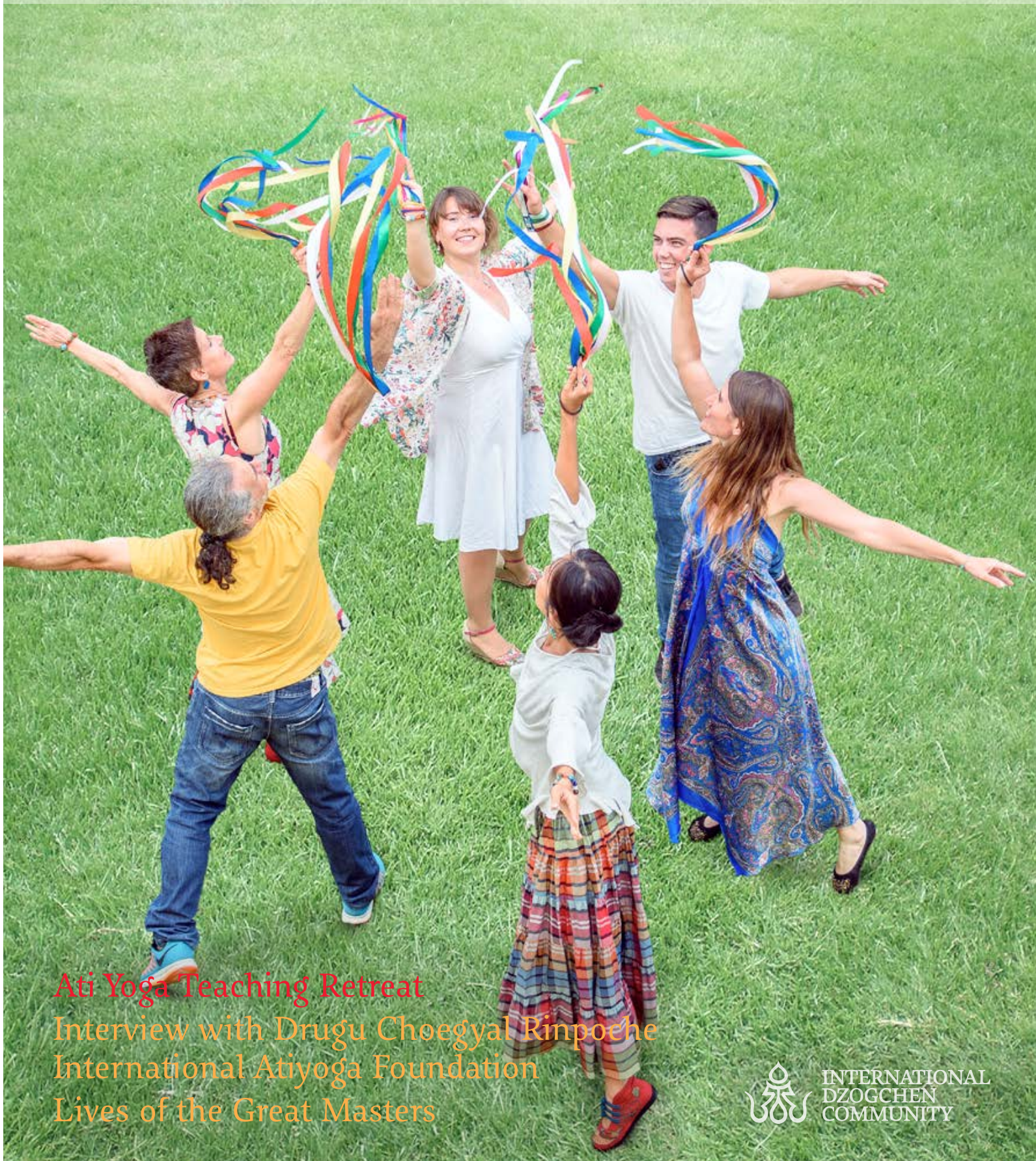


THE MIRROR

No. 146
December 2019



Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat
Interview with Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche
International Atiyoga Foundation
Lives of the Great Masters



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY

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Above: Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga, Dzamling Gar, 2018.

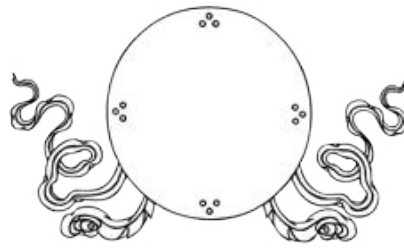
Front cover: Khaita dancers by Paolo Fassoli.

Back cover: 4th graders in Rome, Italy, doing Kumar-Kumari Children's Yoga as part of their school day.

Editorial

As another year draws to a close and we pause to reflect on the events and developments of the past twelve months, it is also an opportunity to look towards the future that lies before us as an International Community. As a Community we sorrowed deeply for the passing of our much loved Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in autumn 2018, and had a full year for quiet reflection and practice. On the anniversary of Rinpoche's passing on September 27 of this year we gathered together at various Dzogchen Community centers across the globe to remember and celebrate the life and works of our Teacher through practice, events, and performances.

The beginning of this new year, this new decade, is now the time for each and every one of us to become aware of our shared dimension as a Global Community. The physical form of our Teacher may have passed beyond our vision but his legacy, the International Dzogchen Community he established years ago, has grown, developed, and become a living organism, transcending limits of language and culture to bring the Dzogchen Ati Teaching to all parts of our planet.



It is now up to us to take up the responsibility that Rinpoche has passed to us together with the transmission of his teachings in order to care for and protect them in their essence. As our Teacher explained a few years ago:

“The Dzogchen Community was established as the safeguard for the continuation of the Dzogchen Ati teaching and its transmissions. How I started it is the same way I take care of it continuously. It doesn't depend on how long I live, but until the total realization of all who are interested in this path and are seriously related to my transmission.”

The Community is the “boat” in which we as Rinpoche's students “sail” until we eventually reach the final goal of realization. It is the place we can collaborate among ourselves, where we can go deeper into the teachings and integrate them, where we maintain the pure transmission, and guarantee it for future generations.

In this New Year, with these thoughts in mind and the awareness of the tremendous gifts and legacy our Master left us, we can resolve to go ahead with the same perseverance, steadfastness and commitment that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu consistently displayed throughout his life, his work and his dedication to his students.

May all beings be happy!



The Editors

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Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat

Day 2 morning – Part 2

Part two of day two of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Ati Yoga Teaching at Dzamling Gar, December 29, 2017. Part one of day two was published in the last issue of The Mirror, no. 145.

In the Mahayana tradition they believe that all sentient beings have Buddha seed, or Buddha nature. Thus if a person has the fortunate possibility to follow Buddha's teaching they can also have the realization of the Buddha because of this Buddha nature. This is Sutra teaching.

Vajrayana does not say that we only have Buddha nature. More than that we have what is called the potentiality of the Vajra. When we think about vajra, the ritual instrument comes to mind, but this is just a symbol of the Vajra. The real Vajra is our real nature, just as we say in Dzogchen teaching that Dzogchen is our real nature. How is the nature of the Vajra explained? Some tantras state that it has seven qualities that are unchangeable such as it is uncuttable, it is indestructible, and so on. Its real nature is always how it is. This potentiality of the Vajra is something more than Buddha nature. The real nature of the Vajra can manifest in a pure dimension.

Vajrayana also has particular methods. To receive that kind of teaching first we need to receive initiation, then instruction. We can become expert in what the Vajra means and can have that realization. It is very different from Sutra.

In Sutra we have Mahayana and Hinayana. In Hinayana they do not accept that all sentient beings have Buddha nature. They believe that while some beings exist that have Buddha nature there are also many that do not. These are called *rigchadpai semcan* (*rigs chad pa sems can*), which means that this family does not have Buddha nature, and Mahayana and Hinayana have many discussions about that. In particular an important text called *chamcho denga* (*byams chos de lnga*), considered to be a teaching of the Maitreya Buddha, contains another outstanding text called *Gyud Lama* (*rgyud bla ma*) which explains that in Mahayana all sentient beings have Buddha nature. It also explains why Hinayana does not accept this.

At the time of the Buddha his teaching was very widespread. There were also currents of the traditional Indian religion and people would come to have discussions with the Buddhists. Many people were interested in the Buddha's teaching and became his students. But even though they were Buddha's students they were strongly attached to the Indian tradition. For example they gave a lot of importance to the principle of immortality, stability, and wanted to maintain this concept. However, the Buddha's teaching affirms that we are in samsara due to following dualism, which



Photo by Ralf Pluschke

is related to the mind, to thinking and judging. Another aspect of dualism is the person or subject who is observing and what is observed as an object, *zungwa* (*bzung ba*) and *dzinpa* (*'dzin pa*), the duality of subject and object. Although Buddha explained that everything is emptiness, everything is unreal, Hinayana emphasizes that [aspects of] both subject and object never dissolve into emptiness, while Mahayana affirms the "non-ego of the subject" and the "non-ego of dharmas" or material things. Hinayana continued to maintain this aspect of their tradition and developed in that way, not understanding or accepting the teaching of the Buddha.

Later on Vajrayana teaching developed as well as Dzogchen teaching and the Anuyoga tradition, the essence of all teachings. Anuyoga is related to the Vajrayana teaching although the characteristics of applying the methods are different. In Sutra teaching the method is called "the path of renunciation". When we understand that something is negative and has no value, we renounce it. For instance, if our clothes are old we throw them away and buy new clothes. It is the idea of change. It is the same principle of change when we receive Hinayana vows: yesterday I was living an ordinary life in samsara, I have renounced that and today I am different, I am a monk or a nun. My physical appearance has also changed: before I had long hair but now it has been shaved. Previously I wore ordinary clothes while now I wear monk's robes.

Then when you receive a vow you receive a name. Many Westerners ask to receive a dharma name. This idea is influenced by the Hinayana principle of changing: yesterday I was Maria, today I received a vow and have become Tara. You feel that you have changed, that you are not like before. When you meet your friends you ask them to call you Tara, that you are no longer Maria. The idea is that something related to attitude, to the condition of body, speech, and mind has changed, although actually nothing has changed. Maria will always be Maria. However our idea is that something has changed. This is characteristic of the Hinayana system.



Some people want to have a dharma name although they may not know that it is related to the Hinayana system. When I ask a person if he or she has no name, they reply that they do have a name, Maria. Then I tell them that this is their dharma name. It becomes a dharma name if you are a dharma practitioner. You must understand that a name does not change anything.

In my area, Derge in Tibet, when I was small people would slaughter animals in the 9th month at the beginning of the winter. Tibetans do not kill animals themselves, they ask a particular person to come and slaughter them. Although that person does this job for a living it doesn't mean he does not have the same convictions as other Tibetans. When they have killed many animals they invite some teachers and do pujas and purification. My family would invite a person called Ake Sangye – Ake was his family name, Sangye means Buddha – but even though his name was Buddha he would kill all the animals. When he would arrive at our home then I knew that he would kill some yak and some sheep and I would be really angry with him. So you see that even though a person may change his name, the substance does not change.

On a higher level the characteristic of the Vajrayana teaching is “the path of transformation” which is not like the path of Sutra. We can transform everything when we understand this method. For example our condition consists of five emotions that can be transformed into five wisdoms even though our nature does not change at all. We cannot learn this in an ordinary way by judging or thinking but by receiving initiation. In Sutra teaching initiations do not exist because Sutra has vows and training, but in Vajrayana even the lower tantras start with transformation because they recognize that we have the quality of the Vajra since the beginning.

Vajrayana consists of lower tantras and higher tantras. The lower tantras give a lot of importance to purification and mantra recitation, and initiation is not the same as in the higher tantras. The Dzogchen teaching explains that there are three series of lower tantras: Kriya, Upaya, and Yoga. Among these three the most important and developed is Yogatantra, but even in Yogatantra there is no direct transformation. For that reason for if we do a lower tantra puja, alcohol and meat are never allowed. On the other hand in higher tantras they are indispensable because practitioners have more capacity to understand the real sense.

When we receive initiation we have the potentiality that we have received. What does potentiality mean in the Vajrayana system? To give an example, a young prince or princess will always be part of the royal family so when they are older they will become king or queen. If you are not a member of the royal family but just an ordinary person you need to change your life to become king. In a similar way Sutra teaching is ignorant of our real nature of the potentiality of the Vajra, while all Vajrayana traditions, even lower, understand that we have that quality of the Vajra. With this knowledge we are just like a prince and princess and can also become king and queen in this life. To empower that we have initiation just like the coronation when the prince becomes king. After that we can apply that method and transform.

Vajrayana has two systems of transformation: gradual and non-gradual. Gradual transformation is called Anuttaratantra or higher tantra and was developed in all the Tibetan traditions. How-

ever in the Nyingmapa tradition Guru Padmasambhava also transmitted the non-gradual way of transformation. This non-gradual teaching was not very diffused in India at that time unlike the Anuttaratantra, which was known everywhere. There were practitioners and teachers and translators who translated those teachings. When Guru Padmasambhava first gave teachings in Tibet he, too, taught the gradual path of Vajrayana teaching. But he also taught the non-gradual way.

In India Guru Padmasambhava was an eminent scholar and highly realized being who discovered a teaching called Anuyoga. Anu means always superior, yoga means possessing that knowledge. In all these teachings the most essential concept is how the Base is explained. The Base refers to the consideration of the real nature or condition of sentient beings. For instance Buddhist Sutra says that all sentient beings have Buddha nature, while Vajrayana states that all sentient beings have the nature of the Vajra. However Dzogchen teaching maintains that we have that perfected state called Dzogchen since the beginning. With that perfected state there is no need to add, or multiply, or develop anything. Anuyoga explains the Base of all sentient beings just as it is explained in the Dzogchen teaching. Since the beginning all sentient beings have the perfected nature of the three primordial wisdoms, that is, essence, nature and energy, or *ngowo*, *rangzhin*, and *thugje*. When we are in that state it is also called realization.

But even though Guru Padmasambhava discovered that Anuyoga is an elevated teaching, it is not like Dzogchen. Dzogchen is “the path of self-liberation”. What is the difference between self-liberation and other paths? In “the path of renunciation” we renounce something and if there are problems we know what the antidote is. In Vajrayana problems are related to one of the three root emotions of attachment, anger and ignorance. We transform that aspect into a divinity and its dimension into a mandala. Although there are hundreds of different ways that divinities can manifest they are always peaceful, or joyful, or wrathful forms. In the Vajrayana system we don't need any antidote.

Anuyoga uses the method of transformation to get into this perfected state, but not gradually developing the transformation in Anuttaratantra style because it is perfected since the beginning and there is no need to construct anything. Most important is that receiving initiation related to the instructions is a secondary cause for manifestation. When we receive instructions we know how to transform into that form instantly.

The practices we do in the Dzogchen Community are related to the Anuyoga system not because we refuse Anuttaratantra but because transformation in Anuyoga is easier. For practices such as Simhamukha or Guru Tragphur we only need to sound a seed syllable and the manifestation appears immediately. Some people have received Kalachakra or Yamantaka initiations from important teachers like the Dalai Lama and like to do these practices. They use gradual transformation with a book called a *sadhana*, reading the Refuge and Bodhichitta at the beginning and then gradually transforming and constructing all the visualization. When they succeed in doing the development stage they can start the accomplishment stage, integrating with their existence.

» continued on the following page



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The development stage is more about creating a sort of fantasy. You close your eyes and think that your dimension is just like the mandala. You construct your manifestation of Yamantaka or Kalachakra in the same way and keeping that presence you feel it in that moment. Your existence, your energy and body, speech, mind, everything is present there. Then within the figure of Kalachakra or Yamantaka you visualize the central channels, *roma* and *kyangma*, and then the chakras one by one. All of these are related to our energy, the prana energy and the energy of the five elements and so on, something alive that we have. Now you integrate this energy and all the functions of your physical body into that development stage. In the end you realize that and don't need much effort. This is one of the final goals of Vajrayana practice. Now you are going in the direction of contemplation. You understand that the development and accomplishment stages are not just two ideas as in dualistic vision. Everything is in that state which in Vajrayana teaching is called the state of Mahamudra.

What does Mahamudra mean? Maha means total, all our considerations of subject and object, mudra means symbol. When we make some movements with our hands we call them mudras. For example if we do Guruyoga in formal Vajrayana style, we do a mudra that is like a vajra with three points. We consider that the three points represent the states of our body, speech, and mind. In any kind of Vajrayana teaching the mandala, the form of the divinity, and so on are all symbols that help us understand what they represent. Mahamudra means that everything totally enters this symbol and does not remain in the dualistic concept of the development and accomplishment stages. This is the real meaning of Mahamudra.

Sakya Pandita gave a very clear explanation about this in Peking, China, in reply to a yogi's question about Mahamudra. Maybe in that period there was no Mahamudra as presented today in the Kagyupa tradition. In this tradition Mahamudra is a little different and is not considered only the final goal of Vajrayana. This method was developed by Gampopa, the foremost student of Milarepa, who was considered by the Kagyupa to be an accomplished scholar as well as a highly realized being. He was also very expert in Dzogchen teaching, Dzogchen *semde*. Dzogchen *semde* explains the four contemplations, *naljor nampa zhi* in four levels: *nepa*, *miyowa*, *nyamnyid*, and *lhundrub*. Gampopa presented the four yogas of Mahamudra with a similar method: *tsechig*, *trödral*, *rochig*, and *gomme*. First is *tsechig* meaning one-pointed state, similar to *shine* practice. Then Dzogchen teaching has *miyowa* meaning no movement. There is no movement because it is integrated in our contemplation. In the state of contemplation, *miyowa* means that there is no movement of objects and you can understand subject and object and their differences and so on. In the state of contemplation called *nyamnyid* in the real sense there is no difference being in the state of contemplation. Gampopa explained *trödral* in the same way as *miyowa*. *Trödral* is the final goal of the Sutra in Mahayana.

There is a very famous Uma Madhyamaka teaching of Nagarjuna that says that nothing can be confirmed because any kind of confirmation comes from mind. This makes us understand that

we should go beyond mind. This is the most important concept in Mahayana called *trödral*.

Then on the third level what Dzogchen teaching calls *nyamnyid*, non-dual, Gampopa called *rochig*, or same flavor. The essence is the same; there is no difference. At the end the fourth level in Dzogchen is *lhundrub*, the quality of self-perfection. We discover that and we are in that state. Gampopa called the fourth level *gomme*, meaning no meditation, beyond any kind of effort. So we can understand that that system of Mahamudra is related to the Vajrayana teaching.

Gampopa's explanation does not say it is indispensable to receive initiation, but also does not say that it is not, because he knew that if we want to go beyond our concepts relatively we cannot; we always have to learn from a person, a teacher, who has this experience. The teacher uses a particular method and with that method we learn and get in that state. In the Vajrayana tradition this is called initiation; it is difficult to go beyond without receiving initiation.

Even though these two methods [the Four Contemplations and Gampopa's Four Yogas of Mahamudra] such as the one-pointed state, relaxing in that state, and so on, do not perfectly correspond, we can understand the basics. For that reason Gampopa's teaching of Mahamudra was developed very much in all of the Kagyupa traditions. When we consider Mahamudra we should distinguish these two methods.

Mahamudra is the final goal of all schools. However in the Kagyupa traditions Gampopa's method is very special. If Dzogchen practitioners really know Dzogchen teaching they can understand very well how Gampopa's Mahamudra is explained. ✱

Transcribed by Anna Rose

Edited by L. Granger

Tibetan language with the kind assistance of Elio Guarisco

Honoring Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in India

Jamyang Oliphant

Starting on December 7th a series of Vajrasattva pujas took place in northern India in Tashijong and Jangchub Jong. These pujas were an initiative of H.E. Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche, a high Drukpa Kagyu master and an old friend and great admirer of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his teachings and work. He said that in the Kaliyuga era a great master such as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu should be remembered and honored.

The intention in holding these pujas was to purify all obstacles so that the Dharma aspirations of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu may be fulfilled. The first three days the pujas were led by H.E. Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche along with three "tokdens", yogins who have renounced worldly activities and devoted their lives to spiritual practice. Several monks also attended.

The following day a large group of monks, numbering around 120, carried out the same Vajrasattva puja. Another day a group of around 50 nuns from the nunnery in Tashijong performed the Vajrasattva puja.

Finally the tokdens inside their closed retreat centre, which is not accessible to the public, executed the final closing of the Vajrasattva puja cycle that had lasted one week in all.

Many thanks to H.E. Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche for his initiative and to everybody who helped sponsor the pujas.

May they be beneficial to our Dzogchen Community. ©



Connections

An Interview with Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche

Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche, a Drukpa Kagyu master and well-known artist who depicted the Twelve Primordial Masters in the Merigar Gönpa, was in Italy in autumn 2019 for the opening of an exhibition of his work in Rome. Because of his close connection with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu he attended events at Merigar to mark a year since the passing of the Master. He kindly offered to do this interview with *The Mirror* during his visit.

The Mirror: We want to say welcome back to Merigar. How does it feel to be back?

Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche: Of course I miss Norbu Rinpoche but there are reasons not to be so sad. This *sangha* has gathered together to do practice and I really feel that the teaching is alive in the Community of Merigar. When Buddha passed away His teaching remained alive within His disciples. In the same way when a teacher passes away, his physical life is gone but his lineage, his teaching do not disappear with the teacher but remain the same and continue to be alive.

M: Can you tell us about your past visits to Merigar?

DCR: I first came to Merigar in 1986 when Norbu Rinpoche invited Dorzong Rinpoche before the Gönpa was built. We visited twice I think. Dorzong Rinpoche gave Mahamudra teachings and I gave a talk. The second time I was invited – the Gönpa was not yet ready – I gave a teaching of a Yeshe Tsogyal practice. I came again because Rinpoche wanted me to paint the panel of the Twelve Primordial Masters. I discussed the plans with him and he invited me, Tsering Wangchug the master artist and his wife and fellow artist. I came a few times after that to complete the painting of the Twelve Masters.

M: The figures of the Primordial Masters that you painted in the Merigar Gönpa are in a unique original style. Were you inspired to paint them in this way when you came to Merigar?

DCR: When I started to paint the figures, I contemplated the Dzogchen Masters, visu-



alizing them in accordance with the texts. I drew some sketches and showed them to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche who liked them. He wanted me, rather than do something that completely conformed to tradition, to paint the way I felt. These figures are not really done in a traditional way, yet they are not untraditional. They are based on the essence of the quality of each individual master, and the feeling and meaning I sensed visualizing them.

M: Did the VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche, your teacher, know Changchub Dorje, the master of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu?

DCR: The life story of the VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche's was written by Bongtul Rinpoche in two volumes. Elder togdens told me stories about Khamtrul Rinpoche visiting Gonjo in Kham where Master Changchub Dorje's retreat area was situated. When Khamtrul Rinpoche was in Gonjo, Master Changchub Dorje invited him to his monastery. You may know that Changchub Dorje did not invite many masters. He did not prostrate or recognize as remarkable anyone unless really special. Changchub Dorje had the feeling that the VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche was a true emanation of Guru Padmasambhava. When he invited him, Changchub Dorje made prostrations and received blessings because of his great respect for him. That is why Norbu Rinpoche had great respect for the VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche and that was how the connection between them came about.

A highly respected monk Choelha in Drugu who came from the Khampagar area wrote about his journey to Changchub Dorje's place to receive teachings. Changchub Dorje told Choelha about a dream he had had in which he went to Zangdok-

palri, the pure land where Guru Rinpoche dwells, and he saw that Guru Rinpoche's throne was empty. He asked the *dakas* and *dakinis* there where Guru Rinpoche was. They told him that Guru Rinpoche had gone to Dzambuling and from there to Tibet and Kham where at Khampagar Guru Rinpoche was then manifesting as Khamtrul Rinpoche. So Changchub Dorje himself knew that Khamtrul Rinpoche was an emanation of Guru Rinpoche; it was not that someone else had told him. That was why he did prostrations and had great respect for the VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche.

Later on Changchub Dorje made a prediction about what would happen in Tibet when the huge tent that hosted the Guru Rinpoche Lama Dances in Gonjo collapsed in a powerful storm. He said that this was a sign that no more would there be the big Guru Rinpoche Lama Dances of Khampagar and that Tibet would face destruction. Many people heard this.

The area of the monasteries of H.E. Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dorzong Rinpoche and myself was close to Changchub Dorje's retreat place. Two of Khamtrul Rinpoche's elder togdens, Togden Choeleg and Togden Amtrin, often went to Changchub Dorje to receive teachings. They had a very strong connection with him. Because of that I heard many stories from these elder togdens.

M: Where were you born?

DCR: I was born in Chakzam Kha of Ngomchu River in Nangchen. My monastery is near Chamdo in a place called Drugu. It is a small independent monastery in quite a large area inhabited by six nomadic tribes. We all live together as one community.

M: How old were you when you had to leave Tibet?

DCR: I left Tibet for India in 1958 just after H.E. the VIIIth Khamtrul Rinpoche did so. I reached India in 1959 after H.H. the Dalai Lama crossed Tawang Arunachal. I was supposed to leave Tibet with Khamtrul Rinpoche and Dorzong Rinpoche. They reached India in 1958 before the upheaval in Lhasa. Because Khamtrul Rinpoche knew what was about to happen in Tibet, he left earlier in order to reach India safely. Rinpoche had wanted to take Adeu Rinpoche and me with him. However, Adeu Rinpoche was unable to depart because he was the teacher of the king of Nangchen and the king and the royal family could not leave.

We left many months later. From childhood I had great faith, trust, and devotion in Khamtrul Rinpoche, the Triple Gem, and my Tsawai Lamas. Thus, though we had some difficulties on the way, we prayed to Khamtrul Rinpoche and the Triple Gem and all went well. When we reached India, Khamtrul Rinpoche took care of Dorzong Rinpoche and me and gave us teachings. We were surrounded by all the great togdens and I did not feel so lost. I saw that in this enlightened company nobody was angry at the Chinese, nobody was upset about the sad situation, everyone was happy and peaceful. That was really amazing.

M: How old were you when you started to paint?

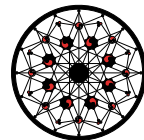
DCR: At my family home when I was small we had a beautiful shrine room with statues and wall paintings that I really liked. I remember them well. So even at an early age I had a great interest in art. My monastery was endowed with many thangkas, statues and books with paintings. I was always very inquisitive and wanting to browse through these books. When studying at the monastery although I was alone I did not feel lonely because I was surrounded by all these things and had an enormous interest in art.

M: As a *tulku*, did your tutors at the monastery encourage you to paint?

DCR: My monastery training was almost fulltime study, mainly reading, writing, and other subjects. I had a few different tutors: some were very kind and compassionate, sometimes letting me have a break to do things like clay sculptures and painting, but these activities were exceptions. The big collection of thangkas of my monastery influenced me strongly.



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
GAKYIL



To Our Vajra Brothers and Sisters of the International Dzogchen Community,

Our Master left us with everything we need to apply The Teaching, and after a year of Mourning, we now move into a deeper understanding of how to be responsible for ourselves, and for our collective action as the students who hold Rinpoche's unique and precious lineage.

Our future as a Sangha remains alive on the basis of our practice, our collaboration, and in a very concrete sense: Renewal of Membership as a way Rinpoche created to maintain organized courses, events, services, and places to gather together.

Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, Santi Maha Sangha, Khaita, Medical Programs, Translation Projects, Book Publishing, and all Collective Practices continue to develop based on our opportunities to gather and share our knowledge and experience. Just as Rinpoche's Transmission planted the seed for all of that Activity to manifest in Gars and Lings around the planet, in a practical sense, Membership fuels the growth and development of that Activity.

We owe our existence as a Sangha to our amazing fortune as individuals who received the Supreme Teaching from our Supreme Teacher. Membership in The Community that Rinpoche built is the responsibility we share as students who were Blessed as knowledge holders directly by

M: When did you first meet Chögyal Namkhai Norbu?

DCR: The first time was when Khamtrul Rinpoche, Dorzong Rinpoche, and myself were invited to Italy in 1976 by Mario Maglietti and Elio Rumma. Khamtrul Rinpoche and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu became close friends and had a lasting connection. Through their relationship Dorzong Rinpoche and myself also developed a strong connection with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

M: Thank you for your time, Rinpoche. ☺

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Although it feels we can never truly repay the kindness of the person who introduced freedom beyond all limitations to each of our lives, there are very mundane and simple things we can offer every year that symbolize our appreciation. Membership is a basic expression of our gratitude for Rinpoche's life and the infinite kindness we have received from that rare and authentic connection.

If we want the Dzogchen Community to continue its evolution, and we see ourselves as a part of that evolution, then Membership is a very real contribution each of us can make to uphold the Teaching for ourselves and for the benefit of Our World.

We urge you to consider well the deeper significance of Membership Renewal, and we thank you for your continued interest, dedication, and support.

All Our Love,
International Gakyil of The International
Dzogchen Community

Please contact your local Gar or Ling to
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The www.dzogchen.net portal hosts the webcast of the International Dzogchen Community where replays of teachings and webcasts are available for members

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The Importance of the Dzogchen Community

“The Dzogchen Community was established as the safeguard for the continuation of the Dzogchen Ati teaching and its transmissions until the total realization of all who are interested in this path and are seriously related to my transmission.”

An extract from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's message to the Dzogchen Community published in The Mirror issue 43, January-/February 1998.

There are many newer and older students in the Dzogchen Community who do not have a clear idea or understanding about what the Dzogchen Community is and why it is so important. Since I have created the Dzogchen Community, it is my duty to clarify this...

When you are my student, a member of the Dzogchen Community, and do Santi Maha Sangha Trainings regularly, then you should understand that the Dzogchen Community is like a Big Boat that carries all my students to whom I have transmitted my transmissions of Dzogchen Ati Yoga and takes them to the final goal of its realization. That means that the Dzogchen Community is a guarantee to all my students that they will reach the final goal sooner or later with my transmissions of Dzogchen Ati Yoga...

The Dzogchen Community is for all Dzogchen Ati practitioners. That means that all Dzogchen practitioners are in the same boat and that they should take care of the Dzogchen Community just like their own home. That is how our Dzogchen Community members must be in our Dzogchen Community...

When I was three years old, and then again at five, I had already been recognized as the reincarnation of a very important high Lama or Teacher. But even though I had been recognized as such, since the beginning I had no wish to become a Buddhist teacher in general, or a Dzogchen Teacher in particular. After many years of living in the West, in Italy, many Italians asked me to teach the Dharma. The Gyalwa Karmapa particularly had



Photo by Ralf Plüschke

asked me repeatedly to teach Dharma to Italian Dharma followers. But I had hesitated for some years reflecting on it, because I knew that to give teaching meant working with the transmission and since I was also still on the path, I did not want to play with the very important transmissions I had received from my teachers.

Finally, when I decided to pay respect to the order of Gyalwa Karmapa, and make those people happy who were interested in receiving Dharma teachings, I started to teach principally the Dzogchen Teachings, and at the same time I took a promise of 27 commitments for my teachings that they not become something related to personal interests, etc. Since then I have always transmitted all my Dharma teachings in general, and the Dzogchen Ati Teachings in particular, while maintaining these 27 commitments. I created the Dzogchen Community for the purpose of the continuation and maintenance of my Dzogchen Ati transmission. This Community is only for those people who are interested in my Dzogchen transmission and who are interested in maintaining the

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of the community. To access translations and webcasts, use the login and password used for registering on www.dzogchen.net. After logging in, members can also access and download free pdf copies of The Mirror magazine.

The International Gakyil on behalf of the whole Dzogchen Community would like to give their sincere thanks to all those renewing their membership, particularly meritorious and sustaining members whose participation is vital for the continuation of the Community. ©

Global Membership Policy 2020

Local Ordinary Membership	set by local Gakyil
Local Sustaining Membership	optional, and set by local Gakyil
Global Sustaining Membership	500 EUR / 575 USD
Global Meritorious Membership	1,500 EUR / 1,725 USD

Global Membership Policy details – Benefits

Global Meritorious	80% discounts on all events and workshops in all Gars and Lings. Each Gar can provide more benefits to its own members
Global Sustaining	50% discounts on all events and workshops in all Gars and Lings. Each Gar can provide more benefits to its own members



Dzogchen transmission that I have sincerely and purely transmitted to them...

I have tried to transmit the essence of all three series of Dzogchen Ati, which are the very essential knowledge of Dzogchen Ati transmissions that I received from my precious teachers such as Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, Ayu Khandro Dorje Paldrön, Togden Ugyen Tendzin and so on, more than 15 Dzogchen Masters, to my students who are seriously interested. Most of you know that I have transmitted mainly Dzogchen Ati Teaching and its transmissions for some 15 years or more, which means that for all this time I have been dedicated to and worked seriously with the Dzogchen Ati transmissions.

Then you can understand that I also have a great responsibility for my Dzogchen Ati transmissions. For that reason, I formed the Dzogchen Community with all my students who are in this same transmission boat. You can understand why I created the Dzogchen Community, and that the Dzogchen Community does not exist for my personal interest or for creating an important position of power for me.

Everybody in the Dzogchen Community knows very well that I have never undertaken any kind of missionary life. I worked at the University for nearly 30 years. It doesn't mean that I liked being a University professor all those years. What I learned in the Dzogchen teaching is that a practitioner of Dzogchen should accept how the circumstances of one's life manifest.

Of course, we can understand that if there is some terrible situation, we can try to find what the cause is and modify this situation. It was also clearly explained by Buddha Shakyamuni in the Sutra teaching that the way of overcoming the suffering of samsara is not struggling with it, but discovering what the cause of suffering is. When we discover the cause, there is always a possibility of modifying. Otherwise we can accept things just as they are: we have a set of circumstances and we accept them as they are. For that reason I worked that way instead of being in the position of a Dzogchen Master. I am not saying that the position of a Dzogchen Master is negative but if there is some personal interest involved, then it could definitely be negative.

Therefore you can understand very well the real purpose for the creation of the Dzogchen Community from the beginning. In short, the Dzogchen Community is:

- the way we collaborate with each other and between all our Dzogchen practitioners;
- the way each practitioner goes deeper or progresses in the real knowledge of Dzogchen;
- the way each practitioner integrates the knowledge of Dzogchen in their real condition;
- the way all practitioners travel together to total realization;
- the way we maintain a real and pure transmission of Dzogchen Teaching for future generations;
- the way we can have a guarantee of the correct continuation of the Dzogchen Ati Teaching.

The Dzogchen Community was established as the safeguard for the continuation of the Dzogchen Ati teaching and its transmissions. How I started it is the same way I take care of it continuously. It doesn't depend on how long I live, but until the total realization of all who are interested in this path and are seriously related to my transmission.

For that purpose, the Dzogchen Community has its characteristics: its structure is different from all other kinds of Dharma Centers and that is called the Gakyil. This is why the Gakyil exists in the Dzogchen Community. If we have real knowledge of Dzogchen Ati, then we must have knowledge of the value of Dzogchen Ati transmission. Having this knowledge, then we can have total understanding of the value of the Dzogchen Community and it is not so difficult to understand the value of the Santi Maha Sangha Trainings and how they are related to the Dzogchen Community.

When we start different levels of the Santi Maha Sangha examinations, we ask candidates, "Are you a Dzogchen Community member?" It doesn't mean, "Do you have a Dzogchen Community Card, or did you pay some money to have the Dzogchen Community Membership Card?" If that were so, there would be no sense in having Dzogchen Community Membership.

It means that you must understand how important the Dzogchen Community is and how you must be responsible for it. That is the real sense of Dzogchen Community Membership. If you are a Dzogchen Community member you should take care of it in the way I have done until now. ✱

SMS Instructors' Meeting At Dzamling Gar

The Santi Maha Sangha instructors

Just before Rinpoche's birthday on December 8th, 2019, the Santi Maha Sangha instructors met together for two days at Dzamlingar Gar from December 6th–7th, 2019. The topics for the meeting were divided into four sections: Transmission, Newcomers, Sangha Retreats and Collaboration. The initiative for this meeting principally arose as a follow-up to the previous SMS instructors meeting, which was held at Merigar West during August of this year. The general aim of these meetings is to exchange ideas and experiences, to get to know one another a little better and also to explore what Rinpoche specifically advised the SMS instructors to do: that is, to communicate and collaborate together and to look at "what goes well and what doesn't go well..." to use Rinpoche's own words.

There were eleven SMS instructors who attended the meeting in person, while a further thirteen connected online via zoom. Several other instructors who were not able to connect with the meeting directly also sent their comments on specific topics to be read out during the discussion. Although there was some prior expectation that the purpose of the meeting was to identify solutions to some of the issues facing the Dzogchen Community at this time, in fact the actual purpose of the meeting was to simply exchange different views and experiences on various topics, without trying to draw any conclusions.

The Santi Maha Sangha instructors have been getting together in different ways for quite some time by participating in small group discussions and especially since an online SMS Forum for open communication was established a few years ago, as well as having regular zoom meetings. This has greatly improved collaboration within the group on a level platform and it is surely a sign of progress that everyone feels able to freely express their opinions in an open way, including presenting radically opposing views by putting different suggestions on the table.



Some of the issues that were discussed on the subject of transmission included: Does oral explanation constitute a 'type of transmission' or not? Does some form of transmission take place when experienced practitioners practice together? What precisely does lung-transmission mean? In organizing Sangha retreats, the following matters were addressed: The need to make a clear distinction between open courses which welcome new people and retreats which are just for those who already have transmission; how to provide guidance for those who wish to deepen their practice; and the proposal to identify a clear subject for each Sangha retreat and discuss beforehand what each person presents in a collaborative way so there is a greater sense of cohesion.

For the final session on the December 7th, representatives from the ATI Foundation were invited to facilitate collaboration between the AITF and SMS Instructors in order to help provide guidelines for the ATIF open courses. Regarding looking after new people, the following questions were posed: What is it good to do in open courses for new people? What parts of the SMS Base Level are open to new people? Can newcomers attend secondary practices like the Ganapuja without having transmission? Is it best if Gars and Lings have some kind of common guidelines on these matters?

Members of the International Gakyil were also invited to attend the final session, as it is clear that greater transparency and better communication between all the different groups, as well as with the Sangha at large, is something vital! This can be implemented via newsletters, The Mirror, online information, email groups and What's App ... to name but a few. Thanks to all who participated over these two days to pool ideas and brainstorm the best ways forward.

This period is an important time for the whole Dzogchen Community: it is a time for the entire Sangha to come together with trust in each other and in the spirit of collaboration in order to fulfill Rinpoche's vision for the future. Small seeds are beginning to grow in our mutual appreciation of each other, based on our different and diverse capacities. Traditionally, when a great Tibetan Master passes away, it is said to take at least three years to begin to come to terms with the new situation and to discover fresh potentialities. In the words of the Dzamlingar Gar Song:

"Let's unite our strength and capacity ...
May all manifest auspiciously!
May our desires be fulfilled!
With fortune arising self-perfected.
May victory manifest in all
directions!"



Interview with Marco Baseggio about the Atiyoga Foundation

Dzamling Gar
December 7, 2019

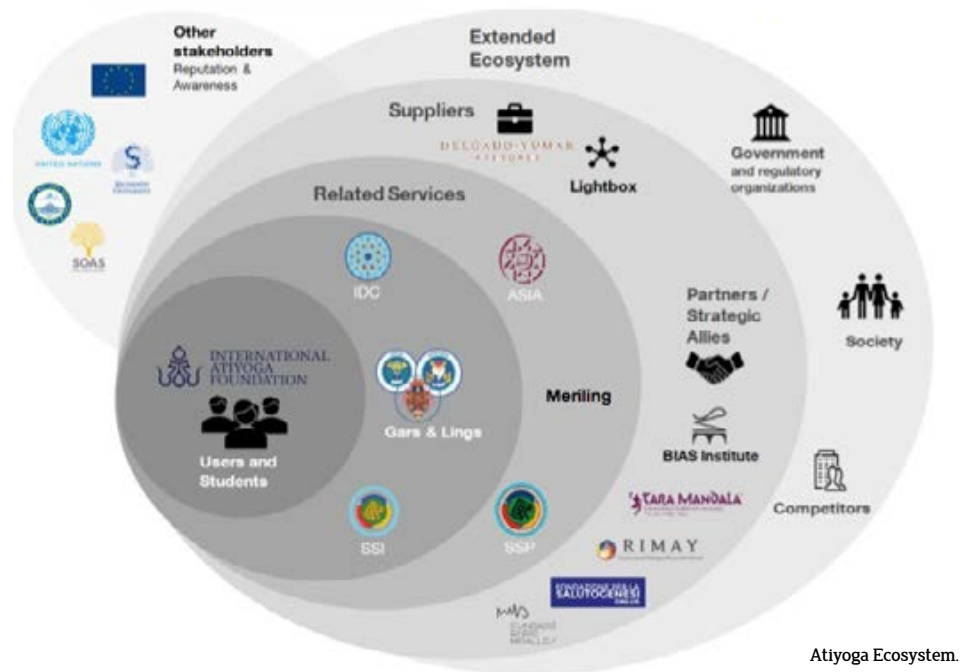
The Mirror: Can you tell us how the Atiyoga Foundation was founded?

Marco Baseggio: Thank you for this question because it allows me to clarify something about the Foundation. Initially I started to do research about establishing a foundation because Rinpoche asked me to understand if it was possible to create a foundation where we could merge the MACO (Museo di Arte e Cultura Orientale) and the Shang Shung Foundation. This happened in October of 2017 when I came back from China, where I went to assist Fabio Andrico with Yantra Yoga. Immediately after I returned, Rinpoche asked me to see if we could consolidate the MACO and Shang Shung Foundation and how.

I prepared quite a complex long document with all the information from the Italian court about how to merge our two entities, one a foundation and the other an association, and also how to merge a museum that is part of another association as well. After one month I wrote to Rinpoche and he wrote me back directly and was very happy because he understood that it was really possible to do this and not very difficult from a legal or economic point of view.

Then I spoke with Rinpoche by telephone and he said, "Very good", and then at the end of the call he asked to expand the research a little. Rinpoche wanted to understand if it is possible to do a foundation that is more international, not only Italian, possibly with the legal domicile in Dzamling Gar.

I started to have contact with a lawyer skilled in cultural foundations in Barcelona, thanks to Ilaria Faccioli, who suggested this lawyer. I went to Barcelona and he explained to us how this works in Spain; quite similar to Italy but the law is a little better



structured, because there is an institution that does not exist in Italy. The institution is called El Protectorado de Fundaciones in Madrid; they give the license/authorization to become a foundation. It's a process and they have to understand how our statute is.

This happened in November of 2017. In December of 2017, Rinpoche wanted to make a public announcement about the cultural foundation. On the morning of the announcement, they told me I had to be part of the webcast through Skype. So Rinpoche began to speak about the merger of the two foundations to make one new foundation. I was a little surprised because it was a little difficult to understand what these two entities were. One was clear, it was the Shang Shung Foundation. And the second one? I thought that Rinpoche was speaking about IDC.

M: So at that point you thought he was talking about merging the Shang Shung Foundation and the International Dzogchen Community?

MB: Yes, in fact, I discovered after this public announcement that this was his idea. There is a recording where Rinpoche clarified to Fabio Andrico, Andrea Dell'Angelo, Mark Farrington, and Steven Landsberg about this idea. They asked Rinpoche what his idea was. He said many things. This recording is very interesting. It would be good to put this transcription in The Mirror. Rinpoche spoke of many things, including Guru Yoga. (December 7, 2017)

I tried to understand how to merge a cultural association with thousands of

members (IDC) into a cultural foundation (The Atiyoga Foundation) where there are three members who are the founders. Rinpoche made it clear that Atiyoga Foundation must be the umbrella for all the organizations in the Dzogchen Community. He explained that it meant that all the organizations under the umbrella must maintain their identity for their activity and cultural business, but they have to be under a bigger umbrella that is this new foundation, The Atiyoga Foundation. Rinpoche explained his idea for The Atiyoga Foundation for the first time at the meeting (see transcription).

Then at Losar, February 2018, Rinpoche asked me to prepare the Atiyoga Foundation birth certificate as a symbolic deed for the birth of the Atiyoga Foundation with him as the founder and Nancy Simmons and Carlos Ramos as co-founders. Also the co-founders represent the Dzogchen Community. There are five members of the Board. I am just the temporary president, and my commitment is only to create the structure of the foundation, and Ester Escudero, Alex Siedlecki, Oliver Leick, and Pia Bramezza are the other Board members.

We started our job very slowly. We understood that it was very difficult to dissolve IDC into Atiyoga Foundation and maybe it was not necessary. Our intention was to create a relationship with IDC, a partnership, and that is what we are doing now. Atiyoga Foundation tries to keep the "leadership" for the main decisions for external activities and to leave as the IDC's

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role, which is very useful and strategically important, for membership, the alignment of all the statutes for the internal programs, retreats, etc., and for the salaries for the four main teachers. This role is very clear from our side.

M: When you say the management of the internal programming, does this also include the decision making for Santi Maha Sangha, for example, which contains a lot of internal, transmission related material, and right now they are having a meeting to decide how SMS will go forward. These kinds of policy decisions about internal programming and internal functioning are also the domain of the IDC?

MB: Yes maybe it is. But in my mind, for example, if we invite someone else, some other teacher or someone who is not part of the Dzogchen Community, it is not internal anymore, that is external. For these aspects, however, it seems more correct to me to solicit the opinion of the Namkhai family, especially of Yeshe Silvano Namkhai.

In June of 2018 it was not easy, we had some exchanges by email with the Protectorado of Madrid, and they gave us many requirements and we had to modify something in the statute, but we finally obtained the permission to sign the constitution of the ATIF officially. The 4th of July of 2018 Rinpoche was really ill, it was not easy for him to go out, despite this he went to a notary near to Dzamling Gar to complete the legal formality for the constitution.

Then there was the moment that was very strong for all of us on September 27th, 2018, when Rinpoche passed away.

Immediately after in October and November, we had some communication, especially with Yeshe Silvano Namkhai and the Namkhai Family, about the legacy of the copyrights and the intellectual property of Rinpoche. In the meantime the Atiyoga Foundation, in a practical way, became the leader or the manager of the SSF.

We decided to sign a new publishing agreement between the heirs of the Master: Yuchen, Yeshe and Rosa, and SSF/ATIF. It was good because it was possible to develop a clear relationship with Yeshe, Yuchen and Rosa and I suggested that they choose an administrator from a legal point of view for the legacy, the legal copyrights and the intellectual property. Yeshe accepted to be the legal administrator and representative for the heirs. So we have to remember he is



(left to right) Alex Siedlecki, Marco Baseggio, the notary Javier Martinez Del Moral, Oliver Leick, Pia Bramezza, Ester Escudero, Carlos Ramos, seated Nancy Simmons.

legally appointed by the rest of the family for that.

M: There is a question that many people have as to whether Shang Shung Foundation still exists or not?

MB: The process was complex because it was not easy to dissolve SSF since inside SSF is Shang Shung Publishing. It costs money to close a legal entity and to open a new one, and since we have to maintain the existence of SSP, there were some fiscal problems with the tax authorities in Italy with SSF, so we suspended the legal process, and we actually blocked it. So the old Board of the SSF renounced and we created a new Board with the agreement of the three founders still living: IDC, Merigar and Rosa, so now the Board is composed of three of us from the Atiyoga Foundation: me, Pia Bramezza and Oliver Leick and two more members of the Board who are representatives of the publishing house, Giovanni Totino, who is also the legal president of the SSF, and Artur Skura. So for a few more months SSF will still exist, until the end of April 2020, as a branch of Atiyoga Foundation and the publishing house will be a department of SSF as a branch of Atiyoga Foundation.

Inside the SSF there is also legally the library of Merigar and the archive which are in my opinion more connected to the task of a cultural Foundation than a cultural association. And there is the department of Tibetan languages that again, for fiscal reasons, tried to create a seat in Spain, but it is easier to have that department in It-

aly; but even with all this legal structure the leadership is clearly under The Atiyoga Foundation.

M: Is the Tibetan Medical program under the umbrella of The Atiyoga Foundation?

MB: Now we are creating our structure. This activity takes months and months. We are learning how to make an action plan, a strategic plan, for Atiyoga Foundation. There is a professional helping us, Lucia Lander living in Barcelona, part of the Dzogchen Community, she is very precious, and we are creating this plan with the method called Theory U¹. We discovered that Theory U is the same methodology that Yeshe Namkhai applied some years ago. That is interesting. Yeshe was happy we are using Theory U.

Now for us it is clear how The Atiyoga Foundation structure is. We have many services in the area of activities, health and wellbeing, interdisciplinary dialogues, languages and translation studies, and cultural awareness and expression, there are many, and our function is as advisors, mentors and collaborators as a board.

The activities are many; Tibetan Medicine/Integrative Medicine, Tibetan language, Yantra Yoga, Breathe, School of Khaita, Vajra Dance, Meditation and others. How are the departments managed and functioning concretely? Rinpoche asked the ATIF to serve as an umbrella, and to leave each department self sustaining, self responsible for their own activities. There are internal departments, external depart-

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_U

ments, and there is also a larger ecosystem. It is not really hierarchical; its' function is to improve partnerships and relationships.

So the internal departments are the Board – with five members – and the Board does fundraising, IT, finances, administration, program and volunteer management, and many other activities. We network for different projects inside the Dzogchen Community, we try, for example, to collaborate for the development of the Global Gar (Dzamling Gar) as a real Global Gar, through cultural relationships with important external cultural institutions, and we try to find some investors to complete the vision of our founder and master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Then there are departments. There is the Ati Movement and Mind Department, the director is Fabio Andrico, and inside of this department are all the practices that are at the core of the cultural heritage of our master, ie: Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, Breathe, Khaita, Presence and Awareness, or Santi Maha Sangha. These kinds of activities are more connected to the external world. Maybe we don't like to talk about external/internal because it is a dualistic approach, but just for the organization the ATIF is more connected with external activities as a tool of the Dzogchen Community, and the IDC, the Gars and the Lings are more connected to the internal activities.

Then there is a Department of Wellbeing and Medicine, with the headquarters in Dzamling Gar. The Director is Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo and the executive manager is Ilaria Faccioli. Now Mariela Dominguez Leandro is the secretary for the Atiyoga Foundation in Dzamling Gar, primarily for the Tibetan Medicine and Ati Movement and Mind programs, but also for the different independent sub areas.

Then there are external structures that are somehow part of ATIF, for example SSF still existing for a few more months and maybe there will be a new Foundation in Italy, maybe not, and the rest will remain. Shang Shung Publishing will become a cultural business company; there is a new law in Italy giving permission that a cultural business company can receive donations and also do business.

Then the archive, which is for the entire Dzogchen Community. The archive legally could be part of the foundation through Atiyoga Foundation Italy or directly under the Atiyoga Foundation or move legally inside Merigar (we still have to understand what is the best route), and the library. We

signed an agreement with Merigar and they accepted to manage the library at this moment, they are very helpful and kind because ATIF does not have the resources to pay for the library management, and the library is very, very precious. And then under the Italian legal entity is the school of Tibetan Language, which is directed by Fabian Sanders.

Then there is another department, which is Shang Shung Institute, because we want to maintain the brand, it's very precious and it has a history. It was created by Rinpoche so the brand is important, and there are many SSI's around the world, so we don't want to cancel it. Oliver Leick, from the SSF, is a bridge from all SSI's to The Atiyoga Foundation, to create a good and deep relationship.

Then there is MACO. Alex Siedlecki, is a member of the of the Atiyoga Foundation Board. MACO is still legally under Merigar but the long term direction, in my personal opinion as a lawyer, should be for MACO to become part of either the future Italian Atiyoga Foundation or the International Atiyoga Foundation as the Italian branch. I think that legally a museum cannot be part of an association, like Merigar, because a museum is looking to the world, not only for the members of a association.

So the last thing that I want to say is that now we are more or less finishing our strategic plan, and now we discover where we are. When we finish our strategic plan, we want to start with our strategic communication plan. We are really sorry to the people of Dzogchen Community that only a few people really know about us, because the process has been quite complex and it takes a lot of time. We want to do everything well done, so we are trying to create the accounting systems, software where everything is transparent, and all of this is time consuming. We are sorry that we have not yet started the strategic cultural communication plan.

Actually few departments already created their own landing page, such as Khaita, very well done, and Tibetan Medicine, also very well done. The idea is that also for the communication that each department be self sustaining and responsible, though we have to make a common communication strategy for all the areas/departments under ATIF umbrella.

We also have to establish a relation with Atiyoga Association, the responsible is Migmar Tsering. With ASIA we already did something together where we present-

ed the heritage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Italy. And we have a strong strategical connection with SSP for many reasons, and one is for the intellectual property rights of Rinpoche.

M: And how does the Atiyoga Association of Migmar Tsering fit in to all of this?

MB: Migmar created this association in China before we did and called it Atiyoga with the same logo as we have, to develop the activity of the Dzogchen Community in China but also to create a relationship for tourism, between China and Europe and especially Italy. Rinpoche informed me, and Migmar knows this, that in the future this will be a department in the Atiyoga Foundation. We will create a good partnership and we already spoke and we have to understand how to manage our relationship. We have the same name, but we have different activities.

M: So what are the immediate goals of the ATIF?

MB: Our direction consists of two concrete projects in this moment.

The first one is to come out with the guidelines for external courses; to take the leadership and give some direction – a light in the darkness – and this is a main project, part of the core.

And then, for the cultural aspect, we want to interface with the BIAS, Biennale International d'Arte Sacra Contemporanea (www.bias.institute). The main seat of BIAS is in Sicily with branches all around Europe and the world. Possibly Merigar and hopefully Dzamling Gar can host some works or some related event or cultural pavilions of BIAS, The next summer of 2020 BIAS will do several events/expositions for sacred contemporary art in several sites in Europe and outside of Europe, so we invite all the artists, architects, photographers, musicians, photographers, performers, set designers, and filmmakers of the Dzogchen Community to present their candidacy through the website www.bias.institute if they want to present some works. Possibly Merigar and hopefully Dzamling Gar can host some works, some related event, So these are our main projects at this time.

M: Thank for this information, Marco. In conclusion, let's review the next steps for The Atiyoga Foundation.

MB: For me the first most important activity in the near future is to communi-

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Atiyoga Foundation as an Umbrella

The words of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu
From a meeting with Mark Farrington, Steven
Landsberg, Fabio Andrico, and Andrea Dell'Angelo
December 7, 2017 at Dzamling Gar

The way of working, internally, externally and economically in the Dzogchen Community, is that all areas are autonomous, so that one person is not controlling everything. Everybody who is responsible for an area takes this responsibility and they report back and things become unified and everything becomes much easier; things are less expensive, we need less time and less people. Also then there is more possibility for more people because now in the Dzogchen Community we have so many branches, so many different aspects.

We need to make it possible for everyone to participate and to offer more general courses and present them in a more normal way. In this case we need to be a little more open. Open doesn't mean, for example, that the teaching or everything is open, but

that we need to offer some topics or areas in a different way; we need a different way of working. This is what I am thinking about when we talk about an umbrella foundation. It is fantastic if there is this possibility, but we need to check everything to see if we can actually make this foundation or not.

Studying, learning and developing, this is my idea. When I tell people my idea, some people feel afraid and they think my idea is dangerous. But we are present and we work with circumstances, not that someone has decided one way and we have to follow that. We always work with circumstances, we see how the circumstances are; we see if there is a possibility or not, if the circumstances are good or not.

This is how the Dzogchen Community works basically because we have open and not open teaching, so if we go in a perfect way, there is no problem. I am saying that we need different sections and different people responsible for these sections. The responsible people are checking and collaborating and then they report in our unified place.

We work with circumstances, we see how the actual situation is and then we work with that. We don't say everybody needs to be registered as only a cultural or religious association. In some countries it is better to be registered as religious and in some better as cultural. We should work with circumstances. When we work with circumstances things do not become heavy, everything is easier.

Now, for example, we have two foundations, two separate entities: Shang Shung Foundation and Dzogchen Community Founda-

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cate the existence and the function of the guidelines for public programming to all authorized instructors. We also have to implement them because if instructors ask to partner with ATIF, to promote their courses with our logo, we have to answer and give them information. Also in the guidelines there is the provision to partner with the ATIF; participants in the courses can become friends of the ATIF. They can offer a donation per year and receive a card (virtual), that certifies that, for example, the yoga class they are following is part of the legacy of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and they can receive the newsletter, participate in some events for free. These kinds of benefits are normal in a cultural foundation and an important step for us to go ahead in the world and for the future.

The next most important step is the dissolution of the SSF and creating the new entity for SSP. I think SSP is really strategic for our community. It's a very important asset for all the community for members/practitioners as owners of the legacy. The books and publications are very important.

M: This is a question about the participation of instructors and also the Community at large in the guidelines and branding of the Atiyoga Foundation. If instructors choose to go their own way using Rinpoche's methods and teachings, does the Atiyoga Foundation have any recourse?

MB: The Atiyoga Foundation is not a police force. We want to certify courses as part of the legacy of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and if the instructors want to be part of this legacy it is optional. They are free. If people appreciate to participate in this very precious network for the Dzogchen Community, that is very good and we appreciate and we are very happy. We think that the reputation of The Atiyoga Foundation will improve because of this, but we are also sure of this reputation because of the Founder. If the instructors do not want, really they are free to go ahead; it is everyone's personal choice and decision.

M: So you have communication with and keep the Namkhai Family updated as to the situation?

MB: Yes we are in communication with all three. For example I just made a large report to Yeshe Silvano Namkhai about the main projects of ATIF and its strategic plan and during that meeting he explained to us very effectively what the cultural heritage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu should be. Now we will have to understand how to implement this message concretely.

Also recently I talked to Yuchen Namkhai and Rosa Namkhai on different topics. Personally I think that the three of them are the first representatives of the Master's cultural and spiritual heritage, so the Foundation cannot ignore a good relationship with them. This is my personal deep conviction, indeed I would like that in the future that they enter somehow into the organization of ATIF, if they wish. The invitation is always open to them.

M: Thank you Marco very much for this very helpful clarification, for your work and your time. ©



tion (which is legally not a foundation but an association, *Ed*) and now they are becoming one. How do we become one? This doesn't mean we cancel everything, but inside these different areas there are different aspects, different kinds of work. So these areas all become autonomous and work in that way.

For the organization and the foundation, when you have two entities you need to spend money for two separate entities; we don't need this and in this way we are limiting many things and in the end we cannot integrate. So now we need to open more possibilities for many different aspects of the Dzogchen Community. This means we become larger and more open.

Then there is an umbrella, the umbrella of the Dzogchen teaching. The teachings are for all sentient beings, not only for monasteries, also for groups of practitioners. If there is a more elevated teaching, it would be a little more limited, and in the end everybody cannot understand and apply, so for that reason we have different areas, different aspects within the foundation.

For example, ASIA will remain autonomous, but ASIA will be connected with this umbrella. This is what we need. ASIA is the work of the Dzogchen Community, this is what we mean when we say ASIA is part of the Dzogchen Community. You do not necessarily have to say you are working *for* the Dzogchen Community, it is the work *of* the Dzogchen Community, but you know that and you deal with the umbrella of Dzogchen Community, because everything is unified there. This is what we need.

The umbrella will have another name and under this umbrella you will have the Dzogchen Community dealing with the teachings, for instance, ASIA dealing with Tibet, and etc. The foundation will be called The Atiyoga Foundation.

Everything will be integrated and there will be more possibility; all activities will enter there. That is why at Merigar (West, *Ed*) for example, we are making some tourism business, but these things cannot enter in our association, because there is no legal possibility. In society we need to make money, otherwise how can we live. We develop everything, but it doesn't mean that the Dzogchen teaching is becoming a business.

Maybe you didn't read our program, but you can read it and then you can understand. We have prepared everything with Marco. He has been working on this for a long time and reporting back to us. Sometimes we are correcting things.

Some people feel afraid when they hear about this change, but I am not afraid because until now, like Merigar (West, *Ed*) and Dzamling Gar, there have not been heavy mistakes. (*laughs*) I am not saying it should be like this, but we can work with circumstances and see how the possibilities are. We are researching because I don't know everything. Proceeding in this way means our activities can be more open.

We are not working only with Tibetan culture. We are also working with the open aspects of the Dzogchen Community. Through the teachings in this world there is benefit for all sentient beings. This is the main point, not only Tibetan culture. We are already working in this field of Tibetan culture, there are many aspects of Tibetan culture in Shang Shung Institute and Foundation. For example, we are studying, researching, doing translations, etc., ba-

sically we are working with Tibetans. So it is better if people don't have useless thoughts and feel afraid.

We should remember the teaching is for all sentient beings. We have so many conflicts and problems in this globe, if we can develop a little (it can help, *Ed*). Also the aspect of evolution really helps for peace, also politically for people if they develop this mental concept a little. For example, the teaching is related with that. When we say evolution, the main thing related to evolution is the Dzogchen teaching. Evolution is the Dzogchen teaching, the base is the Dzogchen teaching.

That is what we need to help to reeducate in people. That is why we are learning and slowly developing the different aspects, at least for dancing and singing, for example. I think it is not necessary to change so many things because (in the end, *Ed*) we are coordinating to work a little more together, not to remain separate.

With Santi Maha Sangha we need to develop more and organize still more. There are many things to do. When we say Dzogchen teachings, there is open Dzogchen teaching and not open. Not open is for practitioners who are seriously studying Santi Maha Sangha and going deeper. Open, for example, is when I am doing a retreat and I say to do Ati Guru Yoga, to apply presence, this is an example. At that moment at least people understand what the main point is. The main point in the Dzogchen teaching is that you know there is mind and nature of mind in everybody. Nature of mind is Dzogchen.

But we do not know what nature of mind is. We are studying, we are thinking and judging, but this is in time and space; for developing this understanding we should go beyond time and space. In this case, at least in an open teaching, we say to do Ati Guru Yoga and then relax. When you relax you are not thinking, you are in that state and that is symbol of contemplation. We introduce that. That is open. If you want to go more (deeply, *Ed*) study Santi Maha Sangha. Then you can understand what teaching is open and not open.

Also we have Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance, open and not open. That is related with the teaching of Dzogchen. In ASIA we don't have open and not open, it doesn't exist. (*laughs*).

In the Dzogchen Community we really have great potentiality of everything, there are so many things and so much understanding. We also need the possibility of all we can use, we can do something to develop on this globe. In this case we need to be more open, otherwise we could not do that. We need to make a Santi Maha Sangha program because we still don't have a very precise program, we are thinking and we should do, we should apply. For SMS there will be a meeting, to study and prepare in a precise way. Is very important. ✱

(The group thanks Rinpoche for his time, *Ed*)

Transcription Ilaria Faccioli
Edited narrative by Naomi Zeitz



The School for Tibetan Language and Translation

In 2019, during the first operative year of the school for Tibetan Language and Translation – a department of the Atiyoga Foundation – we have had several courses for the dissemination of knowledge of Tibetan Dharma language. We have tried to create interest in this basic instrument for any Dharma practitioner and show its beauty, depth, precision and incomparable value.

In particular we have had a beginners' weekend online course in English on reading and writing, a four weekend online and onsite course in Italian on reading, writing, words and grammar. We have also initiated Tibetan Dharma Language beginners' courses for Czech and Russian audiences, thanks to the beautiful, competent and

patient translation work done by Kateřina Drajsajtlová and Kirill Shilov. In summer we had a month long translation course for all levels with Fabian Sanders and a calligraphy workshop with Giorgio Dallorto. During the rest of the year a series of guided translation lectures based on the original Tibetan version of *The Precious Vase*, the reference text of the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha curriculum has been going on with a two-week frequency.

Audio/video recordings are available for all the above courses (except for the long translation course) and allow self-learning. If interested please contact m.pansa@shangshunginstitute.org or f.sanders@atiyogafoundation.org

In addition to that we have had several Drajyor courses, the system for representing Tibetan pronunciation with Latin letters that is so useful for a correct pronunciation of the practices of the Dzogchen Community. In collaboration with Merigar

and with Khaita Dances we have also organised some colloquial Tibetan courses with Lobsang Zatul focusing on the song lyrics.

For the year 2020 we will add four more weekends to conclude the beginners' online and onsite course for Italian speakers and seven weekends to continue the online beginners' course in English. We will also continue *The Precious Vase* guided translation lectures all over the year and the intensive summer translation course will be scheduled from the end of August to mid-September. The program will be soon published on <https://atiyogafoundation.net/en/studies/tibetan-language/> and on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/SchoolforTibetan/>

Hopefully we will also be able to go ahead with a very ambitious and comprehensive project for online study of Tibetan Dharma language, which is currently very much in need of funding.

On request we can offer Tibetan Dharma language courses, guided translation courses on texts of your choice, and Drajyor pronunciation courses in all Gars and Lings and – except for Drajyor – also outside the Dzogchen Community. If interested please contact the above emails. ©



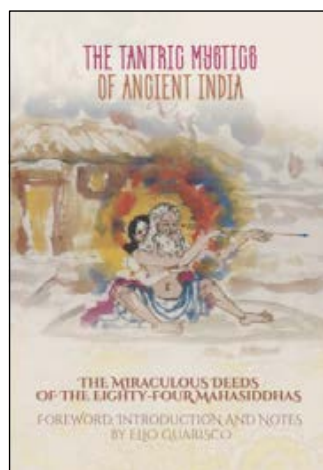
SHANG SHUNG FOUNDATION
INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR TIBETAN CULTURE

Shang Shung Institute Austria

Supporting the Ka-ter Project

Dearest friends and supporters of the Ka-ter translation project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria,

You have probably already seen and read the latest published product of the Ka-ter project, *The Miraculous Deeds of the Eighty-Four Mahasiddhas*. I was so fascinated when I read the excellent introduction of Elio and also the stories of the miraculous deeds of the 84 mahasiddhas. Two parts of this book really touched me deeply and therefore I want to share them with you.



The first one is of DHARMAPA, the teacher who did not meditate. When he was old and blind a dakini appeared to him in a dream and gave him instructions on transforming thoughts into wisdom:

*Imagine all things that exist as a lamp,
All continuing thoughts as the oil, and meditate that your mind is the wick.*

Then meditate that the wick blazes with the fire of wisdom.

Pour the oil of continuous thoughts into the lamp of everything that exists and lighting the wick of pure presence, look at the wish-fulfilling jewel of mind essence.

For five years he meditated in accordance with the words of the dakini and at the end he transformed thoughts into wisdom while his body surprisingly transformed into an eight year old child. He guided many students and at the end of his life he left for the pure land of the dakinis. (see pages 231–214)

The second one is about ACHINTA, the wealth-obsessed wood-seller. He was a poor man who had no other thought than



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that of becoming rich. One day the yogin Kambala passed by that place of Achinta and finally taught him how to use his creative imagination:

How can you get rich just by wanting it? It is like a barren woman's desire for a son. You just must let go of such dreams.

Imagine that your body is like space and in it your mind shines like many stars: that is the god of wealth. When you accomplish this meditation all that you desire will come to you.

The wood seller understood and supreme knowledge arose in him. He lived for 300 years and during that time, he guided beings by teaching them how to discover the ultimate state. (see *pages 169–170*)

These are just two shortened parts of this wonderful book. There is so much more to discover and understand in this book – I hope that you enjoy this book in the same way as I am enjoying it.

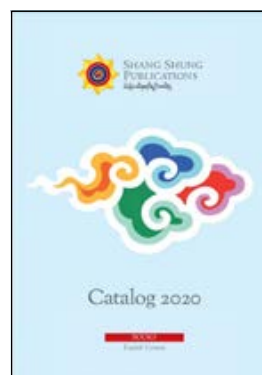
To be able to read these words of wisdom is actually only possible because our two main translators, Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco, have been working in such a concentrated, dedicated and diligent way for the benefit of all people for so many years.

I asked Adriano and Elio for a short update of their recent work and here are their reports:

Adriano wrote: "I have finished the Namkha book and the Necklace of Jewels, and now I am about to start reviewing the Tregchod book. Recently I had to spend some time for writing down the precise melodies for the Chod and I am thinking to publish a book with all the notations of the melodies we use, as this is also part of my job."

products and accessories, grouped in different categories. We hope the catalog will make it easier for you to locate the material for the support of your practice.

To get the new Catalog 2020 for free, please go to <https://sse-db.shangshunginstitute.org/products/catalog/request/>, register and download it.



The catalog 2020 can be useful for all practitioners, not just English speakers, because it presents the entire range of the works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu published by Shang Shung Publications. ☉

Elio wrote: "When I arrived in Lima, Peru, early this November I began to revise a draft translation of the Drathalgyur that Adriano Clemente and I commissioned Jim Valby a few years ago. If one believes in auspicious circumstances that work that I began in Lima was auspicious: I was told that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu completed his edition of Vimalamitra's Commentary to the Drathalgyur right there. At the beginning I spent a few days just to understand the title from more than 200 pages of Vimalamitra's Commentary that deals with that. After going on that high mountain pass near Tashigar South in Argentina I descended into the extraordinary and ordinary setting of the Tantra. I started to add orderly notes that probably will go into an introduction. The complexity of translation of this tantra are various, but they do not appear to be impossible to overcome. It just needs a lot of time, concentration, reflection and effort.

Even at the first glance of a few pages the *Drathalgyur* appears to be something extraordinary.

So just like picking up a intriguing and beautiful novel one does not feel to put it down until you have finished.

The Drathalgyur is so fascinating that one does not feel to put it down but rather continues to read puzzled by the way it can be rendered in English.

I hope this year I don't receive many invitation to teach, so that I can delve into this very root of all teachings."

So you see, the translation work is continuously going ahead and soon you will be

able to get the next published book based on the Ka-ter translation project.

As you know, the entire funds for the Ka-Ter project come from donations from generous donors of the International Dzogchen Community. Since 2002 the Shang Shung Institute Austria has been able to support the translators over all these years based just on your generosity.

In 2019 we had very high expenses for the various translation activities so that the donations that we received up to now actually did not cover all expenses. It would be wonderful if you could continue to support our activities, so that the continuation of our important work will be guaranteed also in the future.

Please send your donation to our bank account:

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Thank you so much for all your support and understanding, I wish you a very pleasant and relaxed time,

All the best to you,

Oliver Leick

Director of the Shang Shung Institute
Austria

Gersdorfberg 19, 8212 Pischelsdorf, Austria
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The Teaching of the Birds

Translation from Tibetan into Italian, Introduction, and Notes by Enrico Dell'Angelo
English Translation, Foreword, and A Tribute to Enrico by Maria Simmons

The *Precious Garland of the Teaching of the Birds* is a delightful allegory in which profound Buddhist truths are uttered in a poetic manner by a bodhisattva cuckoo and the council of birds attending his teachings. This English edition is a translation of the Italian rendering by the late Enrico Dell'Angelo (1954-2016) of the original Tibetan text, the *bya chos rin chen 'phreng ba*. Our wish is to honor his memory with the presentation of this book.

The manuscript translated by Enrico seems to correspond to the edition in *umé (dbu med)* cursive script in the Buddhist Digital Resource Center catalog where the authorship is stated as unknown. The text is in the native homiletic folk tradition of literature and classified as belonging to the literary genre in the style of aphoristic verse known as *Legshe (legs bshad)*, songs of advice, popular among a wide Tibetan audience. These are related to the *subhāṣita* (well-explained) format of eloquent sayings in Sanskrit verse. Although this enlightening tale with a cast of birds has been regarded as anonymous it is interesting to note that recently a number of scholars have come to agree that the *bya chos rin chen 'phreng ba* can be attributed to the immensely gifted Tenth Karmapa Chöying Dorje (*chos dbyings rdo rje*) (1604–1674).

Enrico's discerning translation of this fable and its evocative illustrations drawn to his specifications encourage us to imagine the birds as they soar over pristine Himalayan snow peaks and mountain cascades. Flocking together, they alight deep in a forest where they present themselves to the Wise Cuckoo and one by one, each with its quirks and heartfelt declaration, receives his Dharma advice.



Illusions similar to dreams, such are lives in transmigration.

Whatever one sees, what is its substance?

The elegant dwellings built in earth, stone, and wood,

The wealth that provides food, clothing, and ornaments,

The armies and the attendants that surround the mighty,

All are examples of illusion, evanescent like a rainbow in the sky.

Deluded are the beings that consider them real.

Relatives that converge, aunts and uncles, nephews and nieces, brothers and sisters,

Spouses that come together, wives and children,

People from the same land, neighbors who gather merrily,

Have the nature of friendships in a dream, like fleeting encounters among travelers.

Deluded are the beings that consider them real.

The illusory body composed of blood and lymph,

The hidden inclinations elicited by misdeeds in the past,

The mind that develops various attachments,

These are like flowers in autumn or clouds passing through the sky.

From the song of the cuckoo, the Great Bird

Longsal Teachings

Dear Vajra Family,
Two volumes of Longsal teachings, Three and Four, are now available as e-books.

Other volumes, except Nine, will follow in the next weeks.

The volumes One and Two will be published last since they are the earliest translations and will be revised on the basis of the written and oral commentaries Rinpoche gave us during the last 20 years.

Volume Three contains two upadeshas and the histories of their discoveries: *Preliminaries of the Path of Ati* (a commentary for which was published recently as *The Crucial Preliminaries of the Path of Ati*) and *All-Penetrating Wisdom*.

Volume Four contains *The Main Points of the view Totally Beyond the Conceptual Mind*, a special upadesha of Garab Dorje written down in its final form in 2002 on the isle of Margarita. Written in prose, it contains extraordinary and clear explanations on the main points of the Dzogchen view.

Best wishes,
Shang Shung Publications Team

News from Shang Shung Publications Italy

If you plan to visit Merigar, please stop by and meet us in our new shop in Arcidosso, Via Davide Lazzaretti 90.

<https://shop.shangshungfoundation.com/en/content/22-our-shop>

Best wishes from Shang Shung Publications!
Shang Shung Publications Team

Giovanni Totino
giovannitotino@gmail.com



Multicolored Impermanence

Premila Van Ommen

In the week of prayers and global celebrations for our late beloved Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, the Drepung Kongpo Khangtsen monks, belonging to the great Drepung Loseling Monastery (also known as the Nalanda of Tibet for its high academic standards), visited our London UK centre, Lekdanling, to create a sand mandala. We were honored to have these esteemed visitors spend a few days from 5–8 December building a sand mandala in Lekdanling until its contents were swept and poured into the waters of Victoria Park in a dissolution ceremony on the

final day. This was the first time to view a sand mandala construction at Lekdanling for both regular and new visitors, who were warmly welcomed by the prayer flags at the entrance. For many, it was an opportunity to witness firsthand such a creation and query the monks about this practice.

As the Gen-la, head of the monastery overseeing the work, explained, the creation of the mandala was both an offering as well as form of meditation, for the artists as well as the public witnessing. Mandalas, or cosmic maps, come in many forms with traditional Tibetan Buddhist arts. They can both be two-dimensional, such as sand mandalas or those found in thangka paintings, or three-dimensional such as architectural wooden sculptures. These help visualization during meditation and empowerments, aiding in the creation of mandalas in one's mind. The complexity



of each mandala depends on the teachings they are meant to convey, through which deities and sacred texts. In the case of the one constructed at Lekdanling, the mandala was for meditation on world peace and compassion through Chenrezig, or Avalokiteshvara. Specific colors in the mandala were attributed to symbolize the five Buddhas as well particular elements such as earth, fire or water. Motifs such as the lotus flower were iconic objects associated with Avalokiteshvara. The bright colors of the dyed grains of sand were modifications of the older practice of making sim-

>> continued on the following page



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ilar mandalas in Tibet, where colors were originally created from crushed rocks and semi-precious stones. The practice, taken to India, adapted its base materials due to expenses and unavailability. More modern pigments were used to beautifully dye grains of sand, and then carefully placed through metal funnels gently tapped and shaken to make shapes on a flat surface.

At Lekdanling, visitors were able to observe how the placement of each detail and color of sand were guided by a template for the mandala, drawn and measured according to exact ratios of sacred geometry. The construction itself is a meditative process, approached with prayers. Images were constructed through practice and memory in careful precision as everyone marvelled how the monks were able to build something without a visual guideline save a few lines for measurements.

On the final day, monks prayed and brought out special instruments as part of the chanting process, asking everyone present to also meditate on bringing benefit to all sentient beings. The dissolution also had a specific order, with grains being swept into the middle in an ordered manner. Here was the lesson in impermanence through many colors, each colored sand carefully placed, prayed and meditated over through a number of days to build a mandala of wonderful beauty, only to be swept up reminding us of the transient nature of all phenomenon. The colorful grains were swept carefully into a jar and brought over to nearby Victoria Park, a bright spectacle for the British public watching monks in billowing robes. Further prayers, chants and music were played through sacred Tibetan instruments as the grains were poured into the waters for adults, children, animals (yes animals!) and other beings in the park to reflect on. Each aspect of the mandala's construction and dissolution touched many witnesses one way or another, whether through glimpses in real life, or live streamed and broadcast through the internet. We were blessed to be able to wonder on and witness ephemerality in such a beautiful way through an exercise of art, craft and heritage. We would like to thank the Drepung Kongpo Khangsten monks, Maureen Pugsley, Anne Bancroft, Jon Kwan and all other volunteers for making the event happen, a truly memorable way to round off all the events for the end of the year with Shang Shung Institute UK. ©



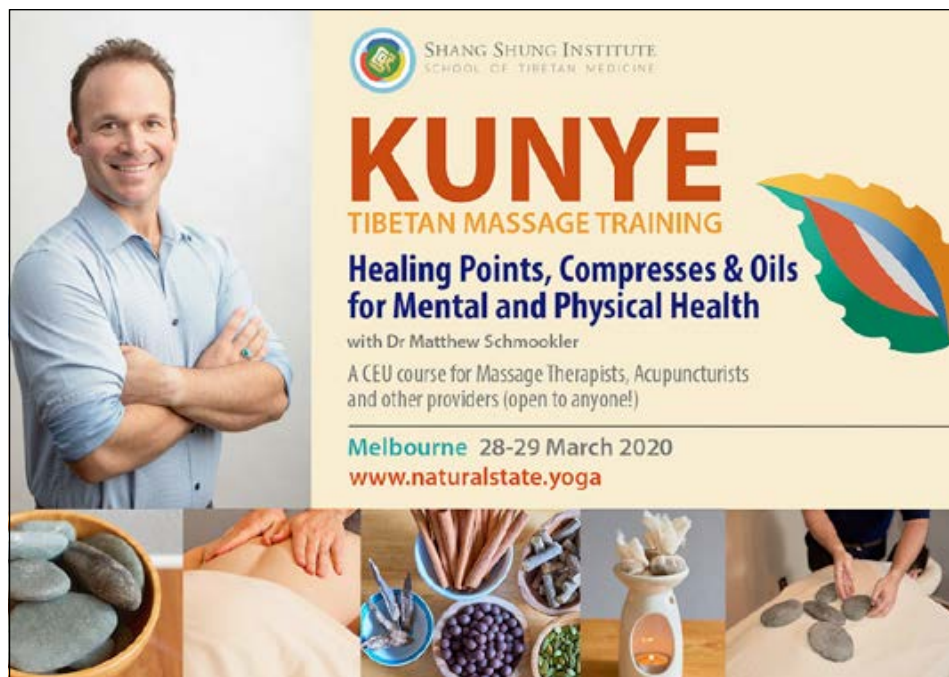
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MenSana: guaranteeing adequate nutrition for the children of the schools of Dupcheshwori, Aarukharka and Thangdor (Nepal) through the renovation and the enlargement of the canteen and kitchen.

The terrible earthquake that struck Nepal in 2015 inflicted a very deep wound on the whole country: 8,800 victims, including almost 2,300 children, over 875,000 buildings including homes, schools and health facilities, destroyed.

For children and families in the vast mountain areas surrounding the capital of Kathmandu, such as those in the Rasuwa district classified by the government as "severely affected" by the earthquake, the social, economic and emotional distress is still profound given the total destruction that surrounds them.

ASIA intervened immediately after the earthquake to bring relief to the population and remained with a project to rebuild schools and develop agriculture. Now, once the primary need for school infrastructure was met, another important need has emerged: **taking care of the condition of child nutrition, both to improve the health of children and increase the schooling rate, and to encourage the socio-economic development in these extremely poor areas.**

In fact, **in Rasuwa the literacy rate is 54%** and is much lower than the national average of Nepal which is 81%. Sending children to school here involves a number of concerns for parents: the long stretch of road, even **more than an hour's walk from the most distant villages, crossing rivers and roads often collapsed due to heavy rains, and the impossibility to have lunch at school, discourage school attendance.**

After meeting the parents and the teachers of the schools, ASIA decided to accept their requests and to **equip the three schools of Dupcheshwori, Aarukharka and Thangdor – rebuilt after the earthquake – with a canteen, a kitchen, all the necessary furnishings, and equipment.** In order to guarantee its sustainability and help the local community to start this new activity, the project also foresees a **supply of food for the first six months.**



The request of the Rasuwa community is supported by alarming data on the condition of infant nutrition in Nepal: 36% of children suffer from growth arrest and 53% from anemia, while 50% do not consume the largest sources of protein. More generally, **41% of Nepalese children suffer from chronic malnutrition**, with serious consequences of **increasing the risk of infant mortality and compromising their cognitive functions.**

For this reason, the project will also focus on the quality of food, including an **expert nutritionist** to set up the preparation of balanced meals with a healthy supply of energy and to **train school staff and mothers of students on the basic rules of healthy nutrition and health and hygiene education.**

How to participate in the #MenSana campaign

- * With 20 Euro you can provide a child with a healthy meal each day for a month
- * With 54 Euro you can give a healthy meal a day to a child and the training in nutrition to his/her mother
- * With 100 euro you can participate in rebuilding the canteen and the kitchen

You can learn more on
<http://www.namaskarfornepal.org/en/>

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Wonderful Wednesday

Constance Soehnlen and Laura Graci

December 4, 2019

Imagine 70 children (4th graders) going to public school in Rome, Italy and there encountering two yantra yoga teachers ready to present an hour lesson of Kumar-Kumari Children's Yoga as part of their school day. Yes, this can happen and is happening here in Rome and also in Naples.

Thanks to ASIA's recent project "Distinti ma non Distanti", (a project implemented in Italy, funded by the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation AICS, with the main aim of raising awareness and spreading three of the most important values of Buddhist philosophy: empathy, non-violence and interdependence), Kumar Kumari's yantra yoga is presented to four different 4th grade classes in two different public schools in Rome.

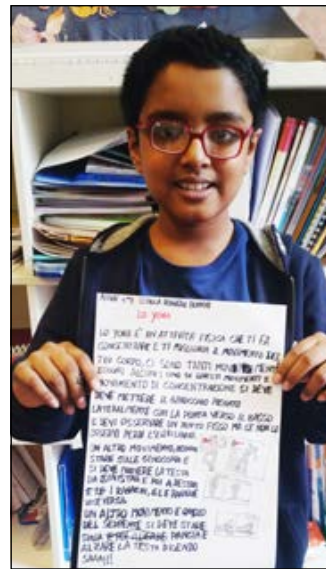
We (Laura Graci, Yantra Yoga and Kumar Kumari instructor and Constance Soehnlen, Kumar-Kumari teacher) start our Wednesdays at Plesso Bonghi, near the area of Vittorio Emanuele and Colle Oppio. From 9:30 to 11:30, we have three back-to-back classes in a small, well lit gym. Each class has from 22 to 25 children. We then walk over toward Via Cavour, stopping to 'refuel' and eat something, for our afternoon class 2:30 to 3:30 pm at the Elementary School Alfredo Baccarini in the Esquilino -Monti area.

Every group we have seem to jump out of their shoes, leaving them behind in the corridor as they run to claim a yoga mat, preferably next to a favorite friend or two. We have introduced the yoga mat as 'one's own space', what you can consider a 'small peaceful island'. From the beginning we started with simple guidelines for the class. Take care of and observe yourself in this space, listen and follow the best you can, concentrate on the sounds and your breathing as you coordinate movements. This framework encouraged collaboration and respect between each other.

This is, of course, ideally speaking. Now the 'real picture', as we add 8-9 year old boys and girls with their energy and emotions. All the groups loved to talk and joke around. Sometimes a group would find it hard to settle. We found after a week or so



Teachers Laura Graci and Constance Soehnlen.



that 'warm ups' didn't help so much, rather we started with the opening Kumar-Kumari exercise, the beginning breathing, finding the sounds and movements a way to calm and set the tone of the class. A choice of two or three *tsjong* movements was a perfect way to loosen up. We used

different children as assistants in front of the class who soon reminded their classmates to 'keep your backs straight and shoulders open, relaxed'. Over the months, we added new movements (from the *lung-sang* and *tsandul* groups) and learned the *yantra*, cobra.

Enjoy Tibet

When Culture and Dharma
create the Perfect Mandala

November 1–3, 2019
Dzamling Gar

Anca Rusu

Though it was intended to be only a Tibetan traditional dancing workshop with the graceful dancer and choreographer Tenzin Phakdon, *Enjoy Tibet* transformed itself over night into a cultural event, a beautiful display of everything the Dzogchen Community has to offer to the world and its members, not only here, in Dzamling Gar, but all over the world.

Our guest performer and instructor, Tenzin Phakdon, lives in London with her family and was invited to Dzamling Gar after participating in the Khaita performance at the London Museum in March, 2018. (see <http://melong.com/khaita-british-museum>). Tenzin is a wonderful dancer and teacher; people were enthralled with her fluid, beautiful and seemingly effortless movements.

The intensive three day workshop (1–3 November) became the center of a harmonious mandala. Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo, Director of the Shang Shung Institute's



International School of Tibetan Medicine, opened the weekend event with a talk on Tibetan culture; the event also offered appealing events with a sunset drenched Khaita presentation of our skillful Dzamling Gar dancers and for the first time, precious insights on sacred art offered by our Community artist and graphic designer Paola Minelli. And last, but not at all least, *Enjoy Tibet* ended on the 3rd of November with a captivating cuisine workshop offered by our “star”, Tenzin Phakdon (who taught us how to make momos in all the five traditional shapes), then an inspiring and informative talk on Diet and Lifestyle based in the principles of Tibetan Medicine with Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo, followed

by a festive and extremely tasty momo themed lunch.



Momo workshop.

» continued on the following page

We decided, after a couple of weeks, to divide the class and work in smaller groups (in the gym and a small theatre space) Here we concentrated on first practicing the sounds, then coordinating those sounds, breathing in and out to the set of movements. We could see and hear each child individually and work more closely in a smaller group. AND in smaller groups, it was easier to experience a quieter dimension, which led to silent moments. Laura used a set of small cymbals to call attention to a moment of peace. One of the groups naturally sat cross-legged, some in the lotus position to do what they considered ‘yoga’.

Definitely one of the most difficult elements of the class was lying down for a pause or final quiet moment at the end of the class. Quieting your body and mind is truly difficult in our ACTIVE lives. And children have so much to do between, schooling, homework, afterschool football, karate, dance, chess, music class...we can

go on and on. We hoped by introducing silence and this calm space that the children found a time to do nothing and feel what was happening.

As a way to encourage reflection, the class would often end with a big circle asking each child to describe in one word how he/she felt after yoga. We worked in all the classrooms a couple of times over this 2 month period asking the children to explain through drawings, words, whatever form, what kumar-kumari yoga is all about. This picture wasn't for their teachers or adults. Instead we asked that they explain yoga to other children, maybe one of the younger classes in the school. This work in progress was so revealing, fun, and creative. We now have a book to leave for each class as a memory of this experience.

All the children benefited. Some children who find it hard to settle or have particular difficulties, are calmer overall. Working on the energy level through the sounds and breathing, have, we hope, made

each child more observant of how they move and feel.

In a way, we can say we have given a small treasure to each child. And of course we have to give our thanks to our teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, for this precious teaching. Thank you ASIA for letting us be part of it, to ASIA director Andrea Dell'Angelo, to Lorenza Sebastiani, project manager of “Distinti ma non Distanti”, to Roberta Marranca, Stefano Ricco and the other people involved. We send our gratitude to Patrizia Vari who coordinated for Plesso Bonghi and Baccarini, to the 4th grade teachers and children who all helped us! This wonderful project has opened the doors to teaching Kumar Kumari yantra yoga in the public school system here in Italy. May this be only the beginning! ©

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Friday and Saturday evening Tibetan Games were played in the cafeteria: bagchen, ming mang, the Game of Liberation and cho (dice). Some people were learning and some veterans just playing and enjoying.

The event is a milestone in online participation, as *Enjoy Tibet*'s videos reached over 12,000 people, from which more than 4000 danced Khaita along with us in their homes during our daily practice and learned the Tibetan steps with Tenzin! You can imagine the delight and excitement of the team in charge of the event!

Not to mention that the momo workshop, which was followed by more than 20 people online from all over the world, so I am sure that soon we will have some "five star" momo dinners in our lings. Please, go live so we can also admire your "momo skills"!

Enjoy Tibet was also an auspicious opportunity for all the permanent or temporary residents of Dzamling Gar to join hands in organizing a beautiful cultural event, putting aside differences of all kind.

Enjoy Tibet had a team of more than 25 people working to ensure that everything goes according to plan and though many surprises occurred (of the unwanted and unexpected kind, of course), the harmony between the team members remained steadfast, offering the best ground for amazing results to manifest.

Let us enjoy only events that become an opportunity to practice compassion and enthusiasm in our Sangha! ©



Playing bagchen.

Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo Speaks about Tibetan Culture, Health and Wellness

Introduction to Tibetan Culture Week at Dzamling Gar
November 1, 2019

Tibetan Cultural Week
from Nov 1–3, 2019, Dzamling Gar

First of all I want to say thank you for coming here and thank you to the team who organized this workshop.

As you know the Tibetan culture is very big, it is as deep as the ocean and as high as the sky. That is what we say. So inside this large deep thing I will try to go into the things that we do. Today I will not go into the history, but I will go into the living part of Tibetan culture. In Tibetan culture there are many things, but for the last 3000 years it is more focused on the inner teachings or inner knowledge.

So, outer knowledge and inner knowledge are slightly different. Outer knowledge is based on the material realm and inner knowledge is more based on your own elements – you observe your own body and your own mind. That is more like the Tibetan culture in the last several thousand years, more focused on the inner. Tibet offers a lot of great things, but some things are sort of culturally damaged. When we are balancing, there are many aspects that benefit humanity.

When we are looking at the Tibetan culture, there are ten aspects to learn. The ten aspects are what we call རིག་པའི་གནས་བརྟུ (rig p'i gnas bcu), there are the five major and five minor. One of the major ones we call བོལ་རིག་པ། (bzo rig pa), is making things, like art and things made by hand. The second we call སྒྲ་རིག་པ། (sGra rig pa) sound. Sound is also like sound of the word along with grammar, and the གསལ་བ་རིག་པ། (gsob ba rig pa) means to listen to the sound and observe the sound. When we look at the Tibetan alphabet, each letter connects to the other, each letter has its own element, and each element is therapy. So, when we look at the alphabet sound 'A' – 'Ka', you try to observe where the sound is coming from. Sound has a root where it is coming from, so if you think that when you are learning



a new language and think all the sounds are the same, if you really observe and listen well, each sound has a different way to appear, like the origination is lower abdominal, mid-abdominal, some of them upper abdominal, some of them are from the throat, and some of them are from these places in the head area. Then we have eight origins of the sound, including the nasal sound. Then another one is the thoracic sound and these are related to the signs of the healing.

When we look at the healing, what are we trying to heal? If we say 'there is a human', it means there is a body that we can see, energy that we cannot see, and the mind that we cannot see. If we look at these three things together, unified, it is a human. The body we can see, energy and sound we can hear, but energy of the mind we cannot see or hear. If one of these energies is not working well, then we have different names. That does not mean the person is of lower quality or something wrong, we are not saying that. It is slightly based on their body – energy – mind function, and there are slightly different names. So, when we talk about healing, we are talking about the healing of the physical body, the energy of the body, and the mental condition of the body. This is the science of the healing. Sometimes people think that Tibetan doctors will check the pulse and give a pill, and this is not the finality of our medicine. Our medicine tries to heal the body, mind, and energy; this is healing.

Another side of Tibetan medicine is to learn is the debate system, we call it the ཚད་མ་རིག་པ། (tshad ma rig pa). That is the base of logic as a tool. Do we know there is suffering? Yes, we all know suffering. Do we want to stay with suffering? No, no one wants to stay with suffering. Do we want relief of suffering? Yes, all sentient beings

want to get out of the suffering but, still we are in suffering. No one wants to stay in suffering, but it's like we are on a road running around and we want to get off the road and we are still there. So, the debate system puts a lot of logical information for debate; should we get off at the first exit, yes or no? Once we get off at the first exit then what happens where we get off? This is not the main topic, but it is sort of how we debate (why, how and so forth).

Then the last one we call *ནང་དོན་རིག་པ།* (nang don rig pa), which is inner knowledge. So, inner knowledge is for when we observe ourselves. In one of Rinpoche's videos he discusses what he has been teaching to the Dzogchen Community for the last 40 or 50 years. It is in every teaching that he is giving, the top and highest teaching, so we are all very lucky that we are receiving this teaching. Many times Rinpoche said, "Now is the time that we need to do evolution, not revolution." Once we learn that knowledge from him we don't need to go to other people to convince them, we need to practice by ourselves. We practice and practice, and we try to obtain that in the long term, but those goals are a bit far. Now we try to become a person who is caring, understanding, and respectful – these are some of the goals to learn the inner teaching. So, those parts are what we call the five major signs to study. We call them "major", because they are totally connected to a human life change – like a "healing."

Then we have the five minor aspects. One of the five minor aspects is astrology. Astrology is minor and is important to help us understand the outer nature put into the inner nature – to understand the integration of outer and inner. It is like when outside we plant a flower – the first changes are growing, then getting green, then having a flower, then fruit, and then all the leaves fall down. This is like our body that is constantly changing. This also happens in the sky – the constellations are changing. So, this is the value to study astrology. Another thing in the Tibetan culture is that astrology is inseparable from daily life. In ancient times when they were making clothes, new dresses, when they were cutting the material for the dress, they would do the astrology to find out on which day they should make the dress, because clothes have an important part to play in our lives. Clothes also protect us – protect us physically from the weather, climate, whatever might happen to us. Clothes are also important emotionally since there is

an inner as well as outer protection, as well as our secret protection. So, clothes have a lot of meanings.

Also, when we buy animals, or we adopt a dog, any kind of things that we do related to our individual lives, we do astrology in our daily lives, like when should we buy a horse – because the horse is your vehicle, and it also relates to a person's life. All those types of things we put into astrology – to determine which day is good, which day is not good. Another time we use astrology is when we need a new medicine, in Western medicine when the doctor does not know what is happening we are sent to have a diagnosis with a different machine. But in Tibetan medicine we do not have the opportunity to use these machines, so what do we do? Anytime a doctor is not able to understand, we use astrology to find what is happening to this person, and therefore can treat the problems of our clients. It is not only what is happening, but also how we should treat them. So, astrology is very helpful in every event or activity for the individual life, family life or community life; as it relates to us astrology is a very helpful tool, then we can determine how we should move.

Then there is poetry and literature. Poetry is very important for determining different things, and one of the main goals of the poetry is to give the sound of healing to the person; not that you become a professor of poetry and then say harsh words to your neighbors. This is not the goal or use of poetry. We say: *སྒྲན་ངག།* (s Nyan ngag), words are not like a sharp knife, but can cut into a person's heart. If someone punches you somewhere, you can go to the hospital, you can put ice, someone can help, can comfort. But, if someone says something to you to hurt your heart, we cannot go to the hospital, we cannot put ice, and you are suffering and I cannot help you. How can the doctor help? So, this is also a big cause of disease, so to learn good and nice speech is important when treating another person.

Then another one is what we call the *ཐེབ་སྒྲུབ།* (sDeb sByor), or literature. There are *མཛན་བཞེད།* (mngon brJod), different ways of saying the same topic. An example is when I am writing a poem about the sun, *ནིམ།* (nyi ma) in Tibetan is the sun. So, if we are writing a poem about sun, and generally we call sun *nyima*. So if you write poetry about the sun and you are always referring to the sun over and over again as *nyima*, so you say *nyima, nyima, nyima, nyima, it is*

not nice. It is not nice to hear. Then we say a different way of saying sun *མུན་སེལ།* (mun sel), then there are many words to refer to the sun to make it nice and the poetry becomes soft. Then for each number, like one, two, three, and four there are words – for each number we have a meaning for interpreting through these words and telling the meaning for that number. Then another one is *རྫོག་གཤམ།* (zlos gar) means to repeat, and that is like the art of the dance. So, all this is what we call the ten signs to learn, but in Tibet it is understood that all these ten signs are for the well being of humanity and we use for healing.

When we are talking about Tibetan Medicine, there are two main types of doctors. One treating the root of the disease, and one treating the result or the fruit of the disease. So, *རྩ་བཅས།* (rGyu 'bras) means to remove the disease or the cause of the disease and the result of the disease. Why did Buddha teach 84,000 volumes of the teachings? He taught this way because five people have five different ideas. We say

མི་གསུམ་བཅུར་སྒྲུབ་བ་བགསུམ་བཅུ། *མཛོད་གསུམ་བཅུར་རྩེ་ལྔ་ཡུག་བཅུ* which means 30 people have 30 different ideas, and 30 yaks have 60 homes – so, with all these different ideas agreement is not easy. For that reason, 84,000 volumes of the teaching are needed to understand yourself and where your problems are in order to soften the three poisons.

You know the three poisons which are hatred, attachment, and ignorance. How many problems we create through ignorance. We cannot imagine. I am doing yoga and then something happens to my leg; it is not the problems of the yoga, it is because we are ignorant when we are doing the yoga. I am walking on the stairs and I fall down – it is not the problem of the stairs – it is the problem of ignorance, we are distracted. Those are small problems, but many other problems follow. How many problems do we create through our ignorance? How many problems we create through our hatred? Ideally, since we were born we went to elementary school, middle school, high school and college, we should have many friends. Forget many friends, maybe we cannot even work together with one neighbor. You know, why are we not working with our neighbors? Because you had another idea, selfish or whatever; we are self-centered.

We always think the problem is with the neighbor. There is a Tibetan joke where they say: I am like a reincarnation of a Rin-

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Khaita App Is Now Online

Welcome to khaita.com!

Khaita.com is a free web app (a website optimised for mobile phones) that will unite all Khaita songs, dances, lyrics, translations and commentaries on your mobile phone or desktop.

You can now enjoy singing the new Barsam collection through the app!

Choose your lyrics in Drajyor or Tibetan, with English translation when available (we'll be adding new lyrics daily).

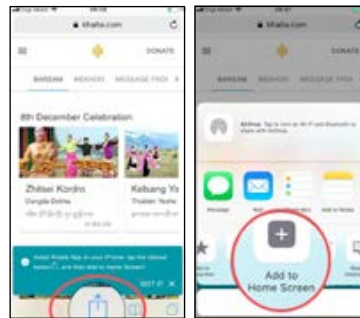
New Khaita video intro by Soledad Suarez is featured in About Khaita section <https://khaita.com/about>

Khaita.com is work in progress: this is a trial version that will be further improved for public release in 2020.

We plan to add more functionality and upload more content, including transla-



tions in different languages and video commentaries by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.



Please help us to improve khaita.com for you, donate here <https://khaita.com/donate>

Very special thanks to Alexandr Zheleznov & Dzamling Gar Dzogchen Community

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and Italian, English editing

And to many more!

<https://khaita.com/ourteam>

To add Khaita icon to your phone screen, go to khaita.com and it will automatically suggest it to you through a pop-up message at the bottom of your screen.

· Android: just tap on pop-up message at the bottom of your screen

· iPhone: click on "Share" button on the bottom of your screen, and then "Add to Home Screen"

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poche, I am a precious, I am, I am. Then how many problems do we create with attachment – all those mental problems, all those རྩུང་ (rLung) problems. Most diseases, when we go to the root, are somehow linked to attachment. So, for that reason, when one doctor works to cure us from the root or cause of the disease and that did not work then the three humors are disturbed རྩུང་ (rLung), མཁྲིས་པ། (mkhris pa) and བད་ཀླན། (bad kan) then there is another doctor who helps us more on the physical level, then it can work. I am not going to say that we Tibetans can control the three poisons. No. But through those great masters' tireless help to those generations, centuries and centuries working in our land, this accumulation of knowledge can help, even though we have had many high moments, low moments, sorrowful moments, happy moments, but in a dignified way we are able to keep the peace. So these are the things that we learn from this inner understanding, even though we don't understand totally, but we try to understand the inner.

We try to understand the nature of impermanence and then to understand of the main function or purpose of life, human life. The Buddha also said རང་གི་ལུས་ལ་ དཔེ་ཡོང་ལ། གཞན་ལ་གནོད་པ་མ་བྱེད་ཅིག་ – to take your body as an example, and to not harm

to any other, anything else around you. So any other is a human is one of them, all the animals are one of them, and also all the nature is one of them; flowers, grass, trees – each of them have their own life of growing and dying, growing and dying and this is life. Many people say that we are practicing Buddhism, then why do we eat meat? There are several reasons that we need to eat meat. But in the way the way of the ancient Tibetan eating system, meat is just to survive, not for enjoyment. And in the course of a year, we try to kill one of the biggest animals that we have, we try to kill as little life as possible. A quarter of the meat we eat in the winter, fresh, then a quarter of the meat we make like a prosciutto that we eat in the spring time, a quarter of the meat we dry it and eat in the summer and autumn, and a quarter of the meat we offer to the monasteries and monks to do practice for the life for what we killed. So, in the water there are fish, in the sky there are birds, flying animals are there, in the middle part are the wild animals freely moving. So in Tibetan culture we try to respect the animal life as we love our own life.

Another thing in Tibetan culture is that we respect all scriptures, letters, and books, because we as Tibetan people, we as a community of people, practice all the

time. That is why we respect these precious books. Books are where the letters become knowledge, and then there is the proverb བཀའ་ཐོག་སྐུ་མ་བཟུག་ (bka' thog sku ma bzag) that even if there is a Buddha statue, we should not put it on the books. The book is more important than the statue. The book contains all the energy, knowledge and scriptures and through the voice energy, we receive this knowledge from the enlightened masters. So, we should not put the books on the ground, move, and then put things on top of these books, go and get the Ganapuja food and walk on the books. This is not good. When we do these types of things, it shows that we are still ignorant, still not really understanding the higher meaning of the teaching.

So, thank you, this is a very brief summation of some very important things in Tibetan culture.

©

School of Tibetan Medicine:

<http://www.shangshung.org/TMedu/>

Transcribed by Carl M. Stepath

Tibetan and Wylie with the kind assistance of

Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

Edited by Naomi Zeitz

Khaita Dance School

Educational Program for
New Instructors and Experts



KHAITA
DANCE
SCHOOL

The Khaita Dance School has recently organised a three-year training program to prepare new Khaita instructors and experts. The aim of the program is to create an important 'bridge' through Khaita that will help us to bring the values and the message of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu outside the Dzogchen Community. Khaita is a very effective way to do this. The training program aims to give participants some basic tools so that they can bring Khaita not only to the general public but also potentially into places such as schools as well as into residential homes for the elderly and the disabled. Dance is a fantastic tool to keep people moving and feeling young and it can also be therapeutic. At the moment, there are not many instructors, so the first step in the program is to increase the number of experts.

The training program will last for three years, with three courses per year, each lasting a week, each at a different time and place. Basically the training will cover three areas: one part will be to develop awareness through movement and sound, while a second area is the learning process, learning how to become an instructor but also how to organise and prepare shows, and how to create projects, present ourselves, and propose activities. The third area will be about culture.

The program plans to develop more experts and instructors, so in addition to the three weekly courses, there will be workshops on some specific topics. For example, in the coming year the Khaita Dance School is organising a workshop on voice that will be led by Giovanna Natalini at Merigar West in June. This workshop will be about singing together, and how to sing while dancing. The workshops will be open to everybody interested, not only those who are following the training. Later there will be another workshop about communication and public speaking, then others on topics such as how to write a project, how to prepare a business plan, and so on. There will also be a university professor who teaches methodology of dance research running some workshops. Of course in a single weekend it is not possible to learn every-

thing but participants can at least have a base from which to develop.

The first year of the Educational Program will be more dedicated to learning the base of the dances, how the material for Khaita is structured, where to find it, and acquiring basic knowledge of the dances. At the end of the first year training, participants will be able to lead Khaita in an informal way.

The second and third years will be dedicated to how to teach, how to organize events, and put together programs. At the end of the third year, those who would like to become instructors will take an

exam and undergo supervision with the Khaita Committee and if they pass will receive a Khaita instructor certificate. In order to do the exam, one should have participated in all three weeks training every year.

The training program for 2020 has already planned three weeks of courses. The first will be at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, in March. March 10–11 will be two days of Drajyor because if someone wants to become an instructor, they should study Drajyor.

- The first course of the training will take place March 12–18.
- The second week of training in 2020 will be at Merigar West, Italy, June 12–19.
- The third week is at Phendenling, Czech Republic, October 24–31.

The project is in collaboration with the Atiyoga Foundation. harmonyinthespace@atiyogafoundation.org ©



Photo by Paolo Fassoli

SANGHA Mobile Application

Designed especially for
practitioners of the Dzogchen
Community

Yanchi Kompiš & Libor Malý

The Sangha app is gift from practitioners to practitioners offered for free to everybody with Transmission who is interested. Similar to Norbunet in the times of emails, Sangha brings a new effective platform in the epoch of mobile applications, a living space to strengthen practitioners' activities. Released last year, it already has 700 users and is continuously growing.

Private and secure platform

We use many public social networks today that are often not very trustworthy regarding data privacy. However, we need to share information about the Teaching and our secret practices. Sangha app was created as private and highly secure platform especially for our practitioners, containing many different functions in one space.

Collaboration & communication tools

In the Sangha app, directly from your Smartphone you can:

- add your own events for practicing or relaxing together
- access details of Community events
- choose to follow information from more Gars & Lings
- use the special Guruyoga Instant Presence reminder
- receive notifications about Ganapujas and Events
- chat directly with your Vajra friends

SANGHA mobile app & SHEDRA project

The Sangha app is focused more on the social and collaborative aspects of our community members' lives. Besides official IDC events, practitioners can also add their own private events for practice groups, relaxation, meetings, etc. The main intention of Sangha is communication and collaboration between members, helping each other. Shedra, the Atiyoga Foundation project founded by the International Gakyil, is focused more on official education, certification and event management. Both projects



share some similarities and hopefully will be able to fully exchange data soon.

Where did sangha app come from

It is a spontaneous activity created by individual practitioners from Czechia, Russia, Slovakia and the USA – with stable funding, a dedicated team, open to development and serving the needs of practitioners, totally free of charge. We have signed a mutual Memorandum of Understanding with the International Gakyil, declaring publicly to treat all confidential info & data in the app in a strictly private and secure way according to GDPR and Special terms & conditions. The International Gakyil has acknowledged the existence of Sangha app and agreed to promote information about Dzogchen Community events.

Collaboration workspace

This function should be released in the Sangha App by the beginning of 2020. It is great news as it will open space to share information about fundraising, karma yoga, jobs, accommodation, transport and so on. Additionally practitioners can create any topic they need to share or collaborate with. So there will be platform to support each other in more ways, finally in one dedicated space.

Together

We invite all practitioners to make Sangha space alive together: by using the app, adding your own events, inviting others and giving us the necessary feedback.

We have had many positive reactions to the Sangha app. It has inspired us to develop it even more and continue to support the communication and collaboration of

practitioners. We love to stay connected and evolve together.

hello@mahasangha.net
www.mahasangha.net

How to get & activate the Sangha app

Every practitioner with transmission can download the Sangha app for free to their own Smartphone with a supported operating system: <https://www.mahasangha.net/about/download>

To activate it – everyone needs to insert a security code that they can get from another practitioner who already uses the app and who personally knows that this person has received Transmission from the lineage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. This is because the application may contain restricted information regarding the Teaching. With this personal approach we can maintain privacy and security, which are very important aspects of the Sangha app. ©

Merigar West Autumn Update

27 September

September 27th, 2019, was the first anniversary since our beloved and precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu left this earthly existence.

The International Community gathered for a few days of practice at Merigar and in all the centers of the Dzogchen Community throughout the world. The Merigar Community organized four days of intensive practice at the Merigar gönpa and practitioners from all parts of the world came to practice together, mainly Guruyoga, Vajrasattva Purification, Six Lokas, and Ganapuja. Especially at the weekend there was not much space left in the gönpa.

Everybody still misses the Master in his human form very much. But beyond this, his presence could be felt very strongly during these days. Many people also went to the Great Stupa to meditate there and enjoy the very special peaceful energy at that wonderful place in the middle of the Gar.



Very moving also was the arrival of Dru-gu Choegyal Rinpoche who took part in the practices on Friday. He did not give teachings or speak publicly, but he came, he said, to honor his old friend Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

A number of initiatives and events were organized at Merigar to celebrate the life and work of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and share its greatness. Given the vastness of his interests and the depth of his knowledge, it was possible to place the accent only on some aspects, such as the work of ASIA Onlus, the many books published by the Shang Shung Publications, the Gars created in every part of the globe, and the sacred dances. They are only a small part of the great and multifaceted legacy of our



Master, which, as an international community, we will continue to share with the whole world in different ways in the future.

In particular, on September 27th in a packed conference hall at the Aldobrandescan castle in Arcidosso, Giacomella Orofino, from the "Oriental" University of Naples, gave a speech about "The thoughts and scientific works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu", Constantino Albini, meditation instructor from the Dzogchen Community, spoke about "The global Dzogchen Community", and Jacopo Marini, Mayor of Arcidosso, about "Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, a Tibetan Master on Amiata". Each speaker gave the audience a chance to participate

cious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was published on the Merigar website.

In the Merigar gönpa, in the evening, there was a wonderful live performance of the Song of the Vajra, by Roberto Cacciapaglia (electric piano) and An Chi Huang (soprano), followed by a Vajra Dance performance. At the end of the event, everyone was offered a taste of Tibetan cuisine and drinks.

On September 27th and the following days it was also possible to visit the photographic exhibition in the Mandala Hall on the international Gars, showing how the Master's teaching has drawn together people of many different cultures, now



in their personal experiences of being with the Master. The mayor also announced that a street in Arcidosso would be named after Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to honor him.

On the same day, at the castle, ASIA Onlus opened an interesting and beautiful exhibition on the work of A.S.I.A. over the last thirty years, while the Museum of Asian Art and Culture inaugurated an exhibition on the world of Tibetan sacred dance. At the same time a timeline of the main events in the life of our beloved and pre-

united in a profound brotherhood. At the library there were guided visits to view the collection of Tibetan texts and the original texts written by the Master, while at the new office of Shang Shung Publications in Arcidosso it was possible to see the many books written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu available in Italian and English.

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Activities at the Gar

In October and November, retreats and courses were organized for both practitioners and new people, especially at the weekends, all the courses taking place in the Mandala Hall while renovation work on the Gönpa is going ahead.

December began with a Mandarava practice retreat led by Nina Robinson, which began on the tenth day of the tenth month (December 6th), Rinpoche's birthday according to the Tibetan calendar, until December 8th, our western date for the celebration of his anniversary.

The period between Christmas and New Year will be dedicated to practice (from December 26th to 31st there will be an Amitayus practice retreat led by Elio Guarisco,) and there will also be several opportunities to get together for lunches, dinners, movies, games, dances and much more.

The 2020 calendar is being finalized, but you will already find many of the planned events and courses on the Merigar website www.merigar.it. We remind you that many events are reserved for practitioners and are therefore found by going to 'courses and events' and then proceeding to the 'reserved' section.

Update on the maintenance works at the Gönpa

As you probably already know, the Gönpa has been undergoing extraordinary maintenance work for several months. The most urgent work, coordinated by engineers, professionals and expert consultants, started in May 2019 and has been carried out in collaboration with specialized companies.

Work began on May 6th and before the summer break the lantern was redone, part of the fixtures changed, the copper

roof rebuilt, some external columns were reinforced and/or changed, and the external walkway and the windows in the renovated area were partly redone (north and east sides), as was the wooden access stairway, all the rainwater channeling system and the guttering.

After the break during the summer so that the Gönpa was available for various summer activities, work began again on October 7.

In recent months, the three supporting beams on the south, south-east and south-west sides of the building have been redone in concrete since they were found to be seriously damaged when the external walkway was dismantled. In order to do this it was necessary to dismantle part of the interior floor which was then rebuilt. On these sides of the building the external walkway has been completed and the new fixtures mounted.

The sanding of all external wooden parts was also completed and the first treatments for the wood were undertaken. For effective wood maintenance we are studying with experts an elastic and resistant grouting system that will adapt to the movements of the wood due to sudden changes in temperature, humidity, etc. This grouting will be followed by new treatments that will create the base for the decorations. The project for decorations will be created with a team of experts in 2020.

An essential maintenance program is also planned to prevent the deterioration of wood and paint, as well as the control of rainwater runoff.

The intense period of bad weather of the last few months has delayed and complicated completion of the works. For this reason it has not yet been possible to build and assemble the railing of the external walkway.



The total cost of the works to date has been around 345 thousand euro; 200,000 have been financed by the '8 per mille' contribution from the UBI, the Italian Buddhist Union, of which Merigar is a member.

Other donations have come from Dzogchen Community practitioners to who we give heartfelt thanks. Unfortunately we have not yet covered all the expenses and much remains to be done. For your contribution, go to the website <https://www.merigar.it/en/donation-for-a-specific-project/> and for more details <https://www.merigar.it/en/visit/gonpa/the-restoration/updates/>

There are also other important projects in progress, such as the "Path of Awareness" and the restoration of the Master's retreat house, which however fall within the broader hydro-geological and security project of the Merigar area, the subject of an intervention plan with a geological study in collaboration with the Tuscany Region and the Municipality of Arcidosso. ©

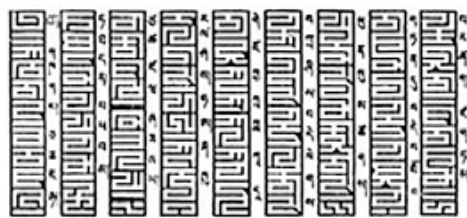
Updates from the Zikhang Library at Merigar

Since this autumn, the Zikhang Library at Merigar has been funded by the UBI (Unione Buddhista Italiana) as part of the "Working with the Words and Texts of Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and of Tibetan Buddhism" project. The objectives of the project in the library sector are different. First of all, the project involves the identification, scanning and indexing of the unique and rare material in the Tibetan section: it started with the collection of Changchub Dorje's texts, already scanned, but where it was necessary to check the completeness of the images and the indexes which need a technical update of the non-unicode fonts used previously and a subsequent verification. We will then proceed with the collection of manuscripts, for now only partially documented, with the creation of the indexes



and the complete scan of the volumes. This work will offer greater accessibility and searchability of the texts contained in the volumes, limit direct consultation of the original documents so as to avoid wear and tear and better conservation, and will lead to the preservation of the contents also in digital format.

To give greater visibility to the Library, the project also foresees the start of the organization and cataloging of texts on Tibet and Buddhism in Italian, English and other languages, with the purchase of new shelves to facilitate access and consultation in the reading room, and the creation of a special station for consulting the catalog.



In this sense, we have also started entering the Grosseto Library Hub (Polo Bibliotecario Grossetano): the catalog of texts in Italian and English will soon be available on the Maremma Libraries website and will allow us to enter the interlibrary exchange circuit.

The third aspect of the project concerns the organization of events and visits for the promotion of the patrimony of the books and for the dissemination of Tibetan fields of knowledge. The visit to the library has long been an integral part of the "Welcome to Merigar" guided tour, and even for occasional visitors it is possible to have a guided visit to the Library's Tibetan collection: during these visits visitors receive explanations on the traditional format of Tibetan texts, on their printing, and on the various scriptures in use for both texts and decorations. In recent years, many schools in central Italy have requested to visit the Library and we have also organized small Tibetan writing exercises for children and teenagers. These aspects will be further implemented; we will also continue the "Library Talks" events also proposing film and documentary screenings on Tibet, Buddhism, and much more, as well as hosting courses on Tibetan language and traditional sciences.

The reading room is open for consultation and loans, with the possible request for online and onsite bibliographic research. For information and timetables write to library@dzogchen.it

Library Talks

Created as an opportunity to spread knowledge, promote reading, raise awareness of the Library and its treasures and also raise some funds that help us keep the library and its services open, the "Library Talks" event has become the container of various cultural events that Merigar offers in

the area. The program started in 2018, then continued in 2019 and we are planning the 2020 program.

In 2019, many conferences were organized not only in the Library, but also in Arcidosso, the Council Chamber and the Conference Hall of the Castle. The themes were quite different, often related to Tibet and Buddhism, but not only: for example, this year we had a story about David Lazzaretti, a show of Indian classical dance, creative writing meetings and insights on recycling. You can find last year's program here: <https://www.merigar.it/it/corsi-e-eventi/racconti-in-biblioteca-e-oltre/>



We would like to thank those who in 2019 offered their knowledge, in order of appearance: Fabio Risolo, Gino Vitiello, Elio Guarisco, Steve Landsberg, the dance company Natanavedica East/West Performing Arts directed by Maresa Moglia, Fabian Sanders, Iacobella Gaetani, Lobsang Zatul, Anna Scattigno, Cristiana del Falco, Michael Katz and Aldo Ferretti. We look forward to your participation in future events! For information and to offer your participation, write to library@dzogchen.it ©



THE MIRROR

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Deepening the Supreme Dzogchen Teaching

Druğu Choegyal Rinpoche, a well-known artist and Drukpa Kagyu master, is currently the spiritual head of the Dru-gu Community and the Dru-gu Monastic Institute in Tibet. In the Dzogchen Community he is particularly known for his depictions of the Primordial Masters in the Temple of the Great Contemplation at Merigar in Italy and for his close and long standing connection with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. For part of September and October he was in Rome for the opening of an exhibition of his paintings but also took the opportunity to participate in events at Merigar to honor the passing of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. He offered a few much appreciated words to Dzogchen Community practitioners at the “Open Day” inauguration of Zhenphenling, the Roman ling, on October 4, 2019.

As Buddhists we believe that infinite sentient beings have been our brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers. We have a special connection through Norbu Rinpoche and because I have come to Italy many times I have many friends here.

My encounter with Rinpoche came about through the Eighth Khamtrul Rinpoche, the Dokhampa, who became close friends with Norbu Rinpoche, and who came to Italy to visit him [1976], accompanied by Dorzong Rinpoche and myself. I am extremely grateful to Norbu Rinpoche for inviting me to Italy, giving me the opportunity to know you and to make friends with many people.

This year a greatly fortunate coincidence happened to me: Alessandra Bonomol had arranged an exhibition of my paintings in the same period of time as the first anniversary of Namkhai Norbu's passing, which made it possible for me to be in Merigar then. This has been an immense blessing for me.

As Buddhists we do not have the idea that we are Buddhists and others belong to other religions or that we are Tibetans and others are Westerners, so that we feel separate. On the contrary, we have a sense of openness in our hearts. We feel connected



is enough. Your cup is full, and there is no reason to pour in more because it is already completely filled.

Now is the moment for you to have faith in yourselves and find in your hearts the strength to carry on and to develop and deepen in yourselves the supreme and profound Dzogchen Teaching you have received from your extraordinary Master. Spread this knowledge for the benefit of all sentient beings, especially in your area and your country, to diminish the ignorance and pain of the world, the main cause of every trouble, and bring light and positive energy to help all those beings living in darkness. We need to spread this message in the world.

I thank Zhenphenling for inviting me. I feel happy to be here and so glad to have met all of you. ©

through love and the enlightened quality of all beings.

When I attended the Ganapuja rite in the Temple at Merigar, I had a deep feeling of the presence of Rinpoche, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. His body has changed, but his mind has remained, it has not changed. This is our sincere conviction as Tibetans.

Norbu Rinpoche was a great Teacher who gave so much energy and effort for many years to his numerous activities all over the world without ever stopping. Giving his complete trust to his students, he revealed and transmitted to them the Dzogchen teaching in its most naked and essential form. What he has given you, you have received, and what you have received



Stupa Finishing and Summer in Merigar East 2020

We are very happy to invite you all to join the second Stupa finishing preparations... Now we already have the deadline. The actual finishing – filling the Stupa will take place on **15th of July 2020** with Migmar Tsering.

We start the final preparations in the Gar on **1st of July** and continue till the **main filling day 15th of July**. The building team will be present to prepare the construction to access all the necessary parts of Stupa. We have to make final selection and completion of the relics to put inside and most of all, we would also like to dedicate this period to practicing together... **AND we will need many helping hands to join and enjoy the filling day!**

As there are not so many people physically present in the Gar, most of the preparations during autumn, winter and spring is taking place in various countries and lingas of Merigar East. We would like to express our **gratitude and many thanks** to all who are participating by sending financial support, by spending their time and dedicating to prepare mantra rolls, tsa-tsas and other relics... **Many thanks especially to Czech, Hungarian and Slovak sanghas!**

To support the finishing of the Second Stupa of Merigar East and getting more information please visit our website: <https://dzogchen.ro/merigar-east/donate-for-our-projects/merigar-east-stupas>

We are bringing few photos from the places dedicating the time and energy to cooperate on the Stupa works... Actually sometimes we call this Stupa “Stupa of Co-operation” because it is what we are learning very much during the process of this project which started already in 2012...

Hope to see you all here soon and maybe also enjoy continuation of the 2020 summer program in Merigar East and make your summer longer:



Top left: Budapest rolling the Green Tara mantras October 2019. Top right: Phendeling tsatsa, Czech Rep, April 2019. Lower left: Prague, Mantra rolling in Kunkyabing, October 2019. Lower center: Tábor, Czech Rep, Mantra rolling, Nov. 2019. Lower right: Wangdenling, Slovakia, Mantra rolling, July 2019.

Program 2020

June 5–10

The relation between ordinary mind and the enlightened possibility in theory and practice

with **Steven Landsberg**

July 1–14

Merigar East Stupa Filling Preparations – practicing and cooperating together – COME TO HELP ME!

The actual filling day is set for **July 15** with **Migmar Tsering**.

July 17–22

Tibetan Astrology course with **Migmar Tsering**

July 25–31

Green Tara with 21 Praises Retreat with **Oliver Leick**

August 18–21

Tsalung of the Immortal Life – the Essence and the most important of all the Tsalungs of Mandarava with **Elio Guarisco**

August 22–26

Instructions and practice retreat on how to Find Oneself in the State of Contemplation with **Elio Guarisco**

And here we are bringing information about another type of program in Merigar East next year. Some activities are therapy training and methods and are dedicated to bring Rinpoche's vision of the Gar to fulfilment, to learn and evolve together. We wish that your circumstances will allow you to join us and in this way enjoy the “sky-and-earth” quality of Merigar East and also receive the immense benefits and satisfaction of collaborating with the Community of practitioners.

March 2020–Summer 2022

Craniosacral Biodynamics Training

1st module: March 24–29, 2020

2nd module: August 11–16, 2020

3rd module: November 3–8, 2020

For information about the whole training programme:

<https://forms.gle/u4PCKX7BFGgMZaTR8>

June 18–21

Nature Constellation Workshop “Opening the Heart to Nature”

For more information about the method:

<http://www.naturdialog.ch> ©



Rinchenling, Moscow, Russia

Moscow Rinchenling Dzogchen Community is the oldest in Russia, it was registered in August 1992. Some facts about us: at the moment we have 373 members, 5 Santi Maha Sangha instructors, 5 Yantra yoga instructors, 7 Vajra Dance and Khaita instructors. There are regular classes and practices on Santi

Maha Sangha Base and 1–4 levels, as well as regular classes on Yantra yoga, Vajra Dance and Khaita Joyful Dances. In 2019 we held 12 retreats and training courses with international and Russian instructors and 4 open events in cooperation with the Shang Shung Institute. We also actively collaborate with Kunsangar North and with other Russian lings.

In November 2019 we elected a new Gakyil for 2020–2021:

Blue: Sasha Ivaniuk, Polina Fokina, Aleksey Lukashev

Red: Mila Slobodyan, Dmitrii Naumov, Eldar Asadov

Yellow: Andrey Biryukov, Marina Samaya, Ylya Shirobokov

In 2020 we are planning to organize several courses with international and Russian instructors including:

January 3: one day course
"Discovering of presence in the flow of 5 senses cognition"
 with Elio Guarisco

January 31–February 2
Retreat on Semdzin and Rushen
 with Grigory Mokhin

May 1–10
Santi Maha Sangha retreat
 with Alexander Gomonov

June 29–July 5
Yantra yoga course
 with Fabio Andrico

If you by any chance come to Moscow you are very much welcome to come to our Gönpa for practices and courses. We are always happy to have guests, just contact us at moscow.ling@gmail.com or by <https://www.facebook.com/groups/rinchenling>

Namgyalgar Australia

Natural State Holidays

Yantra Yoga & Wellbeing
 Relax and enjoy a 6 day harmonious holiday at a hidden sanctuary in the pure deep south of legendary Tasmania.
 12–17 February 2020 Tasmania Australia
www.naturalstateyoga

Song of the Vajra

Beginner's course Part 1
 with Cosimo Di Maggio
 Level II Vajra Dance Instructor
 21st Feb to 1st March, 2020
 Price \$400 Concession \$300
 50% deposit by 15th Jan
 Contact: Sean
 Phone: 0414 610 243
 Email: read.sean.62@gmail.com
 Melbourne Unitarian Peace Memorial Church
 110 Grey St, East Melbourne VIC 3002
www.vajradance.net ©

Yangdakling New Zealand

January 27–February 2, 2020

Santi Maha Sangha Base
 7 day Guruyoga and Long Life Retreat
 more info & rego www.dzogchen.org.au/waiheke2020 ©

Tsegyalgar West Baja California South, Mexico

Yantra Yoga Beginners and Seniors
 with Maxim Leschenko, Nataly Nitsche and Luke Karamol

April 3–15, 2020
 Info: secretary@tsegyalgarwest.org ©



Meditate, Breath, Dance and Enjoy in the Sea Retreat

Costa Rica
September 26–29, 2019

It was exactly October 2010 when our Precious Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, came to a small beach in the south Caribbean coast of Costa Rica; he approached the marvelous turquoise waters and said “Ottimo”.

This moment, this moment in space and time, has remain cherished in my heart for nine years. Meditate, Breath, Dance and Enjoy in the sea was born as a spark of this memory. On September 27th, on Rinpoche's Anniversary, an International Sangha, came together as a Family singing, trying our best to integrate inner and outer experience with the sound of the Song of Vajra.

Participants came from all over, new people and old practitioners came to enjoy

Testimonials

Rozanne from Puerto Viejo

The retreat's name promised an experience encompassing different ways to connect – through the mind, the body, and the spirit, working with the energies around us and within us. Each aspect, while powerful on its own, were integrated beautifully with loving intention on this retreat.

We began by the sea with confident teenagers from the local community facilitating activities to “break the ice.” We learned each other's names, laughed, shared a light meal, and enjoyed the turquoise still waters of the Caribbean Sea. After returning to the retreat facility adorned with peace flags made by local children and teens, which was the anchor for all formal and informal activities,

the breath and the body. After there was the meditation workshop with Ricky – an introduction to the breath and the mind. In the afternoon, I enjoyed the Mandala Dance with Gloriana – an introduction to the breath and the movement of energy and sound. In between these formal workshops, there were different types of breathing – the slowed breath while understanding strategy learning bagchen and the joyful breath of laughter during Khaita dancing where we danced into the night for hours.

One of my favorite things about the retreat was that my family could participate in all the activities. My teenagers came to the meditation workshops and my younger children participated in kids yoga classes Kumar Kumari. We all enjoyed the commu-



Meditate, Breath, Dance and Enjoy in the Sea Retreat, September 26–29, 2019.

four days of togetherness. In honor of our Precious Master, we tried to deliver the experience of what he taught us during his lifetime. We started the day with Yantra Yoga for beginners with Nataly Nitsche and advanced Yantra Yoga with Maxim Leschenko. Simultaneously Ricky Sued gave a short intro of Mindful meditation to the kids. We continued with Mindful meditation for adults while the kids learned Kumar Kumari followed by Vajra Dance, bagchen, relaxing and enjoying on the beach and finishing up with Khaita Joyful Dances after dinner. Laughter and joy were experienced throughout the whole retreat bringing everyone closer as a big family, honoring its name; Dekyitling “Place of Joy”.

we were introduced to some of the retreat's offerings through a gentle demonstration of yantra yoga and dancing – a relaxed beginning to a retreat filled with opportunity to learn individually and cooperatively with other participants and teachers.

The inhale and exhale rhythm of the retreat allowed perfect flow between the tools and practices of yantra yoga, conscious meditation, mandala dance, and the pagchen play and joyful dance. As we repeated the rhythm daily, I was able to integrate the practices at a deeper level as the retreat progressed. I loved that there were both experienced practitioners and beginners in the workshops, sitting beside each other during meals, and dancing together.

In the morning, I began my day with Nataly and Yantra Yoga – an introduction to

nity and connection in-between activities.

We ended the retreat as we started – relaxed and all together. We had a last trip to the beach and shared our final dinner. As we ended with toasts of gratitude and appreciation of our time together, I realized that this was more than a retreat by the sea, it was an opportunity to connect on more levels than I could have ever anticipated. As I completely exhaled after the toast, I smiled as I became aware of the greatest lesson and gift from the retreat – even as I emptied, I was full.

Ruben from Mexico

The Caribbean was a perfect spot to have this retreat in Playa Chiquita, Costa Rica, celebrating the anniversary of our beloved

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teacher passing into parinirvana. Led by instructors Maxim, Nataly, Ricky and Gloriana, I felt the fresh brilliance of the practice in their transmission of the yantra teachings as if Namkhai Norbu himself was there. It was special, magical to spend time in such a marvelous place. Teachings always happen in places that are not easy to get to, and it takes effort to reach these places, but the connection with our vajra family is priceless, and precious without measure. I plan to return for the next event.

In between the retreats we had a trip day, we enjoyed a boat trip to Punta Mona, visited an organic farm, tried snorkeling and surrendering to the beautiful nature!

Living Guruyoga

October 1–3, 2019

The “Living Guruyoga” retreat was Dekyitling’s 13 year anniversary, where practitioners came together to work with our Transmission.



Living Guruyoga, October 1–3, 2019.

Ricky guided us from the essence of “Guru Yoga of White A” to how to simply relax in our daily life. Titi thought us Khalong Dorje Khar, also known as The Dance of the 12 A’s. We then practiced the dance on top of a cliff over viewing where the sky met the sea, experiencing as if we were dancing in space combined with vertigo. Khaitas were present everyday. Some days we sang together and shared our memories of the beginning of Khaita...we even practiced Kongpo, since we had the male experts Richard, Maxim and Thinley!!

Then we had the cherry on the cake practice...everyday, for sunset time, we would all go and take a dip in the lukewarm waters of the caribbean sea, enjoying and connecting with that very same place where once Our Precious Master enjoyed and said “Ottimo”.

Testimonial

Janina from San Jose

For me, the retreat was a wonderful experience in many aspects. The jungle environment, the Caribbean sea, the contact with nature, was an incredible support to the different practices contemplated in the program; which resulted in great wealth, we had the opportunity to have the participation of excellent instructors in Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha. With them we share both the moments of formal practice, as particular reflections in relation to practices. Dancing the Dance of 3 Vajras, in the mandala extended to the moonlight, was wonderful; the practice of Yantra Yoga, the Pranayamas, with the support of instructors of a level of knowledge and ability to convey the essence of the meaning of practices within the context of meaning of what the Dzogchen is, it was an opportunity that I value very much.

Living Guruyoga, meant to me, to reconnect with the essence of what Dzogchen is. The instructor, in a very simple, experi-

the group support, were elements that as a whole facilitated us to advance in contemplation practices. A deep thanks to the Sangha of Costa Rica for their effort in organizing this activity and waiting for it to be repeated.

Dekyitling would like to thank all the International Sangha for making the effort to come together, thank you to our instructors Ricky Sued, Nataly Nitsche, Maxim Leschenko and Gloriana Brenes (Titti). Thank you Alix DeFermor for teaching us the ethics and life lessons of bagchen.

In honor of our Precious Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – Infinite Gratitude from Dekyitling. See you again September 24th–27th, 2020 for Meditate, Breath, Dance and Enjoy in the sea retreat followed by the “Living Guruyoga” retreat October 1st–3rd, 2020. ©

In between the retreats we had a trip day, we enjoyed a boat trip to Punta Mona, visited an organic farm, tried snorkeling and surrendering to the beautiful nature!



ential way, invited us, through the realization of some introductory practices to the state of contemplation, to reconnect with the experience of direct introduction that in his opportunity each had lived with the Master. The ability of the instructor to direct the practices so experientially, naked of concepts, but very rich in terms of the experience transmitted, the jungle environment within which they were carried out,

Artists in the Dzogchen Community

The Evolution of an Artist

Filmmaker Vladimir Maykov
December 2, 2019
Dzamling Gar

I grew up in a family where my father was very close to art, especially to opera and singing, as he was a dramatic tenor, so from early childhood, even before I started to speak, I heard the voices of the greatest singers in the world. When I was a child my father encouraged me to put my attention in the subtle differences in voices, but my passion was physics, science and psychology, but science more. I dreamed about the cosmos, astrophysics, and I read a lot of fantasy books.

I entered the best Russian institute in the field of science called the Moscow Physical Technological Institute, the Department of Cosmology, but after one year I was disappointed, both in cosmology and in science, and I realized my passion was psychology. I was intoxicated by Dostoevsky and I also read the great works of the philosopher Nietzsche, and so philosophy and human nature became my biggest passion.

I was lucky to meet like-minded people and also a teacher in philosophy, but the only official philosophy at this time was Marxist/Leninist philosophy. My teacher was teaching his close students underground; Russian philosophy, world philosophy. We would have private, secret classes and we were only two close students. It was six years of education and I graduated with high honors. I changed my department to bio-physics, which was more close to human nature, but my passion was still philosophy. I was a member of the underground 'Bart' movement, which was an anti soviet governmental state of affairs movement. I met leaders of this movement, so this became my passion at that time as well as philosophy, songs and guitar.

I graduated and I entered into post graduate studies at the Institute of Philosophy at the Soviet Academy of Sciences. So in 1980 I entered this study and met people



My first Dzogchen retreat, Conway, 1990. Vladimir is in the center with the blue shirt.

from the underground transpersonal circles in Moscow. They translated books by Stan Grof, John Lilly, etc., so I read my first book by Stan Grof and I was excited; I had finally found some new dimensions and secrets of human beings and so I became a member of the underground transpersonal movement.

I helped in underground book translation and the leader of our underground transpersonal circle asked me to edit a translation by Longchenpa: How samsara and nirvana are fabricated from the ground of being. It was the Herbert Guenther translation for the Crystal Mirror. I also read books by Chögyam Trungpa, *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* and *The Myth of Freedom*, and *Gesture of Balance* by Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche as well as the Evans Wentz translation of the *Tibetan Book of the Dead*...anything that was available at this time. This was our gateway to Tibetan Buddhism.

Longchenpa really struck me, I did not realize at the time why, of course, but it was a revelation for me. I remember one quotation: "Those living beings who know their own nature, manifest as Buddhas, as enlightened beings and those who do not realize their true nature have cycles of rebirth." Then I realized how important it is to know your true nature. I started to search for where is the real nature...and I also remember that the word had a very special connection to me, the word Dzogchen, I had no idea of what it meant really but the word resonated in me.

In 1982 my friend, who was the director of the transpersonal movement, and I decided to go to Buryatia. In all the Soviet Union, Buryatia was the only place where there were people with real knowledge of Tibetan Buddhism. We decided we needed a kind of practical introduction and so our special aim was to get introduction to Vajrasattva practice which was the gateway to the Bidia Dandaron Community and the teachings. Dandaron was the only teacher at this time who transmitted this teaching to "white" people, people from Estonia, Lithuania, etc. Dandaron was teaching underground.

During the Stalin period Dandaron spent twenty-five years in labor camps together with German professors and this is why he knew Western philosophy, Western sciences, several languages, and later he started to transmit the teaching. He was the first person in the Soviet Union who translated several texts of Longchenpa, but the access to these books was only possible through his students if you were accepted by them as part of the Dandaron community and that's why we understood that the best students of Tibetan Buddhism in the Soviet Union were part of Dandaron's community and that is why we moved to Buryatia. We visited Victor Popachev, one of the greatest experts in Tibetan medicine in Russia at this time, but also a very good translator, and he gave us some books by Dandaron and he informed us that at exactly this time His Holiness the Dalai

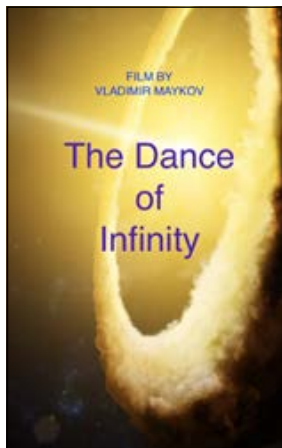
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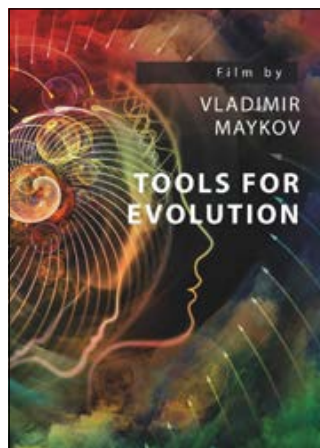
Lama would give teachings in Buryatia. So this was a great coincidence.

His Holiness gave teachings for three days: Avalokiteshvara, Manjushri and

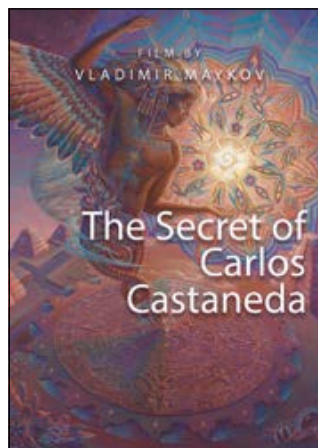
copies of this book and sent them to Lithuania, Latvia, St Petersburg, Buryatia and my friend Vitaly in Moscow. So a new era started and we began to dream about miraculous Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.



The Dance of Infinity, poster.



Tools for Evolution, poster.



The Secret of Carlos Castaneda, poster.

Green Tara. There was a huge crowd at a Buddhist Temple 30 kilometers from Ulan Ude. We were thinking that 5,000 were Buryatian old men and women and the other 5,000 were KGB. So we received this precious teaching.

We also got some initiations from an old Buryatian lama, who was a successor to Dandaron, and we received teachings and got access to Dandaron's translation of Longchenpa, and also to Dandaron's students, so when I went back to Moscow and established connections with Dandaron's students in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, and Buryatia. It was a big community and the next phase of my underground Buddhist life.

I tried to study and practice but after several years I realized there were no obvious results that I had hoped for, some great achievements. So we tried to get some other teachings and there were only a couple of other famous Buddhist teachers visiting the Soviet Union at that time and one of them was Bakula Rinpoche, the head lama of Lhadak living in India.

In 1987 some guy from the underground circles gave me the green book, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Talks from Conway, Rinpoche's teachings transcribed by Jim Valby. I started to read and I was not able to stop. I don't know how this book came to this guy, it was a miracle. I read through the whole night and only stopped reading the next morning. I was a new being in the morning. I finally started to understand Dandaron, Longchenpa, His Holiness's teaching, Buddhism, everything was kind of a new vision. So I made five or six photo-

The first time I visited a foreign country was in 1989. I visited some transpersonal leaders in London and one of them was Rupert Sheldrake. We talked about his work and he introduced me to his wife, Jill Purce, and within five minutes we realized she was a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. She had invited Rinpoche to the UK and she gave me the contact information for Italy and I immediately wrote a letter

ed us to a retreat at Tseggyalgar. I had a good opportunity to attend since in 1990 I had a two month visa to the US for my transpersonal psychology and holotropic breathwork study with Stanislov Groff, who I had met in Russia. My schedule was flexible enough that I was able to change it to also go to Conway for the retreat with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Four other Russians came with me.

Rinpoche was young, very active, entertaining and joking at this time, and I remember the excitement from this first day. After I went to him to arrange a kind of private meeting and he was very interested, and I invited him to the Soviet Union. He replied that next year he would have a personal retreat and the next place he would visit after his personal retreat would be the Soviet Union.

In the spring of 1992 I received a phone call from Fabio who said, "Vladimir, if you are standing up please sit down, take a sheet of paper and a pen and write this down. Rinpoche will come to Vilnius at this time, Riga at this time, St Petersburg at this time, Moscow at this time and Ulan Ude at this time. So prepare." So I immediately contacted all places with information about how to prepare for Rinpoche's visit. This was the beginning of the Russian Dzogchen Community.



Translating the Master in Moscow, 1994.

to Rinpoche and he replied inviting me to a retreat at Merigar. This was in 1989. Unfortunately I did not receive this letter until six days after the retreat was over. All mail at this time was checked by the KGB.

Rinpoche replied to me, "Don't worry", connected me to the Conway Dzogchen Community and told me they would send me the books. We received the books and started a new activity. Rinpoche also invit-

I continued my work as a transpersonal psychologist and published books that I translated, classics by Stan Grof, Ken Wilber, Arny Mindell, I made personal connections with all of them and with many other leaders. Transpersonal psychology was a kind of public gateway to something more real than official psychology.

I continued my studies with Stan and Christina Grof, graduated from Grof's

school of transpersonal psychology and people asked me to give seminars in holotropic breath work and other methods of transpersonal psychology and psychotherapy; I became kind of a leader of this movement in Russia and I initiated the Russian Institute of Transpersonal Psychology and Psychotherapy together with other leaders. I am still president of this association organizing international conferences. I am the chair of Transpersonal Psychology Department at the Moscow Institute of Psychoanalysis. Now I am transforming more of my activity on line so as to be more flexible.

My filmmaking career happened kind of miraculously. I never thought about filmmaking. Never. But around fifteen years ago, Eduard Sagalaev, one of the leaders of Russian television, was having a spiritual crisis, and got interested in spiritual teachings. He read my book on transpersonal psychology, found me and we quickly became friends. He suggested we make a series of films about my field. This was around 2006.

It happened that this same year I was going to Ireland to see Stan Grof and negotiate with him about bringing the Grof transpersonal training to Russia. When I told him about this, Sagalaev asked me to ask Grof if he could bring a film crew to film Grof and holotropic breathwork, and so we started to film everything and also my seminars. I became a member of the TV team and the personal advisor and scientific consultant to Sagalaev and his team. We made six films with Sagalaev, so this was my film university. I was excited about the presentation of my field on Russian TV but I was disappointed in how it was presented, so I decided to make the next film by myself.

In 2010 I organized XVII International conference on transpersonal psychology in Moscow and I invited many leaders in the field, spiritual masters, great artists. Yeshe Silvano Namkhai also participated in this conference and gave a talk called "What is Enlightenment?" I was able to arrange to film nine interviews from this group. This was the beginning of my film making.

For the next several years I continued to make interviews and I started to edit and make films from these interviews. It took a lot of time for me because I was self-taught. So I am a filmmaker without special education, but was lucky to have connected with great professionals in the Sagalaev team, to learn on the fly, so to speak.

I went through two film teams and finally found my team of co-workers. After two months *The Dance of Infinity* was ready and first released in 2015. Later, after finishing two new films in 2019, I re-edited *The Dance of Infinity* to make it more friendly.

The film was received very well in Russia and other countries like the US, Great Britain, Germany and ex Soviet countries but I was exhausted. I decided to stop and not make any more films. But after a year, in 2016, I started to feel something inside like passion and realized I had to do three new films simultaneously: one a continuation of the *Dance of Infinity* about evolutionary vision from the point of view of normal science, normal art, not a spiritual vision, so the *Tools for Evolution* is based on the vision of twenty-one experts.



With Stan Grof, Moscow, 2006.

At the same time because I was lucky to know people personally who knew Castaneda and was also connected to his direct close students I started to film the *Secret of Carlos Castaneda*. So for the next three years I worked on these films even though I had fewer resources after the financial crisis and the Russian economy was going down.

The film of Castaneda was shown in fifteen cinemas in thirty of the biggest cities in Russia, also private screenings in different countries and now I am looking for ways to expand audiences. In the Castaneda film I try to show the moving force of his life, going beyond gossip and problems that are natural for any human being.

After following the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for a long time, I found that my aim is to present the ideas of evolution, the human mission and all the great possibilities we have in our time, in a language that is accessible and understandable for many people. And I realized that the first two films are part of an evolutionary trilogy and that I needed to complete the trilogy with a third film to tell the complete story; to present evolutionary tool kits for

lay people, to normal human beings who are not so lucky to be connected to great spiritual teachers. So the third film of the trilogy, *Heroes Journeys: New Horizons*, is in the making.

I like to do two films simultaneously and so *Orvidas* is another film I'm working on at the same time. This film is about a Lithuanian sculptor who was not only a great artist, but an example of how every human being can be liberated through art and creativity.

If people want to see my films, they are distributed with different companies and I would like to find distributors in other countries. I also need producers. I still have more plans for films.

I want to share my vision mainly related to Dzogchen Teachings and the teachings that have helped to generate all these resources in my life. There are multiple ways to be a Dzogchen practitioner in our life and I am very excited that Dzogchen is for normal people in ordinary life. No kind of isolation, or uniqueness, so what I like to hear and read in Rinpoche's teachings is when he explains Dzogchen in every day life and how everything in your life can be practice. So for me now filmmaking is also part of my practice. ©

vmaykov@gmail

Vladimir's Evolutionary trilogy

1. The Dance of Infinity (2015, 2019) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zHeQu-aJ4DA>
2. Tools for Evolution (2019) <https://youtu.be/-OSY17rBcG8>
3. Heroes Journeys: New Horizons (2020, in progress)

Visionary films

1. The Secret of Carlos Castaneda (2019) <https://youtu.be/3ZBihuXBMng>
2. Orvidas: The Garden of the Human Soul (2020 in progress) <https://youtu.be/SjFzjuhltU>

How Much Do You Really Know About Meditation and Contemplation?

On Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th November 2019 Elio Guarisco led a Course of Meditation and Mindfulness “An Approach to Contemplation. How to keep calm in the midst of the storms of daily life” in Lima, Peru. He was interviewed for a local newspaper, El Comercio, about Meditation and Contemplation and how we can come out of the “cage” that we build with our limits and conditionings to become free and autonomous persons.

“To meditate does not mean leaving your mind without thoughts.” Elio Guarisco

What is meditation?

The term “meditation” is very general, and because of that, everybody understands meditation in very different ways. For example, some people think that to meditate is to pray to God or a deity. Others think that meditation is to chant mantras or to imagine something with the mind.

All these are indeed forms of meditation, but they are not the essence of meditation. The essence of meditation is not to pray nor to recite a mantra nor to do something with your mind.

The essence of meditation is what we call “presence”, but when we speak of “presence” we must distinguish two different types of it: an object bound presence and a presence with object. The mindfulness practice that is widespread nowadays in the West is the cultivation of “presence” as an aspect of the mind. And this means to be fully immersed in the present moment, to consciously notice what you are looking at, what you are hearing, what you are thinking without judgment. Such mindfulness has always an object; it is a form of extended attention. Thus, essentially, for the purpose of the practice mindfulness is to acquire mastery of attention.

The “presence” that is spoken in the ancient Dzogchen teaching is not a form of attention. It is not an aspect of the mind to develop but rather an innate quality of the individual. It is already there fully de-



veloped in each individual, but it must be discovered.

If it is an innate quality, this means that we can all experience this presence?

Of course, everybody can experience this, but in general, you need a teacher that is able to create the circumstances in which you can discover it. Only in that way can you have a concrete knowledge it, not only an intellectual knowledge derived from studying or listening to explanations or descriptions. Unlike “mindfulness”, such presence is not an aspect of the mind. In fact, it is beyond the ordinary mind that thinks, reflects and makes judgments. It is beyond what we call “rational thinking”.

Likewise, just as mindfulness and innate presence are different, we should understand that “meditation” and “contemplation” are different. Meditation is a process of familiarizing ourselves with an object, a principle, a state of mind, a peaceful condition. To recite the rosary as done in Christianity, is also meditation. But the innate presence we are talking about here is something that has no object.

However, mindfulness and innate presence are not incompatible; when one is mindful you can approach more easily the discovery and the remaining in the state of innate presence. And when you can be in a state of innate presence, in your daily life mindfulness and awareness will be naturally present.

What is sought with contemplation?

I can give you the answer that the Buddha gave when a person asked him this question: “I cannot say that I have gained something; but I can say that I have lost many things.”

To think that by meditation you will gain something that you don't have, or that you will become another person than what you are, is a wrong idea. By contemplation

you will find your original state, the essence of what you really are. This original state has knowledge, wisdom and all the qualities one may dream of inherently in it. So when you find yourself in this original state, your qualities unfold by themselves, without having to do anything to develop them.

Your awareness and clarity will blossom, and you will become an expert navigator throughout the events of your life; you will not build tension and be more relaxed in your work and in your relationships.

Nowadays, in the world of science, much is being explained about our perceptions of things being conditioned by memory, experiences etc. When you look at something, in the initial moment you have a naked perception, but from the second moment you begin to associate your thoughts, judgments, your stories and emotions with this perception. Thus we never see things as they are. When we discover the innate presence that lies at the core of our being, we will also naturally have the object bound presence, with that, the moment before you go into the conceptualization of what you perceive, we will not automatically associate our concept to that. Everything will become more authentic and simple.

It does not mean that when you practice mindfulness or when you have discovered the innate presence you don't think anymore, you don't judge anymore. Many people who practice meditation have such an idea. They think that to practice meditation means to empty your mind of thoughts.

Yes, this is a very common idea that we have, that we must stop thinking.

First of all, you cannot really stop thoughts. And why should we stop thoughts? We need to think, we need our mind. Imagine if we couldn't think or judge, we would not be able to distinguish one thing from another, what would our life be like? It would be impossible to live a normal life.

But the problem is that we always produce thoughts even when it is not necessary. Our mind is always filled with useless thoughts of worry, of past, of present and of the future. So we need to learn to relax and not always create and follow unnecessary thoughts.

If we have presence, and we recognize thoughts, we do not stop them or follow them, hence thoughts will not bother us.

So thoughts can be there also when we are “meditating”, it is not a problem.

Meditation is not to stop thinking, then?

Although many people think that in order to meditate one must empty the mind of thoughts this is not so. As we said before it is not a problem if there is thought. If we are mindful, present, our way of experiencing thoughts changes.

First of all, usually in our unmindful condition, although thoughts occur unceasingly in our mind, we do not even notice them. But even if we do not notice them it does not mean that thoughts do not affect us. On the contrary, we automatically endorse them, and start a chain of reactions.

For example, when we have a thought of anger and we are not present, immediately we will feel “I am angry”. The thought of anger will fill our mind leaving no space. Our clarity will become dim and our reactions instinctive, animal like.

Instead if we notice that we are having a thought of anger it means we are observing it. This noticing, this observing creates space between us and the anger. We are not the anger; there is a thought of anger with which we do not need to identify. At that moment the automatic reaction is interrupted. Our clarity remains eventually telling us the best way to deal with the situation. ©

Elio Guarisco is an Instructor of Meditation, a well known translator and scholar of Tibetan texts. He was born in Italy in 1954 and lived for 20 years in India, where he learnt and applied different systems of meditation. He began his studies in 1970 as a disciple of the renowned master of Vipassana, S. N. Goenka. Afterwards, he explored the Tibetan tradition under the guidance of great masters such as Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Translation from Spanish into English by Laura Yoffe

A Seasonal Poem

Jacqueline Gens

The Light of the world is Love
Shining forth outside of time
With no other aim
Than Creative Display

The Light of the world is Love
Beyond boundaries
In the great expanse of space

Incomprehensible Presence
Not a place

The Light of the World is Love
Heals all hurts

Holy
Holy
Holy

December, 2019
From the Charnel ground
of old age housing
Highland Village
Shelburne Falls, MA USA



Lives of the Great Masters

The series “Lives of the Great Masters” were originally published in the 1990s in several issues of *The Mirror*. Each article was researched and compiled by a different person. The story of Adzom Drugpa was the first in the series, published in issue 29, January-February 1995.

Adzom Drugpa 1842–1932

Adzom Drugpa Drondul Pawo Dorje, also known as Rigdzin Natshog Rangdrol, was born on the 25th day of the 9th Tibetan month in the year of the Water Tiger (1842) in eastern Tibet, in the village of Adzom near Derge. When he was three years old, he declared himself an emanation of the great Drugpa Kagyu master Pema Karpo and was later acknowledged as his emanation by several masters, among them the great Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo who was to become one of his principal masters.

He received transmissions from and studied with many of the greatest masters of his time, such as Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thaye, Chogyur Lingpa, Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje, Nyagla Pema Dudul, Mipham Namgyal, Paltrul Rinpoche and the Drugpa Kagyu master Sakya Sri. All of these masters were involved in the tremendously important 19th century spiritual movement towards tolerance, understanding and, in particular, a non-sectarian synthesis which came to be known as Rime.

As his practice matured, on several occasions he received visionary instruction from the masters Padmasambhava, Longchenpa and Jigme Lingpa. He later revealed his own cycle of Terma teachings, the *Odsel Dorje Sang Dzod*. He established the practice community of Adzomgar in eastern Tibet where he would give Dzogchen teachings to large gatherings of students for three months every summer. In the wintertime he would teach the *tsalung* practices of the channels and winds.



Adzom Drugpa Drodul Pawo Dorje as depicted in the Temple of the Great Contemplation at Merigar West, Tuscany Italy.

In 1934 Adzom Drugpa predicted that he would soon pass into Nirvana and for the last time a great number of disciples gathered around him for three months to receive his profound instructions. On the 25th day of November 1934, after midnight, Adzom Drugpa assumed the position of Vajrasattva and accomplished the *Phowa*, transference of consciousness, passing into Nirvana amidst wondrous signs. His body remained in the upright meditation posture for three weeks during which time it shrunk to the size of an eight-year-old boy.

Our own teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, was recognized as an incarnation of Adzom Drugpa. Many significant people in Norbu Rinpoche's life were disciples of Adzom Drugpa such as his paternal grandmother, Lhundrub Tso who lived for many years at Adzomgar and who later wrote a biography of Adzom Drugpa; Norbu Rinpoche's paternal uncle, Ogyen Tendzin; his father, Tsewang Namgyel; his masters Ayu Khandro, Rigdzin Changchub Dorje and Adzom Drugpa's son, Gyurme Dorje, who was the principal holder of Adzom Drugpa's teachings. ©

Compiled by Jey Clark, a dharma student and translator of Tibetan who studied and practiced for many years with many contemporary Tibetan masters, among them Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Sogyal Rinpoche, Gonpo Tsedan Rinpoche, Kalu Rinpoche and the 16th Gyalwa Karmapa.

Food of Sinful Demons

Meat, Vegetarianism, and the Limits of Buddhism in Tibet

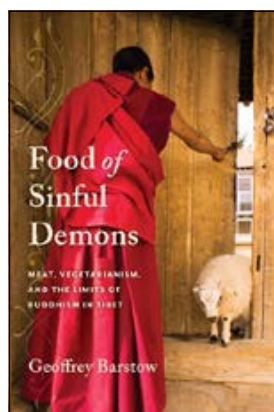
by Geoffrey Barstow
Columbia University Press 2017,
pp. 320
ISBN print 978-02311 79966

Alexander Studholme

Tibetans generally like eating meat, though their Buddhist piety has never made this entirely easy for them. The central Mahayana ethic of compassion and the law of karma mean their yak or mutton comes freighted with questions about the suffering involved in animal slaughter and the unpleasant future consequences that may be its result. In this brilliantly researched and beautifully written book, Geoffrey Barstow describes the many different, often rather specious and casuistic strategies Tibetans have used to justify their carnivorous ways and cites numerous pro-vegetarian lamas who have, over the years, challenged this meaty status quo.

As monastics, the Tibetans point to the fact that the Buddha himself was almost certainly not vegetarian and did not forbid his followers from eating meat. When his fractious cousin Devadatta insisted that his own disciples be entirely vegetarian, the Buddha criticised this as too extreme, though he also was pretty strict: his *sangha* were only allowed to eat meat given to them in their begging bowls, and only as long as it conformed to a rule of threefold purity, namely that the monks or nuns had neither seen, nor heard, nor even suspected that the animal had been killed for their benefit. But according to many ordained Tibetans, for whom begging for food is virtually unknown, this maxim is upheld when meat is bought from a butcher, perhaps wholesale for a big monastery, provided the man in the abattoir had no *specific* monk in mind while he went about his work.

The Buddha's rule, originally designed to create an occasional exception for what is morally problematic, has been subverted to normalise meat eating. The same can be said for the Tibetan appropriation of the Vajrayana commitment to eat the five meats: cow, dog, elephant, horse and



human. As Jigme Lingpa, the great 18th century Nyingma visionary, explains, the point here is that these things are ordinarily considered to be taboo, and so to eat them in a ritual context becomes a means of participating in the non-dual dimension: "Because they are feast substances, dualistic thinking – such as dividing things into pure and impure, clean and unclean – must be abandoned." But, as Barstow reports, many Tibetans, past and present, have interpreted this esoteric tantric vow simply as a licence to eat meat on a daily basis, something Patrul Rinpoche rebukes as "behaving carelessly with the tantric commitment of consumption."

Barstow also examines the Tibetan view that eating meat can, in some circumstances, actually be good for the dead animal. By being devoured by a practitioner, the creature is deemed to receive a cause for a positive future rebirth: liberation through consumption. The prime exemplar of this practice is the *mahasiddha* Tilopa, who is famously depicted sinking his teeth into a fish that he has just caught, thereby transferring its consciousness to a better life. Barstow looks in vain for any other textual source, but concludes that this perspective is critiqued so regularly by lamas sympathetic to vegetarianism – from different times, places and lineages – that it must have been fairly widespread. Jigmed Lingpa issues a quiet, self-deprecating caveat: "In a tantric context, it's great if someone... is able to benefit beings through a connection with their meat and blood. But I do not have this confidence."

Barstow presents Jigme Lingpa as Tibet's most towering vegetarian figure, who along with other famous lamas such as Patrul Rinpoche, Shabkar and Nyakla Pema Dudul, was responsible for a strong culture of vegetarianism amongst lay yogins in eastern Tibet in the 19th and early 20th centuries. One of the most striking passag-

es in the whole book is Jigme Lingpa's reflections on seeing a group of lambs awaiting slaughter. "Thinking like this, uncontrived compassion arose," he writes, "This experience was the most important event of my life." So moved was he by Jigme Lingpa's views, the revered, modern day Nyingma lama Dilgo Khyentse "took a vow to eat meat only once a day."

Herein, perhaps, lies the crux of the book. Although Barstow is himself veggie, his book is never a tiresome polemic. It is, rather, a fascinating social history, in which the phenomenon of meat eating becomes a means of affording fresh insight into Tibetan culture and identity. Dilgo Khyentse's vow may seem almost comical in its mildness, but it is representative of the kind of many pragmatic compromises that Tibetans took towards what was widely regarded as a necessary evil: moderating one's intake of meat, saying prayers for the dead animal, cultivating awareness. Barstow acknowledges the "limits of Buddhism" in Tibet, discussing the way in which meat eating is an integral part of other sociological tropes such as prosperity and heroic masculinity.

Barstow concludes by discovering an upsurge of vegetarianism in contemporary Tibet: travelling in Kham, he comes across entirely meat-free monasteries and restaurants with menus divided into "white food" (*karse*) and "red food" (*marse*), vegetarian and non-vegetarian. Though this cultural shift is due in large part to the advice of venerated teachers like the Dalai Lama, Karmapa and Khenpo Jigme Puntsok, there are plenty of dissenting voices: the issue is debated passionately in online forums. Vegetarianism, though expressive of the Buddhist values that Tibetans cleave to, is seen as incompatible with other aspects of the Tibetan world, most notably the nomadic way of life, where raising livestock is absolutely central. Pro-vegetarian lamas have had to revise their views in order to support nomadic communities.

Whilst the harsh environment of Tibet has hitherto made surviving without meat extremely challenging, there is now a much greater availability of fresh fruit and vegetables, as well as improved dietary education. The modern Rime master Khentru Rinpoche, writing in 2013, notes: "[Until] about eighteen years ago, most of the people in my village didn't even know that vegetables could be eaten by humans." However, the meat eaters remain defiant. As one young Tibetan tells Barstow: "Vegetarianism is destroying our culture." ©

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Amely Becker

Growing up in Germany in the industrial part of the Ruhr valley left me with very few options to live a creative and spiritually inspired life. Let's just say I lacked opportunities to harvest a life style derived from visionary resources. My inner dimension was barren and undernourished through lack of stimulation, and even education. The details of why is another story, so let's leave it at that. In any case, by the time I was 20 I knew I had to escape from this mean and uninspired world in Duisburg, and so I decided to go to India, searching for meaning, purpose and guidance. And I did find my first Guru, Lama Thupten Yeshe, in Nepal. Living a pilgrim's life for almost a year I filled myself up with a world full of exotic, mystical experiences and what felt like miracles to me; I discovered a path that allowed me to tap into the rich potential of my inner dimension and I took to it like fish to water. It was like switching from a black and white TV to a colored one.

Later, returning to Germany, it became totally unfeasible to squeeze myself back into that lifeless, functional reality and so very quickly once more I left friends, family and Duisburg behind to go to London, in the hope to escape the prospect of inviting a mental breakdown.

One day after a few months finding my way in London, and engaging with the sangha of Lama Thupten Yeshe, I had a visit from Brian Beresford who was a student of Lama Yeshe at that time too. He also taught Tibetan language classes which I followed. He had just come back from Italy where he had attended a retreat in Monte Faito led by a teacher called Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. At that time he was simply addressed as 'Norbu'. Brian told me that 'Norbu' would be coming to London and he strongly urged me to go to see him. It was an easy decision to make since many of my dharma friends were going anyway.

So, in mid December of 1979 I met 'Norbu', as he was called then, by attending my first retreat of teachings of Semsde. I was 23 years old. He was a teacher with an impressive presence. And still quite young. He had just turned 41 years. He seemed



fearless, powerful and a little scary. Once, during a break, I was sitting on the floor leaning against a wall and just across the room he came in through a door, looking straight at me, I caught his gaze and I felt a shock to my system which instantly made me break the contact, only to try and re establish it again after an instant. However, already in less than a couple of seconds he shifted his direction slightly away from me. I had the feeling that I had lost him, but it also seemed to me that he totally respected my boundaries, he would not invade me, which happened so often in my life with other people. I felt safe with him. And what a sensitive antenna he was!

This retreat took place in an amazing house in St. John's Wood, a beautiful old building with many bedrooms. It was used as the Cambodian embassy in its glory days. Now it was a squat, and a unique and interesting group of artists, musicians and healers had occupied it for quite a few years waiting out their chance to legally possess this stately house as their home. Inside, old thick carpets covered the living room floor, which was large and was used as the teaching hall for this retreat. Meals were sometimes prepared in a large kitchen and there was a dining room adjacent. However, we enjoyed sitting in the living room, relaxed around Rinpoche who sat on his teaching seat which was slightly raised so that everyone could see him. I was in awe of how informal this teacher conducted himself with us. He was dressed in jeans and wore colorful tops and he looked quite exotic. Someone brought him lunch and

we would sit around him on the floor to take ours alongside him.

Andy Lukianowicz formally introduced me to Rinpoche one day. As he got up from his seat and walked across the room to leave, we met half way and standing in front of each other, a small group of people gathered around us. I felt encouraged by his solid presence and spaciousness, so I told him of some of my life issues, to do with my mental health and my lack of ability to smell.

The first thing I did was to tell Rinpoche about my hallucinations which were persecuting and terrifying me on and off since I was 13. After listening to my descriptions he concluded that in Germany I had been under the attack of one of the manifestations of the 8 classes, since I get up in an industrial city with many steel factories strewn around and the pollution was hazardous. This particular class was provoked by the pollution and I picked up on that. To my great surprise he also told me about some of his own visions of beings when he



Santi Maha Sangha Exam in Australia in 2000.

was young, lurking around hay stacks, for example, and the beings being fierce. I was amazed at this, how he did not categorize my hallucinations as being the result of mental illness. At that time when he finished his accounts, as we were standing facing each other, he looked so intensely into my eyes that I felt a force making me turn on my own axis. Returning to my position facing him again, I felt stunned, in disbelief, bewildered and utterly hopeful that my life would be turned around.

Regarding the smell issue, his response encouraged me to trust that a solution eventually would be found. After many years of failure to recoup my ability to smell he finally said to me one day, "Oh well, at least one attachment less."

A lady called Sue in this squatting arrangement seemed to display a role of position, we discovered soon. Once more we were comfortably taking our lunch at the feet of the Guru in the living room, which was bedecked with antique furniture from another epoch and draped with old but beautiful wine red velvet curtains, generously grazing the floor. We were chatting and settling in, listening eagerly and intently to Rinpoche's words and to his silences.

Suddenly, the door swung open, and the woman of the house charged in, looking at us with rage on her face: she began to shout quite quickly, capturing all of our attention, "How dare you sit here in the living room, you should not eat here! You should be outside or in the kitchen. This is my house!!!" As if to say, you have to do what I say. We were dumbfounded and shocked; no one spoke.

As she still stood there expectantly and fuming, we all turned to Rinpoche for guidance. I saw him completely turn away from her and stare into space with wide open eyes. He just ignored her. As a result she rushed out in the same style that she had gushed in and slammed the heavily weighted wooden door shut.

Again we looked at Rinpoche who was still turned away. A moment later he turned to us, looking solemn and remaining silent for a moment. I remember feeling stirred up and detected a heavy heart beat, suggesting fear. He seemed quite relaxed but serious. As he began to talk, I felt relief. He said: I think we better go outside. And so we all followed him then and for many, many years to come. ©





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