camp in order to attend.

The Center is open to practitioners of different traditions for personal retreat and has already become a reference "Retreat Center" for some local and US based groups that rent the Gar's facilities 5–6 times a year for their retreats/teacher training on yoga, dance, meditation, corporate retreats. The Center has started to become more familiar to local people and tourists visiting Baja South who come for visits or like to participate in activities organized at the Gar.

A feeling of more stability in the management of the Center and more understanding of the value of the Baja Gar is becoming evident to people more used to visiting the Gar, a situation that is encouraging the TW Gakyil to enter a new phase in planning the Center's program and in developing the land.

Next year during the main season November to May we will have instructors

from the IDC semi-residents at the Gar. This is in order to be able to offer some open workshops for locals and visitors, as well as to the closest local Sanghas in Baja Sur and mainland Mexico. Instructors will have time for personal retreat, too. Retreats and activities done by groups renting the place, when possible, will be included in the Center's program.

A Master Plan

In recent months the Gakyil has been working with some experts and collaborators who are familiar with the property to draft a "Master Plan for the Preservation of the Land and Achieve Self-Sustainability" that will be presented to the International Gakyil for approval. Based on the works started by previous Gakyils, additional studies, listening to necessities and comments, the Master Plan will include both existing and proposed projects

- La Tierra
- Retreat Centre
- Community Centre for Arts, Crafts and Culture
- Residential Area
- Eco/ hotel and Restaurant "from the orchard to your table"
- Conservation Areas

These projects will each attract talent and visitors, sharing a common culture around conservation, and generating positive synergy. Each project, and its main actors,

» continued on the following page



Tashigar North, Venezuela

Margarita Island

Rolo Carrasco

It is not an easy time for us here in Venezuela. Most of you are probably aware of our general circumstances through the media reports; of course these reports always come from a certain point of view. Normally we try to report optimistic news from our side of the history, but it would be very naive not to make clear that certainly



Gilberto & Manuel.

we are facing difficult moments. We are revealing the true story with the intention to ask for some international support that for sure will be needed soon, both spiritually and relatively – meaning financial.

So far we are doing well inside the Gar. Margarita, in general, it is not that active in public riots or demonstrations pro or against the regime. So this gives us a certain peace that does not exist on the mainland. Economics are really crazy. It is expected that inflation reaches 10.000.000% for 2019. That is not a mistake, seven zeros. So that has increased our monthly maintenance expense from US\$ 1.000 to US\$ 2.500.

Lately Rinpoche's advised us to keep a low profile in our activities until these bad times are gone. He wisely provided us with some savings from the 2010 Drubchen that are lasting until the present day. But that money will be finished soon.

In the current economy we cannot work on any project because we do not have enough resources to cover even the cost of the provided product or service. Inflation



Ana Maria – member.

eats all. We tried many ideas, from guided school visits, room rental, house rental and the aloe business. With some donations we recorded a video for the inauguration



Tata – yellow gakyil.

of the Gönpa of Dzamling Gar. We agreed to use some shots of it to make a kind of promotional video for Tashigar North



Douglas & Amma (residents).

with the intention to refresh the connection we know a lot of us have with the place. In order to finish the video, we are



Rolo Carrasco (administrator).

» *Tsegylgar West* continued from previous page should complement the others so that each will be enriched by the rest.

The property, locally known as "Rancho Los Naranjos" is in the hills of San José del Cabo, BCS, Mexico. Its 1,250 hectares are of great ecological interest for its flora and fauna, most of it endemic and for the beauty of its arroyos and big rocks. It is located between Mar de Cortez and the Pacific Ocean, a 40 minute drive from Los Cabos International Airport, in an area with a high level of international tourist attractions.

Now is the time for the Dzogchen Community of the West Coast to manifest its potentiality in this marvelous land. We will be back soon and let you know how to participate.

TW Gakyil

<https://tsegylgarwest.org>

©



seeking video images from the Drubchen (2010). If you have some material please contact us at rolocb76@gmail.com. The idea is to show the video during the annual meetings at Dzamling Gar to collect some funds for us, exclusively to be presented inside the IDC.



Olga – former blue gakyil.

At the level of spiritual activity, we perform our Ganapujas together and some



Dmitri – red gakyil.



Delma.

special dates in the calendar. On average, we have around ten participants. Due to local circumstances it is very difficult to have any international instructor visit us and it is hard to cover the cost to bring the instructors living in Venezuela. Now it is even difficult to follow webcast as our internet connection is damaged (it is provided by a governmental company).

We have suspended any major maintenance projects, nevertheless we need to raise some funds to maintain the wooden doors of the Gönpa. They need some care urgently because the doors are under risk to get permanently damaged. The ARP, Animal Rescue Project, we presented a few years ago at Merigar West turned into the FFF (Free From Fear Project). We have provided surgery for more than 300 dogs/cats and there are currently fifteen living in our refuge. If

you are interested to support this project, please write to kashkurova@gmail.com.

For security issues we have decided to take care of the night shifts ourselves, so two nights a week we have to be on guard from 10pm to 6am preventing any difficult situation. We have installed a new surveillance camera tower in the North Eastern border of the Gar.

Some of us grow some vegetables in little orchards near home, some others in little lots of what used to be the aloe field. We are without a Gekö since last October, so in this case too few of the residents share some of the duties to keep things running. If you are interested into apply for the Gekö position, please write us to tashigarnorte@secretary@gmail.com.

We are convinced that we have a special protection coming from the blessings of Rinpoche. We believe we are going to be ok during all this process, as long it will take. We encourage you to keep supporting us, we here do our best with what is given to us. Please keep us in your practices and let's keep thinking of the day when all of us will be together again for a long bagchen Sunday in our beloved Tashigar North. We keep going!

©



Rolo Carrasco (administrator).

Tashigar South, Argentina

Discovering the Jewel of the Sangha

Interview with Marisa Alonso
March 1, 2019 in Dzamling Gar

The Mirror: Marisa, you have been involved with Tashigar South since its beginning, so we would like to ask you about the current situation in Tashigar South and any plans for the future.

Marisa Alonso: Yes, well Rinpoche had not been to Tashigar South since 2015 so a lot of time passed. So then we had to figure out how to survive without his retreats. Then we had the idea to rent the place, some of the houses, including the Gönpa, and we asked Rinpoche and he agreed to do that. So we began to do that with other yoga schools and other meditation groups, other disciplines also like Tai C'hi and Chi Gung, and all of that worked very well.



cancellations of the programs from outside last year, but even so we are doing well.

At first after the departure of the Teacher there was a very sad feeling. But after that initial sadness, everyone felt very grateful. And the next phase was the feeling of responsibility for the Community. So now I think also all the practices done around that situation, really now you feel the Sangha is a jewel, very strongly, and this is very, very nice.

But in any case, we never said to anyone that they could not come. We always say to people, you come, you come...

M: Do you have many new people interested?

MA: Yes because also from before we try to have once a month or once every two months, a weekend for new people at Tashigar in Cordoba. So we do some meditation, we do Khaita, we do Yantra Yoga, and a little of everything so they can have a taste of all. Some people are participating very



We do not have many members. Last year in 2018 we only had 146 members. That was 30% less than the previous year, so this year the Gakyil decided to reduce the cost of the local memberships to try and keep as many members as possible because many people say they cannot afford to pay.

The situation in Argentina is not very good at all, so we are going with this because the memberships do not allow the Gar to survive. But with these other activities we are doing well. Also we had some

M: In Merigar West and Dzamling Gar there are more practice retreats. Is that also happening at Tashigar South?

MA: Yes we are doing a lot. A lot of retreats, and also activities for new people, and the issue of the new people is worrying us a little because we don't know what to do, but we do what we can, we do the practices we know we can share, we do Yantra Yoga, we Vajra Dance, we do Khaita, and we hope somehow, some day, will manifest someone who will be able to give the transmission so that all the interested people can go deeper.

enthusiastically who have not even met Rinpoche, who did not have the fortune to meet him, but they are very motivated. It is nice.

M: Do you have any special projects for this year?

MA: This year we are going on with renting the places, and Rosa authorized us to use the house they built for Yeshe and Yuchen, she authorized us to furnish it because it is not yet furnished, and also to use for these purposes and to rent it, also we are doing





the same with the house of Ingrid Bertet who died – she left everything to Rinpoche and Rinpoche said we can also use her house in the same way so we are doing that. People are going there to do personal retreats, it's very nice.

And then, we also have the fortune to have very, very good water. We have a well that our water “terton”, Eduardo Gomaches, who has a house in Tashigar South, he is a dowser and he found this water source and the first well is 108 meters deep, and the

M: Can you talk a little about the unique quality of Tashigar South and how that lends itself to the different programs you can offer?

MA: Yes now we are learning how to market Tashigar. Before we were a little timid and careful, but now we have gained experience, so we can go more openly. We offer the place, the land, the houses, and some of the people who are not living there they offer their houses to be rented during these periods. We have a lot of houses in



water is very pure and like a natural mineral water. Each year we do the test and the water is very perfect so we are thinking of the possibility that maybe in the future we can do something with this water to give Tashigar the possibility to have more income. This would be a dream and Rinpoche was also very happy with this idea. We don't have the project really stable yet, we are just in the thinking phase. But it is a good possibility really.

Tashigar, there are about 29 at this point, and there are not so many people living there full time, we have 50 hectares, so it is very big, so we have two big zones that are for the houses and in the middle the area is for the public, in this area there is a Gönpa, a dormitory, an office, a house for the gekō, another house for guests, a house for retreats, and the houses that are not in use we ask the permission of the owners to rent and normally they agree, maybe they take a little to help pay their expenses.

M: Can people do personal retreats there?
MA: Yes! We have now since three years a gekō and secretary and they are very nice and this year they will begin to make their own house, they have a piece of land. So they can take care of people on retreat. We are very happy.

M: In the past there were some activities in other parts of Argentina like Buenos Aires, etc. What is happening now?

MA: Buenos Aires did have a ling, a physical place, but now they are not able to sustain it. So now they are meeting in houses like before. In Cordoba there was never a ling, so they are going on, and also in Bariloche and Rosario they meet, but they don't have a physical place. They come to Tashigar when they can, but it is far and now it is expensive. The retreats we just had in January we had a lot of people for us.

M: In the summer for some years now you have been doing open retreats. Can you say a little how those are organized?

MA: Yes usually we have several weeks and we offer one week of Yantra Yoga, one week of Vajra Dance, one week of meditation, etc., and always we mix a little. So maybe the main focus is Yantra, but we also do some meditation, for example. This past summer we did a Tara retreat and a lot of people came. These events are pretty successful. We always follow the webcasts and people come to the Gar and we follow together. There is a nice feeling of Community, more than ever. It seems to be happening everywhere. Also when I was in Merigar and here in Dzamling Gar. Now we can really feel the jewel of the Sangha. Before we were not so aware. And now we are learning how to go on without our Master. We are growing up. ©

Everything Different, Everything the Same

Mandarava Retreat 2019
at Dzamling Gar

Doro Franck
Tenerife, 8 March 2019

Losar – Mandarava – Tenerife. Like in previous years, for many practitioners this is the formula for an optimal beginning of a new (Tibetan) year. But of course this year everything was different – and yet so much the same.

Last year we participated in the last Mandarava retreat with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche; now we were on our own. Well, of course we were not. Many practitioners came (I guess a good 350), and, with Nina Robinson guiding us, the *dadars* were dancing, the Mandarava melodies were resounding and the bells ringing as they always did, transporting the space of the Gönpa into another dimension, with Rinpoche's presence on his empty seat almost tangible.

In the first days, Nina Robinson, our greatly experienced and graceful Mandarava teacher, explained the origins and the meaning of the practice as well as practice details and the *sogthig*. Then the rhythm changed a bit: in the afternoon sessions we had extensive explanations of the *tsalung* both by Fabio Andrico and Elio Guarisco, which were applied and integrated immediately into the short Mandarava practice.

Many other things could be learned and practiced. Besides the daily Yantra Yoga sessions, Khaita and Vajra dance, we also had the opportunity to study the *drajyor*, the Tibetan phonetic system that Rinpoche developed for our benefit, combined with the pronunciation and word-by-word translation of the practice text. I really enjoyed Fabian Sanders' clear and systematic explanation that finally made me understand how ingenious and helpful this system is for all who don't know Tibetan.



Nina Robinson leading the Mandarava practice during the retreat.

Everything the same ... everything different. The first day, Losar, was a special and festive experience: we practiced in the beautiful new Gönpa. The elegance of the building in wood and glass is striking: subtle yet solid, graceful, airy and transparent, looking light and natural in its elevated position overlooking the Gar, with the majestic view down to the sea. We experienced the fruit of Rinpoche's tireless and unfailing efforts – and a bit of all of us. Walking up the welcoming, wide and solid staircase to the entrance, I was moved to finally see it in function.

A strong Calima (Saharan east wind) storm forced us to return to the Gönpa-tent for the next days for the Mandarava practice, since the windows and ventilation systems at the new Gönpa were still missing their finishing touch. Yet it provided ample space for the daily Vajra Dance and for the Dance of the 12 A, which was taught and practiced almost daily.

It was truly a Sangha Retreat. So many fellow practitioners and an untiring Dzamling Gar team contributed actively to this event. When Nina did not lead the practice we heard the beautiful resonant voice of Naomi Zeitz or the calm and concentrated voice of Sebastien Remy. More than ever, I felt during the whole retreat the collective devotion and cooperation of the Sangha. Was it just my imagination that the senior instructors had also become more patient and mellow? I often felt an unspoken sharing of our loss and a noticeable solidarity and motivation to deal with the new situation. Before or after the practice, now and

then, Nina shared some precious information and insights with us, answering unspoken questions about the Namkhai family and the continuation of the Dzogchen Community.

The cafeteria – the social hub of the Gar – served, as always, excellent food and drinks and made many joyful and useful encounters possible, meeting old friends and making new ones, exchanging information as well as jokes. The Gar's garden was in flower, as always, in the care of Alix's green fingers, and the enjoyment of the blooming gardens and the laughter of children from the swimming pool area mixed with the somewhat drifting and empty feelings when passing in front of Rinpoche's house.

Everything changed – everything the same: the retreat was encouragement and consolation – and a confirmation of the resilience of our Sangha and the indestructibility of the Dzogchen Teachings. ©

How to Make a *Dadar*

Nina Robinson

Da means arrow. A *dadar* is a ritual arrow decorated with silk ribbons. It is used in many Long Life practices for recalling all the aspects of our vital energy and protective energy that are damaged, lost or stolen. The manifestations of Guru Amitayus and his Yum hold *dadars* and so do Mandarava and all the Dakinis in her mandala. Also we can use a *dadar* when we do the Long life Practice of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava.

We can construct a *dadar* in a more or less elaborate way, according to our wishes and possibilities. It represents our life. Its main features are a stick and five silk ribbons or scarves, jewels or beads and a *melong* or mirror. The stick symbolizes our *yab* aspect; it is stable and represents form,



thab (method). The silk ribbons represent our yum aspect: they are light and move in the air and symbolize *sherab*, wisdom and energy and the essence of the five elements. The jewels represent concentrations of energy. The *melong* is a symbol of our primordial potentiality. So these are the essential features.

The stick should be approximately one cubit long or the length from elbow to fingertips, but it doesn't matter if it is a bit longer. We usually use a bamboo stick because it is light and strong. If you can find one with five joints or knots that is good because they would symbolize the five main *chakras*. But if that is not possible three knots is also fine. When Rinpoche gave the Mandarava initiation in August 2007,



he used a *dadar* that had amber and coral threaded onto the whole length of the stick.

The ribbons should be one of each of the colors of the essences of the five elements: white for water, yellow for earth, red for fire, green for air and blue for space. They can be tied on near the top of the stick making a kind of loop at the top of each one. They can hang down almost to the bottom of the stick. You can also tie silk threads of the five colors on the stick below the ribbons.

The *melong* can be tied on at the top of the arrow, at the point where you tie on the ribbons, using a narrow piece of ribbon or strong thread. It can be the same ribbon or thread that is used to tie on the five ribbons. Rinpoche has used quite a few different *dadars* when leading practices in the Community. The one he used in August 2007, when he gave the Mandarava initiation, had a small *melong* attached at the bottom of one of the strings of jewels. The *melongs* sold at Merigar, made by a member of the Community, are always made using five metals: gold and silver, copper, tin and iron. A *melong* of the previous batch is always included in the alloy. The first batch contained a gold *melong* that was made for Rinpoche and which he wore for several years. So there is always a small part of that original *melong* in every new one.

An arrow also has a point. You can make it in any way you like. For example, some people use a small crystal but many other people have points made of gold or silver or other metals. It is also possible to just cut the stick to a point. Anyway it is better

not to make it too sharp or it will bother you when you practice. At the very top an arrow usually has feathers. We can use any feathers we like. I used peacock feathers because they look like *tiglés* and have Tantric and Dzogchen symbolic significance.

If we want to make our *dadars* even richer and more elaborate we can tie strings of jewels onto the stick. When Rinpoche did a month long personal retreat of Mandarava practice in Merigar in August 2007 he had dreams clarifying some aspects of the Mandarava practice. In the first dream he discovered that 3 lines were missing from the *terma* he wrote down in 1984. One of them, from the description of the visualization, was that the *dadar* was decorated not only with five coloured silk ribbons but also with five coloured jewels. So we can use turquoise (blue and green), lapis lazuli, amber, coral, pearls or any others jewels we may have.

If you can't find the materials described here you can make a *dadar* with whatever suitable materials are available to you. Some people buy an arrow from a "sports" shop, or you can cut a straight stick from a tree or any other plant. You can buy a small round mirror from a pet shop: the kind they use in birdcages. If you have no jewels you can use glass or plastic beads. I haven't heard of any rules for making a *dadar*. As long as we keep in mind the main features and symbols we are free to improvise as much as we like. The *dadar* symbolizes our life so we try to make it as beautiful and as perfect as we can, according to our possibilities. ©

Focus on the Primordial Masters

Traditional texts state that from the most ancient times twelve great Masters or Buddhas have appeared in our world to spread the teaching. These twelve teachers that preceded Garab Dorje are described as *nirmanakaya* manifestations of the primordial Buddha Vajradhara and lived at different times and in different places, starting from an epoch when the life span was beyond calculation up to the manifestation of Buddha Sakyamuni. Thus the primordial Buddha manifested twelve forms to transmit the teaching according to the countless conditions and capacities of beings.

In Longchenpa's text "The Treasure of the Supreme Vehicle" (*theg mchog mdzogs*), he lists the Twelve Primordial Masters, the places and times in which they lived and the teachings that they transmitted. Our presentation here is based on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's "The Supreme Source" and "Ati Samten Gongdzöd – The Ati Treasury of Contemplation".

At Merigar West, in the Temple of the Great Contemplation, paintings of the Primordial Masters are depicted on the west side of the building, on a horizontal panel above the seat that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu used when he was teaching. The figures were painted by Master Dugu Chögyal who is a reincarnation of Drugpa Chögyal Gyamtso, a famous tertön and Master of the Drugpa Kagyud lineage. Like his predecessors, Dugu Chögyal is a spiritual Master as well as being a highly gifted and well-known artist.

In addition to the Twelve Primordial Masters, the panel in the Merigar Gönpa also portrays the figures of Kuntusangpo and Vajrasattva as well as Shenrab Miwoche, the founder of the pre-Buddhist religion Bön. The descriptions that follow also include these three figures.



Chöku Kuntusangpo (Dharmakaya Samantabhadra).

Chöku Kuntusangpo (Dharmakaya Samantabhadra)

This is the central figure in the panel portraying Samantabhadra, the Primordial Buddha, the essence of all Buddhas, primordial enlightenment beyond *samsara* and *nirvana*. Beyond the distinction between unity and multiplicity, he is present in all beings. He totally transcends all conceptual limits of origin and cessation, eternity and nothingness, being and non-being, vision and emptiness. He is the principle that contains *sambhogakaya* and *nirmanakaya* within himself. He is presented naked and blue in colour, symbols of his being without attributes, similar to the sky. In the Dzogchen teaching, Samantabhadra is the emptiness of *dharmakaya* that contains all manifestation in itself. The principle through which the infinite possibility that is inherent in the *dharmakaya* starts to manifest as sound and light is Sambhogakaya Vajrasattva.

Longku Dorje Sempa (Sambhogakaya Vajrasattva)

In the Dzogchen teaching, Vajrasattva is the principle from which all the diverse divinities of the *tantras* manifest. His body is white in colour symbolizing the source of all colours which then unite to create the visions of *sambhogakaya*. The figure of Vajrasattva is shown seated in the lotus position with his right hand holding a *vajra* and raised in front of his heart while his left hand rests at his left side holding a bell. His condition is beyond dualistic vision yet his ornaments and jewels are a

symbol of the qualities of his potentiality which gives rise to countless manifestations. Vajrasattva is the source of the six million and four hundred thousand Dzogchen teachings that have been spread in the human world by the *nirmanakaya* Garab Dorje.

Khyeu Nangwa Tampa (Acintyaprabhasa) (1)

At a time when the life span could not be calculated, all beings had bodies of light formed of the essence of the elements, were born miraculously and shone with their own light. At this time Buddha Vajradhara manifested in the divine dimension called Joyous Pagoda in the form of a white, eight-year-old child in the midst of a lotus with a thousand petals. He was called Khyeu Nangwa Tampa Samgimikhyabpa or Supreme Child Inconceivable Vision. On each lotus petal an emanation identical to the central one appeared, foretelling the coming of one thousand Buddhas in that fortunate *kalpa*. The six million four hundred thousand stars that manifested in the sky represented the arrival of the same number of Dzogchen *tantras* and the seventeen that shone more brightly announced the seventeen *tantras* of the Man ngag sde series.

He taught *The All-surpassing Sound* (*sGra thal 'gyur*) *tantra* and the two Bodhisattvas Nyima Rabtu Nangwa and Gaje Wangchug gathered his teachings.



Longku Dorje Sempa.



Khyeu Ömitrugpa.



Shönnu Namdrol.

Khyeu Ömitrugpa (2)

When the life span diminished to ten million years, the light of beings decreased and the first passions appeared, in the dimension called Saha beings were born from five-coloured eggs made up of the substance of the elements. They were surrounded by a luminous aura, possessed miraculous powers and few passions, did not meet material obstacles and fed off the substance of the four elements. Buddha Khyeu Ömitrugpa (Child Imperturbable Light) appeared as one of them to two hundred thousand *dakinis* to indicate that the same number of female beings would be liberated in the future thanks to his teachings. He taught the five *tantras* of the Body, Voice, Mind, Qualities and Activities.

Jigpa Kyob (3)

When the life span decreased to one hundred thousand years and the light continued to diminish because of the passions, beings were born from heat and humidity. They started to eat plants and became subject to the first illnesses caused by imbalances of the elements. Buddha Jigpa Kyob (Mind that Protects from Fear) was born in a place called Trödsher Düpa Wödkiyl Pungpa (Mass of Light that gathers Humidity). He taught *The Emptying of Samsara* (*'Khor ba dong sprugs*), *The Peacock's Entwined Neck* (*rMa bya mjing snol*), *The Exhaustion of the Four Elements* (*'Byung bzhi zad pa*) and other *tantras*, whispering them to six hundred thousand *bodhisattvas* to show that

an equal number of male beings would be liberated in the future thanks to his teachings.

Shönnu Namdrol (4)

When the life span had diminished to eighty thousand years and passions had become even stronger, the bodies of beings lost their light and the sun and moon appeared. Due to desire and attachment, the sexual organs of beings developed and while at first looking at each other was sufficient to satisfy their desires, finally beings started to come together and procreate. They would dress in cotton or the bark of trees and feed from the 'fat of the earth' but were so greedy that this was all consumed. When they started to eat rice, their growing feeling of 'I and mine', their hatred and pride made this food disappear as well. Buddha Shönnu Namdrol (Young Manifestation of Compassion) was born from the uterus in the form of a ten year old child at this time in the place called Chagjung Ngaldun Nangwa (Apparition in the Womb of Conception). He taught eleven *tantras*: the five root *tantras* and six secondary Semde *tantras* to one thousand *yaksas*.

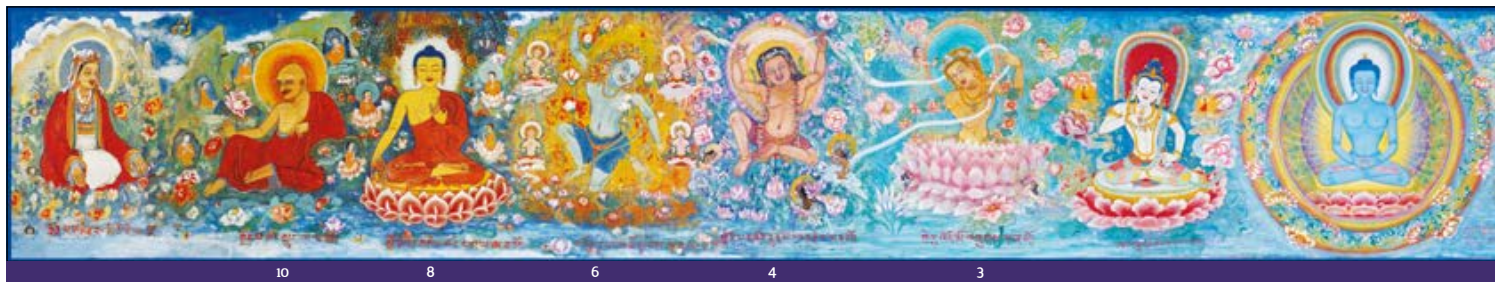
Dorjechang (Vajradhara) (5)

When the life span had become seventy thousand years, the Buddha Sixth Vajradhara was born as a divine *bodhisatta* in the dimension of the Thirty-Three Gods. In the garden of the Young Doctor (*Tsho byed gzhon nu*) he transmitted teachings on the six, three and eighteen *paramitas* that encompassed methods with and without effort, including the *tantras* of Dzogpa Chenpo, to the seven heroic Buddhas of our times. He spent seventy-five years with the *devas* and left his testament to his disciple Norwang, entering *parinirvana* where he remained in *samadhi* for seven thousand years.

Shönnu Pawo Tobden (Kumaravirabalin) (6)

When the average life span had diminished to sixty thousand years, Vajradhara reawakened from his *samadhi* and, stirred by compassion towards beings, was reborn as the son of a *yaksa* and a ferocious *dakini* in the dimension of the Cemetery of the Secret Manifestation, in the frightening place of the *yaksas* northeast of Mount Meru. His name was Shönnu Pawo Tobden (Young Powerful Hero) and he appeared as a frightening dwarf with three faces and six hands holding the worlds of the six classes of beings, the *devas*, *asuras*, humans, animals, *pretas* and hell beings. He taught the *Tantra of the Spontaneous State of Pure Presence* (*Rig pa rang shar*) and other *tantras* to the seven *bodhisattvas*, who listened immersed to the navel in clouds, and to

» continued on the following page



» *Primordial Masters* continued from previous page
countless *dakinis*, *devas* and *nagas*. After staying with them for a thousand years, he left his testament to the *yaksa* Lechö and entered *parinirvana* where he remained in *samadhi* for one hundred thousand years.



Jigpa Kyob..

Trangsong Tröpai Gyalpo (7)

When the life span had decreased to ten thousand years, Vajradhara awakened once again from his *samadhi* to be reborn as Trangsong Tröpai Gyalpo (Wise Wrathful King) in the dimension of the *raksas* on earth, in a western region where there were many *bodhisattvas*. He transmitted the “ten *tantras* to subjugate negativities” and other teachings to ten million *raksasas* in a cave that radiated the sound “rulu”. He did not leave a testament and at the end of his life was reabsorbed in *samadhi* where he remained for fifty thousand years.

Serwö Tamba (8)

When the life span had become five thousand years, Vajradhara was reborn in the place on this earth called Vulture Peak. He was born into a royal family and named Serwö Tamba (Supreme Golden Light). When he was twenty-five, he cut off his own hair and took the vows by himself in front of a *stupa*. He taught the Vinaya and Prajnaparamita teachings to innumerable *sravakas*.

Tsewai Rolpai Lodrö (9)

When the life span was reduced to one thousand years, Tsewai Rolpai Lodrö (Intelligence Manifestation of Compassion) was born in northern Mongolia, in the land called Yui Min-machen (With Turquoise Eyebrows), near a *bodhi* tree growing next to a self-arisen *stupa*. He transmitted the “seven special *tantras*”, including *The All-creating King* (*Kun byed rgyal po*) and *Total Space* (*Nam mkha' che*) to countless *bodhisattvas* who were his disciples, remaining there for one hundred and twenty years.

Ösung Drepo (Kasyapa the Elder) (10)

When the life span became five hundred years, Buddha Kasyapa the Elder came from the world of the Thirty-Three Gods and took birth in the human world to reduce the suffering of old age. He gave many teachings including the *anuyoga* scriptures to seven disciples in the place called Vulture Peak. He stayed there for seventy-five years after which he went to practice asceticism remaining seven years in the lotus position. At the end of his life he dissolved into a body of light, leaving no mortal remains. His testament remained with the Brahmin Gön Sem.

Ngöndzog Gyalpo (11)

When the life span was three hundred years Buddha Ngöndzog Gyalpo (Perfected King) was born at Vajrasana (Bodhgaya) as the son of a brahmin. Not far from the tree under which the Buddha of the present era, Sakyamuni, would attain enlightenment, he came before the council of the Lords of



Trangsong Tröpai Gyalpo.

the Three Families (Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani) and transmitted all the teachings concerning the real condition as well as other *tantras*. He taught for twenty-five years after which he entered *parinirvana* displaying the ordinary signs of death in order to show his disciples of lower capacity the truth of the suffering of birth, old age, illness and death.



Shenwō Tamba.

Shenrab Miwoche

Shenrab Miwoche (The Great Supreme Man of the Shen) was the founder of Bön, the tradition of pre-Buddhist Tibet. According to biographies, he was born as a prince of the Shen clan around eighteen thousand years ago in the land of Olmo Lungring, the sacred land of the *bönpos*, probably located north-west of Tibet. At the age of thirty-one, he renounced the world and dedicated himself to spiritual life and soon started teaching the *bön* doctrine. His biographies describe his 'twelve great deeds', paralleling symbolism commonly found in tales of the lives of the Buddha, which include the spreading of the *bön* teaching and the subduing of its main enemy, the demon Khyabpa Lagring who eventually became one of his disciples. On the only occasion that he entered Tibet, he transmitted some ritual instructions but considered that people were not ready for his teaching, prophesying that it would flourish there in the future. According to his followers, his teaching which was

broadly subdivided into Nine Vehicles and the 'Four Doors plus the Fifth, the Treasure' spread in the kingdom of Shang Shung as well as in India, Kashmir, China and Tibet.

Shakya Thubpa (Buddha Shakyamuni) (12)

When the life span became one hundred years, the Buddha of our era descended from the heaven of Tushita into the human world to spread the Dharma, taking birth as Gautama Siddhartha. He was born to Mayadevi and Suddhodana, king of the Sakyas of Kapilavastu, lived a sheltered joyous life at court and as a young man married Yasodhara, who bore him a son, Rahula. Secretly leaving the palace that had been his sole abode, Siddhartha encountered a man afflicted by old age, a sick person and finally a corpse. These encounters showed him that no person is free from the suffering of existence. When he met a monk begging for food, he decided to leave his life at the palace and search for a spiritual path that would lead to liberation from suffering.

Siddhartha practiced extreme asceticism on the banks of the Nairanjara river for six years but without attaining the fruit he hoped for. Then he came to the seat of Vajrasana and decided to remain under the *bodhi* tree until he reached enlightenment. In this place, Mara, the lord of demons, tried to trap Siddhartha with the three main passions of ignorance, desire and hatred but without success. Then, purified of all obscurations, Siddhartha obtained the Awakening, knowledge of the real condition of all phenomena and became the Buddha.

He gave his first teaching, the First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma, at the Deer Park in the vicinity of Sarnath, near Benares. At Varanasi and other places he taught the Four Noble Truths and the different gradual paths. Later in his life, in order to show beings the impermanence of all phenomena, the Buddha became seriously ill, lay down on his right side and entered *parinirvana*. ©



Shakya Thubpa (Buddha Shakyamuni).

Vajra Dance Global Practice Events

Prima Mai

Shall we evolve from our daily, weekly or monthly Vajra Dance Tun practices and include monthly coordinated global practice events on full moon days?

The small Vajra Dance mandala symbolizes the pure dimension of our earth and is actually inseparable from the medium or solar system mandala and the large or universal mandala, even when they are not visible due to the limited available space. Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche once told me that the Vajra Dance on its mandala is not only a symbol of the inseparability of the inner dimension of the human condition and its outer dimension, the earth, but goes beyond the narrow human condition, reaching out even further, inseparably linked with other dimensions through our solar system and the universe; all is interwoven and interdependent. This is one aspect in the symbol of the large Vajra Dance mandala.

Very recently scientists discovered that the moon lies inside the earth's atmosphere, hence the earth's atmosphere is much bigger than previously thought, extending far beyond the moon. Maybe in the future there will be new discoveries about how the subtle levels of the energy spheres of all the planets extend, measurable beyond infrared and today's technology. They may even discover that all these planetary spheres interconnect and exchange information. They might discover similar energies extending from our swirling solar system, dancing and being interconnected with other systems throughout our galaxy and even all the infinite spiraling galaxies with their infinite dimensions beyond limited space and time being interconnected, as the symbol of the universal mandala suggests.

During his teachings we have heard Rinpoche point out that being in the state of contemplation, integrating collectively with the Song and also the Dance of the Vajra worldwide is very important. It has benefits such as more clarity and peaceful development for individuals, societies and countries.

We practice the Song and symbolic Dances of the Vajra from our devotion to Rinpoche and for our individual realization,



inseparable from dedicating all merits to all sentient beings. We wish from all our hearts, from true knowledge, unconditional love or *bodhicitta* energy, and imagine all sentient beings awakening to an unconditioned state of mind, entering a path to liberation from suffering, and acting for the benefit of others. We wish this for the smallest insect and even for our worst enemies.

Our refuge in the path or wish to engage fully in the light of wisdom and knowledge with an unconditioned state of mind, the coordination of our body through breath, sound and movement, integrating with phases of contemplation and being not even for an instant separate from *bodhicitta* energy and dedication are the keys to the realization of internal happiness as well.

When we collaborate, we already know that we become stronger together rather than struggling alone. Throughout human history Dance and Song in general have been a method to strengthen and benefit the wellbeing of a Community, which is one reason why, in the last years of his life, Rinpoche also developed Khaita Joyful Dances in which everyone can spontaneously and immediately participate, with or without transmission, with meaningful songs, inviting his students to sing and dance together every day.

When knowledge is applied positively, unconditioned by pride, envy, jealousy, positions etc., we support and enhance each other's qualities, or strengthen them when they are weak. When knowledge is applied

World Dance Days 2019

Thursday March 21
Friday April 19
Saturday May 18
Monday June 17
Tuesday July 16
Thursday August 15
Friday September 13
Sunday October 13
Tuesday November 12
Thursday December 12
Friday January 10, 2020
Sunday February 9, 2020

New Moon Eclipses

Tuesday July 2 total solar eclipse
Thursday Dec 26 annular solar eclipse

Anniversaries

Friday March 1 Ayu Khandro
Saturday August 10 **Guru Rinpoche**
Friday November 22 Adzom Drugpa
Sunday December 8 **Birthday of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**
Mon. March 9, 2020 Garab Dorje

but lacks *bodhicitta*, it can do the opposite and block the potential and development of others. When we do collective practice together at the same time, we strengthen and generate a positive field of energy. It's not necessary to visualize, pray or even fully believe in it. It happens simply through the intention and motivation to do it together. That is how, in the extreme opposite, even wars take place and why they become so powerful.

We already have global Vajra Dance practices on important anniversaries, like the birthday of Rinpoche, when we pay homage, honoring and energizing all the sources of our knowledge, purifying and renewing our commitments for the benefit of beings.

For generating a more continuous and more powerful positive field of connectivity and its benefits, the motivation arose to activate the mandalas and practice all together globally also every month, on full moon days. The full moon is a good day for

Globally Synchronized Practice Days

2019	Full Moon	Anniversaries	Various Special Days
Jan	21		
Feb	19		
Mar		01 Ayu Khandro	
		09 Garab Dorje	
	21		
Apr	19		29 CID World Dance Day
May	18		
Jun	17		
Jul			02 Total Solar Eclipse
	16		
Aug		10 Guru Rinpoche	
	15		
Sep	13		
Oct	13		
Nov	12		
		22 Adzom Drugpa	
Dec		08 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu	
	12		
			26 Annular Solar Eclipse

Note: Weekend days in **bold**

<https://vajradance.net/globally-synchronized-practice/>

Long Life practices, as we already do together, not only for prolonging life, but also for enhancing all relative aspects needed for a healthy, thriving and prosperous life. Rinpoche rediscovered the cycle of the Vajra Dance teachings, also called *The Light of the Precious Lamp*, belonging to the series of Longsal teachings or *The Luminous Clarity of the Universe*, *Innermost Essence of the Dakinis* during his personal retreats of the Long Life practice of Mandarava.

In addition the full moon day is a day of international celebration. Buddhists and groups from other religious or spiritual backgrounds meditate or apply contemplative practices on this day with essentially the same motivations, dedicating them to healing, to the welfare of others, evolution and peace on our globe.

Scientific studies have been done on the positive results generated through an increased coherence within even a small percentage of a population. It increases harmony and wellbeing, even beyond a nation's borders, improves international relations and reduces international conflicts.

This network of global efforts during our insecure times and continuous conflicts is an important motivation for us to participate on a global scale. Supporting each other in our good intentions and efforts corresponds with Rinpoche's teachings. Everyone can participate through movement or sitting still, generating as much *bodhicitta* energy as possible in same time periods together.

» continued on the following page

Time Table

Namgyalgar (Australia, Queensland)	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00	18:00	20:00	22:00	00:00	02:00	04:00	06:00	08:00	UTC+10
Samtengar (China, Yichung)	08:00	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00	18:00	20:00	22:00	00:00	02:00	04:00	06:00	UTC+8
Kunsangar North & South (Russia, Moscow & Sevastopol)	03:00	05:00	07:00	09:00	11:00	13:00	15:00	17:00	19:00	21:00	23:00	01:00	UTC+3
Merigar East (Romania, Constanta)	02:00	04:00	06:00	08:00	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00	18:00	20:00	22:00	00:00	UTC+2
Merigar West (Italy, Grosseto)	01:00	03:00	05:00	07:00	09:00	11:00	13:00	15:00	17:00	19:00	21:00	23:00	UTC+1
Dzamling Gar (Spain, Tenerife)	00:00	02:00	04:00	06:00	08:00	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00	18:00	20:00	22:00	UTC
Tashigar Sur (Argentina, Cordoba)	21:00	23:00	01:00	03:00	05:00	07:00	09:00	11:00	13:00	15:00	17:00	19:00	UTC-3
Tashigar North (Venezuela, Margarita Island)	20:00	22:00	00:00	02:00	04:00	06:00	08:00	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00	18:00	UTC-4
Tsegvalgar East (USA, Conway MA)	20:00	22:00	00:00	02:00	04:00	06:00	08:00	10:00	12:00	14:00	16:00	18:00	UTC-4
Tsegvalgar West (Mexico, Baha California)	17:00	19:00	21:00	23:00	01:00	03:00	05:00	07:00	09:00	11:00	13:00	15:00	UTC-7

Some Reflections on Creating the Vajra Dance Mandala at Zhenphenling, Rome

Daniela Monaci

Creating the Mandala of the Vajra Dance is a precious and demanding practice: it is about making the vision of the Master's dream material. There is nothing to invent or create, everything is already there, very precisely: drawings, measurements, proportions, colors. It is just a matter of **offering your services and working**.

Our Teacher also taught us how to work: it was enough to observe and remember his gestures. Whatever he did, even the simplest everyday task, like opening a package or sorting out his papers, his gestures were perfect, essential, harmonious, in short, beautiful. Everything flowed from his pure presence, without effort. When I



1. The compass.

worked on the Mandala I had that teaching inside me, even though it took me some effort, at times a lot. In my movements I practiced rigor, attention, precision, concentration, but all of this was still subject to effort. It was a **practice of concentration and presence**, which can lead to a few moments of pure presence without effort.

Another teaching that applies when working on the Mandala is "**doing your best according to the circumstances**". In this case the circumstances are the concrete objects with which we work: the support for the Mandala, the colors, the humidity of the place, etc. If you visualize the Man-

dala with your eyes closed, you are in a dimension of pure light. But if you have to bring it to the ground and walk on it, you're dealing with matter. And the matter is concrete, has its characteristics and imposes its limits on you.

I'll just mention one example of a problem that we faced: the problem of transparency. If you paint colors on a white background, they retain all their qualities. In this case, you appreciate the strength of the energy of each color, but accept them in all their material qualities.



2. The tape.

» *Vajra Dance continued from previous page*

What should we do if we don't know the Dance of the Song of the Vajra? Depending on our circumstances, with Tara or Long Life practices or essential Dzogchen Guruyoga practice, we integrate in contemplation with singing or/and dancing the Song of the Vajra on a mandala, sitting on the correct triangles for males and females or outside the mandala. On this day we can also spend a longer time in contemplation after the Song and Dance of the Vajra and before empowering our dedication with mantra. If we "only" sing the Song of the Vajra, we can also continue and apply any other Vajra Dance we know. Even each Vajra Dance specifically connects through sound to different aspects of our existence. They are all of the same essence, represented with the sound and dance of the unborn through the symbol of A in a *thigle* or circle symbolizing beyond limitation. And since space is pure energy connecting all beyond limitations, if we know how to continue in the state of contemplation by applying harmonious movement, we can also integrate with the Vajra Dance of Space of the 12 A.

On these days we can also wear the Vajra Dance costume, symbol of our inner pure mandala and real nature. If we are fortunate and find ourselves on a Manda-

la in a beautiful peaceful setting, displaying the five elements in harmony, we can mirror our karmic fortune by wearing the Crown, the Vajra Dance headset. It consists of three peacock feathers, surrounded by five colored strings spiraling clock or counterclockwise around them, symbolizing specifically the non-duality of the potentials and powers of the enlightened mind in the female and male and the realization of the potentials of our three inseparable existences linked to the Three Jewels: the *Buddha* or teacher as the symbol of the Source and our real potential; *Dharma* or the knowledge coming from the teaching or illuminating exchange or awakened state, and the *Sangha* or the Community living by this wisdom, the enlightened society.

Below you can find the calendar for all global Vajra Dance practice days high lighting days falling on weekends or holidays, when it's possible to organize more extensive practice days, retreats or events.

We are all invited to organize public events particularly on April 29 each year. This is International Dance Day, dedicated to all forms of dance and organized by the International Dance Council "CID", which is a non-profit non-governmental organization founded in 1973 within UNESCO.

<http://www.danceday.cid-portal.org/>
<https://www.facebook.com/international.dance.council.CID/>

This could be one possible date for annually repeating public events on a larger scale dedicated to research, talks, performances and workshops related to dance. These events could take place in a city and be organized with the Atiyoga Foundation and also in collaboration or participating with other organizations, schools, or universities. In any case we include this day with the global practice dedicating merits for increasing recognition of the importance of all forms of dance and arts, fundamental human activities bringing benefits for a healthy and peaceful world.

You can find all necessary information, links and calendar with a worldwide timetable for easy access on our website www.vajradance.net and visit our new page dedicated to "Globally synchronized practice".

With gratitude to Rinpoche and all the indispensable practitioners who inspire our continuity in global practices. Thank you Elisha Koppensteiner, Lenka Tchernobay, Thomas Eifler and Robert Czabanski who collaborate to manifest the communication of our intention. ©

If you want to get closer to the light, you try to work with the transparency of the color and hence you dilute it. But transparency has its limits. The yellow-beige of the parquet floor conditions and modifies the colors, and modifies them even more, the



3. Painting.

more you spread the diluted color, to let you see the wood: what is gained in transparency is lost in color quality. In addition, the wooden floor is a living material, and over time you know it will transform and tend to darken. The first to lose its color is the yellow, which will lose its light. You have to take into account several factors and try to find the balance between color, parquet and transparency.

In addition, applying colors diluted with a certain transparency is much more complicated: when using tempera you can correct a mistake, while here it is like with watercolor, everything can be seen and cannot be corrected. It takes a more experienced hand and a lot of concentration. This has an effect on collaboration.

The ability to collaborate is, in fact, another important point of our Master's teaching and is obviously also put to the test in the construction of the Mandala. Collaboration cannot be impromptu and confused, but requires awareness of the capacities of those who wish to collaborate in order for the Mandala to have a good result.

It is always the Mandala that commands and every moment of the work is equally important, from the construction with the compass to the calculations, from drawing to painting, from erasing to applying tape. Putting the tape on the boundary lines is very important and is not simple given the curve of the lines. But if one makes a mistake, the tape can be removed and replaced. If one makes a mistake with transparent painting, it cannot be remedied. The collaboration took into account all these circumstances.

And then you have to come to terms with the **attachment and gratification of**

the ego. As you work you get more and more attached to that floor where you spend hours kneeling, the smell of those colors, the excitement when you take off the tape and there are no smudges, and when you start to see the vision spreading out on the floor sparkling with the first rays of gold, you are really tired yet satisfied with the final point of arrival. But when everything is really over and you close the door behind you, you feel a little dizzy and wonder what your days will be without the Mandala. This is attachment, like on the nights when you woke up thinking about the Mandala.

But the worst is yet to come, when others arrive. If they don't say anything, you feel bad: your ego is wounded. If they say "good" you still feel bad: you feel your ego getting stronger and that's no good.

And so? The only thing is to observe all these emotions and thoughts and free them, let go of everything, together with the Mandala.

The greatest thanks to our Master who offered us the possibility of this experience. Thanks also to all those who collaborated, in whatever form and moment, to the creation of the Zhenphenling Mandala. ©



4. Tools for working.

Making the Mandala

Flaminia Lizzani

Materials: a compass, pencils, erasers, masking tape, scraps of cloth, sponges, cans, paper towels, brushes, plastic basins, colors. Knee pads or cushions.

Requirements: collaboration, precision, patience, listening, observation, dialectics, silence, open eyes. We should remember that we are in a sacred space, the gift of the Master, and we work with attention, awareness, love, and collaboration.

Preparation: the design, the first dimension



5. At work.

The design is the base, the structure, the DNA of the Mandala.

We start with the compass, which we have previously built. We place a square base of heavy metal that does not move at the center of the future Mandala, with a central pivot into which the compass radius is inserted, whose length depends on the size of the Mandala chosen. Ours was 4 meters.

The radius is a metal rod, in which, in correspondence with each circle to be traced, we have made holes to insert the pencils.

Carefully slide the rod round in a circle until all the circles are drawn.

Now it's time to draw the center of the Mandala with the inner triangles, from which the rays will start. This is the most delicate moment: the calculations must be very precise, because a difference of a few millimeters in the center will become a difference of several centimeters on the outer edge, given the width of the circumference. The word approximation is banned.

Masking tape

A less important job? No. We are entering the second dimension of the Mandala.

If you make a mistake in outlining the design, a color will overlap and spoil the next color. We do not want this to happen. The advantage is that at this stage an error can be corrected.

You do the outer edge by pulling the tape and making it stick with one hand, pressing it well along the entire perimeter. The more you enter the circle the more the circumference decreases and the more complicated the work gets. You have to proceed with small steps or with small pieces making sure that between one piece of tape and another there is no overlapping that might mix up the borders. The most

» continued on the following page

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important thing is buy good masking tape and apply it well, not making the pieces too small.

It is work that can be done in a group and is a good job to share. We work in several steps because we cannot paint the Mandala in one go, but in different phases, entering and exiting the circles and the triangles, along the rays to the center. We have to consider the times for the colors to dry well, hence external factors and circumstances of time and seasonal humidity have to be considered in order to put the tape on the parts already painted and to work on the neighboring ones

As soon as we have outlined the areas we are going to paint, we have to remember to indicate the colors for the spaces with a bit of tape, a very useful visual reminder because distraction is always lying in wait.



6. Removing the tape.

The third dimension: erasing the pencil marks

We are in the lead up to the fourth dimension, therefore eyes increasingly open and knees on the ground. We are working on the defining details and the most boring work, but only apparently. Erasing the traces of pencil that mark the boundaries is not only manual work. It is a great opportunity to practice careful purification. We cancel and purify present and future karma.

The fourth dimension: light and colors

This is the most complicated phase, that of necessary presence, now nothing can be postponed or corrected because everything is perfect. But since we are not and we must work with external circumstances, our capacities, our senses, our ego and our fears, the materials, and the support that changes from time to time, there is a lot of tension, many expectations from ourselves and others.

The choice of colors: the most complicated choice. More than a month of re-



7. Removing the tape.

search, internal and external in which, through obstacles and tests of tenacity, we come to define what seems to us the most compatible solution with our center, where we have a straw-colored parquet floor and we want to work with a certain transparency.

We choose watercolors, but with natural, non-toxic resins.

We then have to understand the adherence, transparency, and dilution for a final result that is difficult to predict. We do a small color test but there is a very different effect when the painted surface is very large. It starts with a certain risk and everything is defined during the work, through continuous adjustments. However many plans you do before, the end result is all in the movement, in the painting, in the gestures, the calmness, the breathing, and the attention.

Predicting our potential errors of distraction is essential, so arm yourself with a basin where you can put all your work tools: sponges, colors and brushes, anti-static cloths to remove dust that is constantly deposited on the surface. Under and around the basin use a big piece of cardboard to protect the floor.

Careful, we are not working with opaque paints, but with transparencies. Coordinate with others on the dilutions and not: if your hand is not steady and the dilutions are not balanced, the color goes out of focus and everything will be conditioned, raised in tone, covered, with a dull look. So, we need a lot of patience, a lot of listening. Reflect, look, and always look back, a foot in the color that has just been applied is a danger to even the most tested and careful painter! Prevention by preparing our range of action will help us to be careful but also relaxed, without spending unnecessary energy to correct mistakes, sometimes very dangerous, such as dripping a color on the floor.

The use of the vacuum cleaner before applying the color is always advisable, in-

deed necessary, otherwise small lumps of different substances, especially pieces of rubber that we have just used, will affect the fluidity of the painting.

Work every day, so make sure that people are available for painting, because it is not a job that can be done in your spare time. It is better not to have too many different people working because it is already difficult to manage the work, to understand how to give color, to stay consistent in the painting. Looking at the work of others and advising him/her to understand if you have the same fluidity, the Mandala must be balanced, in its final form.



8. Finished!

Conclusion: the attachment phase

We have finished painting. We remove the tape and what a pleasure! Everything is perfect! And also help! We've gone over the line in some places. We don't get discouraged because we can correct it without becoming obsessive. Difficult but possible.

We have to detach ourselves from the Mandala and get closer, correct the small overlaps or gaps that make the areas appear confused, a question of centimeters or millimeters, but remaining in total vision, otherwise the ego that does not want to detach itself from the Mandala adopts the most subtle strategies to nail you even in the invisible.

Consult with your travel companion to see where he/she has worked, exchange visions, always, once the floor is polished nothing can be corrected. Perfection is impossible but the work must be done with total dedication.

We have finished. Depending on the type of parquet, there will be finishing and polishing to do, and we do not know how the vision will change, but it is time to say goodbye and deliver the dimension to others, who will enter the Master's dream and the light of the Mandala.

A huge thank you for having been able to participate in this wonderful practice. ©

Artists in the Dzogchen Community

Anna Diogène Fadini

Actress
Barcelona, Spain

The Mirror: You are an actress. When did you first become interested in acting? When did you notice your first impulses?

Anna Diogène: Since my childhood I was interested in visual arts, music, dance, cinema and theatre. I was always drawing and painting and my favourite game consisted in disguising my friends and myself. When I was three years old I had also a very special friend nobody could see. I was always talking and playing with her and my parents totally respected our relationship. I was very lucky to be able to widely develop my imagination.

I studied Art in the University and also music and dance. And afterwards I studied acting in a theatre and cinema school and decided to focus my professional life totally in this field because I prefer to create in collaboration with other people.

M: Can you talk about your life and how your life experience may have influenced you to become an actress.

AD: While I was at school I decided to follow the scientific branch, as I wanted to become a veterinarian. I loved mathematics, physics, biology, but I was also very interested in philosophy, literature or art. I also wanted to become an astrophysicist and study Egyptology. I didn't want to specialize my studies and renounce to all this wisdom I was discovering around me; my curiosity seemed to be infinite. I wished I could have lived in the Renaissance and met Leonardo da Vinci! Well, being an actress allows me to experience a lot of professions and different lives, so maybe my curiosity brought me to become an actress.

M: Also can you talk about your life and acting and how that brought you to Rinpoche and the Teachings? How did you first encounter Rinpoche and Dzogchen?

AD: Like everybody, I had personal issues during my childhood and I had very traumatic experiences during my adolescence



and youth. Due to these circumstances I started a personal research and studied philosophy, symbolism and Buddhism.

I usually remember my dreams very well and sometimes I receive information through them. During my adolescence I started writing my dreams, sometimes I remembered two or three different ones. I also had the feeling that life was like a dream, or even less "real" than a dream.

So I have always been very interested in deepening this aspect of my life. At the same time, after finishing my studies in the University, I started following the Teachings of different Masters as His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Gyalwang Drukpa Rinpoche or Shepen Dawa Rinpoche among others. I was following the path like a little bee and was more and more interested in Mahamudra and Dzogchen.

One day I found a treasure: the book *Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light* written by Rinpoche. I started reading it and after a few pages I fell asleep. The next morning I remembered my dream clearly and was very surprised by all the information, the details, the light, the colors and, especially because I was aware that it was a dream and I was able to change it and continue, and change and continue. "I want to meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu," was my first thought.

I tried few times to go to Merigar but the circumstances were not favorable,

so meanwhile I was reading other books written by Rinpoche. Finally, in 2005, I had the privilege to meet Rinpoche in person during the first retreat in Barcelona. I had the impression that Mount Kailash was manifesting and entering the space; I was totally pervaded by Rinpoche's Compassion, Wisdom and Light.

M: How is acting related to and/or how does acting affect your life experience?

AD: Philosophy and the Teachings are part of my life. Everything we do is an experience; integrated. So acting is also totally related to my life. It is my profession, not only a job.

A musician is an artist and plays an instrument, has to work hard, study and develop a technique and his or her creativity, with feelings, harmony and richness of expressivity, etc. And he communicates magically to the audience.

An actor works in the same direction but his instrument is himself.

So as an actress I need to know perfectly my instrument and work with it. I have to investigate, discover how to deal with it, to open possibilities, to master and develop my instrument more and more. But what is my instrument? It is my body and my voice of course but not only that. I also need to use my feelings, my sensations, my energy, and my thoughts. This is a very interesting question.

And here starts a whole fascinating world of research with my instrument, with myself; therefore I need to deepen my self-observation and my listening.

Who am I? Who are we? And this could be applied to any of us, as practitioners, as individuals, as human beings in this planet. So yes, acting affects totally my life experience, which affects totally my acting.

M: How has your life experience shaped your acting? How have the Teachings impacted your acting? How does acting relate to the discovery that happens inside the teachings; does it help or inhibit that journey? In general can you talk about acting, life and the teachings?

AD: What is "acting", is it performing? We can say many things but I don't want to

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Biography of Anna Diogène Fadini, Actress

Anna lives in Barcelona, Spain nowadays.

She studied Art in the University of Barcelona and Acting with different directors from Spain, London or New York. She has been working as an actress on TV, cinema and theatre in international projects around Europe.

On stage she has performed plays from different styles and authors as the classical Greeks, Commedia dell'Arte, Shakespeare, Hemingway, Molière, Edoardo de Filippo, García Lorca or Buero Vallejo among others.

In cinema and TV she has worked with many directors from Spain, France, Italy, England and Germany.

She is now developing several personal projects: writing a script for a film, participating in another cinema project and co-creating a theatre play with poems in collaboration with a pianist, an actress and a visual artist.

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give a definition. I will try to describe my modest experience in this field.

For me acting is listening more than "doing". Creating in collaboration with others, exchanging, communicating feelings, sensations, ideas, values, teachings - growth. To be a good actress I need to separate my ego from me and put it aside. Like this I can be another person, another character. I can be anyone! And I can enjoy and be surprised by "her" (or "him"). I can "play" and do anything. And obviously, my experience in life helps me to play certain situations, I appeal to my memories (sensorial memories, images etc.) and my imagination to create them.

I do all that with awareness and mastering my instrument in a relaxed way, listening and dealing with other people and elements at the same time.

My experience as an actress has a lot to do with my experience as a Dzogchen practitioner, more and more. I could even say that there is so much in common that I don't see any difference. In the same way I cannot separate life from art or life from the Path.

So acting is totally related to the discovery that happens inside the Teachings.

It represents the same journey on the same boat.

M: What is your main form of acting, film or stage? Which do you prefer?

AD: I have always worked in different media: TV, cinema and theatre. I work with my voice for documentaries, commercials or dubbing films. I have also directed theatre and taught acting to children and adults.

I love to act in cinema and stage. We use different techniques but I love both of them. In cinema you can act in a more subtle way with your body, voice and energy. You can offer different tones and colors with the expression of your face or your hands, or very deep, delicate and rich glances with your eyes.

In theatre you use your instrument in a "wider" range, sometimes in a more "organic" way, depending on the kind of show you are performing in. It can be a very "physical" type of theatre with big movements or dance and music; or a play more focused on the text so the aspect of the words and poetry is more important, therefore

you emphasize the music of the language. There are many kinds of plays and different ways to stage them. I have experience in all of them and I enjoy widening more and more possibilities. It depends also on the approach of the director. Sometimes you connect more or less with that approach but you try to give what is required in every situation. So you need to be very flexible and always adapt your acting to the circumstances and the rest of the crew, the other actors, the space, the lights, etc. Every experience is unique.

On stage you can feel the energy of the audience and this is something very special and magical. Every performance is different because the people in the audience are different every night. And this is a very demanding experience, but very rich. You cannot see them but you can feel them and they are modifying you and the way you play. We are co-creating the play every night. We all feel different every day, again and again. If you take the challenge to create seriously, as "if it were the first time you say that sentence", you can discover a whole world and even be surprised by yourself, by your character, even the tone of your voice

can change. To reach this level of creativity is one of my goals and I really enjoy it. I feel free and connected to the “magic” when it happens. But if you don’t take any risk and you repeat what you already “know”, acting can be very boring and the audience will fall asleep!

I try to deepen in the process of creating throw the experience of “listening” to each other, the actors on stage and the people in the audience; or even the actors on a studio with the team around them and the magic of the moment. I try to be present. Acting is a practice of presence.

M: What kind of acting are you doing currently?

AD: I feel very fortunate because I had the privilege to choose my profession in life and I can live on it. I do any kind of acting required to earn my living with modesty. I choose with certain criteria of honesty, respect and creativity.

I love comedies and I think that the sense of humor is an important skill to develop and a very useful and interesting tool for our lives. And when we play the classical Greek tragedies for example, we are entering in the symbolic world of the archetypes, which is very reach and interesting to study. We also play dramas; and the word “play” – like in French “jouer” – means also to enjoy like kids do, they play. And this is great because when hard or dramatic things happen in our lives, we are able to take them with a certain distance, like in a dream.

By the way, in our daily lives we are all constantly playing different characters: the mother, the son, the sister, the customer, the traveler – it is interesting to be aware of it, of how we behave with different people or situations and observe ourselves.

Professionally I’m always opened to collaborate with different types of people and crews. I like to work with young directors who are starting in order to help them and also to exchange new points of view. We can learn constantly while exchanging experiences with different people and generations: from the wiser and older with large background, to the youngest with fresh ideas, who experiment with new medias or techniques.

M: Is there anything else you would like to say regarding the relationship of your art as an actor and the Teachings?

AD: When we develop and deepen the field of acting – or any art in general – we are dealing with many different aspects that are totally related to the Teachings. As a communicator, I’m also trying to share my limited experience with other people. Since I was very young I wondered how I could help the others. This question is still by my side and is one of my teachers. So I try also to transmit a message that can be useful to others.

Currently I am writing a script for a film and collaborating with a friend in another one. I think that it would be wonderful to collaborate with other artists from the Dzogchen Community for future projects. We could organize a special net where we could all communicate, also people from different fields interested in co-creating, sharing and spreading some contents related to the Teachings.

Like in life, every day is different and every moment is special and unique. What can help us to live better? What is important? To love, respect, be present, be happy, to be free in a relaxed way, listening, collaborating, creating, and smiling. We all know that this is the advice our Precious Master gave to us. We try to apply this advice in our daily lives and in our professions, respecting and loving the beings around us, and our mother Earth.

I feel very fortunate for many reasons, for my family and friends, and I feel especially grateful to Rinpoche for his Compassion and Wisdom, for the Teachings he was sharing with us in such a special way and with such dedication. The Teachings are here with us, in us. He was also the greatest communicator, “actor”, that I have ever met.

Thank you Rinpoche.

Thank you Naomi and Liz for this opportunity to share with all of you a little piece of my experience.

M: Thank you, Anna.

©

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Emanuel Giachetti

December 12, 2018

Dzamling Gar

I have been living in Dzamling Gar for about eight months now and I like it very much. I have been living in a tent next to the Gar.

I grew up in North Italy, in Torino, 100 km from Milano, and very close to the Alps. My parents loved sailing, so I sailed a lot during the summers since I was one year old, and I also traveled altogether with my family to some European capitals, like Paris and Athens, we have been to the north of France, and we have sailed a lot together.

I studied at the University in Torino at the university of humanistic sciences. I studied literature and philosophy. I did my last year where you choose the main topics for the thesis and I chose oriental studies, so I studied Indian philosophy and history and I translated the teachings of the Buddha Sakyamuni from Pali into Italian together with the teacher.

Then I did my thesis about the access to meditation through the breath. We studied also Vipassana techniques. After my study I went back to my main passions, which were skate boarding and surfing.

I started surfing with my friends in the summers in Italy when we were 21, 22 years old. I went one year to Portugal and also Indonesia to learn. My friends did surfing only in the summer and I wanted to take it more seriously, so at 25 years old I moved to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. Then I went back to Italy to finish my studies. I finished my studies when I was 28 years old.

Then I went back to Fuertaventura, which is another Canarian Island next to Lanzarote. I lived there for seven years traveling to different places each winter. To survive I was teaching surfing and I had other types of jobs. I started to get tired of living on the island, already in 2015, so then I started to change my job, worked less and dedicated more time to my other passion, which is writing, and doing yoga.

I learned some yoga when I was younger to use as stretching after a skate boarding session, and then I understood it was connected to the breath, so stretching turns into yoga when you use your breath. I stud-



ied formally with one teacher in 2015. He had studied in India and he had a degree and taught hatha yoga. We did yoga seriously twice a week for one year.

After that, at the end of 2016 around New Year's Eve, I was no longer an official surfing instructor, and I was doing three or four different jobs to make enough money to pay the rent. Things were going well, I had everything I wanted, let's say everything I was supposed to be wanting, because I was not completely satisfied so, I had enough surfing, weed and women. I had everything but I was a bit bored, I was empty, and my dream was something else. So then I started to write. Writing is something if done freely helps us to analyze ourselves somehow.

So one day in 2017, in the middle of my writing, at the beginning of December, I was at the table and I was writing and I close my laptop and start to do something else, and this day I was really focused on one thought, "I found everything but I never found a master who was able to teach me the techniques of meditation."

So through the yoga you feel that your body is more relaxed and the mind is more relaxed, but not completely quiet. I knew because I studied at the university that there are techniques for the mind, which is the hardest part to control.

I was dreaming about and wondering about how to meet someone in a cave somewhere in Mexico. One night I had a dream where I was in a kind of hall and there were many people, in this dream my question to myself was, "Well, I did everything and now I would also like to help the others", and also to be useful, life is not only about ourselves. But I wondered how

and especially where and especially who. So in the dream, in the middle of the room in the middle of the crowd, there was one man, not so tall, dark skin, Asian eyes, and dressed in red. So he was showing me with the hand, "Look come with me", and he was not talking but we were talking without movements of the mouth. We communicated mentally, looking in the eyes, and he was saying yes, come with me and I will show you what is a good way to do what you want to do. I was thinking, nice, good to know. There was some light coming from another direction and we went somewhere else. I woke up thinking this is the classic dream of about my Mexican master and I thought that is very nice but where is he. These things should happen if they have to happen and where should I go - to each cave in Mexico?

So I saw that probably Mexico would be my next destination. I felt it was time to leave this apartment in Fuertaventura; it was time to go. So I had this dream, days were passing, I forgot about everything and I was back at the computer. Then at the computer I was writing and I stopped writing because I became tired and I looked at the images of Mexico, the Mexican fishermen, the classical Google images of Mexico, and then I opened Facebook. In Facebook I saw on the right side of panel some suggestions and there was this Ati Yoga Retreat, in Tenerife.

So I thought, what kind of yoga is Ati Yoga because I know all the names of the different systems of yoga around, and no names are Ati. So which kind of yoga is this one...so then I clicked and I saw the photo of Dzamling Gar with the rainbow, and when I clicked on the retreat I saw there was a Tibetan master giving this talk and he really looked like that man in my dream. So I read the details about this retreat. It was in ten days or so, around December 18, 2017, and so there was time enough to get ready and organize the ferry from Fuertaventura to Tenerife, it was fifteen euro. It was supposed to take eight hours but my journey took ten, but it's ok.

So I decided to take the ferry and go see what this was. Of course I told my friends where I was going, they were good friends and I was not ashamed, but of course they were quite skeptical, they didn't prac-

tice any yoga and they were not interested in spiritual life so they said, "Look you will see this master is not really Tibetan, it will be a Spanish organization selling vacuum cleaners; a pyramid scheme selling vacuum cleaners for the company. You will see. And the Tibetan will be the classic Catalanian dressed like a Tibetan." So I said to goodbye to my friends, they are really funny and cheeky guys, but anyway I didn't want to spend another New Year's Eve drinking and smoking with them. I had done enough of that.

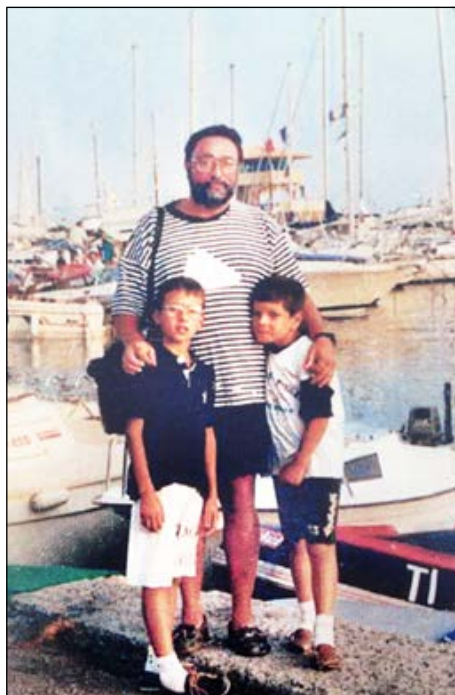
I took the boat to Santa Cruz, I took the bus and came to Los Cristianos and then there were no more buses because it was already midnight, so I was looking for a taxi and the taxi driver said, "Oh you mean the Buddhist center in Adeje, everybody knows it, now many people are coming." Then I thought it must be something important. So he took me to Dzamling Gar for fifteen euro, the trip with the taxi cost the same as the whole trip with the ferry, and I came here in front of Dzamling Gar at around 3am, December 28, 2017. I expected to find a guardian at the gate like in Asia where there is someone twenty-four hours a day, but this was classic Canarian style, more relaxed, so everyone was asleep, and there was no one. I could not get in. Registration for the retreat was starting at 11am that same day. So I sat down outside by the gate with my sleeping bag on my shoulders and I slept against the wall. The ground was pretty cold and I was just recovering from an illness.

At 7 am they opened the gate. I came in, I see this wonderful view, I see these houses and one house on the left side, so I immediately looked to this purple colored house and I thought that is a nice color since purple is the color of the mystics in Christianity and Hinduism. I sit there under the tree by the hammock, taking a rest for a moment and taking the first rays of light of the sun to warm up, and that's when I saw the Master coming out from his room walking on the terrace, because he used to walk on the terrace to the southeast and the southwest. He used to walk like that all the time.

So I recognized him from my dreams, he was very similar, he was wearing that reddish color, he was actually Tibetan. Actually the Tibetans and native people from South America are similar; they have the same eyes.

So then everything was clear. I stepped into the Gönpa. There were about seven

hundred people; it was packed. The Master started to talk and I really enjoyed what he said. Actually I understood everything because it was not new to me, it was exactly representing all my studies from twelve years before. And when he was saying that people receive many teachings and don't



Emanuel is on the left with his father and brother.

apply the method, I thought that I really found my Master because I am kind of lazy, so I need a master who is strong but also kind, and he was also sarcastic enough to say take care, don't waste your time, and then your life will be over and you will still be there losing time. I was paying attention because he was not repeating the same phrase even once, and I thought that although he was not young, he was quite awake. He was very aware.

After the first or second day, sleeping outside with no tent because I came just with my sleeping bag, my health condition got worse again but one guy helped me and I stayed in his house. Day by day the retreat went ahead and on the last day we had the possibility to go close to the Master and ask for a blessing, so for me it was the official moment to shake his hand. After one week of analyzing his words and his behavior, I thought he was pure and trustworthy, so I went to him, I was shaking a bit, and I became emotional and I wanted to cry; it was a very strong feeling. I was very happy. And then I came close to him and I started to talk too fast in Italian and he said, "Eh?", so then I said I will repeat, I calmed down,

and I said in Italian, "Master, I would like to go and visit my family" and he said, "Where is your family?" and I said, "In Torino, in North Italy" and then he said, "Ok, what do you want?" and I said, "I would like to visit my family first, then come back here and follow your teachings." I asked, "Am I allowed?" and he said, "Va bene." And then he gave me his hand. So the formal analysis between Master and student was complete. He accepted me as a student. And I came back the 14th of April.

Now eight months has passed, and I have studied all the disciplines we have here in Dzamling Gar, especially Yantra Yoga. I never missed an early morning session, more or less, and I applied each technique. Each method is useful and the Master provided many different methods for the students to bring the mind in a calm condition and to experience the natural state for a few seconds or a few minutes, according to your situation.

Today before leaving I saw Rabgyi, the gekö of this Gar. I was really thankful and he was hugging me a lot thanking me for all my help. I worked as the lifeguard at our swimming pool in the Gar in the summer, and I worked in the cafeteria and the bar. I thanked Rabgyi also because he was taking such good care of the Master, especially in the period when Rinpoche was sick. I told Rabgyi I would like to integrate these methods into my life, which is the life of a 30 year old guy, and I said I should be working, traveling and doing what I like and he said he was going to do the same.

So that's how I met the Master. ©

* Va bene means all right



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