

# THE MIRROR

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Ati Guruyoga  
The International Dzogchen  
Community Annual Meeting  
The Heart of Khaita Joyful Dances



INTERNATIONAL  
DZOGCHEN  
COMMUNITY



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The front cover of this issue shows 'the precious queen', one of the seven precious emblems of royalty that are considered to be the seven possessions of a universal monarch (Skt. *cakravartin*). These seven images will be inserted into the marble base that will go into the Stupa of Enlightenment at Merigar West below the body of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. You can read about this project on page 30. The symbols were painted on wood with natural pigments and gold leaf by the Dynamic Space of the Elements group, under the direction of Migmar Tsering.

The Seven Precious Emblems of Royalty:

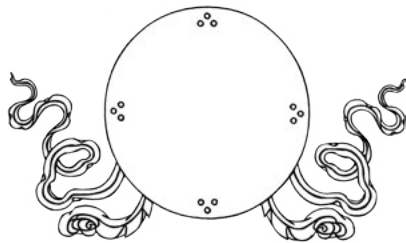
- The precious wheel represents the miraculous power, the wheel of dharma, the ability to conquer and arouse faith in people.
- The precious jewel represents the ability to know and fulfil the desires of beings.
- The precious queen represents the ability to compassionately accompany beings on the path to purity.
- The precious minister is the method to transform and evolve the beings of the six Lokas.
- The precious general represents the ability to defeat the troops of enemy demons.
- The precious elephant represents the ability to defend from demons and enemy troops and defeat them.
- The precious excellent horse represents the ability to bring happiness to beings.

**Back cover:** Khaita dancers from the Dzogchen Community and dancers from the London Tibetan Community performing at the 'Faiths in Tune Festival' held at the Great Court of the British Museum, London, March 2019.

# The Spirit of Collaboration

There are a lot of questions circulating around the International Dzogchen Community regarding the future of our Community, decision-making and development, since the passing of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Our Teacher was a force of nature who encouraged us to become self-reliant and self-sufficient and asked us to observe, work with our circumstances and come to decisions based on our understanding of the value of collaboration as a primary management tool for the Dzogchen Community. When things would become difficult or we needed guidance, Rinpoche was always available to discuss and mediate and, if need be, make a definitive decision.

Since the Community was founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as a container for his lineage of the precious Dzogchen Teachings, it made sense that Rinpoche would have the final word on important internal decisions and direction. The rotating three-colored Gakyil system that Rinpoche created was a system that he hoped would prevent heavy bureaucracy<sup>1</sup> or stagnation. This system was a brilliant creation using the spinning wheel of joy made up of the three colors that corresponded to the different aspects of functionality of work, activity and management – Blue is mind, Yellow is energy and Red is body.



Now we are on our own, so to speak, as Steven Landsberg says in his opening address to the First Annual IDC Sangha Retreat at Dzamling Gar (see page 3 Mirror Issue 143), like ships lost at sea without a captain. Rinpoche left us with a variety of organizations that serve to coordinate the many branches, both public and internal, of the Dzogchen Community. In this issue of The Mirror we are presenting the different bodies that were formed by Rinpoche and will serve as the collective captain together with the collaboration of all the Gars, Gakyils, Lings and practitioners worldwide. We are now a collective body working together to manage the profound legacy we have been left.

We now have the International Gakyil, The Shang Shung Foundation, the International Atiyoga Foundation, ASIA and the subdivisions that serve these organizations, like the newly established Shedra, The Mirror, and the Webcasts.

Rinpoche founded all these organizations with a purpose, to help with the continuation of the Dzogchen Community.<sup>2</sup>

As Adriano Clemente recommended to practitioners at the retreat at Dzamling Gar in December 2018:

*"Each of us should try and continue as best as we can all the responsibilities and tasks that we have for the continuation of the Dzogchen teaching. We should not think that now that Rinpoche has passed away that his Dzogchen teaching, his transmission, his activities for the Dzogchen Community will gradually disappear and then in the end when our generation dies there will be nothing for the future. Rinpoche gave everything – his life, his body, for the teaching. Often he was not feeling well at all and yet he still planned to go here and there traveling and teaching to thousands of people continuously. He didn't care about his body. He didn't care about his health. He only cared about transmitting his knowledge for the benefit of all sentient beings."*

We hope the information in this issue of The Mirror can help to inform and clarify for the Community so that the future can manifest for the benefit of all. ©

## The Mirror Staff

[www.melong.com](http://www.melong.com)

1 From The Mirror issue 13: The principle is to avoid bureaucracy, but that doesn't mean that Dzogchen has to be anti-bureaucratic. It also doesn't imply that one should follow bureaucracy blindly. Bureaucracy exists in this world, and there is a reason for it. It is better to understand why it exists than to be conditioned by it.

2 From The Mirror issue 13: To continue the Community is in our own interest, in order to preserve and continue the Teachings. Through the Teachings a relationship is created with the people you teach, and at the same time there is a responsibility for the Teachings. Once something is created one has to be responsible for it.

# Help to Support The Mirror

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

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# Ati Guruyoga

Part two of day one of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Ati Yoga Teaching at Dzamling Gar, December 28, 2017. Part 1 was published in the last issue of The Mirror, no. 143. Rinpoche continues explaining how to do Guruyoga.

**W**e have primary causes and also secondary causes, which are related to circumstances. Sometimes we have a lot of problems because we may have positive or negative karma in our condition. This is the real cause so when we find ourselves in circumstances with strong secondary causes, our karma matures and that problem manifests. Hence we are not really dependent on secondary causes but we have that potentiality and should know that all possibilities exist.

When we do practice we sound A, we do visualization, using our mind, judging and thinking. This is not the state of meditation but we are going in that direction. After a little while of doing this visualization we feel that it is something alive, however, we should do it in a relaxed way. Many people don't know how to do practice in a relaxed way. If we are not relaxed and get charged up when doing the visualization, any kind of transformation will not work. We need to be present when we are doing practice. We know very well how to be present when we are doing Ati Guruyoga, relaxing, not getting charged up. Then we cannot have problems. Some people say that although they have done Ati Guruyoga many times, they feel a little uncomfortable within their body. They feel uncomfortable because they are not relaxed.

So, we do the visualization in this way and continue to remain in this presence. Then very gradually we relax. What does relax mean? It means we are no longer thinking. We are no longer doing anything such as visualization. We have just done it and we are in that presence. That is being relaxed. When we are relaxed then some kinds of thoughts arise. Some kinds of emotions may also arise. What should we do? In the same way we also relax with that white A and *thigle*. We cannot find these thoughts and emotions anywhere. We just relax. How is our condition when we relax? It is not something easy to define. It is not the same as being in mind.

In general we always follow our minds. When they do practice some people say that they feel something strange, or see something, or hear something with their senses. In particular if we go after our mind too much then our mind becomes very powerful and dominates us. We become a slave to our mind because we do not understand how it functions and then we can have a great many problems. We believe more and more in the mind and follow what our mind is thinking, judging, and feeling. Then mind becomes even more powerful and very slowly it also dominates our energy level. When this happens then some people may think that they can hear someone talking to them.



Photo by Cheong Thoong Leong

If I tell this person that there is no one talking to them, that it is only their mind, they do not believe me because they feel that someone is really talking. This is because mind becomes very powerful and dominates their energy and the energy functions of their senses of hearing, seeing, and so on. When a person has this kind of problem what is their realization? One day they may hear this voice telling them to jump off their house down to the street. Many people jump that way and then they die. They kill themselves because they are conditioned by mind too much. If someone arrives at this point it is not very easy to free themselves from it. Then they should do some yantra yoga and breathing exercises, and working with their existence it is possible for them to overcome that problem.

We can understand a little when we are relaxed, when our minds are not in time and space. Even if mind tries to dominate us, it cannot. In this case we dominate mind. We can use mind; mind is extremely useful in many kinds of circumstances but we must understand this. So when we do Ati Guruyoga and are in a state of relaxation, this represents the state of Guruyoga. It may not be 100% perfect, but it is much better than not knowing and only going after mind.

This is the reason I always say that we should learn and practice Ati Guruyoga. But when we do Ati Guruyoga we can only relax for a few minutes because we start to follow our thoughts, follow our physical body and our energy and so on. We do this because we have not realized that state, we are only relaxing in it. When we are able to totally relax in that state it means we have this kind of realization. However if we do not have that, we should learn Ati Guruyoga and practice it so that we can have a very precise idea what it means to be in the state of contemplation.

Being in the state of contemplation is realization of the path. Any kind of teaching we follow, Sutra, Tantra, and so on, finally brings us in the direction of the state of contemplation and we can have total realization. If we do good actions, accumulate merits and





so forth, relatively it is good, but no one can have total realization only doing that. In the Sutra Buddha gave an explanation that we should remember. Buddha gave the example of two practitioners: one does practice to accumulate merits, always carries out good actions, prays and does all these kinds of positive things, not creating any negative actions. If a person manages to do this throughout their life, that is fantastic.

Then Buddha gave the example of the other person who knows how to be in the state of contemplation. Contemplation means not judging or thinking, but relaxing in that state. If a person spends their whole life doing contemplation, that is excellent and superior. Buddha made a comparison between this person and the person who accumulates merits throughout their life. He said that if a person is relaxed in the state of contemplation for the time it takes a small ant to walk from the tip of the nose to the forehead – ants walk very quickly so it is an extremely short time – this is much more significant than spending one's whole life accumulating merits.

But this doesn't mean that there is no benefit in accumulating merits, which are related to mind. In Tibetan we say གཞེ་བཤམ་གྱི་ལྗག་ལྗག་ (gewa khajor lagjor) that when circumstances make it possible to do virtuous actions we should always do them. But we should not concentrate on them and consider them to be essential. It is very important that practitioners understand this.

In the Dzogchen teaching, the main point is to be in the state of contemplation. When they do not know this principle some people say that, although they like doing Ati Guruyoga very much and know that it is an important teaching, they also feel to do some purification because they have so many negative things to purify. When we know Ati Guruyoga, and we are in the state of Ati Guruyoga, it is a much more important purification than chanting Vajrasattva or another mantra.

For instance, when we study and learn about the Dzogchen tantras there is no explanation of the bardo of existence, the normal bardo, in most of these tantras. When some people follow Dzogchen teaching they consider that they can have realization in their lifetime. But realization in a lifetime doesn't mean that we attain something like the rainbow body of Guru Padmasambhava. For instance, when we die immediately after death we have the bardo of dharmata. That is the passage of the nature of light. At that moment what we learned in our lifetime from our teacher is really easy to understand: the three primordial potentialities of sound and light and rays that we have are naked in the bardo of dharmata. At that moment we say that the mother and son wisdoms meet. What is son wisdom? It is what we received from our teacher when he introduced us to Ati Guruyoga, for instance. Now we know that Dzogchen is our real nature. That qualification, potentiality, is related to sound and light and rays. With this knowledge, understanding, they are integrated in us with the potentiality of practice. When we are in the state of the bardo of dharmata, at that moment sound and light and rays are naked. There are no obstacles. This is mother wisdom. Mother wisdom recognizes son wisdom immediately. When we have this recognition we have total realization of sambhogakaya.

We say that we have infinite negative karma to purify. With this realization in the bardo of the dharmata we purify it all, even

though we have infinite obstacles. It is just like a room that has been without light for a thousand years. We think that the dark is very heavy because so many years have passed, but if we use a light, we can see everything immediately. Recognition of the sound and light and rays is supreme knowledge. It is supreme purification. For that reason when we do Ati Guruyoga some people think that we are not doing purification because they are ignorant of that. Ati Guruyoga is also supreme purification. So, it is essential to understand that.

What should we do when we are not in that state? We should be present. Later on I will explain more fully about how to be present. When we are in the state of contemplation then we sing the Song of the Vajra. The Song of the Vajra can be compared to the way Sambhogakaya manifestations appear from the Dharmakaya when there are secondary causes. For instance, the five Dhyani buddhas manifest from Samantabhadra. All of them manifest with sound. Sound is the principle of the Song of the Vajra.

There are many things to learn but for the moment you only need transmission of the sound. That means you are listening, and I am reading this mantra. When you listen you receive that transmission. This is transmission of the sound.

[Rinpoche gives transmission of the lung of the Song of the Vajra]

When we sing the Song of the Vajra we should try to be in a relaxed state. Some people ask what visualization they should do. We don't need to do any type of visualization. Visualization is a mental concept. We are judging and thinking in time and space. It is not meaningful. But if we are present, then we can enter the state of Ati Guruyoga. So it is important to sing the Song of the Vajra after Ati Guruyoga.

At the end of the practice we should dedicate merits to all sentient beings. Then at the end of all different kinds of practice we have a mantra. This mantra is not for dedicating, but for empowering the dedication. We dedicate mentally and then we chant this mantra to make our dedication become more concrete. Moreover whatever practices we have done become more concrete with this mantra.

[Rinpoche gives the lung of the mantra]

This is how we do Ati Guruyoga. Tomorrow at the beginning of the practice we'll do Ati Guruyoga. If people do not know how to sing the Song of the Vajra, they should listen and try to do it with other practitioners a few times. It is easy to learn. This is the teaching I wanted to give you for this moment. \*

Transcribed by Anna Rose  
Edited by Liz Granger

## The Dance of the Vajra at Palazzo Donà Dalle Rose and an Important Cultural Collaboration Agreement Between ATIF and BIAS

Venice April 2019

Sabina Ragaini

The day is very auspicious according to astrological indications and the Tibetan calendar: a combination of Fire and Fire, Progress in Life, Development, Riches, in both a spiritual and material sense. It is also the Day of Guru Padmasambhava and the *ganapuja*. On such a special day the Dance of the Vajra is presented in a remarkable place and way as well.

The International Atiyoga Foundation and Gyamtsholing (the Dzogchen Community of Venice) have been very kindly invited by Chiara and Francesco Donà dalle Rose to give a public performance of the Dance of the Three Vajra in the ancient Palazzo Donà dalle Rose in Venice.

Chiara Modica Donà is the President of BIAS, International Biennial of Contemporary Sacred Art of Religions and Beliefs of Humanity, whose aims, among others, are dialogue between the various creeds of the world. The invitation to her 16th century palace is an invitation for collaboration with the International Atiyoga Foundation.

The entrance hall to the palace is ancient, large period lamps illuminate it with a dull, romantic light, except for three spotlights pointing on the *mandala* on the beautiful Venetian floor, making its colors shine. On two sides a gondola and a sandal are heralds of the floating world that surrounds the palace, while the main door overlooks the lagoon, lashed today by a strong bora wind.

The international teacher of Dance of the Vajra, Adriana Dal Borgo, explains the meaning of the Dance, the colors, and the movements to the spectators, who are positioned more numerous than expected



around the *mandala*, while the *pawo* and *pamo*, including the instructors Paola Pilon and Maggiorina Capelli, wait to take their places. Dancers, male and female, have come from far and wide to participate in this special event and fill the *mandala* for an intense and absorbing *Tun* of the Three Vajra Dance. The melody starts and the practice of Meditation in Movement bears its fruit.

At the end of the *Tun* Adriana Dal Borgo invites the public to take off their shoes and try some simple steps, *tsom*, and the *mudra* of reabsorption and expansion following the timing of the melody of the

Dance by Roberto Cacciapaglia. Many people move onto the *mandala* respectfully to follow more experienced dancers and the atmosphere is peaceful and serene. It seems that this palace is made to welcome the Dance transmitted by the Precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Everyone follows the movements according to their abilities, but each person is attentive and interested. More concentric circles are formed and the practice, simplified for the neophytes, continues until the melody ends and the A closes the session.

The moment has come for Marco Baseggio, president of Atiyoga Foundation, and Chiara Modica Donà dalle Rose to formally sign a cultural collaboration agreement that will lead, in 2020, to the presence of the International Atiyoga Foundation at the Biennial of Sacred Art in the Philosophical Pavilion on the theme The Game Il Gioco: the time of the game the game of time. Applause seals this important new step for the new foundation of the Dzogchen Community.

The public slowly leaves, the *mandala* is folded and stored, although it will soon return to visit the palace, thanks to the generous hospitality of Chiara and Francesco, on the occasion of some other special Dance day.

As it should be, we all head to a 'bacaro' (Venetian wine bar) for a cheerful toast! ☺







## Class of 2023

Conway MA, March 2019

Shane Kennedy

The first semester of the class of 2023 in the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine is coming to a close. Nine students in all, our class is remarkable for its diverse array of students from all over the world: Poland, Brazil, Finland, India, China, Tibet, Australia, Serbia, and the U.S.! In March, we all met in-person for our first practical training, and everyone became fast friends. Not only were many backgrounds represented, but there were also a wide and interesting range of circumstances that brought everyone to Tibetan Medicine, including some Western medical professionals. While our backgrounds and paths are varied, the one thing we all certainly share is a deep appreciation and joy for meeting our teacher, Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo! Over two weeks, she taught us the basics of Kunye massage, went through Tibetan Medicine's Root Tantra, and worked diligently on our Tibetan pronunciation (where her saintly qualities began to shine). The class continues to meet weekly by video conferencing, but we all look forward to seeing each other again this August in Conway, where we can also continue to refine our momo making skills with the help of Yeshe Tsomo and Tsering Zangmo! ©



## Library Talks and Beyond

Itinerant Cultural Meetings at Merigar and in Arcidosso



After the interest created in 2018, the Library Talks initiative continues this year in a traveling version. Thanks to the collaboration of the Municipality of Arcidosso, which has made the Council Chamber and the Conference Room of the Castle available for the meetings, we can also bring outside Merigar some of the themes that distinguish our Community in the spirit of sharing knowledge, of promoting culture, Tibetan and not only, of inspiring new talks and expanding cultural activities in the area.

The program therefore includes meetings in Arcidosso and Merigar, in the library and in other places, so as to involve as many people as possible with an approach of exchange and openness. These meetings are also an opportunity to let people know about and visit the Library and to collect useful donations for its survival.

Many people have been willing to participate in this initiative. Our gratitude

goes to all of you, and we hope to continue to organize these meetings in the future finding the right moment for the various interventions.

In particular, we would like to thank all those who participated and will participate in this second edition: Anna Scattigno, Cristiana de Falco, Elio Guarisco, Fabian Sanders, Fabio Risolo, Gino Vitiello, Iacobella Gaetani, Lobsang Zatul, Maresa Moglia and Natanavedica East / West Performing Arts, Michael Katz, and Steve Landsberg.

Central to the program is the study of the mind, Buddhism and some themes and figures from Tibetan literature and history, but there will also be much more.

The first three meetings, held in Arcidosso, had as a theme the study, analysis and overcoming of our mind. June will be an Indian theme, with travel stories and an evening dedicated to Bharatanatyam classical dance. Three meetings will follow on themes of Tibetan culture and literature: the



hidden lands (*beyul*), the poems of Jamyang Chödrön and the *leg-shad* or Tibetan aphorisms. And then a glimpse of Amiata! This year we are happy to have Prof. Anna Scattigno, president of the Centro Studi David Lazzaretti, at Merigar, who on August 16 will guide us in discovering the life of David Lazzaretti, his figure and the community he founded which has one of their own centers on Mount Labro, right opposite Merigar.

In the same week we return to Tibet maintaining the biographical theme, with the life and figure of one of the most famous female figures of Tibet, Yeshe Tsogyal. Finally, in September, Michael Katz will talk about dream yoga.

The program is constantly being expanded and updated: you can find the program of meetings on the Merigar website and on the library's facebook page. We look forward to the next talk!

<https://www.facebook.com/SchoolforTibetan/> ©

## Festival of Mind: The Nature of Emotions

London, Lekdanling,  
May 10–17, 2019

Julia Lawless (Director of Shang Shung UK)

The Festival of Mind is an international cultural event whose purpose is to establish a discussion forum for the integration of human knowledge in the fields of medicine, psychology, arts and spirituality in both the Western and Eastern traditions. Each year, the Festival explores a new theme and invites internationally recognised speakers to conduct talks, round table discussions and practical workshops in which everyone is welcome to participate.



Elio Guarisco giving a talk at Lekdanling.

For our 2019 Festival, we chose the theme of 'The Nature of Emotions' with the aim of exploring how to work with different types of emotions in our daily life in positive and life-enhancing ways. Most of the speakers came from a traditional Tibetan Buddhist background, but Zen and a psychotherapeutic approach to emotions was also represented during the course of the Festival. In addition, two of the talks focussed on the importance of incorporating an awareness of our energy and breathing when dealing with emotional issues, since our mind, body and energy (or emotions)

are intimately connected. All of the eight talks from our 2019 Festival, including the round table discussion (see below), are available on the Shang Shung UK website – [shangshunguk.org](http://shangshunguk.org).

In our everyday life, one of our main obstacles to being present is the fact that we are continually being conditioned and distracted by feelings and emotions of all kinds. Yet our mind can be said to be the 'root' of all experience, including emotions, therefore we somehow need to learn to govern our own mind. During the opening talk of the Festival on Saturday morning, Igor Berkhin gave an insightful talk on the need to take a personal and honest look into our own minds, entitled 'Exploring Emotions from the Inside: A Contemplative Approach.' In his own words:

*"One of the first things we meet when starting any contemplative practice is our feelings and emotions. In most cases, human emotions become obstacles for advancing into our deeper mental strata or being able to concentrate on the task at hand, since they cause disturbances & distractions."*

Within the context of Tibetan Buddhism, there are said to be five main emotions: anger, desire, ignorance, pride and jealousy ... but of course there are actually an infinite number of nuanced emotions depending on each individual situation. Knowing how to work with powerful emotions at the moment that they are arising is not always so easy ... anger, for example, clearly influences not only our mind, but also our energy and breathing as well as the hormones in our body when we become enraged about something.

Elio Guarisco gave a very succinct overview of the Tibetan Buddhist approaches to our emotions from the perspective of Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen, entitled: 'Working with our Emotions: Three Different Perspectives'. It was interesting that Elio spoke about all the various Buddhist approaches without using any of the classical terminology of traditional Buddhism, given the fact that the Festival of Mind is open to the public and aimed at people from all walks of life.

*"The ability to work with our emotions is the core of self-evolution. In general, all the various ways to deal with our emotions can be seen from three different perspectives: rejection, adaptation & recognition ..."*

But as Nigel Wellings outlined in 'An Unexpected Hurt', it is important not to simply use meditation or a spiritual path as a way of avoiding our emotional difficulties. Rather he suggested, psychotherapy or indeed any type of authentic healing discipline can be utilised in helpful ways to help deal with emotional difficulties maintaining respect to any given tradition:

*"Why is it that meditation is so difficult? Once our initial enthusiasm dies down we may find that our practice is not all that pleasurable as unwanted sensations, thoughts and emotions visit us. How can we turn this into the path itself?"*



round table discussion.

Stoffelina Verdonk also explored the theme of unwanted sensations and emotions, and gave a demonstrative presentation, which culminated in her throwing pieces of fruit out into the audience ... much to everyone's amusement! She emphasized the importance of 'space' and of remembering the fact that it is always available to us as an anti-dote to feeling squeezed by emotional claustrophobia as outlined in her talk: 'Dealing with Stress & the Challenges of Everyday Life'.

*"Young people especially face many challenges on both a personal & global level these days ... whether it is the demands of social media, relationship & family problems or the difficult environmental situation as a legacy of previous generations."*





Charlie Morley speaking on 'Shadow work within Vajrayana Buddhism'.

It is true at that one of the problems within society today is that many people feel cut off from their feelings or are uncertain how to express their emotions. How should we behave when we come into conflict with another person, for example? How can we get to know the darker side of our personality?

In his Friday night lecture, 'Shadow Work within Vajrayana Buddhism', Charlie Morley illustrated some of the key ways to be-friend our shadow with particular emphasis on using the lucid dream state as an extraordinarily effective way of overcoming trauma. He made some original and interesting connections between therapeutic approaches to dealing with the darker aspects of our personality from the perspective of dharma, psychology and modern scientific research.

*"The Jungian concept of the Shadow (all that we hide from others: our shame, our fears, but also our divine spirit and our hidden talents) is a huge source of power but until we bring it into the light this power will remain untapped and our full potential unreached ... It is said that the Tibetan Buddhist practitioner must be like the peacock: one who can 'transform the poisons of ignorance, attachment and aversion into the medicine of wisdom and compassion.'"*

Dr Jeremy Ryokan Woodcock in his talk 'Love: Its Gifts and Dilemmas' emphasized the importance of being able to sit with an open heart when painful material emerges. He spoke both from his experience as a psychotherapist but also from the perspective of a Zen Sensei of how Dharma practice and good psychotherapy can create the objectivity required to understand our emotions more fully. There was a real gentleness and honesty in his approach, where an emphasis was placed on the importance of 'non-action' on the part of therapist and the therapeutic effect of 'just being heard'

from the perspective of the client. In this way a very natural type of healing could come about:

*"Without a brush  
The willow paints the wind"  
Muso Soseki*

Both Patrizia Pearl, in her talk, 'The Art of Breathing: The Direct Route to Relaxation & Equanimity' and John Renshaw in his lecture 'Helpful Ways of Dealing with Anxiety, Depression & Stress' on the dynamic effects of yoga, both approached the theme of dealing with the emotions from a more body-based perspective.

In her clear and practical presentation, Patrizia demonstrated the theory of Harmonious Breathing and how it can inform our experience and help us to move through the challenges of life and leads us to a greater presence of mind and an enhanced awareness of our body. John Renshaw gave an excellent and innovative lecture on the way that science is informing and confirming our understanding of how yoga and breathing techniques affect all our systems of the body.

The Sunday workshops were all very well attended and especially valuable in terms of practical application. Elio Guarisco and Stoffelina Verdonk gave a joint workshop on 'Healing Emotional Distress via our Senses' showing that by learning how to find presence via our senses, we can shift from our habitual mental level of experiencing things, to a more directly alive and personal relationship with ourselves, with others and with our experience of the world around us.

Igor Berkhin in his workshop 'From Victim to Explorer: Changing our Attitude towards Disturbing Emotions' emphasized the dangers of simply suppressing emotions in the longer term and also the ineffectuality of playing the 'blame game'. We need to learn to own and take responsibility for our own emotions

However to apply this 'self-governing' method, we need to develop such qualities as a stable mindful presence, discipline and finally the courage to face our own demons single-handed.

In her workshop, Patrizia Pearl showed how a proper understanding and use of the breath can help calm our mind, reduce tensions in our body and improve mental and physical efficiency. I think everyone present experienced directly how harmonious

breathing can naturally help to naturally create a calm state.

Then on Saturday evening we had a reception with live music from Ngawang and other singers from the London Tibetan Community, plus a bar and a selection of delicious momo made by Premila and her friends from Yak Bites. Several of us stayed up late, including several of the Tibetan musicians, and we ended up jamming and performing several spontaneous songs! On behalf of Shang Shung UK, I would like to express my thanks to the many volunteers who helped to make the Festival a success and who worked so effectively as a team to both organise and promote the event and to ensure all the various talks and workshops ran smoothly on the day. The Festival of Mind 2019 was organised by Shang Shung UK but we would also like to acknowledge the Atiyoga Foundation as a partner of the Festival as well as thank the UK Dzogchen Community for their support and use of Lekdanling in London. ☺

Talks & Roundtable available from  
[shangshunguk.org](http://shangshunguk.org)

Charlie Morley: 'Shadow Work within Vajrayana Buddhism'

Igor Berkhin: 'Exploring Emotions from the Inside: A Contemplative Approach'

Elio Guarisco: 'Working with our Emotions: Three Different Perspectives'

Patrizia Pearl: 'The Art of Breathing: The Direct Route to Relaxation & Equanimity'

Stoffelina Verdonk: 'Dealing with Stress & the Challenges of Everyday Life'

Nigel Wellings: 'An Unexpected Hurt'

Dr Jeremy Ryokan Woodcock 'Love: Its Gifts and Dilemmas'

Round Table: 'Discussion & Questions' with Dr Alex Studholme

## Friends of ASIA

In such difficult times, in which every day we find ourselves having to face a crisis situation – from the economic-financial crisis, to the environmental crisis, to the many humanitarian crises – we at ASIA also ask ourselves about the role we aim to play as an NGO in the international panorama, and what responses we can give to these “crises” to make them become opportunities for evolution and development for the individual and for the community.

In 2018 we focused mainly on agriculture, environmental protection, food security, protection of cultural heritage, education, emergency and distance support, which remains one of the fundamental pillars of our intervention.

In the coming years we want to dedicate ourselves more to the fight against climate change, both with projects in the countries where we intervene, and with awareness campaigns in Italy and Europe. In order to actively participate in the evolution of society, ASIA wants to develop a universal ethical approach, which nurtures fundamental human values such as empathy, tolerance, compassion, implementing projects for global citizenship education and educational projects both in Italy and in the countries of intervention.

Today more than ever, ASIA is strongly determined to carry out the mission, indicated to us by our founder, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, developing his cultural heritage and spreading the intrinsic values of his Teaching in civil society, in order to reduce conflicts and build a society respectful of the environment and diversity.

ASIA's work will continue to improve the economic, social and health conditions of the people of Asia, the Himalayan areas and Tibet. Women, children and the weakest will always remain at the center of ASIA's interventions, projects based on a careful analysis of needs and transparent and participatory management.



### FRIENDS OF ASIA

In order to continue to carry out our mission, we need the participation of all those who share it and are reflected in it, and for this reason we have created the FRIENDS OF ASIA campaign.

FRIENDS OF ASIA are a group of people who care about our mission and are committed to sustaining it on an ongoing basis, allowing us to plan long-term goals and activities and becoming a foundation on which the Association can count on to turn its values and its projects into reality.

In the Tibetan tradition the Drok po, Jindak and Yon dak were benefactors who supported good causes and spiritual teachings by offering what they had available, in a pure and generous spirit.

Tibetan nomads seal friendship with a real oath called Najong to

“Enjoy pleasures together, endure adversity together”.

### Why become a FRIEND OF ASIA?

Because together we can carry out concrete actions like helping women living in traditional societies to start their own micro-enterprises, provide solar panels to schools lost in the mountains of Nepal, guarantee a meal for children and monks who live in schools and Tibetan monasteries.

There are different types of FRIENDS OF ASIA, with a recurring monthly donation of:

- € 9 to become a Drok po (Friend)
- € 20 to become a Jindak (Sponsor)
- € 50 to become a Yon dak (Benefactor)

The challenges continue to be many but, thanks to all the people who daily support and help us, the local staff of the countries where we operate, the expatriates, the staff of ASIA Rome, our donors and supporters, the volunteers of ASIA Germany, France and America, to the members of the board of directors, we will continue to carry out our work and our mission.

We count on the participation of many FRIENDS OF ASIA!

### To find out more

<https://asia-ngo.org/en/what-you-can-do/support-us/become-a-friend-of-asia/> ©

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# The International Dzogchen Community Annual Meeting

Dzamling Gar April 6, 2019  
Opening Talk by  
Steven Landsberg

Good morning everyone. On behalf of the International Dzogchen Community I want to welcome everyone to our annual general meeting. We hold this meeting once a year so our members can approve the new board and budget and answer any outstanding questions that there may be.

You all may be aware that this is a kind of precarious situation that we are in and we are facing many uncertainties going forward. Fortunately we are held together by our common mission to preserve the legacy of Rinpoche's Teachings and Transmissions, and so the best thing we can do in this moment is to practice individually and collectively, and do our best according to our circumstances to insure the continuity of our Community. The International Dzogchen Community Gakyil is well aware of the questions that everyone has, in regards to transmission and membership. It's not like we are not discussing this a lot. We discuss these points regularly. It's a real predicament.

We know that from the time Rinpoche passed away, that no one again is going to receive a direct transmission from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. Just like I'm never going to receive a transmission from Padmasambhava or Vimalamitra or Vairocana or somebody. That's over.

So if we consider that in order to be a member of the Dzogchen Community you must have transmission, then logically that comes to mean that after 50 or 100 years, we won't have any new members.

On the other hand, we have to wonder could that have possibly been Rinpoche's intention? Many times we heard him say that this teaching was not just for now, it's for generations to come and into the future. So we cannot answer this question right in this moment. It's just not a simple thing to do; we are kind of caught in between these two issues.

So we have to remember we are in a period of mourning, and it's not our mission at this moment to come to some critical or



definitive decision about any of these issues. So if you have this kind of question and this is what you want to ask, maybe put it to rest for a little bit, because I don't think that anyone in this particular moment can give you an answer to resolve that or make a conclusion about it.

So we may all have our personal opinions about this situation, I know I do, but as far as taking any kind of official position, we have to just remain open minded and wait for the appropriate time to come to make an appropriate decision. So we just remain patient, accept our responsibility, and practice according to what we've received.

This is it. I welcome you to this meeting and I hope we get other kinds of things resolved, and on behalf of the International Gakyil I welcome you and it's great to see all of you.

Thank you very much.

## Opening Talk by Costantino Albini

Good morning everybody. I am just talking for myself I am not representing any side of the organization. I am just a student of Rinpoche. But I have a feeling I have something to share with you, which are my personal opinions, and I know this is the year of mourning and silence, so we are still mourning and dealing with our emotional and deep suffering.

I want to offer just a few personal reflections, very personal, on our Dzogchen Community after the passing of our beloved Master. So as I said, it is just my opinion and you can take it the way you want to. Don't take it as anything very important, it's just my opinion. If you like you can agree or disagree.

For over 40 years Rinpoche has been teaching us. Besides his activity as a teach-

er, he has been the heart of our Community; the source of all inspiration as well as the source of our supposed identity. So as long as he was with us physically, his presence did not raise in us the question of what we are and how we want to be perceived.

And now he has passed away we begin to feel the need to define what we want to be and how to present ourselves as an organization. So the first point I see like this, it is just a question I am posing to myself. This is the question: Are we defined as a religious group, or as a spiritual group, or as a social aggregation of individuals with an agenda, a specific agenda as much as you want, but social. Or what else?

We know very well that the Dzogchen Teaching is not a religion. It is not a philosophy. It is not even just a set of rules to live a better life. It is much less than that but much more than that. But you know these Western definitions of the Western culture are kind of wide. And what really counts is the actual presence of the IDC in the world, and its function in the world. We are here. We are living here.

Anyway my personal reflection is always limited to how we can continue as individual practitioners because my feeling is that the Community is made of individuals. And the value of the Community is because of the value of the individuals inside. If the individuals do not have any value then the Community doesn't have any value.

For this issue of transmission I have something to say that is very similar to what Steven just said. Until now the transmission has been given to a number of persons around the whole globe for 42 years. That number is now closed. We can no longer facilitate new people's access to Rinpoche. Rinpoche is in another dimension. So our concern now I think is to make Rinpoche's precious legacy mature and

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bear fruit within each of us. We are the ones who one day will become a testimony of the teachings through our realizations, our conduct and through our example in this world.

There is no one now who can teach Rinpoche's teaching. There is no one now who can be Rinpoche. What we can and must do is gather together, practice together, do our best to deepen our understanding of what we have received without forgetting the real spirit of relative and absolute bodhicitta, which is the base of everything.

We are not a normal dharma group. We are not ordained Sangha, we are not even ngakpa. We do not belong to one particular tradition of Buddhism, Tibetan or not, in the West. The Dzogchen Community was envisaged by our Master as something completely new and original. We are lay people from all over the world with jobs and families. From many different cultural backgrounds, we speak many different languages, and we have received, each one of us, individually, personally and subjectively, direct access to a knowledge that is not limited within the boundaries of organized religious churches or cultures. It is not limited by anything but our own limitations.

That direct knowledge being a subjective experience, and because it is a subjective experience, it cannot be shared. Only a fulfilled Master can share direct experience by giving direct transmission. Our direct knowledge must and can be cultivated so that it can engender an evolution; this is what Rinpoche used to tell us. What we can do is use the transmission that we have individually and collectively in order to mature and engender evolution. And at this point if that evolution manifests then the subject of transmission can be considered again.

My personal opinion is that we are the students of Rinpoche, we have been studying and practicing with him and receiving

teachings, receiving, receiving, receiving, now we have a big legacy and a big inheritance. But now like in all families when the father passes away it is a moment of coming of age, a ritual of passage. Now there is no more the father of the family, now we are adults. This is my idea.

In all these years I have no memory of Rinpoche ever giving us rules and regulations. Instead he always encouraged us to make our decisions in full presence and awareness and to take full responsibility for them. If I know a certain course of action can and will determine a certain karma, it is only my responsibility to take that action or not.

If a Vajra Brother or Sister, for example, decides to give an initiation of Dzogchen Longde to the public, who of us can question whether he can or cannot give it. I believe it is only his or her karma, to take that decision. And I want to believe that he or she knows what they are doing and the motivation they have is respect for the teaching and great compassion. That is what I want to believe. But then this remains his or her private business with guardians of the precious teaching. It has nothing to do with us. We cannot judge.

The vision of Rinpoche I already said many times. Rinpoche's vision of the Dzogchen Community is that we are primarily a community of Dzogchen practitioners, so the Dzogchen practitioners are the content and the container is the organization of the Dzogchen Community. The only principle I can think of about the container is how the individual acts within the container, and that is the principle of collaboration, but today my reflections are primarily about individual practitioners. I think the first concern for any of us must be to question ourselves in this perspective. As our teacher used to say, observe yourself. Am I a Dzogchen practitioner, **am** I a Dzogchen practitioner? To what extent and with what level of commitment? How much am

I ready to collaborate with my Vajra sisters and brothers?

If at this moment I don't feel that I am a practitioner of Dzogchen just yet, how committed am I to truly become one in this life. A Dzogchen practitioner, in the most basic definition, is somebody who has been empowered with transmission by a true holder of the Dzogchen lineage and is committed to train and remain for as much time as possible in the state of Guruyoga, or primordial awareness, or instant presence, many names, aiming to develop the capacity to integrate this state in all daily life. The aim of a practitioner is to reach a condition where there is no more difference between his or her practice and his or her life. So the only person who can judge you is yourself. On the other hand none of us is entitled to judge anyone else. We are fundamentally free. We always have been free but we didn't know it, but we are free to choose our course of action moment to moment. And we are the only ones responsible for the consequences thereof.

And then another concern, given that we have a primary and essential mission, I think you all agree to that, a mission to accomplish; that is to attain realization for the benefit of all beings, right? And, not only do we have a mission, but we have a received an incredibly precious, powerful and beneficial instrument for that purpose. And then I want to say this. My feeling is that we **can** make a difference in the world if we are aware of the gift we have received. We are empowered. We have everything that we need. It's time that we realize that we have grown up. How do we want to integrate with this society where we live, how do we intend to proceed, in order to make a difference at this time in history, in a society that is riddled with suffering, not only in our Community but everywhere around us, uncertainty, many changes, tumultuous changes, so what are the most skillful means for us to achieve effectiveness. The most skillful means, I think, are the ones we have already been taught, to open our hearts, as a bodhisattva does, to radiate kindness, to radiate love, to radiate presence and awareness, continue in the state of Guruyoga, be in presence and awareness, work with circumstances, follow Rinpoche's example. Follow Rinpoche's teaching. Follow Rinpoche's footprints. This is what we can and must do if we want the continuation of this Community. This is my personal opinion. At the moment that is all I have to say. Thank you. ©



# Annual General Meeting of the International Dzogchen Community & the International Gakyil

April 7, 2019  
Dzamling Gar

Mark Farrington

In the past, we always started the AGM with opening remarks from Rinpoche, and he gave us that spiritual leadership and guidance, so we were very grateful that we were able to receive that today from Steven Landsberg and Costantino Albini. Now we go into the purely relative and mundane world of reality, which is how do you structure a legal organization, how do you make rules and regulations to hold this organization together, to comply with the law, and all these things which are not so easy to do, with the Dzogchen view with no limitations and total freedom.

So keep all those nice images alive that you just heard from Steven and Costantino as we dive into the details, which are not so beautiful and spiritual sometimes.

We have an agenda here for you today. We will go through some of the legal alignments, the membership trends, we will review last year's financial budget, and then ask you to vote to accept the financial accounts. We will talk a little bit about the 2019 budget, and the plan, and we will then tend to some legal business at the end, where we would like to propose some legal modifications to the legal statutes to allow us to continue to function, and then to introduce the three new IG members who are joining from today. We have three IG members who are retiring today and three to introduce to you.

So I will remind everyone that this slide is the organizational slide that we have always shown.

So this is the relative, legal organizational view of this boat or this container, for the Dzogchen practitioners in the transmission, which of course Costantino alluded to. So the way this structure has always been designed, of course, is with the honorary and spiritual master at the top, Below the honorary and spiritual master is the IG. We will talk about the statutes again

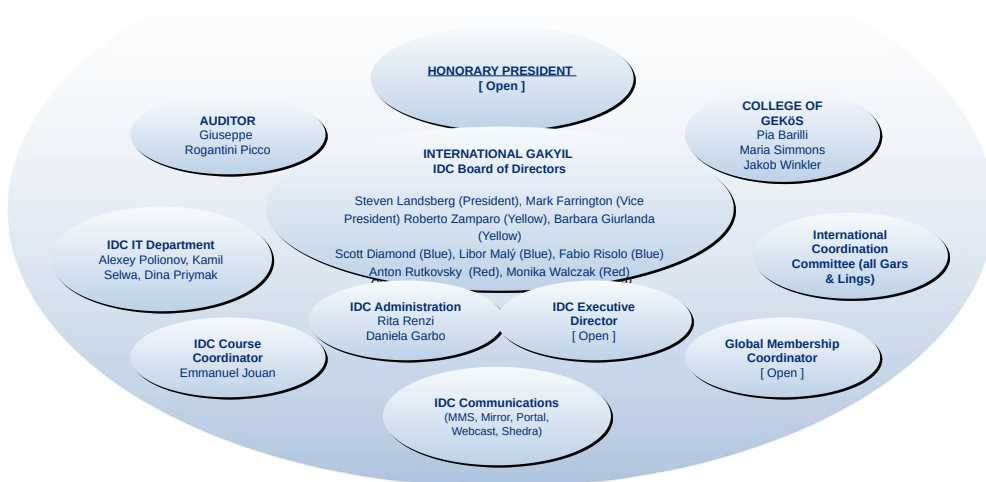


at the end, but just to remind you briefly, Rinpoche was the president, so he had a direct legal responsibility in the International Dzogchen Community. We realized that was not particularly advisable because the president of a legal organization has legal liabilities. So Rinpoche's position was con-

practitioners on the Gar, as the Gekō represents in each Gar, and would then advise the IG and also represent each one of the members if there was ever a challenge.

For example, if someone was doing something at a Gar that was not considered very positive, and that Gar wanted to take away that person's membership, that would be escalated to the IG, we would refer it to the College of Gekōs, the College of Gekōs would then listen to the case, from both sides; that of the member and that of the Gakyil that believes that person should no longer have their membership. The College of Gekōs would help to perform this internal, judicial process. That is the purpose of the College of Gekōs. This type of function exists in nearly all member associations, because signing up to become a member of a community is normally quite easy, but having your membership revoked is not. So all membership organizations offer some kind of fair and internal justice.

We converted ordinary Western legal language to our own language so that it would be familiar to everyone. So we used



International Dzogchen Community – International Sangha Assembly.

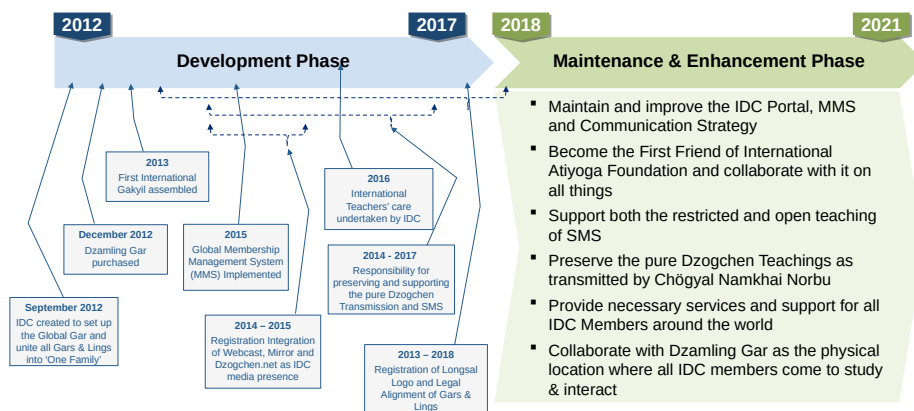
verted into an honorary president in 2016 so that he would be shielded from that external liability. Nevertheless, we wrote in all the international statutes a number of powers and oversight rules for this honorary president.

In addition to the honorary president we had two other elements of oversight. One is the College of Gekōs, the College of Gekōs was meant to be a sort of council or elders, where we chose Dzogchen Community members who had been students for a very long time, who knew Rinpoche's teachings and vision very well, understood the behavior that was expected of members and

this term gekō, but in Western language it would have another terminology.

On the left is the term auditor and we did not convert this into Dzogchen phraseology, we just left it as it is because it is an external person. So the auditor is a paid, external professional service that we pay for and they audit the financial accounts, our actions and they insure that we are behaving according to our statutes, according to our mission statement, etc. This individual has been our auditor for two or three years, and most of us probably don't know him but he is performing this role for us.

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Evolution of the IDC Mission.

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We are a flat organization, so you will notice that we draw no lines of hierarchy; it's just floating bubbles here really. Nevertheless, the coordination with the IG takes place along the bottom. So we have the International Coordinating Committee, which happened yesterday. This is the opportunity for all Gars and Lings to send a representative to come to the AGM and to train with the IG, can ask the many questions that have arisen in the last year that have not been clarified, and to help give bottoms up input to senior Gakyil members who have to think about the future. This is a very important bottoms up form of information, and you can understand how necessary this is when you think we have eleven Gars, fifty some Lings, and we are active in almost seventy countries. So if you don't have this bottoms up information from the Community, it's really impossible for nine individuals speaking on Zoom or Skype every Sunday to try and understand what this Community needs. Please in the future pay respect to this role as much as you can, it's so important to understand what is the reality at the Gar and the Ling level for the Community.

On the far right we have the IDC technology department. To be fair this department was always one person, Alexey Polionov, who is not here today. But he devoted so much time to the Community over the years, to program, to build MMS and to be our one-man karma yoga technology person. We should all be grateful to him for the work he did in the past. But now we have a few more people like I mentioned yesterday with Anton Rutkovsky joining the IG, we had a big lift in terms of our resources in terms of the IT department. We temporarily added Kamil Selwa to this department while we were working on the Shedra launch, and Dina Priymak who has been a fantastic support in helping She-

dra, have a chance to succeed because she has been customer support, she has been speaking to all the Gakyil members and course organizers and trying to help them learn how to use and code the system. So I imagine in the future that department will grow over time and it was fantastic we were able to raise this money at this retreat to help finance their activities.

Below that we have this role of executive director, and for those of you who worked on the rewriting of the statutes at the Gar level, we requested that everyone

this person would run the day to day activities and only refer up decisions to the IG for oversight and understanding of the legacy and the mission and helping to advise. We never had this position but in the beginning I performed this role, but only as karma yoga and we simply just never had the resources to pay for this position. The idea was that if membership was to rise to 10,000 instead of the 6,000 that we started with, that one day we would be able to afford that position.

Also something to think about for the future, Atiyoga Foundation will understand the demands of that position very well and who knows, maybe there can be some overlap where they can help each other and share the cost of such a professional.

Administration, the one position that we did pay for historically was for a secretary because we are a virtual Gakyil located in five or six different countries and only connecting by Skype or Zoom on the weekends, and the secretary was someone located in Arcidosso and managed all of the legal affairs, the banking and the no-



#### Maintenance of the IDC organizational framework

- Modify IDC Statutes in order to ensure all IDC operational functions can be carried out by IG
- Continue with legal alignment of IDC Gars and Lings
- Start tradition of hosting Annual IDC Sangha Retreat to ensure global unity and Sangha development
- Participate in launch of Shedra as primary online Community events & educational platform



#### Continue providing basic services and governance to IDC Gars and Lings

- Support the development and activities of International Atiyoga Foundation
- IDC Membership administration
- IDC Copyright and trademark administration
- IDC Legal and financial administration
- IDC Communications (Webcast, The Mirror, Web Portal, Shedra, etc.)
- International Teacher support & administration

#### Status of International Gakyil Mandate for 2019.

insert this position in their statutes, but in fact we have never used it. This is borrowing from the non-profit world where normally you have a paid salaried position for executive director, who takes all the management responsibility for running such a complicated organization, so that the Board can simply function as an oversight Board. And to be honest, the Dzogchen Community would fit that role much better, because most of us are here to focus on the Dzogchen Teachings and deepen our practice and yet we want to do karma yoga and we end up in these positions that are actually like a full time professional job.

If we had the financial resources, what Enrico Dell'Angelo always envisioned was that we would have this paid position and

taries, and received the mail, etc., for us. Our registered address was Merigar and Arcidosso so we had one physical person. That secretary eventually resigned and left and so Rita Renzi has been doing this position as karma yoga for the last three or four years. It's a very heavy job and we are always grateful to her for her sacrifice and her offering.

And then the position of Global Membership Coordinator was performed for a short period by Nikol Stanišová, who was the secretary here at Meriling and the gekō at Merigar West, you all remember her. It's also an important role and as the system gets more and more developed, it becomes very self-explanatory and users can understand by themselves how to use it, so



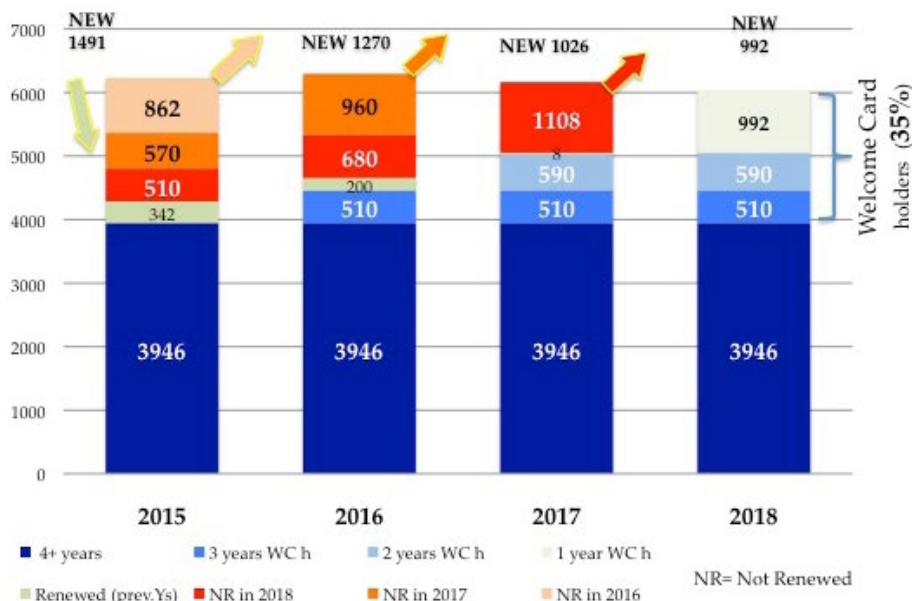
# Membership Dynamics

Roberto Zamparo – Retired Yellow IG

About a month ago, I sent a Yellow IG report to the Yellow Gakyils of the Gars. Today I would like to talk about the membership dynamics and the more detailed statistics we will talk about tomorrow during the AGM.

I would like to explain and give some information about how the Community works regarding the membership dynamics. So you see, this is the history since 2015 when the IDC opened the membership to the Community. Now we have collected four years of data, so we can see how the behavior has been for this time period. Firstly we can see that we have a base of membership of people who have been in the Community for more than four years; these memberships are legal members, which means they are not 'Welcome' members (first three years members).

We have a change rate of around 20%, 20% enter and 20% leave each year. You can see that we have fewer and fewer new people entering every year, but the average is around 1000. Of these people there are also previous members that did not renew each year. Only 60% of new members remain after the first year, another 15% leave in the second year and then 10% in the third year, so we remain with quite a small number of newcomers after three years. What I would like to point out is that up until now we have had this number that



- There is a steady base of 65% (increasing a bit every year)
- There is turnover of 16–18% every year (>1000 members)
- The total contacts in MMS history are >12000 (only half present members)
- 35% of Newcomers will not renew next year
- Only 40% of Newcomers will remain as full members (>3 years)
- 4.4% of members is not continuous in membership

made the total number balanced; the newcomers balanced the people who left. The point is, what will happen in the future?

If we want to maintain membership numbers like in the previous years or higher, we need to have newcomers coming to see and join the Community, otherwise we can expect 18% fewer each year, at least for three years, and then we hopefully arrive at a stable base. So this is a message, especially for Gakyils, to think about how to cope with this situation and try to find some solutions and actions to try and draw new people in, or the income of the Gars

has to reckon with the decrease in membership and has to cope with a different economic situation.

The present situation that we checked at the end of the first quarter (and confirmed at the end of May) is that we have 10% renewals less than the first quarter of previous years, so that means that there are not replacement memberships coming in when others leave. This is what I want to present and open up the discussion for Gakyils, etc., and suggestions. ©

perhaps this role is not necessary. But this role is to coordinate the membership coordinators at all the Gars and Lings. If we had the same membership coordinator in place every year, I think this would run itself without any effort. The problem is the Gakyils actually change every one, two or three years, and we are constantly having a new person coming in to this role at all the Gars and Lings. They don't understand, so this Global Coordinator became very important to educate and train this turnover at the Gar and Ling level.

If this system becomes self-explanatory and with the help of people like Dina, who are like an online customer support person, that a professional web portal would have, maybe they can perform that role. At

the moment this role is empty and if anyone is interested in this position, please try and volunteer to work with the IG because we would still like to have someone in this role to help us with this membership system.

So finally down here we have what is called IDC Communications. MMS, the membership system, The Mirror, the website and Shedra, and the Webcast. We think of all of these as our communication channels; the way we disseminate information to the whole Community, the way we update them on events and happenings and also for them to contact us. So this IDC Communications is essential for holding an organization like this together. The main components of that are The Mirror and the

Webcast, but the other areas are also very important.

So lastly we would like to thank Emmanuel Jouan, he is always invisibly in the background helping with the organization and course coordination. There was not a lot to do in the last year, so there are not a lot of particular issues to report, but Emmanuel has always been there to offer his support should any problems arise.

So this is the organizational structure, these are the roles that everyone has played, and it is useful to keep that in mind as Atiyoga Foundation begins to emerge, with this eco system they showed yesterday, and you will see there will be overlap in different areas with us. ©

# The Shedra Project

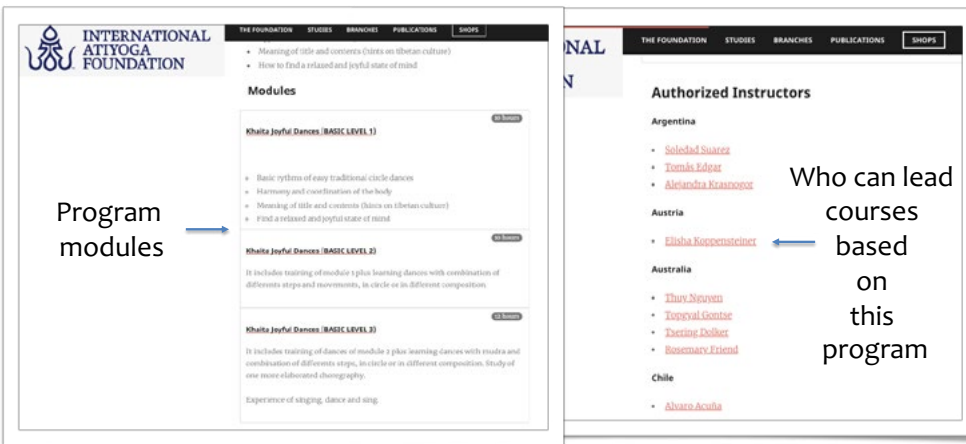
Anton Rutkovskiy – Red International Gakyil  
a.rutkovsky@gmail.com

*Shedra was created at first as a part of Shang Shung Institute activities and after some reorganizational activities is now supported by the IG and it is a part of the Atiyoga Foundation as it is published on the atiyoga.net website, so it is a part of both the International Dzogchen Community and the Atiyoga Foundation. Therefore, the International Gakyil has taken the responsibility to support this project and Kamil Selwa, who is the developer of this platform, and to communicate and spread the knowledge of this project. Eventually this platform will be open to the public and not only for members, because one of its main functions is to help in the development of activities for non-members so we made a lot of effort to give Shedra functionality for people from outside. If you would like details of costs for the project please contact the International Gakyil.*

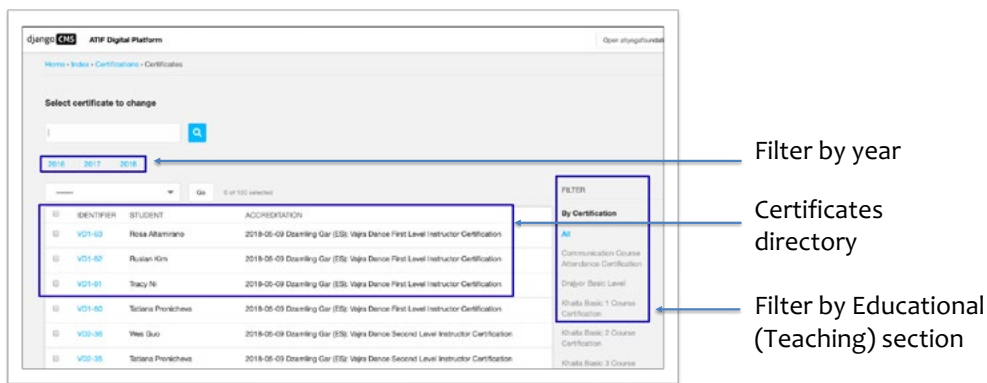
Today I would like to present the Shedra Project. This project is an educational platform for web management and instructor certification. First of all, I want to thank you for your generosity and for the auction that already took place to raise money for the development of this project.

The main goal of Shedra is to unify all the activities that are held in the International Dzogchen Community in the world. We are always interested in what is happening in the Lings and Gars, especially if we are traveling. It is not always easy to find this information, either open courses that we organize in Lings or Gars or closed courses for only IDC members. So the Shedra is where you can find all the information about Yantra Yoga, Khaita Dance, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha, Tibetan Language and Tibetan Medicine courses; everything in one place and on one website.

Rinpoche issued many certificates for instructors. The Shedra was designed as a digital platform for storing that information. You can see all the information about the instructors in the Dzogchen Community and their certifications in Shedra.



Shedra Educational Platform – Educational Program Module.



Shedra Educational Platform – Certification Module.

At the General Assembly in 2016, we decided that the three main functions of Shedra would be supporting educational activities, event management tasks for the Gakyil worldwide and as a digital storage place for certificates. If you are Gakyil, you can use event management functions. You can go to Shedra login page – <https://atiyogafoundation.net/accounts/login/>, and you organize an open course or a retreat. Shedra admin can use the certification section and see information about the instructors.

As a Shedra user you can see the list of certified instructors related to different teaching sections: Yantra Yoga instructors, for example – <https://atiyogafoundation.net/en/studies/yantra-yoga/teachers/>

In the educational program module section you can see all the descriptions of all the sections of the teachings that we have with their programs and benefits: Khaita Dances, Santi Maha Sangha (called "Inner Knowledge" for open public), Yantra Yoga, etc. Also you can see different modules for the sections that we have, for example, the base level of Santi Maha Sangha, the first



level, etc, and on the same page below you can see the instructors who are authorized to teach certain levels.

Regarding event management functionality, there are five main things you can do with the Shedra. First you can make the event, and you can find the description of the program of that event, and you can publish it on line. Also Shedra provides the automatic functionality of registration payments for these events, so you can do registration online and receive payments online. So for the Gakyil it is easier to organize events. Also we can send notifications to participants about the updates for

ing to which section of the teachings they are authorized to teach and the third is the open and closed events management functions that helps Gakyils to organize events and simplify the process of organizing any courses.

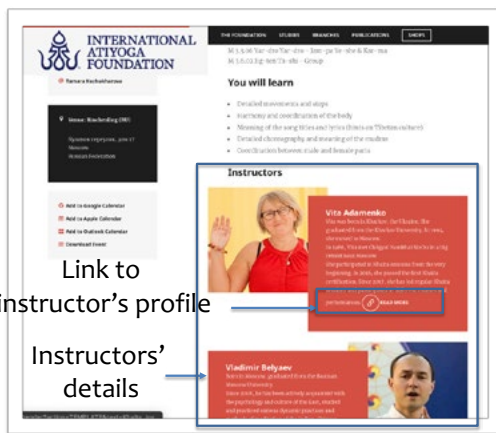
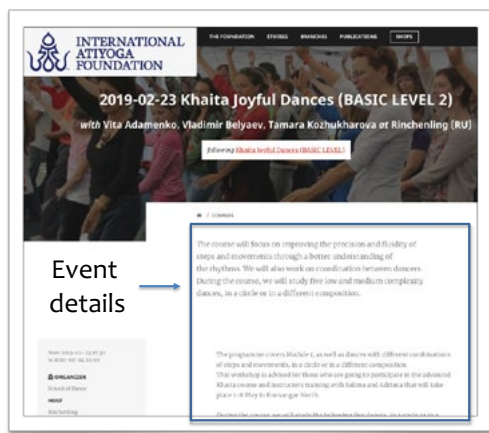
Currently we are working with Kamil Selwa and Dina Priymak to bring new functionality to Shedra. We know that if a Gar or Ling has daily or weekly events, the Gakyil needs to send more frequent updates through various media, so we wanted to create one simple interface for all Gakyils. This functionality is more related to daily updates – the previous information

When you log into your profile, if you are Gakyil, the system automatically recognizes which kind of user role you have. If you are Gakyil you can go to the site and organize a new course or event.

If you are a member of the IDC, you can go and see the list of events and see the events by a certain teaching section, you can see the instructors and you also have the possibility to register to some course and events that are organized by the Gakyil. If you are Gakyil you can go to your personal page on the atiyogafoundation.net website and have the functionality of organizing courses. Also if you are Gakyil and you need any assistance for using Shedra or you have anything to offer as help or any comments or recommendations for us, you can contact our Shedra support manager Dina Priymak at [dinapriymak@gmail.com](mailto:dinapriymak@gmail.com).

I also want to say that this is a work in progress, so it's a process of improving Shedra step by step. Now we have come to the stage where we are ready to spread the word about Shedra and we invite you to test it and use it and we will improve the system together and bring it to the level that will bring much benefit to the Gakyil and to participants in the events, the members of the Dzogchen Community.

So in a few months we will be ready with the daily communication tool so you can easily send emails and notifications, you can export news and information to your local website of your Ling or Gar, or you can offer people to subscribe to your google calendar, so you have the opportunity to put all the data of your events in one place and it will export to every place you need it to. You won't need to update, you will be able to send one email and everything will be updated. We will try to create the place, if you are the Gakyil, where you can do ALL these updates from one place, from your Shedra account page. This is the current situation of the project and we are happy to answer any questions you have. ☺



Shedra Educational Platform – Open and Closed Events Management.

that event. Also you can make the search for all courses available around the world. There is a function for the financial forecast for event organizers. It's very simple to deal with the registration process and the process of donations, etc.

If the Lings and Gars Gakyil representatives fill in their information you can go to the page of the events calendar and you can see the list of all upcoming events, retreats and open courses that will take place in certain Lings or Gars. You can also see the contact information for the Lings and Gars and you can subscribe with your google calendar to the event notifications of certain Lings. You can see past events and all the details of the event; you can have a link to the profile of the instructors and the courses given and then be able to go to a page of that instructor describing all the courses they have given and their certifications, etc. All the information is stored in one place.

The three main functionalities are educational program management; the first is that you can see all the sections of all the teachings in one place, the second is all the instructors and their certification accord-

ing to which section of the teachings they are authorized to teach and the third is the open and closed events management functions that helps Gakyils to organize events and simplify the process of organizing any courses.

It is also important to say that this project is pretty complex and we constantly work on improving the functionality, so you may possibly find that some things are not working perfectly or you see something that needs to be improved. If you find difficulty in organizing events or using functionality, or you want training on how to use Shedra, we will be very happy to provide this support or to fix any problems in the system that you may see and help you understand how to use Shedra.

To start using Shedra you go to the atiyogafoundation.net site, after you make sure you are listed as Gakyil in the dzogchen.net Members Management System, and then you go to the <https://atiyogafoundation.net/accounts/profile> with your dzogchen.net credentials. You use the same credentials, you don't need to register in the new platform because we use the same membership data that we have in dzogchen.net. You can go to your profile on atiyogafoundation.net and your information is already there.

# Atiyoga Foundation

Marco Baseggio  
Ester Escudero

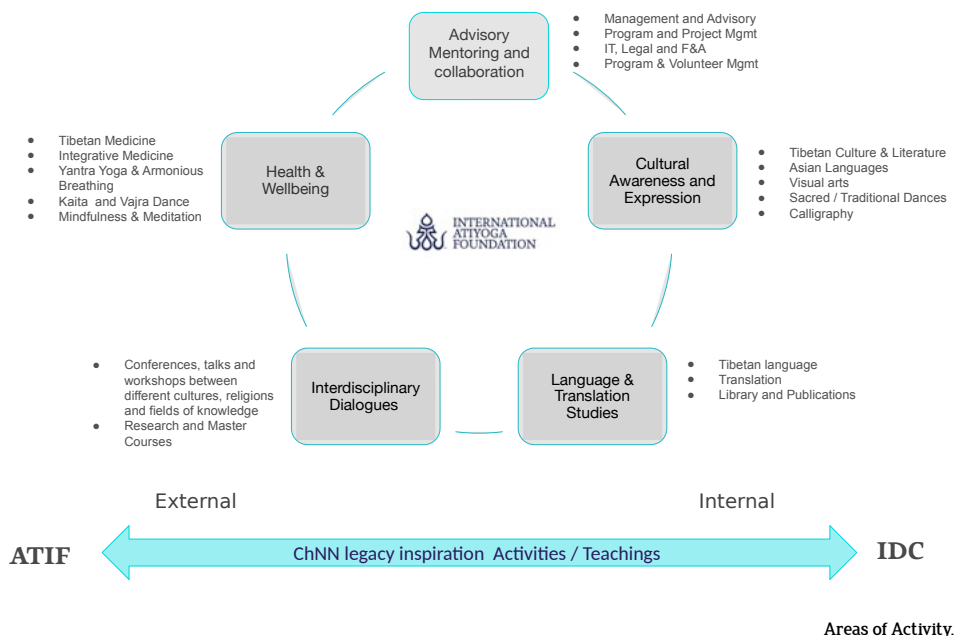
The Atiyoga Foundation (ATIF), founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, is the umbrella for all the organizations in the International Dzogchen Community and was created with the intention to support all activities related to Rinpoche's legacy interfacing with the world. Rinpoche appointed Marco Baseggio as president and legal representative of the Foundation with its headquarters and legal address at Dzamling Gar.

ATIF is a cultural Foundation, with the aim of supporting the evolution of the individual, thanks to the legacy and the cultural heritage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, through the different cultural forms or areas of the mind that Rinpoche developed during his life.

The Foundation's statute was formally approved by the official registry in Madrid after a long formal process. It is legally composed of three founders: Rinpoche, Nancy Simmons and Carlos Ramos. The Board of Directors consists of Pia Bramezza, who has been in charge of accounts at Merigar for many years, Alex Siedlecki, Director of the Museum of the Asian Art and Culture in Arcidosso, Oliver Leick in charge of the Ka Ter Project and the coordinator of Shang Shung Institute within Atiyoga Foundation, Ester Escudero the representative of ATIF for Spain and Marco Baseggio. Rosa Namkhai has been fundamental for the creation of the Foundation, and also Yeshe and Yuchen Namkhai, and the direct and continuous connection with the Namkhai Family is very valuable and has allowed the Foundation to work with serenity and a sense of responsibility.

## ATIF Timeline

In December of 2017 Rinpoche first spoke publicly about the new Foundation during a webcast. Before that we had studied how to legally formulate this situation. In February 2018 during Losar Rinpoche and the two other Founders of the Ati Foundation signed a document for the creation of the Board of Directors. In July 2018 we officially signed the constitution of the Atiyoga Foundation with Rinpoche. In November 2018 we signed a new publishing agreement with the heirs of Chögyal Namkhai



Norbu, and Yeshe Namkhai signed an agreement with Shang Shung Foundation, which still exists. Then in December of 2018 we received official approval from the Protectorado of Madrid, and are now a legal public institution and can receive donations etc. We presented our action plan for 2019, obliged to do so under Spanish law.

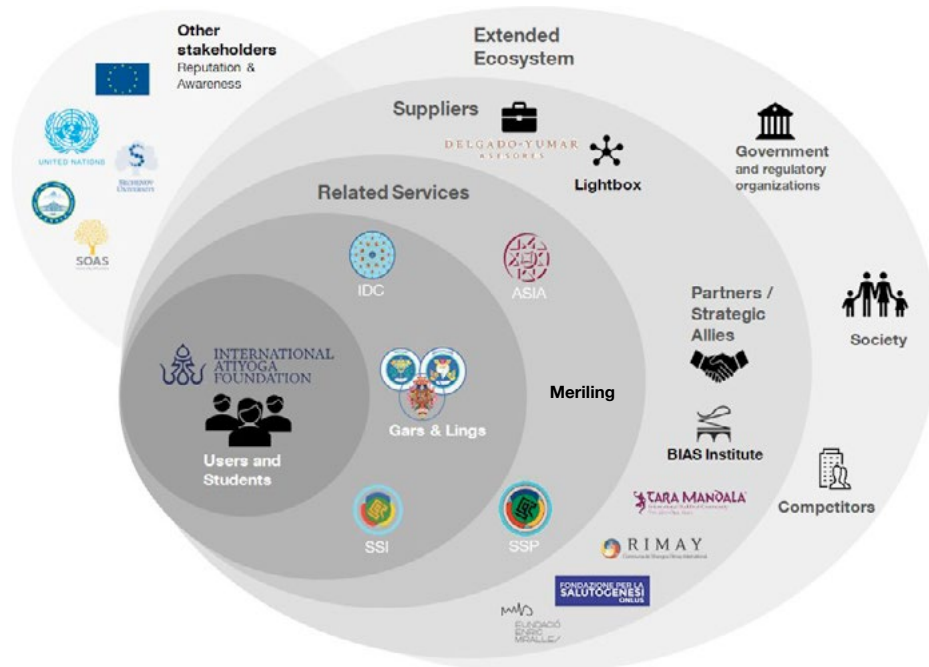
Then in January 2019 we started to work on the accounting plan based on self-sustainability, transparency and traceability. We are still working on this very important project, which represents one of the main issues of the Foundation.

In February 2019 the new Board of Shang Shung Foundation and Shang Shung Publications was created, which are totally connected with the Atiyoga Foundation because three members of the SSF Board are part of the Atiyoga Foundation Board: Pia, Oliver and Marco. The other Board members are part of Shang Shung Publications: Giovanni Totino, the manager of SSP, and Artur Skura. In the future SSP will become a profit making company while SSF will remain as a branch of ATIF in Italy, managing the archive and library, not only for Italy but for the Dzogchen Community all around the world. For several reasons we decided to maintain the legal form because it is very useful.

## Values

ATIF's values of self-sustainability, transparency and accountability, efficiency and diligence, co-creation and collaboration, respect and dialogue are used as a framework for all activities undertaken. These values are based on the principles of interdependence and respect among individuals and groups, not only in the Dzogchen Community. To give an example: in December 2018, ATIF had to present an action plan for 2019 to the official registry. That meant that we had to think for the whole year's program. In order to present that we had to be transparent from the beginning, and everyone willing to collaborate and present their project in the action plan had to make them self sustainable: they had to think thoroughly what they wanted to plan, what their activities would be, who would be carrying out the plans in terms of people, what money they would need, and they had to make sure they could get all the funds to cover it. Then they will have to keep on reporting and, at the end of the year, they will have to be accountable for that because we have to show the Spanish registry of Foundations that what we said has been fulfilled and if it has not been fulfilled we have to show, with evidence, why it did not happen. In order to do that we have to be efficient, collaborating and dialoguing so that all the funds we get we can invest in a clever way in order not to waste people's precious time and generosity.





Atiyoga Ecosystem.

As a cultural foundation we receive money mainly from donations and also through courses that are connected with our mission. It is very precise in the statute what is connected or not. We can receive money through a friendship. Becoming a friend of the Foundation implies becoming a habitual donor or sponsor.

So that is the base. We should do that with a series of activities, which are mainly divided into two macro areas. One of them is building and sharing competence so that means learning, learning how to do things, supporting individual capacity, providing guidance, advisory and consultancy, and, on the other hand, by doing projects and organizing activities, coordinating projects, promoting inter cultural exchange through the various organizations that Rinpoche founded, but also other entities with similar interests.

#### Areas of Activities ATIF & IDC

Atiyoga Foundation by its nature is a cultural foundation and the instrument of the Dzogchen Community. On the other hand the IDC has the commitment, according to its own statute, to preserve the lineage and the pure transmission of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by organizing events for its own members primarily. The Dzogchen Community is the repository of the Teaching that Rinpoche gave us, which required transmission, while the Atiyoga Foundation is in charge of open teachings, open

courses and open activities. What are the activities of the Atiyoga Foundation? There are many.

All the activities of the Atiyoga Foundation are carried out by the following branches:

The Atiyoga Foundation has close connections with all the branches of the SSI around the world, the Gars and Lings we collaborate with to create public events, the IDC with which we share many things, ASIA, and SSP. Then there are allies in the forms of suppliers, and Governmental allies, the link with Tara Mandala and Rimay, more local organizations and also the European Union.

Just like when we first began Dzamling Gar, the Atiyoga Foundation is still something we have to project for the future. It's up to all of us to make this happen and there are things we need to concretely work on:

#### Next Steps

- Complete the Strategic Plan
- Action Plan
- Fundraising Plan
- Communication Strategy
- Compliance with Anti-Money Laundering regulations
- Privacy
- Projects to be developed in the next months

Atiyoga Foundation is not separate from the Community; it is the face of the Community to the world. The Foundation provides a space in the world for the Community to exist and to continue into the future. It is a tool for the Community. We will have new Community members who do not have transmission and will have to be ready to integrate in the world as a Community with all of the Teachings that Rinpoche gave to us.

It is very interesting that Rinpoche created this activity before he passed into a new dimension. We should all think about why, and to try to find together a good path to the future. This cultural foundation is really a very useful instrument for us. ©

# Shang Shung Publications

## Working with and for the Words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Shang Shung Publications, briefly SSP, founded by Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1983 and currently an imprint of the Shang Shung Foundation, is dedicated to the diffusion of the Dzogchen teaching as transmitted by the Master. It also publishes works written by the Master himself and other qualified authors on the traditional sciences of Tibetan culture, ranging from Tibetan history and literature to medicine and astrology.

In the course of more than thirty years, Shang Shung Publications has published close to four hundred books, and also includes in its catalog seventy video and forty-five audio products originally produced by Shang Shung Institute. Many of these books and media products are now available for download as well as in physical form.

A number of these works, originally published in English and/or Italian, have been translated into twenty major languages, resulting in a total of nearly eight hundred translations supervised and authorized by the auditors of the International Publications Committee linked to the publishing house.

This large publishing enterprise, based on the work and tireless leadership of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, was made possible thanks to the commitment of a staff of specialists including translators from Tibetan and other languages, editors, graphic artists, administrators, and logistics coordinators, as well as the collaboration of hundreds of volunteers who have offered their work gratuitously at all stages of production, from the transcription of the teachings to the printing of the completed works.

We wish to express our heartfelt thanks first of all to the Master, source of everything, and all the collaborators and thousands of donors, including the fundamental support of the Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Ka-Ter Projects, which have helped disseminate his words during these years.

We are also grateful to our readers, who by purchasing our products express their deep interest and generous collaboration.

**What we have done in the past 6 months: Working with Atiyoga Foundation (ATIF) and for the reorganization of SSP.**

### About the implementation of the SSP action plan for 2019.

From the end of 2018, aware of the particular moment of the Dzogchen Community and solicited by the Board of ATIF itself, we started to collaborate with Atiyoga Foundation to try to reorganize our publishing house in a sustainable and more efficient way. To this end, we worked for about a couple of months on the development of a serious **business plan** to evaluate the real possibility of making the important function carried out by Shang Shung Publications economically sustainable. All personnel contributed in a fundamental and decisive way to the analysis of weaknesses and strengths, to the identification of possible solutions and, subsequently, to the drafting of a shared **plan of action for 2019**.

Today, after about 6 months of common commitment, we have implemented almost all the plan that we jointly submitted to the ATIF Board and which was approved in December 2018.

Necessarily, like all reorganization and efficiency plans of a structure, the actions implemented were characterized by a **reduction in costs (including the salaries of the staff which were already low), an increase in workload and responsibilities for all and, of course, by a series of initiatives to try to increase revenue and sales.**

Many of these actions and initiatives are related to operational aspects like **logistic, administration, accounting, printing, storage, web shop, shipments and delivering.**

Up to now 80% of the intervention program has been carried out.

The other main activities being implemented are related to the improvement of our capacity to support **the translation and the editing** of books.

One of our specific commitments requires the alignment of our activities and plans with indications existing in the **new copyright agreement**. In compliance with the new contract we have revised all existing contracts, up to now one for each book and therefore not easily manageable, being in total about 250, in a simpler and above all more functional contractual framework for management purposes and compliance with contractual conditions.

Many contractual obligations were requested for the first time and the results processed and subjected to the evaluation of the heirs.

We have not yet completed this work of adjusting all contracts but all publishers are now aware of the existing rules for copyright.

### About communication and marketing

Other ongoing initiatives refer to communication and marketing. Communication is mostly related to our reference readers who are in the Dzogchen Community, while marketing initiatives (not yet defined) will be more related to potential readers from the public outside the Dzogchen Community. We are starting to plan these last initiatives in detail in order to realize them in a subsequent phase, probably next autumn, after necessary verification and approval in regard to contractual obligations for copyright.

In particular, to carry out the mission of Shang Shung Publications and to make its activities sustainable over time, it will be very important to acquire new and greater abilities to operate also outside the Dzogchen Community.

**What we are doing now: Working to train new editors and to complete the catalogue of the complete works of ChNN as soon as possible.**

### About the training for new editors

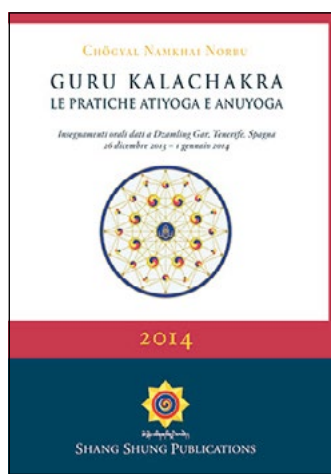
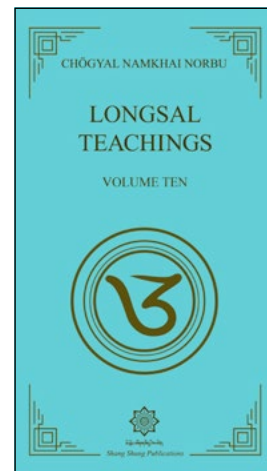
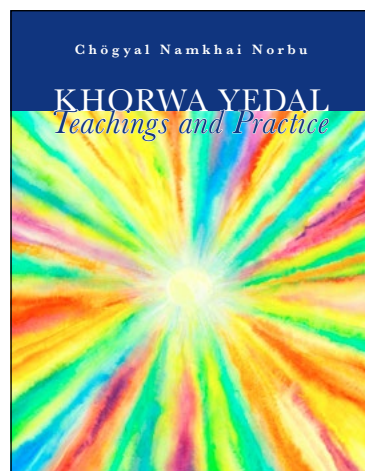
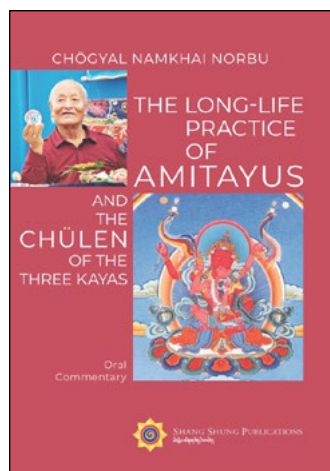
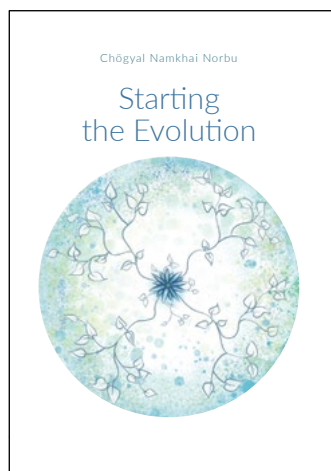
On the 30th of April we announced that Shang Shung Publications was looking for English editors and English-to-Italian translators to join the team to ensure that we will continue publishing the teachings of our beloved Master well into the future.

In particular for those who obtain the best results (2 for editing in English and 1 for translations from English into Italian) it will be possible to work on texts to be published shortly, receiving financial support (work scholarship) for about six months from the end of the first part of the training.

The training will be supported through a special fundraiser, focused on financing the translation, editing and publication of some specific texts with a well-defined timing. Fundraising will be launched soon thanks to collaboration with the Ka-Ter Project.

Needless to say, how important it is to be able to guarantee the continuity of the work carried out by the current Editors (Nancy, Igor and Susan) by offering them





#### Books published since November 2018

##### \* *Starting the Evolution*

A compilation of teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for the general public.

##### \* *The Long-Life Practice of Amitayus and the Chülen of the Three Kayas*

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's oral commentary to the practice of Guru Amitayus and the Chülen of the Three Kayas, including the practice texts and the translation of the root texts discovered by Nyagla Pema Dödul.

##### \* *Freedom from Attachment*

An oral commentary of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to the ancient Mahayana teaching called "Parting from the Four Attachments" and its written commentary by Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen.

##### \* *Tibetan Calendar for the Year of the Earth Boar 2019–2020*

The annual Tibetan Calendar with astrological indications and special practice days.

##### \* *Khorwa Yedal: Teachings and Practice*

Rinpoche's oral commentary to the upadesha called The Direct Introduction to the State of Primordial Pervasiveness in Samsara from the Longsal cycle.

##### \* *Longsal Teachings Volume Ten*

The tenth and last volume of Rinpoche's rediscovered teachings of The Innermost Essence of the Dakinis of the Luminous Clarity of the Universe.

#### Books to be published this summer

##### \* *The King of Space*

The fourth volume in the cycle of Longsal Commentaries related to Namkhai Gyalpo, one of the famous scriptures of Dzogchen Semde and the related instructions from the Longsal cycle.

##### \* *The Teaching of the Birds*

A traditional Buddhist teaching presented as a discourse between different kinds of birds.

##### \* *The Bardo Teachings Sealed with HUM*

A transcript of Rinpoche's teaching from Merigar, 2015, with the instructions related to different kinds of bardos or intermediate states, focusing mainly on the intermediate state of dharmata.

##### \* *The Tantric Mystics of Ancient India*

The biographies of the famous Indian mahasiddhas with illustrations.

the opportunity to have valid collaborators and to be able to transfer their knowledge acquired over decades of work done with care and dedication.

This activity was designed and implemented more as an initiative of the Shang Shung Foundation of which Shang Shung Publication is part.

#### About the catalogue

The SSP catalogue will contain all products available for purchase in the web shop (<https://shop.shangshungfoundation.com>)

The preparation of the catalogue was mainly carried out by practitioners in many hours of work in karmayoga. The biggest work was the subdivision in categories and the book descriptions. The catalogue will allow us to check if some books are missing from our own collection and to have an idea of the complete list of ChNN books available and regrouped by categories.

It will be possible to download the catalogue from <https://shop.shangshungfoundation.com> in a couple of weeks.

**T**hank you very much for inviting ASIA here. I would like to present you a short report about the results achieved in these 30 years of work.

Very briefly, ASIA was founded in 1988 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with the mission to preserve the cultural identity and the spiritual heritage of the peoples of the Himalayan area, with particular attention to Tibet, and to improve the economic, social and health conditions of the local peoples.

We started to work in the Tibetan areas of China, in India and in Nepal, after the tsunami in Sri Lanka and since 2016 in Myanmar and in Mongolia.

This slide is an overview of the work done in the different sectors of intervention.

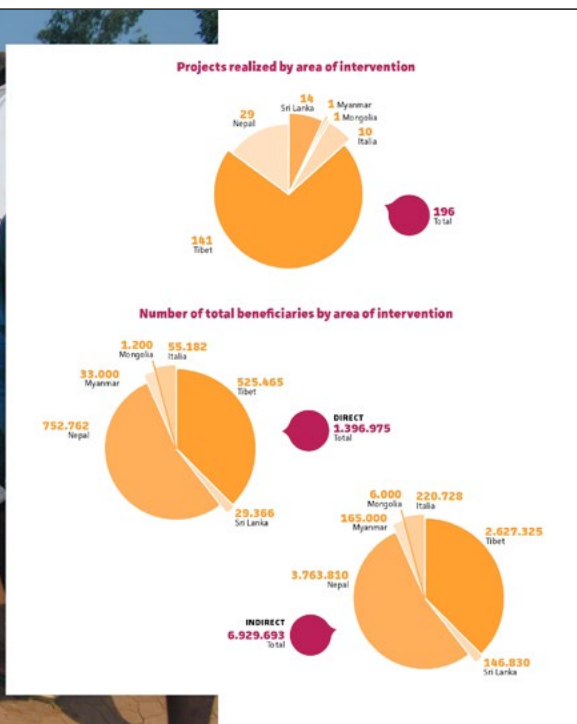
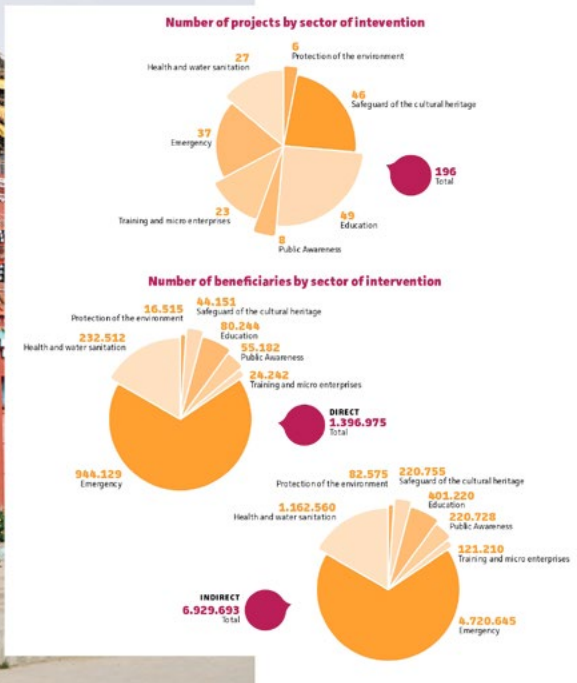
The first graph shows the projects realized in each sector of intervention. The core ones are Education and Safeguarding of the cultural heritage, with the building and renovation of schools in remote areas, the training of teachers in didactic methods, information technology, English, the refurbishment of the Colleges of Buddhist Practice and Study, the restoration of ancient paintings and monuments of historical value and the publication of ancient Buddhist texts.

Then there is Emergency, with the providing of first aid in case of natural disasters and realizing post-crisis projects aimed at rebuilding schools and other facilities and to re-create the social and economic structure of the community.

With the Health and Water Sanitation projects we train local health practitioners in basic health care, maternal/child care and health and hygiene education, we build hospitals and clinics, support traditional medicine and provide access to safe and clean drinking water.

In Training and Microenterprise are included all the projects to implement micro-enterprise activities in traditional production areas, promoting in particular the role of women in these initiatives.

Public Awareness refers to all those activities carried out in Europe that have the objective to raise awareness on the values



held by Tibetan culture, such as non-violence, interdependence and compassion, and to spread the knowledge of the Tibetan cultural heritage.

With the work in the Environmental protection we incentive the use of eco-friendly agricultural techniques and of local plant varieties, safeguard nomadism on the Himalayan highlands and promote eco-friendly architectural solutions

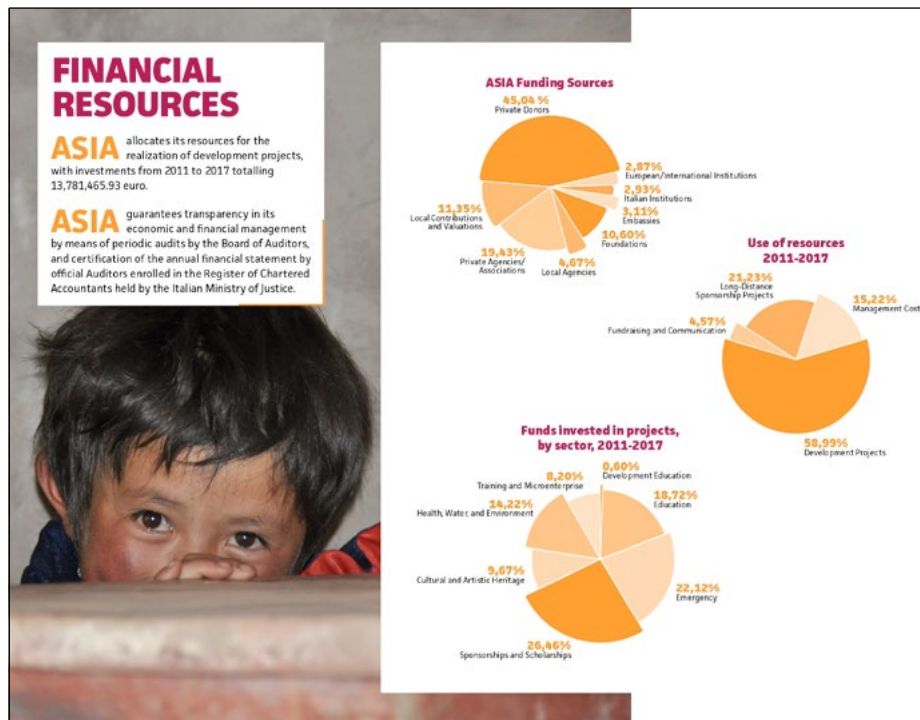
Concerning the number of beneficiaries, as you can see on the graph, in all these years we directly reached almost 1.400.000

people and, considering their families and the ones close to them our projects touched almost 7 million people, with the main number in the Emergency sector.

On the second graph, you can see the countries where we are working. Tibet represent the focal area of our intervention, even if this is a very tricky period and here we are facing unbelievable difficulties.

Nepal is getting more and more important in our strategy, both for the support to the Tibetan people and culture and to the Nepalese people, in particular with proj-



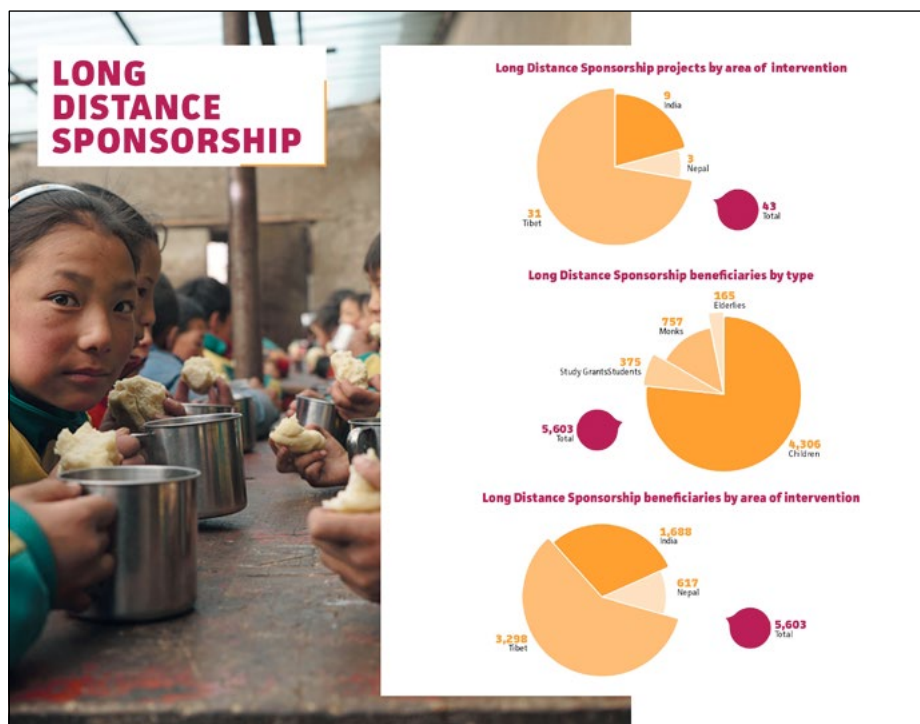


the chance to get a higher and university education for the most promising students, we also started a Study Grants program.

From the beginning are 5,600 the beneficiaries of the Long Distance Sponsorships in Tibet, India and Nepal, and since last year we started also to support the Nepali children in the remote areas hit by the earthquake.

Concerning the financial resources, this last graph refers to the years 2011 – 2016 and tells which are our main financial sources and their usage.

There is still so much to tell, but we are running out of time and now I will give the floor to Urara Taoka, member of our Major Donor's Club. She came with us to Nepal in December and participated to the inauguration of the four schools that we rebuilt after the destruction of the earthquake in a very remote area of Nepal called Rasuwa. These schools are named in the memory of our President, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Thank you for your attention.



#### Urara Taoka, member of ASIA Major Donor's Club

"It was very precious to visit the school in Nepal. I didn't know that our Rinpoche was helping not only Tibetans, but all the people who live in the Himalayan region, especially the most unfortunate people. It was a very remote region and it was a long and difficult journey by car, so I could see how ASIA is really trying to reach remote areas. I can imagine how difficult it was to transport emergency supplies and construction materials to these areas. I was very impressed that ASIA is not only building the schools but they are checking all the details very well after the school is built so that the people can really use the facility. ASIA also knows how to support the teachers, creates job opportunities for the families of the students, for example promoting agro-forestry in Nepal, and thinking about how to support the whole community. The local project managers are working very hard day and night. The people working there are very capable people. When I visited the schools, I saw the children's happy smiles. Here not only children are happy, but all the village people since these schools have a function as shelters for the next natural disaster, they are the only concrete buildings in this area.

I wanted to share my small experience and it was so great to see our Master's compassion manifested in a concrete action. Thank you very much." ©

ects of agriculture, fight against climate change and environmental protection. We have been involved in Sri Lanka since the tsunami in 2005, and stayed there until 2016 with post emergency and development projects.

Generally, as we told before, the big numbers are in emergency. In case of natural disaster, we try to benefit as many people possible, distributing them first need items. We have been carrying out relief interventions after tsunami in Sri Lanka, the earthquake in China in 2008, in Yushu pre-

fecture in 2010, in Nepal in 2015. We have been helping Mongolian people affected by the drought, Tibetan nomads hit by the snow storms, Chinese people damaged by the flood in Sichuan.

The next area is Long Distance sponsorship. This program started to guarantee the right of children to an education and to their own cultural identity, the opportunity for monks to pursue their studies and practice of spiritual teachings, and the possibility for elderly Tibetan refugees to live with dignity in rest homes. In order to give



# The Dzamlng Gardens – Running Fast!

Alix de Fermor

## The Greening of the House Terraces

Each house at the Gar has wall planters on the terraces between the apartments. Previously they were mostly just empty spaces so there was little privacy, particularly closer to the houses, where people sit outside. In September 2018 we decided to fill all the planters with plants starting with the Tashigar House and going on to the others. Since each apartment has a pergola, it creates shade closer to the apartment so we planted shade thriving plants there with a luxuriant tropical aspect such as *alocasia* (elephants ear), philodendron, and areca palms that will quickly create greenery between the patios so you will not be able to see next door.

And it has been a success! In only a few months these plants have grown so well that there is definitely a tropical humid lush aspect to these patios.

## New Water System and Changing Nature of the Gardens

When we first started creating the gardens at Dzamlng Gar the earth was very arid so to keep humidity in the soil and help the young trees develop a deep and extensive root system, we put a lot of soil covering plants. These plants were quite tiny in the beginning and in order for them to develop quickly and accomplish their job of conserving humidity in the soil, we had to lay quite an extensive drip watering system.

However the situation has now changed. After 2–4 years of humid soil conditions, these trees have grown very fast and started producing shade. They are very stable – let's not forget the strong winds here – and no longer need such an extensive water system due to their own wide and deep roots. Because there is now shade from the trees, the utility of soil covering plants is less important: shade maintains the humidity, moreover we noticed that the soil covering plants were the ideal nesting place for the numerous insects thriving in Tenerife, which were infesting nearby trees. So because of too much shade and too many insects, the soil covering plants actually got rid of themselves. The result is that now the trees are healthier and soon

their various blossoms will replace those of the soil covering plants.

Hence we reconsidered the whole watering system for all the gardens, and constructed a better one, more adapted to the new conditions, and also drastically cutting the water bill. How did we proceed? We laid a blind pipe (a pipe without droplets) over all the length of a determined area with its own water point. And then, we added T-intersections of droplet pipes with fewer holes (1 every 30 cm instead of every 20 or 25 cm) covering different small areas. For a determined area these droplet pipes are

more or less the same length, therefore ensuring the same water pressure throughout the whole system. Because the total length of these different droplet pipes is much shorter and because there are fewer droplets, there is much more water pressure on each droplet and the water therefore goes much deeper. We also reduced the length of time for watering. So not only is the watering more effective but we also reduced the garden water bill by around 50%, which is a huge improvement.

## Shady sitting areas and infinite space







What is important in a garden? In the strong sun of Tenerife, I feel it is essential to be able to sit comfortably in the freshness of shade and enjoy the diversity of shapes, colors, smells and sounds of the garden. If there is only shade it is comfortable but not interesting. Therefore it is important to alternate places of shade and sun (as sun is necessary for the blooming of most flowers), while trying to maintain the paths shady for comfort. So we've created many shady places equipped with chairs and benches for people to sit.

The garden is becoming more and more alive with birds and other animals such as rabbits and hedgehogs. Watering some vegetables on the hill one evening a hedgehog actually came up to me to drink from the hose! Another time I came across one near the old Gõnpa. Now the gardens are full of butterflies fluttering from one flower to another. Watering the lawns in the evenings, birds gather there for their baths. The garden brings life and helps people to relax and be happy.

The way I see it, a garden should be transparent, I mean one should be able, while sitting in a determined place, to see the continuation of the garden into the distance, then the sea and the sky because space is also a very important factor in a garden. It helps you to feel free. So this is the difficult part, the balance between the comfortable feeling of being surrounded by green, protected from the sun and still being able to enjoy a distant view, that spacious feeling.

There is a second thing to keep in mind when creating a garden: not to block the eastern morning sun, because the rays of the morning sun penetrate horizontally under the foliage of trees, allowing plants to bloom even in shady areas. That is why a tree should always have its lower branches cut and never be lopped off to ensure these two conditions: transparency and not blocking the morning sun. You see, the Dzamling Gar garden is actually not very big if you compare its surface to the one occupied by the buildings and cemented roads, but if you apply these two principles, in a near future it could appear endless.

From the beginning my plan has been to erase the impact of these 13 huge identical houses of debatable architecture. How? Well, it's already partially happening: the trees extend their foliage higher and higher and there will be a time when the walls of the houses will be perceived like patches of different colors, like flowers blooming through the green.

#### The New Gardens

One of the new gardens we created early this year between the Tsegylgar and Merigar houses has now become a lush green lawn with a single – but not the least! – tree in the middle – the African Tulip tree (*Spathodea campanulata*) with its huge crowns of red-orange tulip shaped flowers. It is a very striking tree blooming all year around if you ensure enough humidity as it is originally from tropical humid countries. Rinpoche commented on this tree saying that there was a very similar looking tree

in his dreams of clarity. At the Gar there are currently eight of these trees – eight being the symbol of Infinity – but we will plant more in order not to give a numeric limit to Infinity.

Another new garden is a rockery outside the Samtengar house with mostly ornamental plants such foxtail palms (*wodyetia bifurcata*) and Mascarena palms. There is also a Pandanus palm, an offshoot of the two big Pandanus palms at the entrance of the old Gõnpa. We have another offshoot in the nursery patiently waiting for its freedom. We've also planted many roses in this garden including the desert rose (*adenium obesum*) which needs very little water and has a bonsai aspect with its gnarled contorted branches and its striking fuchsia trumpet-like flowers. There is also a very nice Brugmansia (Angel's trumpet) bush, coming from a plant from my brother's garden in Juan Les Pins (France) with its huge bell shaped salmon pink overwhelmingly scented flowers. There is a small circular stone paved circle for sitting in the future shade.

Throughout April and May we actually completed all the small spaces that were left up to the new Gõnpa area with rockery gardens containing ornamental plants, mostly roses, hibiscus, and palms, with climbing roses covering the walls.

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The first picnic held in the gardens last year.

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## Projects

I won't be making the new Gõnpa gardens. The reason is that I am actually very tired of the fact that every time I plant a tree (it's been 5 years now!) I have to manually or with the help of a pneumatic hammer get rid of all the construction material and garbage that has been accumulated and compressed with machinery in order to reach a certain "level", top soiling at the end with a thin layer of vegetal soil. It is a very common practice in construction called "filling". Well, I call it "tricking"! In my opinion, it is a very unhealthy habit and in this context – the artificial hill of the new Gõnpa – it is also dangerous as the area is a corridor for very strong winds, trees cannot produce deep roots and are very unstable, possibly falling whenever strong winds blow. Since my request to not "fill" in the Gõnpa's artificial hill was not granted, I finally renounced doing the new gardens there. And here I have a question – could there be in a not too distant future an evolution in the construction field, not only about their ways of doing but also in the material they are using?

So Kasyia and Greg from Poland will be doing the new Gõnpa Gardens and there is already a very nice project on the wall of the Meriling office. I must say that Kasyia and Greg's project – using a lot of local plants, not planting tall trees just the Alexander palm (*archontophoenix alexandrae*) which has very extensive horizontal roots – is not only colorful, low cost, but

also not dangerous. It is the perfect link between the tropical aspect of the other gardens and the reality of the desert conditions of south Tenerife.

## The moon garden

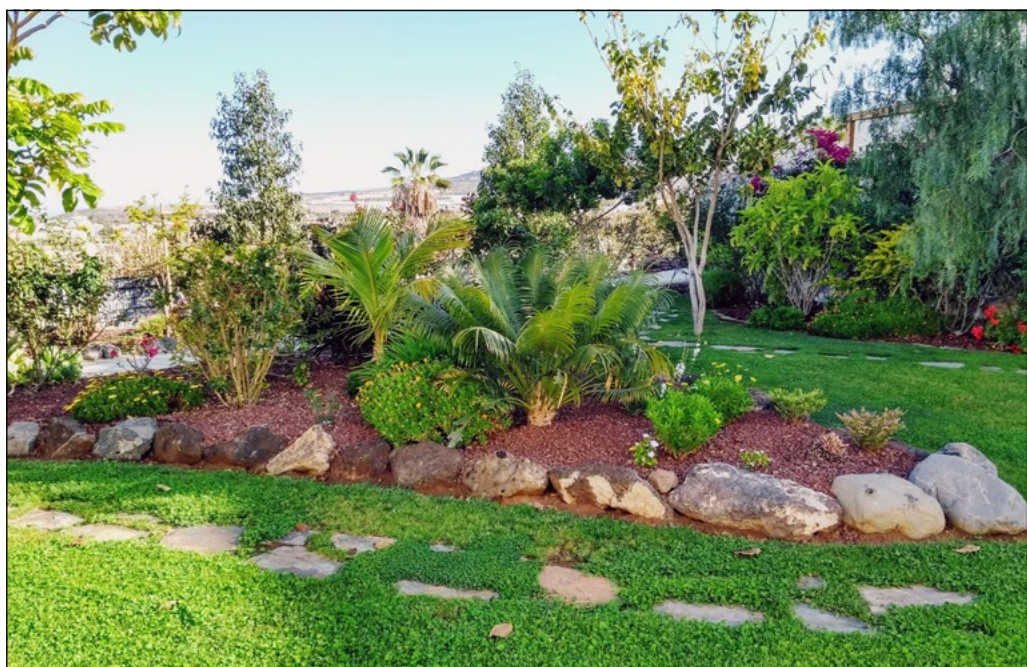
I would also like to talk about my project of a moon garden, which has already been approved by the architects. Jamyang first suggested the idea of a night garden and it immediately appealed to me. When the sense of vision is reduced by obscurity, the sense of smell is automatically enhanced. The scented night is to the garden what music is to the blind pianist: an exaltation.

The night is never completely obscure, the moon is there to prevent it, and there are a number of plants that bloom in the evening and throughout the night with an overwhelming fragrance. You may already know the Lady of the Night (*cestrum nocturnum*), which is present at the Gar. But there are also other night blooming plants with more spectacular flowers such as *calonyction aculeatum* and *ipomea alba*, or Moonflowers. The *pitaya* or dragon fruit (edible) belonging to the *Hylocereus* family also produces strikingly scented flowers.

So where will this mysterious moon garden be? At the top of the Gar on the right as you face the Gõnpa, between the cemented road and the new fencing for the Gar. This area, which has been untouched by construction until now, includes the actual nursery, which will disappear once Kasyia and Greg have completed their gardens.

Because of the lack of shade in the Gõnpa area, this idea of a night garden has evolved into a 24 hour garden and recreation area. Bathing in the morning sun with the spectacular flat topped mountain in the background, the area will gradually include shade as the sun moves towards the west, ensuring a shady place to sit, practice or simply enjoy oneself at midday and in the afternoon and savor the perfumes of the evening and night (including the possibility for a barbecue and fire at its center).

Currently we have used high rocks to create two levels – one higher near the fence and one lower for the moon garden







A view of the planters on the house terraces.



at the level of the cemented road. And after we established the rock wall I was very happy to notice that the natural rock outcrops on the lower level, helping to create a lunar context for the garden. It is like it was meant to be.

We have already planted mango trees along the cemented road as they have a deep non-invasive root system which shouldn't affect it. The mango foliage is also very strong (the leaves are very thick) and shouldn't be affected by the very strong winds here. We've also planted a few false red pepper trees (*schinus terebentifolius*) in the south-west position and worked on the higher part near the fence. After the construction under the Gõnpa has finished, to complete this garden we should eliminate the nursery after Kasyia and Greg have completed their gardens.

### Compost

You may know that we recycle all the cuttings of the different gardens by grinding them with a machine and composting them in order to reintroduce them in the soil. There is now a new development. For a year we have been using micro-organisms called EM that we add to the compost. In this way the composting is achieved much faster. I also want to point out that, over the years, we have had quite a lot of insect pests in the gardens and although we have on occasion used some chemicals to keep them under control, we have now exclusively, since last year, been using natural products such as potassium soap, lactic acid, Bordeaux mixture and water under pressure.

### Fruit

We have a lot of fruit trees! In a previous article I made a list of them. The older fruit trees are now 4 and 5 years old and they are doing quite well, starting to produce a lot of fruit such as guava, guanabana, mango, cherimoya, pitaya and star fruit. We've been getting rid of the main pests by making repeated spraying with potassic soap and lactic acid made from goat milk (every 2 weeks).

There is an orange tree on the hill which is 4 years old and bearing an impressive amount of flowers and young fruit. 4 years is approximately the lapse of time necessary for the citric fruit trees to get acclimated to Tenerife's conditions. We're having a bad year for papayas (as in the rest of the island) and in any case, as you might know, papayas are not forever. The mangoes, which are 4 years old and grown from seed, started producing fruit 2 years ago. The mangas produced quite a few huge fruit last year and are in bloom although this year we decided to suppress the flowers because last year the weight of the fruit was too much for the young branches.

I suppose that in a few years we will have to establish a market to sell the fruit to residents and guests (all the money going back to the garden).

Fruits! Fruits! Fruits! Life is short ... eat the dessert first! ©





Khaita in the Swimming Pool.

## Summer Program Dzamling Gar

July 5–11

**Recitation of Guru Mantra**

New Moon to Day of Guru Padmasambhava  
with Julia Lawless

July 13–21

**Gomadevi and Vajra Dance practice retreat**  
with collaboration of Vajra Dance instructors

July 24–30

**Yantra Yoga Holidays – 7 days**  
led By Alessandra Policreti and  
Stoffelina Verdonk

July 27–28

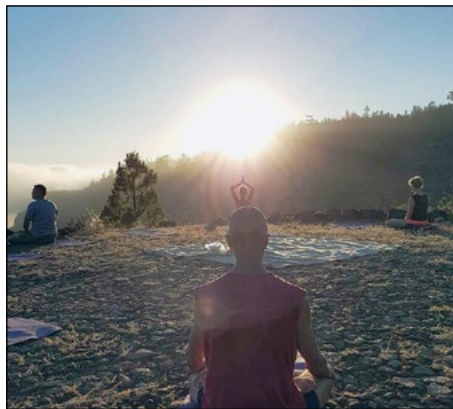
**Khaita weekend course**  
with Khaita instructors Lena Dumcheva  
and Ludmila Kudriavtseva

July 31–August 4

**Santi Maha Sangha and Vajra Dance  
practice retreat**  
with Stoffelina Verdonk – 5 days

August 21–27

**Yantra Yoga Holidays**  
with Alessandra Policreti



## Find your Inner Peace at Dzamling Gar

July 24–30 + August 24–30, 2019

**H**ere at Dzamling Gar we have prepared the greatest holiday complete package: one week of Yantra Yoga and meditation sessions with our experienced instructors: Alessandra Policreti and Stoffelina Verdonk.

Mindful walks in nature, sunrise/sunset meditations, breathing and plenty of Yantra Yoga sessions in a dazzling exotic setting.

July 24–30, 2019

**Meditation, Breathing, Yantra Yoga,  
Grounding exercise, Walk, breath in  
nature, Picnic**

August 21–27, 2019

**Yantra Yoga**  
with Alessandra Policreti

### Complete Package

Course (including the excursions) +  
3 times meal + 7 nights of accommodation.  
Expected donation to cover the costs  
starting from € 510  
Early bird (–€ 30) If you book by: June 15th

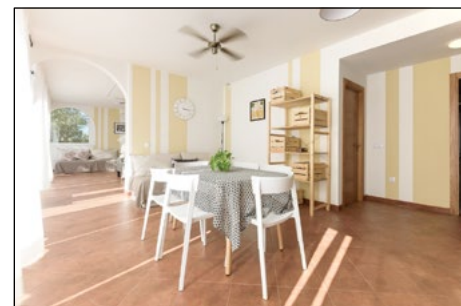
Veggie & Gluten Free Menu can be  
requested

Discount for members of IDC

### Accommodations options:

1. Private one-bedroom apartments
2. Shared apartment
3. Dormitory

Spacious and comfortable apartments with various settings will be available to participants of the retreat. All contributions for accommodation go towards the maintenance and development of the Dzamling Gar project and of the Gars worldwide.



### Book your place now

<https://forms.gle/NSK935vYsffsWrz6A>

Registration does not require the pre-payment or deposit.

To know the different options or for special request, please contact us directly.

[blue.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net](mailto:blue.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net)





# Update on the Extraordinary Maintenance of the Merigar West Gönpa

**O**n 12 April 2019, the lantern (the small structure mounted on the top of the domed roof) was removed by the technicians of the Teken company to begin the reconstruction.

On May 2, the Rubner company delivered the material and equipment required to start the job.

On May 3, work began on the roof of the Cinerarium. When it was inaugurated in 2015, the work on the Cinerarium's roof covering had not in fact been completed.



The cinerarium.

The plan is to clad the roof in copper, similar to the Gönpa. Taking advantage of the fact that the workers, equipment, and construction site infrastructure are already in place, we have been able to secure significant cost savings since the companies involved are the same as those carrying out the extraordinary maintenance of the Gönpa.

## May 10

While the metal roofing experts continue to lay the copper on the roof of the Cinerarium, Rubner's workers have started to dismantle the external decking and the external walls of the Gönpa.

## External decking

Part of the wooden railing has been removed to make it possible to remove the existing flooring and examine the under-structure. The external decking will be redesigned to eliminate the hazardous differ-



Removing the lantern from the roof.

ences in height at the entrance thresholds and ensure the necessary safety in case of emergency.

The persistent and extensive infiltration of water has led to severe rotting at the base of the pillar, destroying the fiber of the wooden base on which it was anchored and causing a serious deterioration of the sections coming into contact with it. Once the roofing has been completed and the windows dismantled, the workers will proceed with the substitution of all the deteriorated sections no longer capable of serving a supporting function.

The bays in the south and west have been removed in their entirety and their principal structures have been rebuilt. Together with the metal roofing experts, various test simulations of the gutters were carried out. The existing channel between the edge of the roof and the gutter has represented a critical element for the building in that in some instances it allowed water to infiltrate the wooden structure supporting the Gönpa.

The objective of modifying the configuration of the gutter system is to ensure the correct functioning of the system for collecting and draining water. This will prevent further damage in the future such as the deterioration discovered at the base of some of the pillars.

The positioning of the channel for draining rainwater outward will also simplify future maintenance, for example with ladders to remove accumulated leaves.

At the Gönpa, the process of reconfiguring the guttering system was begun, starting by dismantling the existing covering, consisting of both copper and sheet metal.

## May 13–18

In this week, the metal roofing experts of the Rubner company completed the work of laying copper sheeting on the roof of the Cinerarium.

The process of consolidating the pillars and their supporting base is particularly complex but unfortunately absolutely essential.



Investigating rotting of some pillars.

Regarding the beams, it has been decided to introduce cement blocks at ground level that will serve as intermediate supporting bases and allow this section affected by rot to remain functional. In some instances, the beams of the internal flooring, which rest on these external beams, no longer have a stable base because water has destroyed the fiber of the wood on the upper part of the beams. Accordingly, it is being decided on a case-by-case basis how to intervene.

The removal of the existing decking surrounding the Gönpa has made it pos-

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The new copper roof.



The base of the new roof extension.

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sible to verify the state of conservation of the load-bearing beams at the pillars and of the building's subflooring.

Unfortunately, the situation in the vicinity of the pillars, noted also by the MOST company, is particularly compromised where the beams are concerned (three in

particular). Currently, their load-bearing capacity is significantly reduced.

**Friday, June 7, 2019**

The work in progress is currently focused on the roofing and the outside decking.

Roofing: The wooden structure has been completed, and 60% of the copper sheeting has been laid.

You can continue to follow the work on the Merigar website:

<https://www.merigar.it/en/visit/gonpa/the-restoration/updates/>

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## The Shrine at the Stupa

**A**t this time at Merigar we are working on the shrine inside the Stupa of Enlightenment, in which the remains of our precious Master will be kept.

The shrine will consist of a case of extra-clear stratified tempered glass placed on a rectangular base made of fine white Carrara marble and equally precious yellow marble. On the sides of the base there will be eight panels decorated with natural mineral pigments, on which will be painted the seven royal symbols and the eight auspicious symbols. Usually these symbols are used during initiations and sacred rituals in order to benefit all beings. Each symbol has a specific meaning.

Inside the base will be placed: 5 cereals, 5 metals and precious and semi-precious stones. This type of offering is intended to benefit the individual who makes the offering and the place itself. Indeed, the teaching explains that everything is interdependent.

The decorations of the base have been designed combining oriental and western art.

This project will greatly benefit the area and our community around the world. For this reason it is important to carry it forward and complete it all together.



If you wish you can participate with a donation.

Bank account:  
Merigar Dzogchen Community  
Loc. Merigar 58031 Arcidosso Grosseto, Italy

UBI Banca, Castel del Piano GR Italy branch  
Acct.no. 1718 ABI 3111 CAB 72190 CIN G  
IBAN: IT65 G031117219000000001718  
SWIFT/BIC: BLOPIT22XXX  
For more information please go to the donations page [www.merigar.it](http://www.merigar.it)

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# Merigar West Summer Program

In the coming months at Merigar there will be many different events that you can find out about on the Merigar website [www.merigar.it](http://www.merigar.it).

Please note that events are divided into those open to anyone interested and those reserved for people who have followed the Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and have received Transmission.

12–17 July 2019

**Study Group on Khalongdorjeikar (The Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra)**  
with Prima Mai

13 July – 8 August 2019

17th Training for Translators from Tibetan

17–21 July 2019

**Teacher Training: Harmonious Breathing**  
with Fabio Andrico

19–25 July 2019

**Course of Vajra Dance**  
led by Adriana Dal Borgo

25–31 July 2019

**Deepening course on Yantra Yoga first level**  
led by Fabio Andrico

26–28 July 2019

**Khaita Joyful Dances**  
led by Salima Celeri

1–2 August 2019

**Practice of Presence and Awareness**  
with Fabio Risolo

5–8 August 2019

**Deepening Khaita Songs**  
with Lobsang Zatul

5–10 August 2019

**Five days of intensive practice dedicated to the purification of Vajrasattva and the Guru Yoga of the white A.**

10 August 2019

**Special opening of the Stupa of Enlightenment**

11–15 August 2019

**Presence and Awareness of Body, Energy and Mind according to “Birth, Life and Death” by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**

Explanation and practice retreat based on a text by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, led by instructors from the Dzogchen Community.

This is an event that is open to anyone interested.

17–23 August 2019

**Yoga Holiday for adults and children**

A holiday dedicated to meditation and Yoga coming from the most ancient Tibetan tradition, useful to help relax body and mind and find the natural condition of individual energy. An opportunity to experiment with new experiences, including yoga classes, walks and immersion in Tibetan culture in order to deal with the stress of everyday life and increase well-being and psychophysical balance.

This is an event that is open to anyone interested.

To find accommodation near Merigar you can consult <https://www.merigar.it/en/visit/alloggi/>

The office is always available for clarification and advice. Call +39 0564 966837, e-mail [office@dzogchen.it](mailto:office@dzogchen.it) ©



# Merigar East Summer Program

Great retreats and courses with many experienced IDC instructors, enjoying, practicing and collaborating together...

Come to Merigar East to live the evolution!

June 21–23

**Course on the Vajra Dance that Benefits Beings**

with Eleonora Folegnani – *second level authorised instructor of Vajra Dance*

The “Dance of the Vajra that Benefits Beings” is a symbolic dance of compassion. It is more related to our physical level. It frees the tensions related to our conditioning by different emotions.

Open course for everybody interested.

June 27–July 2

**Green Tara and Özer Chenma Retreat**

with Oliver Leick

Tara embodies the compassion, the energy and the wisdom of all realized beings. She

is considered to be the mother of all Buddhas and she personifies the perfection of wisdom.

The course is open to all those who received the Dzogchen transmission from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as well as for those with real and deep interest and strong desire and dedication to apply this practice.

July 7–14

**The Song of the Vajra Retreat Part I**

with Stoffelina Verdonk

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The Vajra Dance is a meditation in movement. The simple, slow and fluid movements relax the body, clear the mind, and relieve the tensions of our daily life.

Through dancing we activate and coordinate specific energy points in our body according to an ancient knowledge of channels and chakras. In this way the Vajra Dance dissolves energy blocks, harmonizes the three main aspects of our being – body, energy and mind – and develops presence and awareness.

July 17–24

**The Song of the Vajra Retreat Part II**  
with Elisha Koppensteiner

The “Dance of the Song of the Vajra” is a complex symbolic dance connected particularly to the energetic aspect of our existence. Through their sound, all the syllables of the Song of the Vajra are linked to specific energy points within our inner mandala, our body, and our outer mandala, the external dimension of the world.

July 8–28

**Finishing the construction of the Second Stupa of Merigar East with Tsa Tsa and Mantra Rolls workshop**

Stupa is the oldest Buddhist monument. Originally stupas were built to enshrine the relics of the Buddha and of his most important disciples. As symbolic representations of the enlightened mind of the Buddha, they are of great significance and importance.

Building a stupa is considered extremely beneficial, leaving very positive karmic imprints in the minds of those involved.

August 4–8

**COME TO ME! Open Retreat**  
**The Six Special Mind Trainings**  
with Elias Capriles

In this retreat we will learn how to use suffering and happiness on the Path of Awakening, and how to turn them into the Path of Awakening, both through relative truth and through absolute truth, in the context of the Lojong (mind trainings) of the Dzogchen Menngagdé (Series of Pith Instructions) and a teaching by Jigme Tenpai Nyima, the Third Dodrub Chen Rinpoche.

Open course for everybody interested.

August 28–September 1

**Drajyor Course**  
with Fabian Sanders  
**combined with Khaita Joyful Dances**

led by Erika Motylova  
Drajyor, system used for phonetics in practice texts developed by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, helps to understand the sound and right pronunciation of Tibetan language.

“Khaita” means “Harmony in Space”. “Kha” means “space/sky”. “Ta” means “harmony/melody”. It is a simple and joyful way to experience inner harmony.

Khaita come from the Tibetan culture and promote harmony within the individual and between people and their environment through dance, which goes beyond protecting and supporting a single culture.

While dancing we learn to be present in the inner display of thoughts and emotions. As we cultivate this relaxed presence in movement, harmony and joy develop naturally and we carry it to our daily life, moving more easily through our routines, activities.

September 2–7

**Tibetan Language Beginners Course**  
with Fabian Sanders  
**combined with voice training**  
with Alexandru Anton

The classical Tibetan language is an indispensable tool for all those interested in Buddhism, Tibetan traditions, sciences and culture. Not only does it preserve and transmit most of Indian Buddhist literature in translation, but it is also the expressive instrument of Tibetan Masters, yogis and scholars of great erudition and realisation of all times.

To make the language alive, we will combine it with a concrete experience through sound, movement, energy while exploring the creative possibilities that our voice has to offer.

Open course for everybody interested.

**And what else is waiting for you...?**

...Beautiful Gonpa to practice in, three outdoor solar mandalas ready for your Vajra Dance thun, unlimited possibilities for Karma Yoga, enlarged camping area to put your tent, Multi-Fun house to gather together, Black Sea just 10 minutes on foot from the Gar with soft sandy beaches and fish restaurants with delicious fresh seafood, healing mud in nearby Eforie Nord, meeting with friends, singing, dancing, enjoying the time together in infinite space... and many other unexpected experiences.)

With love your Merigar East Gakyil  
and Geko

[www.dzogchen.ro](http://www.dzogchen.ro)





# Samtengar Recent Courses



April 7–13 Tibetan astrology and Namkha course with Maria Rita.



April 18–22 The Dance of the Vajra that Benefits Beings and the Dance of the Three Vajras with intensive practice with Tracy Ni.



April 28–May 4 Vajra Dance of the Song of Vajra with Wes Guo.



May 10–12 Santi Maha Sangha Base Level course 'The essence of the view and practice of eight vehicles and Dzogchen + Rushen' with Wes Guo.



May 19–23 First level deepening Vajra Dance with Tracy Ni.



May 25–27 Get back the vitality of your body with Boyan Lu.



May 29–June 2 Yantra Yoga Course: Series I & II with Tracy Ni.



## Namgyalgar News

May 2019

Over the past few months the Namgyalgar Gakyil has been turning their attention toward what retreats to organise and ongoing discussions about

how to make our Gar financially self-sustaining. Ideas include the possibility of running an Air BnB venture at Namgyalgar, as well as hiring out the Gar to meditation, yoga and healing groups, to generate regular income.

In February several practitioners gathered at Namgyalgar to celebrate Losar and do Ganapuja, Odzer Chenma and Vajra Dance practice. This was followed by two Deepening Song of The Vajra Dance Cours-

es with Cosimo DiMaggio at the Gar in March and again in May. As well, a Retreat of the Semdzin of The Song of The Vajra and Collective practices lead by Amare Pearl and Arnaud Coquillard was held at the Gar during May.

Elsewhere in the Oceanic region over the summer-autumn period a Chöd retreat was held in Canberra with Angie Gilbert, while in New Zealand there was a Harmo-

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nious Breathing workshop and a Yantra Yoga retreat with Patrizia Pearl. And in Tasmania a small gathering of practitioners met at Dolphin Sands for a practice retreat. Additionally, regional groups in various locations across Australia-Oceania have been meeting as usual for Ganapuja's, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga and Khaita practice.

Namgyalgar's program of events for the remainder of the year include a Harmonious Breathing and Yantra Yoga Winter Camp in July, a Karma Yoga weekend in August, and a Khaita practice retreat in September. There is also the possibility of having a Sangha practice retreat later in the year and in 2020 a retreat with an international SMS teacher.

Events being held elsewhere in Australia include a Yantra Yoga weekend course with Matthew Long in Canberra in June, and a Contemplation, Presence and Awareness retreat with Arnaud Coquillard in Sydney in July.

For details and updates about events please checkout the Namgyalgar website at: <https://www.dzogchen.org.au/>

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## Tsegyalgar West

Program: 2019-20

*From all kind of flowers, seek teaching everywhere. Like a deer that finds a quiet place to graze, seek seclusion to digest all you have gathered.....*

*Chögyal Namkhai Norbu*

### Save The Date

Nov 15-Dec 15

**SMS collective practices**  
with Mariano Gil  
combined with Karma Yoga

Dec 20-Jan 10

**Practice of Long Life of Mandarava with Chudlen and Tsalung**  
with Nina Robinson

Jan 15-23

**SMS collective practices**  
with Mariano Gil  
combined with Karma Yoga  
March-April 2020  
**Vajra Dance.** To be confirmed.

Space at the Gar is limited so book [secretary@tsegyalgarwest.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgarwest.org)

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### THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the  
International

Dzogchen Community of  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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# Tsegyalgar East & Khandroling

Spring 2019

Springtime at Tsegyalgar East and Khandroling means a busy program schedule and increased activity to refresh and repair the land and facilities.

We are hard at work preparing for our Summer programs. Thanks to the generosity of our members and our hard working karma yogis, Rinpoche's cabin is going solar and the stupa is being repaired along with the platform at the pond. Vajra Hall and retreat cabins are undergoing seasonal cleaning, as we rebuild and repair structures due to winter storm damage. Tree and brush removal are also actively being pursued, while planting at lower Khandroling is being addressed. Updates and reorganization plans are also occurring at the Tsegyalgar East schoolhouse.

On the program front – our busy spring featured Fabio Andrico's Yantra Yoga courses, Vajra Dance course with Ed Hayes, and Vajra Dance practice days in addition to our regular weekly Thuns, Ganapujas and Collective Practices.

Starting in June, we will feature monthly talks with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo, Director of the School of Tibetan Medicine followed by a busy summer season at Khandroling.

We hope that you will join us for Yantra Yoga, Tsegyalgar East's 4th Annual Summer Sangha Retreat, Tsegyalgar East's 2nd Annual Dance Dance and Karma Yoga this summer!

See you soon,

Tsegyalgar East Gakyil



*Summer At Khandroling The Land Of The Dakinis*

**The Tsegyalgar East 4th Annual Summer Sangha Retreat**  
 Khaitsa Joyful Dances – Nataly Nitsche  
 SMS – Mariano Gil, Michael Katz & Lynn Newdome  
 Yantra Yoga – Paula Barry, Max Leshchenko, Nataly Nitsche & Naomi Zeitz  
 Vajra Dance  
 Bodhi, Kyu Kyuno & Carisa O'Kelly

**Yantra Yoga Course**  
 Led by Max & Nataly

**Advanced Yantra Yoga**  
 Led by Max Leshchenko

**Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra**  
 For Beginners & Refreshers  
 Led by Authorized Instructors

**Tsegyalgar East 2nd Annual Dance, Dance, Dance**  
 Celebrating 30 Years of Vajra Dance 1989 - 2019

**Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra**  
 Advanced Course Led by Prima Mai

**Khalongdorjeikar – Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra**  
 Taught by Prima Mai

**Vajra Dance Instructor Led Practice Days**

**INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY TSEGYALGAR EAST**

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© Karma Yoga on Khandroling.



Tsalung Course with Fabio Andrico.



# The Heart of Khaita Joyful Dances

Adriana Dal Borgo

Among the many precious methods he offered us, in 2011 our beloved Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, gave us “Harmony in Space” or “Khaita”, singing and dancing what, from an ordinary or dualistic point of view, are considered Tibetan folk songs and dances. Several times the Maestro explained their meaning from the point of view of the practice as if we had not been able to understand him, seeing with how much effort, for years, he dedicated his days to select and collect the songs and to work together with us on the dances; or as if his presence had not been enough at the daily Khaita sessions, in which he participated punctually until the end.

Some of our Teacher’s words on the meaning of Khaita, during a teaching given at Merigar East, August 2015:



Photos above and right by Paolo Fassoli

“Then there is energy that is called *dang* (*gdangs*). *Dang* in Tibetan has many meanings. For example, if we are not talking about Dzogchen Teaching, in ordinary Tibetan language the word *dang* means melody so when we sing a song we say *dang*. When people do a *puja*, the different ways of chanting are also called *dang*. So we should understand that. Sometimes in Vajrayana Teaching they also use *dang* to describe the way energy manifests. The word always means energy although there are not three divisions.

In Dzogchen Teaching, *dang* means the way our energy manifests when we are in the state of contemplation. *Rolpa* or *tsal* energy do not necessarily have to manifest. We are in the state of contemplation without even a concept of energy, just that is the state of contemplation. But how can other people discover our condition? If we are in the state of contemplation without moving, they might think that we are doing meditation. However, in Dzogchen Teaching we can also be in the state of contemplation without necessarily remaining in a position, just like when we are dancing ordinary dances like Khaita dances. If we are Dzogchen practitioners, we know very well how to be in the state of contemplation and integrate with movement and at that moment no one knows we are doing meditation. They only think that we are doing ordinary dances.

When someone does Vajra Dance, people think that since it is a kind of teaching, it is a little better than Khaita dance. From a dualistic point of view Khaita dances are ordinary dances. We cannot do these kinds of dances in a monastery where they are forbidden and always considered negative. But for a Dzogchen practitioner, movement is part of our real nature. We need to integrate not only the calm state, emptiness, but also movement. This is most important in Dzogchen. The way of seeing of ordinary people is very different. (In Dzogchen) we cannot say about anything, “Oh, this is the only way (of manifesting)”. So that (energy or way of manifesting) is called *dang*.

What example can we give to make people understand *dang*? If we have a crystal ball and look into it, there is no color; there is no form, nothing. It is only clear, pure and limpid. If we put this crystal ball on a table with a red surface, the crystal ball will be red when we look at it. Why? Because the surface of the table is red. This is our idea, but it is only what we see. For example, if someone is in the meditation position we cannot really see the state of contemplation of that person, only the figure manifesting a meditation position. However, we judge and think that that person is doing meditation. If they are dancing Khaita dances, they are dancing, not meditating, just like when the crystal rock manifests the color of the table top. However, the crystal rock doesn’t change at all. It is always clear, pure and limpid. That means when we are in the state of contemplation in a perfect way people may see it differently and have different judgements. This characteristic energy is called *dang*.”

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu August 6, 2015, Merigar East.  
From ‘The Mirror of Vajrasattva Retreat, Longsal Dorsem Melong’

We can use different interpretations to understand the meaning and the value of Khaita – Harmony in Space and its possible developments. The first concerns the innermost aspect linked to the transmission of our Teacher, in which *Khaita* is one of the practices of the Dzogchen Community. This aspect appears in Rinpoche’s words above.

Another interpretation is related to the cultural value and includes the great work of the Maestro on the texts and so on. At the center of this there is the concept of *modern Tibetan songs and dances*.

Thirdly there is the external-informative aspect: demonstrations, shows, street parades, use in educational courses.

This third part includes our participation with a 45-minute performance at the Dance Festival organized by Il Salterio in Brescia, Italy.



*The colors and the harmonious rhythm or beat of the Khaita Joyful Dances thrilled the audience one beautiful summer evening at the Castelli Park in Brescia, Italy where every year the "Il Salterio" Association hosts music and dances from all over the world.*

*The Atiyoga Foundation and the Dzogchen Community were presented with simple but precise references to their founder, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.*

*The dance show was introduced with some explanations of the meaning, the importance and actuality of the Tibetan cultural tradition, expressed poetically in the gestures and words of the lyrics of the songs.*

*The dancers, concentrated and excited, were on stage for about an hour and continued to dance with enthusiasm together with an involved audience until the end of the evening.*

*Thank you to all the people who brought this about with great commitment!*

Milena Serena

I would like to share some of my thoughts regarding the performance of Khaita Joyful Dances in Brescia, from the point of view of the organization, which had already started last autumn shortly after receiving the invitation from Ezio Cammarata, the coordinator of the Il Salterio group.

The main aspect when preparing a show is to do our best according to our skills and abilities, without resorting to professionals in the sector, always remembering the principles of the teaching: from the beginning to the end, every stage of preparation, every workout, every movement during the dances and every result or difficulty are steeped in the presence of our Teacher, they are our Guru Yoga and contain a constant gratitude for having the possibility to carry on this activity.

During these last years of dancing hundreds of hours together with the Maestro, when finally being in unison – wonderful dancing in synchrony, the manifestation of the mandala, the pure dimension – it was the fruit of training, but it was also completed by being present, or at least by an attitude aimed at being present. This is the heart of Joyful Dances: their quality and strength comes only in part from the technique, it also arises from personal practice.

What does it mean to apply teaching in these situations, during the organization and then while dancing? Does it mean observing oneself continuously, noticing and working with the manifestations of one's ego ("Is my movement not already

perfect? Why do I have to change it? Who decides? My proposed idea is better!"), dissolving inevitable tensions, and respecting the point of view and the needs of others without losing sight of the common goal. Being aware and working with constantly changing circumstances is just like being able to adapt our steps and movements to the different rhythms of dances. All this can be condensed into one simple but profound word, which we have heard spoken so many times: being present in the relative condition in which we live and ... collaborating!

When preparing an event we need at first to understand the context (venue, type of space, characteristics of the event) and define its duration. This creates a first idea or basic scheme to start with that could still change later, on this basis a schedule is created (choice and order of the dances). Then comes the choice of dancers and the definition of the place of rehearsals and the plan-

and ornaments were sent from the Khaita wardrobe at Dzamling Gar.

And then we arrived at the countdown for the Brescia show.

### **1 month before the performance**

Some dancers announce that they will not be able to participate! The unexpected has arrived – we try to look for substitutes but it's too little time to get organized.

### **2 weeks before**

Training starts at Merigar, every session begins with Guru Yoga and ends with the dedication of merits. We wanted to have enough time to create together a harmonious performance without leaving details to chance or haste. It is not always easy to find a satisfactory balance for everyone between discipline and individual needs, but this too is part of our practice.

We are only nine dancers now, so for the dances in couples we include Fulvio, our



ning, in broad terms, of movements and accommodation during rehearsals and at the place of the show. Salima and myself identified a dozen dancers while, for the logistical aspects, the Merigar Gakyil kindly made available the Mandala Room for training, some places in the dormitory for dancers and the kitchen space to have our lunches.

Luna Lattarulo offered her time and great organizational skills with kindness and generosity: she was the bridge in communication both with the Gakyil of Merigar and with the Community of Brescia, for the on-site support during the show weekend. The costumes: we used new colored skirts, a project I worked on last year, all "made in Italy", indeed "made in Venice", because I used suppliers and seamstresses from the Veneto region. Other garments

10th dancer. The choice arises naturally. Fulvio lives in Brescia, he created the connection with the Il Salterio group and has repeatedly danced Khaita with them.

Between rehearsals, I build the text of the presentation and the outline of the evening that will be presented by Migi, a passionate Khaita dancer who leads the dances at the Ling in Brescia and also during some lessons at Il Salterio.

### **1 week before**

During the weekend the Municipality kindly provided us with the Arcidosso theater. I thank Elisa for the contact, the librarian Adriano and the technician Alessandro for patiently introducing me to the secrets of the theater: for example, how to turn on

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the different lights or make the audio work. A theater is a mysterious and fascinating place, a space where many stories come to life, generations meet. For me it was exciting to keep the 'keys' for a few days, to open the space, initially dark and cold, to the rehearsals and see it fill with music, light and the energy of the Khaita dancers.

Christiane and Giovanna come to see us and, above all, to give us a hand to coordinate the group with an "external" view, they observe us with a critical but benevolent eye and give precious comments and suggestions.

#### 4 days before

Dakini day, the rehearsal with costumes: Rosa Namkhai honors us with her presence and points out an unforgivable forgetfulness: we had coordinated all the passages between one dance and another but not the final greeting! We organize ourselves a moment, and in two minutes we create the conclusion of the show.

#### 2 days before

The fatigue of the long journey melts in the warm welcome from the Dzogchen Community of Brescia. We are soon refreshed by a delicious welcome dinner, prepared thanks to the collaboration of all of them.

#### 1 day before

Test on the scene to try the spaces and the floor, the tightness of the new shoes, the sound, defining the last details of the presentation. Rereading the written text, I realize only now that it must necessarily be modeled on the 'spoken' presentation: so Migi, Mariangela and Milena help to see it again and we try it together, also building intonations of the voice, pauses, to make it more interesting to the public. The day ends by participating in the cheerful activities of the festival together with the dancers of Il Salterio.

#### Sunday arrives

We allow ourselves the first part of the day to rest, arrange the costumes, check make-up, hairpins and accessories.

Photo by Paolo Fassoli



Photo by Alfredo Colitto

#### In the evening

The few hours before starting are as always exciting for fear of forgetting something. Let's go over the order of the performance: presentation, first part of dance, all the passages, we arrange the *kadag* on stage ready for Migi and Mariangela who will hand them over, Milena will take care of moving the guitars of the boys, Laura ready to start the music together with the technician Alberto, we define the lights, I coordinate with Ezio how to lead, the end of the performance, the dance part with the public. Spartaco comes from Padua to help out with the video footage, Paolo indulges himself with the photos, all the other Brescia practitioners arrive who make us feel 'at home': there is a party atmosphere, joy, we don't lose presence and we offer every moment and emotion to the Source of Khaita.

The previous group finishes, Ezio introduces us, Migi gets on to the stage: the show begins and ... you can watch the rest in the video!

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xm\\_Hsph8iIM&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xm_Hsph8iIM&feature=youtu.be) ©





# Tibetan Modern Dances & Khaita: The British Museum, London 2019

Maciek Sikora

On the 31st of March, a group of five Khaita dancers and two dancers from the London Tibetan Community took part in the 'Faiths in Tune Festival' held at the British Museum, London. For our Khaita dancers, it was the second time we had participated in this annual event. Last year, a joyful collaboration between Khaita dancers from Dzamling Gar and Shang Shung UK produced a wonderful and very successful performance, whereas this year we organised it on a local level.

In January 2019 we were invited by the 'Faiths in Tune' organisers to perform Khaita dances at the Festival again. With the show taking place in March, this left just over two months to prepare everything which seemed like a very short time to arrange all the dances and rehearse together. Initially, on hearing that the Khaita dancers from Dzamling Gar would not be participating in the Festival in 2019 it felt a little discouraging, since there are very few dancers in London. And like in any big city, everyone is constantly busy with taking care of his or her everyday survival... so I really thought it would not be possible to go ahead. But then after sitting and considering the idea for a while, I started to think that it would really be a shame to miss the opportunity. The British Museum is such a prestigious venue... so where is a better place to promote Khaita dances? Would this opportunity ever happen again?

I remembered how happy Rinpoche was after last year's Khaita performance at the British Museum. I also remembered my idea from the previous year about involving dancers from the London Tibetan Community with whom we had already established a close connection. Then after having shared and discussed the idea with Svetlana Vajnina, Julia Lawless of Shang Shung UK and Tenzin Phakdon (an experienced Tibetan dance performer), we decided to go for it! Soon after Tomy Edgar confirmed his participation; Anna Stemasova managed to get a visa and come to London; Phuntsok Dhondup from the Tibetan Com-



munity also joined and Wojciech Torczynski was our last minute saviour.

It was a delightful collaboration where everybody from our group actively participated in every aspect and Lekdanling, the London Ling, was the perfect place to train. On the day of the event, everything went smoothly and our Tibetan costumes looked so colourful and beautiful set against the backdrop of the magnificent British Museum great hall. The video of the live show that was streamed via the Shang Shung UK Facebook page reached over 63 thousand views within a matter of days! In addition there were over 800 shares and about 700 positive comments, mainly from grateful members of the Tibetan Community from all over the world.

To cover the costs we managed to fundraise from individuals locally, Shang Shung UK also provided some help and thanks to the initiative and support of the Dzamling Gar cafeteria, we managed to produce and fund a short video of the performance that will be available soon (<https://www.shangshunguk.org/>). Additionally, some of the money that was collected was donated to support the development of Tibetan Dance within the Tibetan Community in London. Heartfelt thanks to everyone who offered their support both financially and through their collaboration. It truly felt like we were spreading Rinpoche's vision and activity. It was a great opportunity and such a blessing!

## Dancers' Comments

*"It was an unforgettable experience to perform at the British Museum with Khaita dancers. I was amazed at the hard work and determination of the Khaita dancers. Also it was my pleasure to share my knowledge and experience about Tibetan music and dance with such enthusiastic dancers such as the Khaita dancers."*

*To perform at the British Museum is a great platform to show and highlight our unique Tibetan culture and music with so many people around the world and we had a great reaction from the audience during our performance. It has been hit by more than 62 thousand viewers on social media and received so many beautiful comments. So here I would like to express my gratitude to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche la, the Shang Shung Institute and the Khaita dancers in helping to keep Tibetan Culture alive."*

Tenzin Phakdon

*"The very last minutes before the performance are usually rich in adrenaline because the attention of the audience and our own expectations bring about anxious thoughts and stress before we start to dance. Relaxation is easy when we are in contact with our body and breathing. Working together for a public show becomes a good occasion to observe and train our ability to relax in a stressful situation with or without physical movement. Both are more likely to happen when we take things less personally and this depends on our viewpoint. Note that one of the ideas behind 'Khaita' is to be present in movement and from there to spread harmony around. And*

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indeed whilst dancing during the show there was both presence and relaxation in movement, accompanied by a sensation of broad communication. It was like a stream of 'tashi delegs' with sincere and unfiltered feeling toward all people dancing and those standing around ... as if there was no better way (than dancing) to express good wishes and happiness. All of this was shared within the team and with the audience at the same time. There was some unity in it. It is not the first time that some of the audience confirmed this sensation in their feedback after the show. Wonderful experience! We can say that Khaita really works."

Wojciech Torczynski

"Performing the art of Tibetan dance in the British Museum with the Khaita dancers was an incredible experience. I was deeply inspired to see very committed Khaita dancers and most importantly, joyful people across different nationalities come together to carry out the great visionary project introduced by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It was a great honour to learn many things from fantastic dancers/choreographers such as Phakdon, Svetlana, and Tomy etc. "

Phuntsok Dhondup

"It was unique in its own way, the first show collaborating with the Tibetan Community UK. Regarding my personal experience, it was the first time I have participated in a public show with Khaita and Tibetan modern dances together, especially in such a place as the British Museum. In the short time that we had, I learned a lot from every single person in the group. It was a

wonderful collaboration. You can observe how it touched and inspired people, even today, many people are still writing words of thankfulness and gratefulness. This is something inspiring and strengthens our hope of creating something even more grandiose in the future!"

Anna Stemasova

"I approached this performance with few expectations. Everyone who worked on this project had many other obligations, so we had little time to put things in order before the show. Regardless of these obstacles, I was amazed at the ease and efficiency in which we all collaborated together. It was the first time that we were producing a show with Tibetan dancers. During the few training sessions everything seemed to flow perfectly.

The performance went beautifully, the whole day was relaxed and free of tensions. After the show we received positive feedback especially from those watching the online streaming, which reached 63k views! Comments poured in, in particular from Tibetan communities from all around the world. They were so grateful for the performance and got motivated to get more involved in promoting their culture. I was really touched by this.

This experience reawakened the importance of Khaita and the rich possibilities that these joyful dances bring.

Many thanks to all the people that helped making this performance a reality and without whose time and energy this show would never have happened. Svetlana, Maciek, Tenzin and Phuntsok. I have a

good feeling that these collaborations will continue well in the future.

Of course, it goes without saying that none of this would have been possible without the vision of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. I am eternally grateful to him for introducing me to this path. Em A Ho."

Tomas Ayrton Edgar

"To find the right words to describe my experience regarding our show in the British Museum feels almost impossible to me.

As everything in our world, it was a process containing difficulties, problems and many obstacles. Despite all of that, Maciek had such a faith in this project and inspired me with it.

I had heard and seen wonderful things about Tenzin, as Maciek, Lena Dumcheva and Shang Shung UK had already established a good relationship with the Tibetan Community UK.

And as everywhere mistakes happened, but this wonderful feeling of flow and collaboration in our group – different backgrounds, cultures and ideas. The union made a wonderful collaboration happen.

I could see that through Khaita, we can also inspire Tibetans with their own culture, also reversed, we got interested in their sharing of their culture and experience. There was true joy around and in the training.

As for the dances we had to find a way to join Tibetan modern Dances and Khaita. We united them during Arog Khampa song meaning Khampa friend. It was symbolic for us.

Tomy and I remembered one afternoon in the pool together with Rinpoche who said to us that one day we would learn from and collaborate with Tibetan dancers and singers. These words came to life and inspired and gave us strength regarding this event.

In deep gratitude to our Rinpoche Namkhai Norbu, his vision, and having given us this precious gift.

Svetlana Vajnina ☺



# Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism

The Third Karmapa  
and the Invention of a Tradition  
By Ruth Gamble

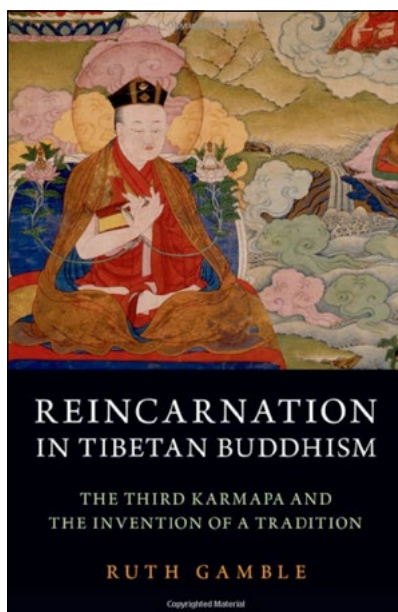
Oxford University Press,  
2018, pp. 344,  
ISBN-10 9780190690779

Alex Studholme

The Tibetan tulku system is commonly held to have its origins in the life of the 2nd Karmapa, Karma Pakshi. Born in 1204, he was identified as the reincarnation of the 1st Karmapa, Dusum Khyenpa, before inheriting the three monasteries founded by the latter and gaining power and prestige for his office via the patronage of the Mongolian court. But, in her brilliant survey and analysis of this phenomenon, Ruth Gamble argues that it was really the 3rd Karmapa, Rangjung Dorje, born in 1284, who definitively established the tradition. Gamble shows how Rangjung Dorje, through his writing and activity, created an institution that was built to last, the template for all the many hundreds of major and minor tulku hierarchs to come: in a nutshell, while a second lama counts as a rebirth, a third lama makes a lineage.

Rangjung Dorje's biographies include all the elements of what would become the standard tulku narrative. His birth, in a remote valley in southern Tibet, is predicted by his predecessor. A precocious child, he first tells others about his past lives when he is three. Aged five, his recognition and enthronement as Karmapa is conducted by a charismatic yogin called Orgyenpa, whom Karma Pakshi had previously asked to be his teacher in his next life, giving him his hat as a guarantee. After Rangjung Dorje greets Orgyenpa with the question, "Didn't I give you my hat?", the attendant crowd giggles as his tiny head is dwarfed by the famous black crown.

Gamble shows how Rangjung Dorje builds on accepted Buddhist literary tropes to bolster the Karmapa legend and to prioritise the idea of a lama as "rebirth", instead of the previously preferred category of "emanation". In addition to an anthology of past lives of the Buddha, he compiles a collection of his own past incarnations. Like the Buddha, he descends to earth from the



Tushita heaven. Before entering his mother's womb, he propels his consciousness into the corpse of a little boy. When he is born, he realizes he can speak, but chooses to remain silent. Growing up, he gives the impression of normality, whilst "inside [he] knew all appearances were dreamlike".

The modern reader may be inclined to take much of this with a pinch of salt. As Gamble points out, the provenance of some of these accounts is dubious, the hand of revisionism is often apparent and different versions of events do not always tally. There is, for instance, no record of the prediction of Rangjung Dorje's birth having been written before the event itself; later biographies record him actually speaking at his birth and, aged three, of fashioning his own homemade black crown; curiously, the past lives of one Karmapa do not always match the past lives recorded by another.

But, perhaps one should beware, as it were, of throwing the baby – or the genuine reincarnated lama – out with the bathwater. It is not as if Rangjung Dorje simply came from the right kind of family, as has since often been the case with other tulkus. His relationship with Karma Pakshi's family, who retained control of the main Karma Kagyu monastery of Tsurpu, comes across as cool and distant. He was the son of an itinerant potter – a fact sometimes airbrushed out in later accounts – about as low down the social order as one could get. It is, at the very least, uncanny that a boy taken from this obscure background should immediately thrive in isolated hermetic settings and so unerringly turn out to be such a spiritual genius.

In any case, Gamble is not preoccupied with judgments of this kind. Her main concern is to demonstrate how Rangjung Dorje constructed a religious edifice – the Karmapa lineage – that might safeguard the *dharma* in very unstable times: reincarnation is just one aspect, albeit an important one, of this crucial project. We learn of Rangjung Dorje's many years spent in retreat, his prolific writing career and widespread teaching activity. He helps to sacralize the history and geography of Tibet, promoting the figures of Avalokiteshvara and Padmasambhava, and identifying the landscape with his own internal apprehension of the mandala of Cakrasamvara, to the extent of interpreting earthquakes as violent realignments within his subtle body.

The richest part of Gamble's book is her extended treatment of Rangjung Dorje's inner life, as expressed in his visions and songs of realization. His connection with the Indian *mahasiddha* Saraha was especially formative. "Saraha showed me that my own mind was the sacred guru," he wrote, later, of an ultra-vivid dream he had at the age of twelve. Incidentally, we also read of a visionary encounter with the early Dzogchen master Vimalamitra, leading to what he said was "an extremely clear understanding of the Great Completion". This recalls the conversation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with the 16th Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpai Dorje in Rome in 1975, when Rinpoche recounted "how extremely kind" both the 2nd and the 3rd Karmapas had been to the Dzogchen teaching.

Ultimately, Gamble's sympathetic and thought-provoking study leaves one pondering the impressive integrity of the 3rd Karmapa and, more generally, the idiosyncrasies of Buddhism's successful integration into Tibetan culture. Like his predecessor, the 3rd Karmapa gained considerable support from the Mongol court, but bridled against his enforced sojourns there, writing witheringly of its decadence and corruption. In some of his songs, calling upon his guru Orgyenpa, he presents himself not as a spiritual monarch, but as a "lazy beggar" yogin, in the mould of the Karma Kagyu sect's great exemplar Milarepa.

Gamble disputes any suggestion that the claims of reincarnation were a cynical ploy to gain worldly power. Despite all the majesty and regalia, Rangjung Dorje was a monk, who appeared wholly dedicated to bringing the Tibetan people to the *dharma*. "This was not a social strategy," she concludes, "it was a religious strategy." ©

# Artists in the Dzogchen Community

Sachiko Fullita

Since childhood, I felt a deep fascination with movement and expression. I could recognize from the very beginning that through the dance my heart healed.

In the beginning, I arrived in classical ballet but even though my body had all the conditions for developing well in that style I got bored very quickly. As a child I wanted to enjoy and dance but in that period in Lima there were not many options for dancing. Later on, I started with acrobatic gymnastics and I fell totally in love, but I had to leave it for external reasons. There were five years when I was always dancing by myself, discovering my body, and my movement. I could clearly feel dance as a refuge.

In 1996, when I was 18 years old, I saw a piece of dance theater for the first time and immediately I knew what I wanted to do professionally. My parents were not happy with my decision, they wanted me to go to the university. Fortunately, I knew there would be a new career in Performing Arts at one of the most prestigious universities in Perú, so they could feel glad and I also. The career was more focused on dramatic interpretation than on movement, so in parallel I was in a dance school. In those years I developed my knowledge in the transformative power of art, not only with the dance, but also with theater and expression.

Already during my studies, I started to work with renowned choreographers, theater directors, and multidisciplinary creators. From them I could learn a lot, but above all I could develop my self confidence, even though externally I could be seen as a self confident person, I was not. Right after finishing my studies I was invited to teach contemporary dance at my university where in 2003 contemporary dance was being implemented as a part of the program of Performing Arts. In that way I started to teach. At the end of the same year I created my first piece of dance and movement, with which I discovered a new passion: the creation.

In February 2005, I met Rinpoche. In that period I was dancing, teaching, creating and exploring more about healing emotions through expression and aware-



Photo by Paolo Fassoli

ness through movement. To meet Rinpoche and His Precious Teachings was the most important event in my life. I could notice how quick and deep I was healing my life, my existence. Before Rinpoche, I had dance, movement and expression as a refuge. At the end of that year I asked myself many questions about the direction of my career. I had a kind of crisis and I felt maybe I should dedicate much more time to bring art to people with different needs so I felt the urge to continue my education in order to acquire tools for working with different people through the healing power of the arts.

I decided to travel to Barcelona, the city where I have lived since 2006. Between 2006 and 2008 I did an MA in Expressive Arts Therapy and Human Development. I arrived to Barcelona as a student again. I didn't want to teach dance and also I was not doing my own creations, in some way I wanted to change the direction of my professional life. In 2007 I met the Vajra Dance, before I would not have been able to believe the existence of such an amazing method! Even I continued dancing professionally with a Dance Company "Kònic Thtr" in various dance performances, telematics, and interactive scenes, as a dancer, performer and assistant director from 2006 until 2012 and I was not really interested in develop my dance anymore.

In 2009 I became mother, I gave birth to Nyma and in 2012 my second child Marcel

was born. My two children have opened up and continue to open new directions and teachings in my life.

After a time when I did this kind of divorce with my dance, precisely in 2012 before becoming pregnant second time, I felt strongly I should retake my own creation of dance, dance theater, improvisation, I



felt I was ready to teach dance and share my different experiences with movement and through movement and with expressive arts with people in general, not only people in need but also young people who want to develop a career in dance or performing arts.



# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Will Shea

I am grateful to have met the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that more than 500 words, or any number of words, can express. They have been the beacon to what had otherwise been a dimly lit path.

I guess I should also thank my troubled adolescence for creating a spiritual yearning. Looking back, I can't see anything so terrible about my circumstances at the time, but they felt oppressive. I suppose I was sensitive to the limitations of samsara, though not very clear about the causes.

I viewed spirituality as an escape from suffering and didn't have the idea to integrate spirituality into my life, let alone make my life become its expression. Perhaps I still have a strand of escapism.

After a half-hearted attempt to take the Catholic background of my youth more seriously, I became attracted to Hindu and American pseudo-Hindu teachers. To that purpose, I set off hitchhiking around America. My primary destination was California – in search of the spiritual scene.

These adventures didn't fare so well in general and included a couple of traumatic episodes. Over the next years I gradually became more practically oriented, working and going to college – still more as a



means of survival than as an expression of any higher purpose. When I see young people now who wish to realize their lives as an expression of a kind of realization or at least good intentions, I realize how lame my approach had been. I eventually started to approach life with a more conscious intention.

In the 1980's I was living and working in New York City. I met many Tibetan teachers and was impressed with the number of them that manifested a tangible spiritual presence. Many of the earlier spiritual groups that I'd met had really promoted

the exclusivity of their teacher. That there were so many accomplished Tibetan teachers indicated that its path can transform many people.

At the same time, I remained influenced by the non-dual emphasis of the esoteric aspects of Hinduism, such as Advaita Vedanta and Kashmir Shaivism. The programmatic and goal-oriented aspect of Tibetan Vajrayana seemed somewhat at odds with the radical nondual view. Moreover, the lifestyle it required was not compatible with what was, by that point, my relatively ordinary worldly life.

In 1992 I attended a teaching by Rinpoche at Columbia University. My first experience with him was like *hedewa* – stopping of the mind. Though I had come to feel by then that I'd understood something of Tibetan Buddhism, I couldn't really process the direct Dzogchen transmission that he was giving. After study of his books and meeting him again in his next visit to New York, I realized with elation that he was the teacher that I'd long been looking for.

My story is not remarkable in terms of coincidences or paranormal activities. However, it seems that there was a logical progression that brought me to Rinpoche. In any case, it is miraculous to have encountered him and his precious teachings! ©

Now in these days, I'm teaching and sharing dance in different ways with different people, and doing workshops for development of creative and expressive movements related to body awareness training. I am teaching in a professional dance school and also I have the beautiful opportunity to share Vajra Dance since 2016. As a dancer and creator my work have been presented in Europe, Asia and South America. These last days I'm working on a new creation in a new format, Video Dance with the motivation of the value of nature and the plastics destroying it.

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