

THE MIRROR

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Khaita – Integrating With Movement
The Path of Non-Distracted
20 Years Ka-Ter Translation Project



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY

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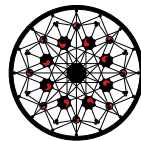
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Front and back covers: Sang and Serkyem practice at Merigar West near the Gönpa.

Photos by Zoe Lucia Lüthi.

Inside back cover: The Longsal stupa at Kunsangar South, founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2012 and one of the first stupas of this type. It is filled with Longsal texts and was established to promote peace, harmony and prosperity and to purify negativity in all those who come into contact with it.

Photo by Elena Razumova



IDC Membership 2022

Dear Global Vajra Family,
Greetings from the International
Gakyil Team!

We hope that the Year of the Water Tiger brings good health, safety, and prosperity for all despite the worldwide challenges that we are all experiencing.

Although our Sangha has been affected by the pandemic for the past two years, and more recently by the crisis in Ukraine, our Global Community has demonstrated its capacity to remain united through both continuous practice and generous support for one another.

The IG sends a warm thank you to the 3,718 people that have already updated their 2022 membership as of mid June 2022 and an appeal to those of you that have yet to do so. Membership is one of the most important ways we demonstrate our commitment to the teachings and to supporting the International Dzogchen Community, its Gars and Lings, and Sangha.

It is easier than ever to renew your 2022 membership. Contact your local Gakyil and ask them for assistance, or visit dzogchen.net to view and choose the payment methods available for your local Gar or Ling. Many Gars and Lings offer the opportunity to renew the membership directly online through your personal profile at dzogchen.net/profile/membership/

Furthermore, the IG Gakyil Team is aware that many members are encountering financial difficulties that affect their ability to renew their membership. Therefore, we would like to inform you that:

Members with financial issues or serious health problems can ask their local Gakyil to financially support their membership fee directly (through a local fund if established) or by looking for one or more donors (inside the local Community) or by asking the IG for global sponsorship assistance. This membership will be considered a Local Ordinary Membership;

The International Gakyil, and the Merigar East and Kunsangar South Gakyils have agreed to provide special conditions to the Ukrainian members by allowing them to maintain their 2022 full membership status even if they are unable to pay or are only able to pay a nominal fee;

Access to the closed section of the Webcast will be available for the year 2022 even for those who have not been able to update their membership by March 31, 2022.

Thank you for being an active IDC member and for showing your support and commitment by renewing your 2022 membership and also by paying for previous membership years as needed.

With love,
The International Gakyil Team
Steven, Barbara, Gabriella, Miranda, Vince,
Anna, Marek

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Khaita – Integrating With Movement

Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, December 31 afternoon, 2017

Originally published in The Mirror issue 139, March 2018, as the last teaching session of the Atiyoga Retreat given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, this excerpt concludes The Mirror's ongoing publication of the teaching sessions of that retreat.

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

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

Then some Westerners say, "Why don't we translate prayers into the English language for English people, into the Italian language for Italians, and so on?" For prayers it does not work that way. Take,



Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

for example, the Seven Line Prayer. Originally they were words coming from Guru Padmasambhava and then for centuries and centuries important Tibetan practitioners used them. They used them in the Tibetan language, not in English or Italian, and even if it had been necessary, they wouldn't have known [how to translate them]. So this is one reason. When we do prayers, invocations, and similar things, it is very important that we use them in Tibetan because this is related with the blessing of the lineage of all of those practitioners. Secondly, when something is translated it becomes very strange.

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

For that reason when I started Khaita I tried to transcribe the pronunciation of all the words in a universal transcription for everyone in the Dzogchen Community. I did not invent it because I am not that kind of expert in language. When the government in East Tibet asked Gangkar Rinpoche and me to teach Tibetan language to Chinese officials working in offices [in 1953], at that time we had two groups. One group of thirty or so students came from Beijing and already knew Tibetan language quite well, having studied it at university. They only needed to advance to a higher level



with the help of Gangkar Rinpoche. This was the first class. Then, in the second class, I had more or less 130 students who were completely new [to Tibetan]. I had no experience in teaching language in that period. There was also a professor from Beijing with great expertise in language working with these students whose name was Yüdachao. He made a very precise transcription of Tibetan pronunciation in Latin characters and for many days I studied this and learned to use and write the Tibetan sounds using these characters. Then later I prepared all the teaching and study books for my students using this form of transcription.

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

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

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

I wanted to do this second book equal to the quantity of a *mekhor*, a *mewa* cycle. I transcribed all of these songs for Westerners, put them in Tibetan, and also in translation. But if you only read the transcription and the Tibetan you won't be able to sing them, because the singers always add many ornamental words to make the songs sound more beautiful. Most of these words are not written, so you have to listen, understand, and add them. Then, I also developed a kind of system of symbols indicating the way to sing and if you look at the book you can understand them. I prepared everything very well.

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

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

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

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

When I started to write down the Dance of the Vajra I did not know a single word of Tibetan terminology related to dance. Then little by little I looked in Tibetan books, and also thought how it should be, and I developed the book of the Dance of the Vajra. Today when I see the books on the Dance of the Vajra I am surprised about how I succeeded in writing down all these things! For example, when I learned a dance in a dream sometimes I did not remember everything precisely. Then I felt sorry that I couldn't write

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Mandarava retreat 2017 at Dzamling Gar.
Photo by Ralf Plüschke

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it down. And when I felt sorry, later I would have another dream repeating it, or someone would dance with me while I was learning and would explain in detail how I should dance. That way I developed a lot. In particular, in Tibetan books there is a Kalachakra dance. It is not an ordinary dance, but with a mantra, a long mantra, and is also called a Vajra Dance. So when I was writing down the Dance of the Vajra I searched for this Kalachakra book. I had never studied it but I remembered that it existed. And when I was dancing and had to turn to the right and left with different kinds of turnings, I found and learned the names for them with this book.

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

In the word *lungta* [Tibetan prayer flag], *ta* is written in the same way as the word for horse. Everybody knows this term, because *lungta* is very diffused. It doesn't mean horse, but *lungta*. In the center of a *lungta* is a horse. In ancient times, in the pre-Buddhist Bönpo era, the horse was a symbol of energy. When they wanted to say that something was very quick they said "just like a horse."

Today we would not use horse, but perhaps an airplane or a rocket going to the moon, for example. They are superior to the horse. But in ancient times the symbol of energy was the horse and it was also related to the four other elements. In the ancient Bön tradition the four elements were not earth, fire, water, and wind. Earth, fire, water, and wind were simply considered dimensions in which there was movement and life.

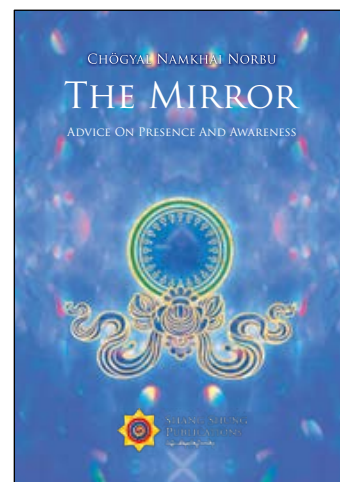
If you look closely, on a small *lungta* in the center there is usually a horse and in the four directions there are four animals – the tiger, lion, dragon, and garuda – that are the symbols of the elements. In ancient Bön times the garuda was basically the symbol of energy. A flaming garuda is also just like a deity that represents fire, because that animal moves in the dimension of fire. The tiger is the symbol of the air element because tigers live in the forest where there is a lot of wood. In elemental astrology, also in the Chinese tradition, wood corresponds to the air element. The snow lion represents the element of the earth. Tibetans believe that this animal lives in very high snow mountains, so in the dimension of earth. How does earth correspond with a mountain like Kailash or Everest? We have very soft earth, which then becomes like a rock, and the rock then becomes just like crystal. For that reason very high mountains remain like that for centuries and centuries. And in high mountains the snow always remains as well. So this is the dimension of the earth element. Then we have the dragon, which is considered a water animal. In general in a Tibetan *mandala*, the *chusin* is presented as a powerful water animal, but in the real sense the *chusin* and the dragon are the same principle. So the dragon represents the water element because its origin, its real dimension, is water. Since we all have these elements, we need to develop them, so that is why we prepare the *lungta*. ✱

Transcribed by Rita Bizzotto
Edited by Rita Bizzotto & Liz Granger

The Path of Non-Distraction

An excerpt from the spring retreat, “The Principle of Presence” according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s book “The Mirror, Advice on Presence and Awareness”. Dzamling Gar, May 14, 2022.

Adriano Clemente



Yesterday we started the first topic [of the book], how we can have real understanding that all phenomena or samsara or nirvana are rooted in our minds. When we have that understanding we no longer have any doubt about it. Then what is the main point that we should apply? To continue that state of presence without distraction. Here the book gives an example. It says, if we need to cut or block the flow of water from a source or spring of water, then we have to go to its source. If we try to block it some other place, we will not succeed. In the same way, if we want to block the root of samsara, we should go to the root of our mind, otherwise there is no way that we can stop this flow or manifestation of samsara.

In the same way when we speak about negative karma and suffering, if we want to stop this we also have to stop the root of our mind. If we don't go to the root that is our mind, then even if we try to accumulate merits, doing good actions and engaging in virtuous practices, we can have some temporary benefit but the root of all this suffering and obstacles will never be cut. Then again we can accumulate negative karma and so on.

Another example the text gives is a tree. If we want to definitively cut that tree, we need to take out the roots. If we just cut some branches here and there, it will only make it stronger and the tree will continue to grow and never dry up.

Our mind is what we call the all-creating king – there is a famous tantra of Dzogchen *semde* called the all-creating king or *kyun-je gyalpo* – but when we say “creating” it does not mean that it is actively creating like we do with our mind. In this case “creating” means that just like a mirror it has the potentiality to allow any reflections to appear inside it. In the same way this mind

essence or primordial state has this potentiality and so all phenomena of samsara and nirvana are just like reflections in the mirror. This potentiality of the mirror is what we call the all-creating king.

So our mind – mostly we have knowledge of what we call the ordinary mind – that mind, too, is like a reflection in the mirror. But how can we have knowledge or recognition of the mirror? Only through reflections, because a mirror does not exist without reflections. A mirror means the capacity to reflect something, then all reflections become a method or means or symbols to discover that potentiality. In the same way, if we are practitioners applying the real sense of Dzogchen, all phenomena of samsara become a means for discovering that state.

In Tibetan we say *nalma* which means original or fresh condition, which has never been touched. The Tibetan word for yoga, *nal jyor*, is usually translated as union although this is more the sense of the Sanskrit word. *Jyor* means union, more or less, and *nal* means original condition, our state fresh as it is, never been changed. So here it says that if our mind is not in its original fresh state, as it is, even if we use many methods like *kyerim* (the development stage), or *dzogrim* (the completion stage), they don't become a complete path for liberation. The reason is because when we do the *kyerim* stage, we begin mostly working with our mind, with our visualization, and we try to transform our impure physical manifestation into a form of the deity and the mandala and so on, so we start from the level of the body. The body also means the manifestation of form.

Then going deeper, after that we have the *dzogrim* stage, when we work with the level of energy, channels, prana, thigle or essences, all these manifestations of the

wisdoms of the deities, trying to integrate all aspects of the development stage at the level of energy. Then the finality of *dzogrim* is real knowledge, to be in the real condition of original mind. Here it says if this finality of being in the natural state of the mind is not applied or reached, then all methods of *kyerim* and *dzogrim* are not the path of complete liberation. It does not say that they are useless. They are very important methods, but in Dzogpa Chenpo they are not indispensable because we go directly to the level of mind essence.

Another example given here is that if we want to conquer a foreign country, first of all we have to capture the leader or chief of that nation. If we just capture other people we cannot achieve our aim. In the same way, if we do not deal with our mind, there is no way to go to the root of all the problems of samsara, suffering, and dualism. If we are not able to continue that presence without distraction, either we don't know how to do that because we have never received instructions on how to do it, or we don't have the capacity, in which case we are just slaves of our distraction and delusion. If we continue that way there will never come a time when we will be free from transmigration in infinite samsara. But if we do not lose ourselves in distraction and forgetfulness, if we are able to control or govern ourselves, if we do not forget, and we have that presence continuously, in that way we can continue or sustain that nature of mind. If we succeed in doing that, it is the essence of all dharmas, and the root of all paths.

All dualistic phenomena, like suffering and pleasure, good and bad, whatever we can imagine or experience, arises from our mind. We have no doubt about that. For this reason, to continue that recognition

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of mind essence without distraction is the most profound point of practice. If we ask how all the Buddhas and Tathagatas of the past obtained enlightenment, [they did it] by following this path of non-distraction. Even in the future, all those who will attain Buddhahood will do so through the path of non-distraction. And even now, all those who are attaining enlightenment, that is the result of applying the path without distraction.

Without the path of non-distraction, it is impossible to attain the state of enlighten-

the experience of emptiness becomes like a magnifying glass. This state of instant presence is not that now it is present and after it is not. It is what we call *changchub sem*, bodhicitta, the primordial state, but we do not recognize it because we are too conditioned and follow thoughts and distractions continuously. Then through methods like the experience of emptiness there is a kind of blockage of all our thoughts and we can have that experience that is sometimes called *heddewa*, which means that we don't have a precise idea or we cannot identify the situation we are in

Once we have that recognition it is very important to continue it with presence. At that point it becomes the essence of all paths and the root of all meditations, the final point of all practices, the real juice of all upadeshas, and the secret point of all methods, and for these reasons we really have to put effort into continuing this flow of undistracted presence.

This was the second subject [of the book] which is how we should have real understanding beyond all doubts that the main practice or root of meditation is undistracted presence.



Participants with Adriano at the spring retreat, "The Principle of Presence", Dzamling Gar, May 14, 2022.

ment. Therefore the first thing we should do is to have recognition of our nature of mind or mind essence. In Dzogchen we talk about the three statements of Guru Garab Dorje. The first statement is directly discovering our mind essence. There are different ways we can have that recognition. Sometimes it happens working with the direct transmission of a teacher, but it doesn't mean that it must always depend on that circumstance, such as direct introduction. In the Dzogchen Community at the moment there is this famous separation between people who received direct introduction and those who didn't. However, direct introduction means that we must have recognized our mind essence in order to have received direct introduction. Otherwise even if we have received direct introduction from the teacher twenty or thirty times, it just remains like a blessing. Therefore we need to work with methods.

For example, sometimes Rinpoche gave the *yeshe sangthal* direct introduction related to the experience of emptiness. Why the experience of emptiness? Because it is easier. What is easy? To allow that state of instant presence to be recognized, because

at that moment. For instance, if we have a shock, like a very strong noise or a bomb, first of all we have that shock, then we can have the feeling of fear, but before fear there is this gap. That gap means that our mind is blocked. If our mind is blocked but we have not fainted, how is our consciousness? How do we identify it? There is no way, but at the same time there is clarity. When we have that experience then we can recognize instant presence.

This is the first point for a Dzogchen practitioner. If this point is missing then all methods do not really go to the real sense of the teaching. Speaking about the aspect of integration, we use many methods for integration in the Dzogchen Community such as Vajra Dance and now Khaita Joyful Dances and so on. However, if we are just fixated on the Vajra Dance, on Khaita Dances but we are missing the main point, it is like saying in the previous example that we are trying to cut the branches of a tree. Of course it is very good, like planting seeds of virtue to have a connection with the Dzogchen Teaching for the future, but it is not sufficient as a main practice. This is the main point that is explained here.

Up to here the text gives the *tawa* or view. First it explains what samsara and nirvana is, and that whatever concepts we have of the existence of the universe, everything is based in our mind. What is the essence or nature of our mind? We should discover that. Once we have that recognition, it is the finality of the view; it is the real view. The path has three aspects: the view, meditation, and conduct or action. The view means that we have that recognition of our primordial state. Meditation means that now we cultivate that state, that recognition, in order to become familiar with it. Conduct or behaviour means that we try to bring into daily life the same experience that we have during the sitting session. It is not that we are dealing with different separate subjects; it is always the same point about how the three stages develop. So we have to start with the view. Once we have established the view then to develop we need meditation or cultivation of the path. Then we can integrate that in daily life. If the first point is missing then the second doesn't have any base. If the second is missing there is nothing to integrate with daily life. That is specific to Dzogchen Teaching. ©

2022: The Ka-Ter Translation Project Celebrates Its Twentieth Anniversary

Founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2002, the Ka-Ter Translation Project celebrates its Twentieth Anniversary this year.

The name Ka-Ter derives from the terms *Kama* and *Terma*. *Ka* stands for *Kama*, all the words of the Buddha and includes the original scriptures of Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga translated from the Sanskrit and Oddiyana languages; *Ter* stands for *Terma*, literally “treasures,” hidden and rediscovered teachings transmitted in short or direct lineages by *tertöns*, masters who have that visionary capacity. *Termas* manifest in incredible and various ways, about which it is said, “...Revealing the essence of supreme realization, these teachings emerge from the midst of the sky, from walls and trees, and from numberless places to those whose aspiration is perfect.”

Throughout the history of the spirit, many seekers in countless searches have looked for authentic and profound teachings that could lead them into the essence of their being. Some, like us, were fortunate enough to encounter a great and generous master prepared to share his knowledge, but only when the teacher and the student speak the same language or in the presence of qualified translation could this essential process take place.

The sacred Tibetan texts, so precious and unique, must be translated correctly, precisely, without changing essential meanings, and if possible composed by an artful translator with an equal command of the languages employed, thus enabling the transmission of the highest degree possible of understanding of the original teaching, given the limited absorption of its truth and power attainable from the printed page. This requires of the translator a profound dedication of skill, energy, devotion, diligence, humility, and long



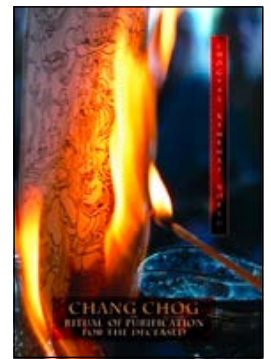
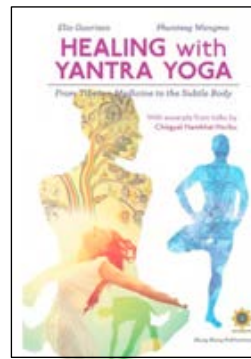
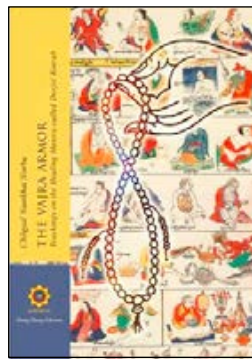
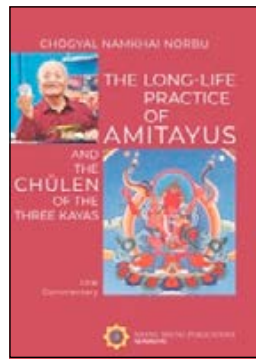
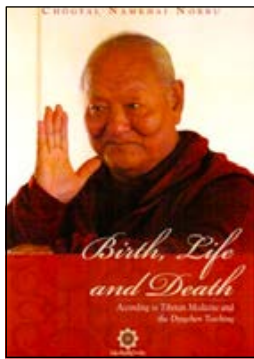
years of study and training and to accept this responsibility in order to become a qualified translator and/or an able instructor of potential translators is really extremely difficult.

Our Master pointed out that to become familiar with the unique knowledge of the ancient masters of Tibet, you must comprehend their scriptures and precious texts and make the age-old wisdom, knowledge, and experience of Tibetan culture available for future generations in Western and Asian languages in precise and correct translation. To realize this goal, the possibility must be offered to study and learn Tibetan for beginners as well as to deepen the extant familiarity with that language of the more knowledgeable students, in both cases to enable the development of high capacity translators.

Reflecting that priority, already in the late 1970s, several Tibetan translation projects had been launched in our Community and numbers of texts completed, mostly by Adriano Clemente and also by Jim Valby who devoted many years to the translation of Dzogchen Tantras. In addition, outside the ken of translations from the Tibetan, the first transcriptions of Rinpoche's teaching-retreats in booklet form began to appear, published by Shang Shung Edizioni, now known as Shang Shung Publications, in Italian and English.

However, the translation of Dzogchen texts from Tibetan, a main task of the translators and the publishing house, faced notable challenges during the early years after the founding of the Dzogchen Community because of the large number of original texts to be translated, the few

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qualified translators available within the Community, and the limited, irregular sources of funding available to compensate the full-time commitment of the translators. In 1989 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu founded the Shang Shung Institute in Italy, charging it among other responsibilities with the task of establishing a functional base for all translating activity and for the training of new translators, proposals which for a while longer remained unrealized due to difficult circumstances.

Then, laying a stable foundation for the fulfillment of these urgent needs, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2002 created the Ka-Ter Translation Project. As Rinpoche said,

"If you want an understanding of Dzogchen, you need the original books. That is essential... The Ka-Ter Translation Project is an important step in that direction."

The central management of this new endeavor he entrusted to the Shang Shung Institute Austria, giving Director Oliver Leick its financial and administrative responsibilities and designating Tibetologists Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco, and Jim Valby as the main translators from Tibetan, with the appointment of Elio also as instructor of a yearly training course for translators. Already in summer 2003 Elio conducted the first Training for Translators from Tibetan, held in Merigar West. Later, Professor Fabian Sanders, appointed in 2010 as the fourth crucial member of that scholarly team, assumed the primary responsibility for courses in the Tibetan language in what remains a yearly event under his guidance.

The fundamental resolution of the dilemma of finding sufficient funds to provide adequate living for the translators from the Tibetan was sought in a donation system developed to support all our activities of translation and publication. Since the very beginning, the Ka-Ter Translation Project has been made possible by the unstinting donations of members of the Community.

In one such example, fulfilling the wish of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, the Shang Shung Institute Austria and its related Ka-Ter Project, thanks to the generosity of the Community, was able to underwrite the digitalization of all the teachings revealed by Changchub Dorje. Some 260,000 pages of Tibetan text were digitalized, verified, and catalogued, the bulk of the work occurring in Tibet at Changchub Dorje's residence in Galingteng, Tibet and in the Shang Shung Institute at Merigar in Italy.

Elio Guarisco summarized as follows the mode of financing adopted by the Ka-Ter Translation Project:

"All this has been made possible through the constant, untiring, conscientious, and dedicated fund-raising of Oliver Leick and the Shang Shung Institute Austria in many years of devoted service to the Master and the Dzogchen Community."

Already Translated and Published Books

Thanks to the marvelous collaboration and support of members of the Dzogchen Community, so many translations have been published by **Shang Shung Publications**.

Longsal Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

All books related to the Longsal Teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu were translated by Adriano Clemente. This work will continue for several years, as many texts are still untranslated and unpublished.

Longsal Teachings, Volume 1–10

Longsal Commentaries, Volume 1–5

- * The Root Upadesha of the Vajra Bridge of Longde
- * The Upadesha of the Self-Perfected Thögal
- * The Crucial Preliminaries of the Path of Ati
- * The Upadesha of the King of Space

- * The Upadesha on the Primordially Pure Tregchöd
- * Chögyal Namkhai Norbu: The Longsal Rushen

Books of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

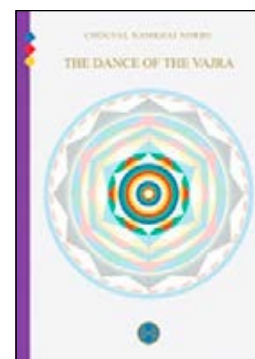
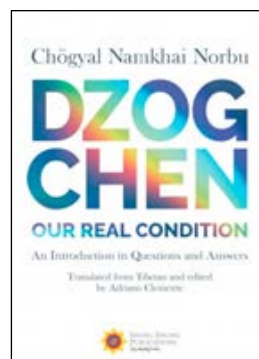
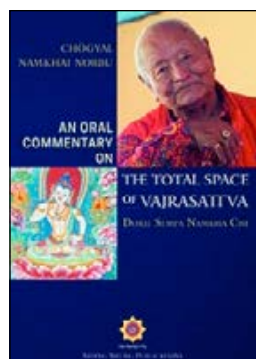
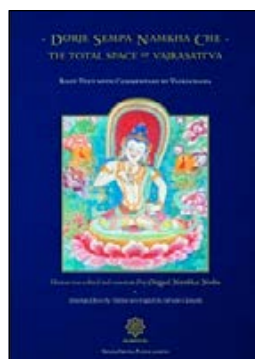
These books were translated by several translators, mainly Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco:

- * A Necklace of Jewels
- * An Oral Commentary on Dorje Sempa Namkha Che
- * Birth, Life and Death
- * Dzogchen, Our Real Condition
- * Healing with Fire
- * Healing with Yantra Yoga
- * Khorwa Yedal
- * Mandarava Tsalung Practices
- * Message from Tibet through Songs and Dances
- * Namkha, Harmonizing the Energy of the Elements
- * The Longlife Practice of Amitayus
- * Bardo: The Bardo Instructions Sealed with the HUM
- * The Dance of the Vajra
- * The Dance of the Vajra: Mandala, Diagrams
- * The Changchog Rite
- * The Divination of Dorje Yudronma
- * The Four Methods of Development
- * The Practice and Action Mantras of Dark Garuda
- * The Yoga of Prana for Clarity and Emptiness
- * The Stairway to Liberation
- * The Vajra Armor: the Dorje Kotrab Terma
- * Teachings on the Thun and Ganapuja

Books by other authors

These books were translated by several translators, mainly Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco:

- * Dorje Sempa Namkha Che, the Total Space of Vajrasattva
- * Gyalwa Yangönpa: Secret Map of the Body



- * Kongtrul Lodro Taye: Creative Vision and Inner Reality
- * Kunjed Gyalpo: the Supreme Source
- * Longchenpa: Longchenpa's Advice from the Heart
- * The Marvelous Primordial State: the Mejung Tantra
- * Abhayadatta: The Tantric Mystics of Ancient India, the Miraculous Deeds of the Eighty-Four Mahasiddhas
- * Awakening Upon Dying, the Tibetan Book of the Dead
- * Kathog Situ Chökyi Gyatso: Togden Shakya Shri, the Life and Liberation of a Tibetan Yogi
- * Paltrul Rinpoche: The Vision of Clear Light

Forthcoming Books of the Ka-Ter Translation Project

The complete version of teachings on Tregchod transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu will be one of the next books offered by Shang Shung Publications. The complex preparation of the various sections of this book has taken more than thirteen years and now the reading of the text for publication is in its final steps. Generous sponsorship makes a high-quality printing possible, and in this way, we pay homage to these extraordinary Dzogchen teachings.

The translation and revision by Rinpoche of Vimalamitra's Commentary on the Dra Thalgyur Tantra, an immense work, the realization of which was assigned to our dear Vajra Brother Elio Guarisco as his main task, has been a major goal of the Ka-Ter Translation Project. The several fully dedicated years it would have taken him were cut short by his fatal illness and Elio had time only to initiate this work. As it is of crucial importance that this translation be made available and Adriano's responsibilities in this regard are already great leaving him no time for a further commitment, a team of excellent translators are being sought to complete the text, independent of the Ka-Ter Project.

Books to be translated by Adriano Clemente

The numerous books on which Adriano will focus his skills in the coming period are listed below, giving an idea of the great gifts of wisdom that await us if only we do our part and collaborate in whatever measure possible and continue (or begin) the wonderful, needed financial support of which the Ka-Ter Project makes such good use.

Longsal Texts

- * Longsal Ati lam gyi sngon 'gro – Commentary to Preliminary Practices of Ati
- * Longsal Gsal stong – Commentary on Clarity and Emptiness
- * Longsal A ti dgongs pa ngo sprod – Commentary on Introduction to the State of Ati
- * Longsal A ti gnad gzer – Commentary on the Most Important Points

Santi Maha Sangha Texts That Need Reviewing

- * SMS second level
- * SMS third level
- * SMS fourth level

Other Texts of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

- * Klong sde'i dgongs don snying dril – Essence of Longde instructions
- * Sbas pa'i rgum chung – Hidden Collection of Buddhagupta
- * A ti yoga bstan pa thams cad kyi snying po – Atiyoga, the Essence of All Teachings
- * Nam mkha' che'i snyam khrid – Experiential Instructions on the Namkha che
- * Nyams mgur – Experiential Songs
- * Thar lam sde gsum – The Three Paths of Liberation
- * Zhi lhag rdzogs chen lugs – Shine and Lhagthong in Dzogchen
- * Rig pa'i khu byug – The Cuckoo of Instant Presence

- * The Mirror: Advice on Presence and Awareness, revised Translation and Commentary

Texts by Other Authors

- * Changchub Dorje Lama Zabdon
- * Changchub Dorje dag snang – Pure Vision
- * Changchub Dorje zhal gdams – Advice
- * Pad ma bdud 'dul gyi mgur 'bum – Experiential Songs
- * Chokyi Wangchuk Lhalung Sangdag
- * Snga' 'gyur lnga'i nyams khrid – Experiential Instructions on the Five Early Translations

Translations Begun by Elio Guarisco To Be Completed

- * Yan tra'i rtsa rlung skor – On Tsalung
- * Changchub Dorje namthar – Biography of Changchub Dorje
- * Nam mkha' che sri singha'i dgongs 'grel – Shri Singha Commentary on the Namkha che

Revision of a Translation by Namgyal Nyima

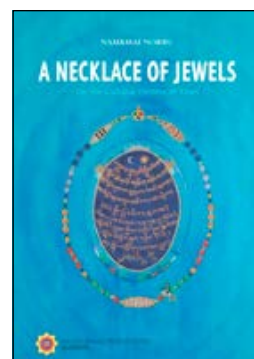
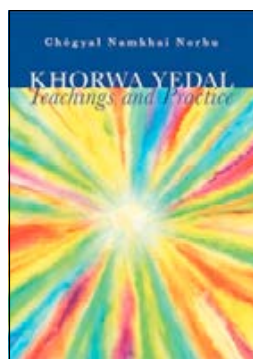
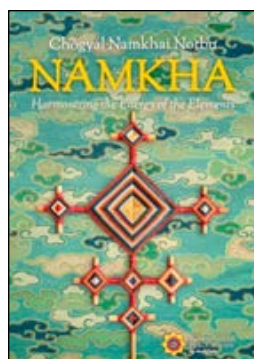
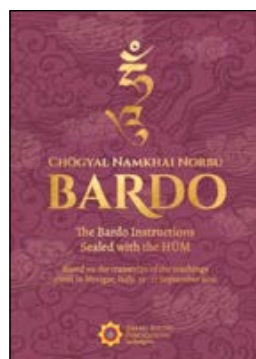
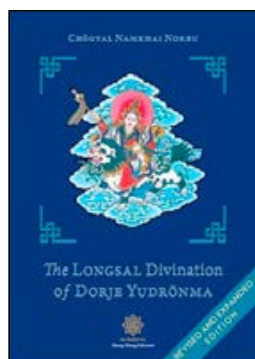
- * A 'dzoms yab sras kyi rnam thar – Biography of Adzom Drugpa and His Son Gyurmed Dorje

After translation, each text is edited and checked by mother-tongue editors before printing by Shang Shung Publications. The printing costs of most of these forthcoming books will be co-financed by the Ka-Ter Translation Project, guaranteeing that each book will appear in an elegant form that underlines the immense importance of these texts for us and future generations.

How to Make a Donation

If you would like to help this invaluable work of translation and education by the Ka-Ter Translation Project to continue, spreading benefit within the International Dzogchen Community and in the world at

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large, please offer your financial support of any measure to the Shang Shung Institute of Austria. Your donation will go directly to support the translation of Rinpoche's personal texts as well as other important teachings selected by him so that their primordial wisdom can be preserved via the unlocking of the doors of language.

In the past Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with many *tashi depts* counselled us in the following words, advice as pertinent today as when he first introduced the Ka-Ter Translation initiative to us in 2002:

"I really hope that all of you who are interested in the Teachings and Tibetan culture will support this project, directly or indirectly, and collaborate with its various aspects."

On behalf of the Ka-Ter Translation team, I thank you, Donors and Supporters for your whole-hearted participation and understanding of the importance of the work we are doing jointly. Together we have succeeded in completing so much because of your collaboration and generous donations. Please keep up your fruitful efforts to make these unique wisdom texts accessible to our and future generations!

Here are the bank details for your donation:

Account holder: Shang Shung Institute Austria

IBAN: AT19 3815 1000 0003 0387

BIC: RZSTAT2G151

Your donation can also be sent via PayPal using the link: [PAYPAL](#).

You can also send donations via [REVOLUT](#) using 0043 664 88662660.

Thank you very much!!!
Oliver Leick, May 2022

Time line

2000

On January 1, 2000, the first day of the new millennium, the Shang Shung Institute Austria was founded and in 2001 launched a first simple but functional website.

In this period two translators of the Dzogchen Community began work on Tibetan texts of two different projects, Adriano Clemente on the *Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* and Jim Valby on the Vairocana Translation Project.

Both of these wonderful activities were compensated only with irregular donations and the translators never knew if they would receive payment in the coming month or have to find another way to pay the bills of daily life. It was not easy at all for them and this uncertainty hindered their work. Jim Valby obtained his own funding and Igor Legati assisted in the collection of funds for Adriano.

2002

Shang Shung Institute Austria received €100.000 donated anonymously in our bank account. Surprised and overwhelmed by this donation, Oliver Leick asked Rinpoche how we should use this sum. Rinpoche advised:

"You take care of it. We will find a good use for it, but do your best so that this amount will not become less."

Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco, and Oliver Leick had a meeting with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Tashigar Norte during which how to use this donation for translation work was discussed. Each of us three had a different idea about how to name this new project, but Rinpoche was not happy with our ideas. He said to us,

"Come back tomorrow, and I will give you a name."

On the next day, meeting Rinpoche again, he said,

"This new project will be called Ka-Ter Translation Project. Ka-Ter comes from Kama, the Words of Buddha, and Terma are the hidden treasure texts. Now all of you do your best to make it fruitful."

This was the moment of birth of this new translation project. From then on the translators were freed of their worries about how to cover their simple needs, as from that point on I was able to offer them modest donations for their precious work on a regular monthly basis.

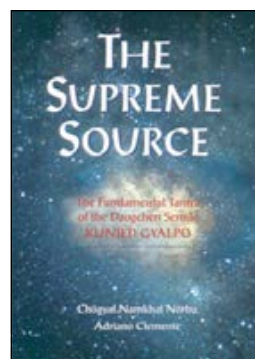
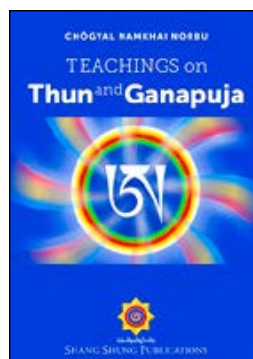
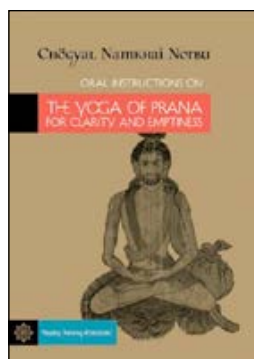
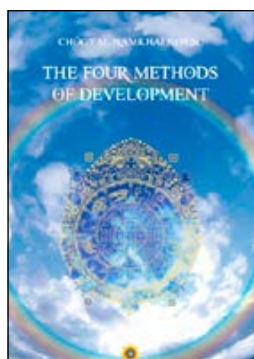
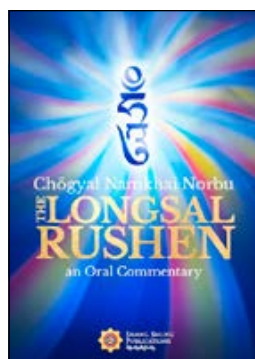
2003

In summer the first Training for Translators from Tibetan, one of the important activities of the Ka-Ter Project, was held in Merigar West under the guidance of Elio Guarisco. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's *On Birth, Living and Dying* was chosen as the text to be translated from Tibetan and fourteen translators from all over the world worked intensively on it for six weeks. As result of the first training, that book was published soon after.

2004

In summer the second Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Isla Margarita (Venezuela). A Dzogchen tantra of the Mind Series was indicated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as the text to be studied, offering a marvelous opportunity for twelve translators from ten nations to come in contact with one of the most ancient Dzogchen tantras, the *Mejung*, the title of which can be translated as the *Wonderful Primordial State*. The training lasted for forty-four days and the participants showed considerable progress over that period in their knowledge of the Tibetan language.

During this training the translators experienced how difficult it is to translate an ancient Dzogchen tantra in all its arcane complexity. Rinpoche suggested that it would be more fruitful if a small team



of qualified translators took over the responsibility for these special translations and asked Elio, Jim, and Adriano to be in charge of that project. Rinpoche himself was the first sponsor of the Ka-Ter Project, as during the retreat in July 2004 Rinpoche himself offered a beautifully carved stone for auction and said: "I want to give this for the translation project."

2005

The third Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Elio Guarisco.

2006

The fourth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Elio Guarisco.

Oliver Leick established a pension and life insurance fund for Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco, payable at the age of sixty-eight. Thanks to this fund the family of Elio received his life insurance in 2020 when Elio passed away. The insurance company did not accept Jim Valby due to his age, but when Jim became sixty-eight, he also received a donation for all the work done until then. Still now, Jim receives every now and again donations from the Ka-Ter Translation Project.

2007

The fifth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

The Shang Shung Institute Austria held the first fund-raising campaign for Ka-Ter in the form of a raffle with thirty wonderful prizes.

2008

The sixth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

The Shang Shung Institute Austria started a new endeavor, The Public Books Project within Shang Shung Publications. Today,

books for the general public are an important activity of Shang Shung Publications. The publication of this category of books is still co-financed by the Ka-Ter Project.

2009

The seventh Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

The Shang Shung Institute Austria held the second fund-raising campaign for Ka-Ter in the form of a raffle with ten wonderful prizes.

2010

The eighth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

Fabian Sanders started a first course on the precise pronunciation of Tibetan with many such courses following in subsequent years.

2011

The ninth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

2012

The tenth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

Igor Legati who had been the main coordinator of the translation project *Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu* (CW) passed on this responsibility to Oliver Leick and from that point it has been part of the Ka-Ter Translation Project.

2013

The eleventh Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

2014

The twelfth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

2015

The thirteenth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the transmission of the *lung* of the Dra Thalgyur Tantra. Afterward Jim Valby started the first translation of the root text of this important and ancient tantra which explains all aspects of Dzogchen.

This first translation of Jim was then transferred to Elio Guarisco who was to complete it. As Elio was very busy in this period translating and compiling many texts, he planned to continue this huge work after he finished his earlier commitments. It took him four years until he could begin this work, but never finished it as he passed away in 2020. It was known that the translation of the root text and its commentaries would take several years, as it is written in an ancient style and its content is difficult to understand.

2016

The fourteenth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

2017

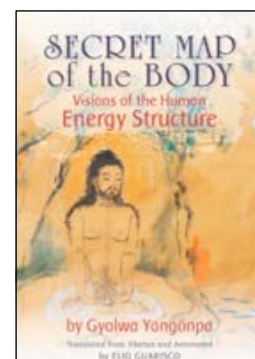
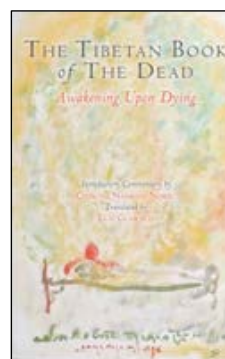
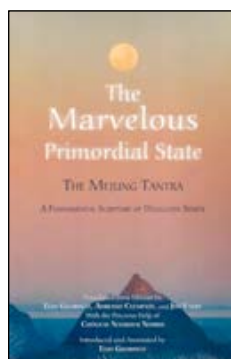
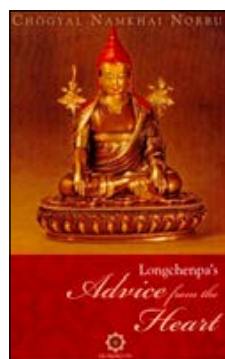
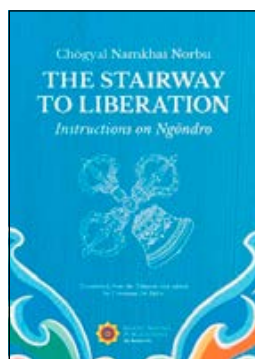
The fifteenth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked Oliver Leick to become the director of the International Shang Shung Foundation and due to this new responsibility his work for the Ka-Ter Project intensified.

2018

The sixteenth Training for Translators from Tibetan was held at Merigar West under the guidance of Fabian Sanders. From then on the Shang Shung Institute Austria was no longer involved in the organization of the Training for Translators from Tibetan, as this activity became the responsibility

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ity of the School of Tibetan Language team with Fabian Sanders as its director.

The Shang Shung Institute Austria began a collaboration with the Shang Shung Institute USA and in particular with the School of Tibetan Medicine. As part of the Ka-Ter Translation Project, SSI Austria supports the transcription and translation work of the teachings of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo given by her during several four-year trainings to become a qualified and certified Tibetan doctor. A large donation given this project supports the work of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo and a small yearly donation that of her main assistant.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu founded the International Atiyoga Foundation and soon afterward Rinpoche passed away.

2019

Oliver Leick became the vice-director of the Atiyoga Foundation, and thus the Ka-Ter Translation Project became part of the Atiyoga Foundation.

The Ka-Ter Translation Project assumed the continuing support of the work of Nancy Simmons, editor of English books published by Shang Shung Publications.

2020

All activities of the Shang Shung Institutes and the International Dzogchen Community due to the worldwide Corona pandemic was carried out online. Tragically, this year Elio fell fatal victim of this terrible disease.

2021

After the passing of Elio, his family received the funds accumulated in his life-insurance policy.

Shang Shung Publications became an autonomous and independent department of the Atiyoga Foundation. Oliver Leick also became a member of the new Board of Directors of Shang Shung Publications which guarantees a fruitful collaboration

between the translators, the editors, the publishing team, and the Ka-Ter Project.

Made possible by its successful system of donation, the Ka-Ter Project began collaboration with Charles Jamyang Oliphant of Rossie as editor of English texts translated from the Tibetan.

2022

Through a fruitful collaboration with Shang Shung Publications, several new books will be published in high quality format.

The collaboration with Jamyang as editor was renewed.

Testimonials

On the occasion of the 20th Anniversary of the Ka-Ter Translation Project, I congratulate the Shang Shung Institute Austria on its tremendous achievement! This project has ensured that the indispensable wisdom of Tibetan culture will be passed to present and future generations!

In particular, the presentation of the unique contributions of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to the revelation of Dzogchen teachings as well as all aspects of Tibetan history and culture are invaluable. This is a tremendous gift to students of Dzogchen and to the public at large. Reflective of their value, the technical quality of the publications is also superb in all respects.

Best wishes for the continuation of their work!

Will Shea, Buckland, Massachusetts, USA
Sponsor of the Ka-Ter Translation Project

* * *

The Ka-Ter Translation Project is a radiant example of extraordinary professionalism and accountability within the International Dzogchen Community. In 2002 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked Oliver

Leick to be responsible for finding funds for the Ka-Ter Translation Project, so that the translators could focus on their very demanding and tiring job to translate wisdom-texts from Tibetan into English.

Thanks to the funds raised by Oliver Leick, and thanks to the indispensable donations received, such a unique project founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has a future, and the Shang Shung Institute Austria could not only assist the translators with monthly donations, but also pay for their life insurance every month.

From an institutional point of view, Oliver Leick's authoritative management, his tireless commitment to Rinpoche's view, his reliability makes Ka-Ter Project and Shang Shung Institute one of the best worldwide projects to preserve Tibetan Cultural heritage in general and in particular the unbelievable spiritual heritage of our precious Master.

With this occasion I want to thank Oliver Leick very much for his continuous support and advice to Atiyoga Foundation Department of Research and Documentation and for his friendship in a mutual open, loyal collaboration. Long life to the Ka-Ter Project!

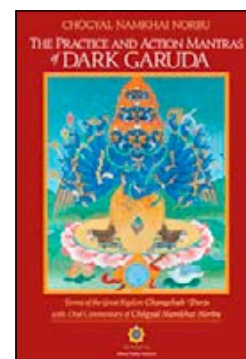
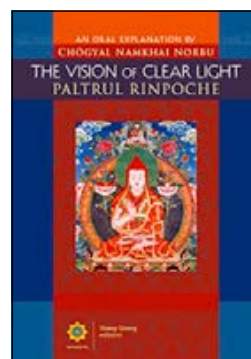
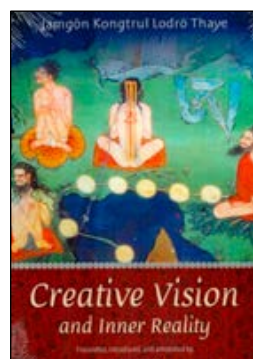
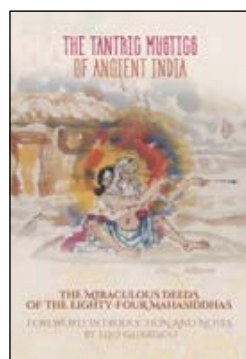
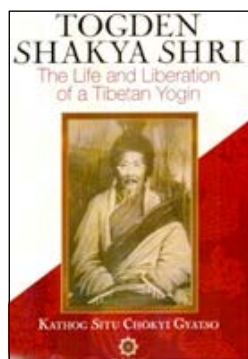
Paolo Roberti di Sarsina, MD, Bologna, Italy,
*Director, Research and Documentation
Department of the Atiyoga Foundation*

* * *

Ka-Ter is a very important project that makes valuable teachings in the Tibetan language available to a wide audience. Particularly I feel it so precious because there are plans to translate the numerous and different teachings, writings and biography of our master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

Adriana Dal Borgo, Italy
*International instructor of Vajra Dance
and Khaïta*

* * *



A long time ago Oliver Leick approached me with a question, would I like to support the Ka-Ter Translation Project. It was written in a very elaborate way, so I was not sure, what part was true and how much marketing was in that message. But after some time, I sent my first donations and slowly I started to understand, what an impressive initiative is behind the name *Ka-Ter Translation Project*.

I am grateful to everybody who is working on this heroic task of translating all these deep wisdoms into currently active languages, to make it accessible even to future generations. Thank you, Oliver, to be so persistent in fundraising for this project, I would hardly find anything else more important these days to support.

Libor Maly, Czech Republic
Sponsor of the Ka-Ter Translation Project

* * *

As practitioners and Community members we are blessed to have a project such as the Ka-Ter. We cannot express enough the importance of the translation project from Tibetan language, carried out by experts who worked closely with our teacher. Dharma text translation is a long and precise work and developing skills and knowledge to do it is a lifelong endeavor. Rinpoche has transmitted to us so many precious teachings and our ability, as a community, to bring them to fruit and preserve them depends on projects such as the Ka-Ter. Looking through the list of books that were translated and published in these 20 years, we feel touched with gratitude. We believe we should all support the translators' work through the Ka-Ter project!

Gakyil of the Dzogchen Community
Merigar East, Romania

* * *

Over the past 20 years, Oliver Leick, one of the earliest disciples of Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, has been commissioned by our precious Master to direct the Ka-Ter project. Oliver has worked hard, and thanks to his invaluable work, the Western world now enjoys the translation of ancient texts and sacred Buddhist teachings.

Oliver did not just direct, but he also participated by engaging in the search for donors who could support Ka-Ter's various projects. He and his family participated as donors. For this we are very grateful for his work.

An immense thanks to donors and workers who, with their great help, have contributed to the development of this fantastic project. Thank you with all my heart!

Migmar Tsering, Italy
Director of Dynamic Space of the Elements

* * *

In 2002 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu entrusted the Shang Shung Institute Austria with the financial responsibility of the work for translation of Tibetan texts.

This 2022 we celebrate the 20 years of Ka-Ter: the structure of the Shang Shung Institute Austria directed by Oliver Leick, which along these years besides the challenging financial responsibility for the translation of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's Teachings, dedicated also towards the teaching of the Tibetan language to Dzogchen practitioners.

In these twenty years, dozens of titles have been produced and then translated into the languages of the four quadrants of the world. In addition to Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Germany, Italy, France, Spain, our texts go to the United States, UK, China, Latin America and even Australia, all headquarters of the International Dzogchen Community, wherever there is a need to deepen the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

It is also worth being reminded that beyond the uniqueness of such literature is the quality of its research for the highest profile and accuracy.

Rinpoche teaches that everything is impermanent and when our life comes to an end and we will no longer exist, it will be essential that the precious teachings that have been transmitted to us find life in other minds and that they are consciously guarded. In short, it is necessary to avoid that everything ends. That is why an important structure like Ka-Ter exists, both for the benefit of our nowadays Dzogchen Community and to ensure its future life, keeping in mind the importance of such precious and rare Tibetan Teachings and the necessity to preserve it.

Enrica Rispoli, Torino, Italy
An early student of Rinpoche who also studied Tibetan with him at the Oriental University, Naples

* * *

Since the birth of the Ka-Ter project in 2002 I have tried, according to my possibilities, to support it, convinced of its importance. Inspired by our Master and dedicated to the translation of fundamental Dzogchen texts by our expert translators and Tibetologists, Adriano Clemente, Elio Guarisco and Jim Valby and with the fundamental collaboration of the Master himself, the essential quality of Ka-Ter lies in trying to have an accurate and faithful translation both of the texts for practice and for those wonderful texts that the Tibetan tradition has given us over hundreds of years and, very important for the Dzogchen Community, the complete work of our beloved Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. It has now been 20 years since the day of the foundation and many things have happened both sad and happy, but I consider the project that Oliver Leick is carrying out with care and passion of the utmost importance for

» continued on the following page

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all those who love and are interested in the culture of Tibet, the Land of the Snows.

Massimo Orsi, Italy
*Member of the Board of Directors of
Shang Shung Publications*

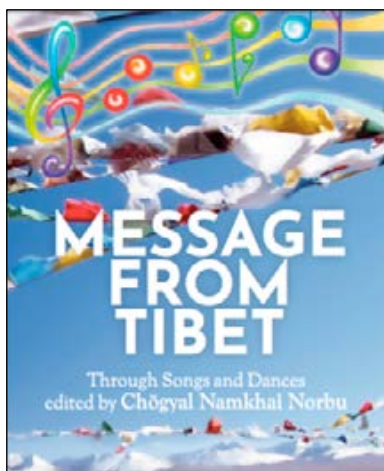
* * *

The first formal publishing activity of the Dzogchen Community goes back to 1983, when Shang Shung Edizioni/Publications was set up at Merigar in Italy for spreading the Dzogchen teaching that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was already transmitting in the Western countries for a few years, from 1976. The main concern at that time was to have books containing the practices and the related explanations given by the Master, but of course the translation of original Dzogchen texts from the Tibetan has always been a primary task of our publishing house.

This task became even more compelling when Rinpoche started to transmit his own terma teachings belonging to the Longsal Cycle. The translations of Tibetan original texts, performed by practitioners that were former Rinpoche's students at the University of Naples, was very demanding in terms of time and immersion in this specific field of ancient Tibetan language. Therefore, after a while a project called Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was set up, whose aim was collecting funds for the translation of Rinpoche's writings that was mainly entrusted to Adriano Clemente.

Very soon the need of translating Tibetan texts related to the Dzogchen teachings grew even more, and other translators like Jim Valby and Elio Guarisco were involved in the ongoing publications activity of the Dzogchen Community.

Therefore in 2002 all the projects aimed at supporting the translation of Tibetan original texts were grouped in the Ka-Ter Project that Rinpoche entrusted to Oliver Leick, director of Shang Shung Institute Austria. With his tireless fundraising activity Oliver succeeded in giving our translators the possibility to work fulltime at making the ancient wisdom of the Tibetan Dzogchen masters available to Western readers, backing in a substantial way the activity of Shang Shung Publications that, without this support, could not have published all the books that are available in its amazing catalog.



Working for more than 30 years within our Shang Shung publishing house, I am really impressed by the huge work that was done on the thrust of our Master who always encouraged us in any way to persist in making the Dzogchen teaching spread also in paper and digital form all over the world. These teachings represent a unique corpus of works that cannot be found anywhere else in this globe. The hundreds of titles published by Shang Shung Publications with the support of the Ka-Ter Project have now reached the amount of 1140 versions translated into English, Italian, German, French, Spain, Polish, Rumanian, Portuguese, Greek, Czech/Slovak, Hungarian, Bulgarian, Dutch, Hebrew, Japanese, Russian and Chinese languages.

I thank Oliver wholeheartedly for having played and playing an important role in this meritorious and precious activity. I really hope that our readers are encouraged to sustain and support the translation and publication of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's wisdom works through their generous donations and purchases that so far made this incredible non-profit enterprise successful.

Igor Legati, Italy
*Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Instructor,
Member of the Board of Directors of
Shang Shung Publications*

* * *

For many, many years the Ka-Ter Project has helped support skilled translators to fulfill the need of having quality translations of many important texts. Not an easy task! For that we should all be thankful!

Fabio Andrico, Italy
*International Instructor of Yantra Yoga,
Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Instructor,
Director of the Ati Movement and Mind
Department of the Atiyoga Foundation*

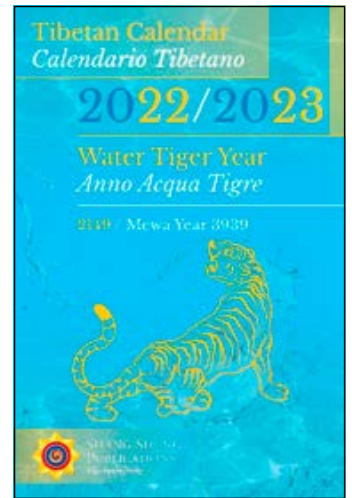
* * *

The history of the transmission of Dzogchen teachings is a fascinating subject. There were challenging times for the spreading of Dzogchen when just a few words transmitted orally and in secret carried the essence of the meaning of millions of tantras, but there is now a wealth of texts available and connected to the teachings of our Master. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu himself wrote many books on different subjects, taught extensively from the most important of the Dzogchen tantras and from many other texts of great Dzogchen teachers such as Longchenpa and Jigmed Lingpa. As for the terma literature, he transmitted methods connected to his own revelations through dreams and to his teacher Changchub Dorje's spiritual treasures. A great deal of this literature is being translated by the Ka-Ter Translation Project which took up this crucial task in 2002. By studying these extraordinary translations, we can validate our understanding of the teachings through textual references and contribute to pass on the teachings in an authentic way.

From 2003–2018 the Ka-Ter Project organized Tibetan Translation Courses too through which we can acquire the skills to read and understand this complex and fascinating language. Personally, I feel a great satisfaction in being able to read the original texts written by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for us, his students.

The two decades-long dedication of the SSI-Austria to these tasks is really praiseworthy and we should not lose the opportunity to sustain and contribute to its mission, as there are still many texts whose wisdom awaits to be unlocked by our translators.

Monica Gentile, Nepal/Italy
*Santi Maha Sangha Base Level Instructor,
Director of the Scientific Committee of
Meditation of the Atiyoga Foundation* ☉



17

Shorten the Distances, Support a Young Monk from Tashi Choeling Monastery!

25 young monks need an
education in harmony with their
cultural roots

Tashi Choeling Monastery was founded by Gopal Lama in 1993 in Kaski District (Pokhara, Nepal) on the shore of Pawa Lake. The monastic tradition of the monastery is *nying ma pa*, a lineage of Tibetan Buddhism which literally means "follower of the ancient tradition".

Today the Tashi Choeling monastery hosts 60 young monks between the ages of 10 and 16, who, unfortunately, live in very precarious conditions. The lessons take place outside, on some simple tables and chairs under a large shed with a sheet metal roof, typical of the temporary housing built after the earthquake of 2015. The families of the children admitted to the monastery cannot provide any financial assistance and Gopal Lama's income, which comes from rituals and donations, is not sufficient to guarantee his students' basic needs and the costs of education and health care.

Gopal Lama's desire has always been to create a decent hostel and a school with modern facilities in order to improve the level of education and the quality of life of its guests. Given the emergency, he has asked ASIA for help to start supporting the 25 young monks.

ASIA enthusiastically activated the Distance Support project with the Tashi Choeling monastery a year ago, to guarantee the 25 young monks training and practice in respect of their own culture, following the basic Nepalese school program, Tibetan language lessons, dharma lessons and others. The goal is also to build adequate classrooms, libraries, infirmaries and dormitories in order to increase the number



Gopal Lama.



Monk.

of registered monks and protect Tibetan cultural identity.

Shorten the distances, make your long distance sponsorship now!

Support a young monk from Tashi Choeling monastery: <https://www.adoptibet.org/wp/en/>

Thanks to your adoption, a young monk will have the opportunity to train in harmony with their cultural roots and will help keep alive the priceless heritage of knowledge and spirituality of the Tibetan people. ©

ASIA Branches

ASIA Onlus
Via San Martino della Battaglia 31, 00185 Rome, Italy
Tel +39.06.44340034, Fax +39.06.44702620
comunicazione@asia-onlus.org www.asia-ngo.org

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Förderverein ASIA Deutschland e.V.
c/o Gisela Auspurg
Königswieser Str. 2, 82131 Gauting
Tel.: 089 / 127 630 32

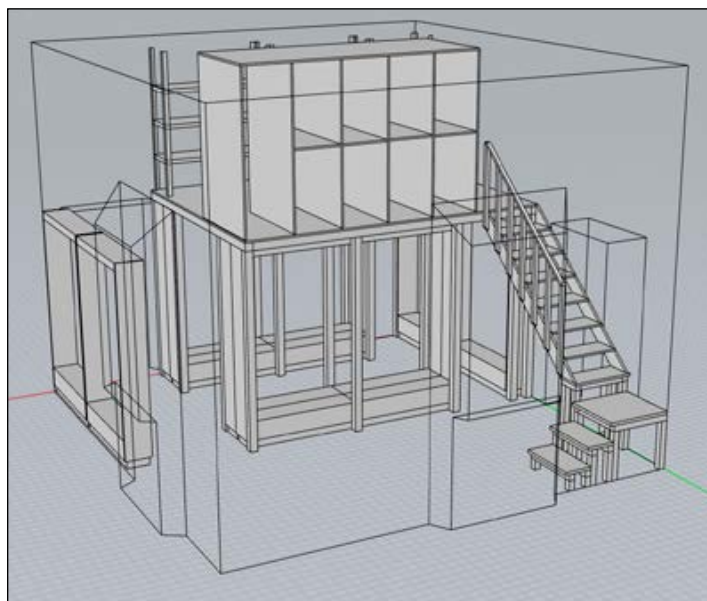


MUSEO di ARTE e CULTURA ORIENTALE
di ARCIDOSSO

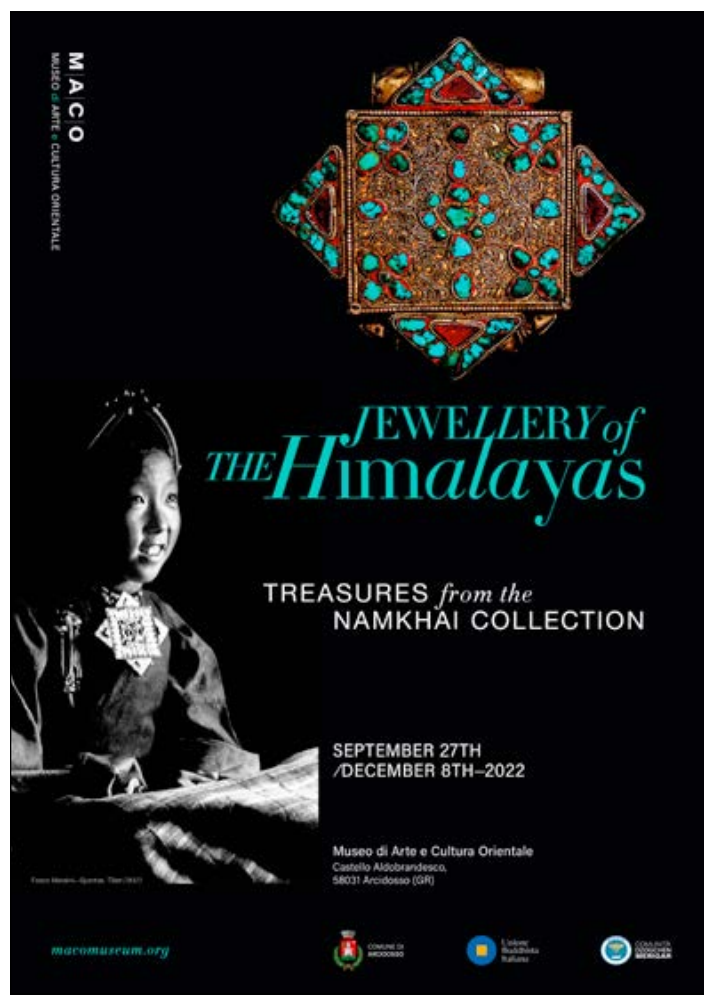
Museum of Oriental Art and Culture June 2022 Update

Earlier this Spring, over 400 artefacts, including personal treasures and consecrated objects from the Namkhai Collection were entrusted to the MACO. This is in addition to the collection of over 300 marvelous and precious artefacts from around the world which were donated to the Collection last December, by Costantino Albini. Together with these incredible objects, entrusted to the MACO for their care and to share them with our Community and the public, comes an enormous responsibility. These new arrivals, each one more extraordinary than the next, have also magically manifested the initial means for their own care and safe keeping.

In light of our fruitful collaboration with the British Museum between 2020 and 2021, to adapt their ResearchSpace software to the needs of small and medium sized museums, the BM very kindly decided to donate to the MACO the customised version of their software that we had commissioned.



With the funds that their donation freed up, we requested our sponsor for that project, the Union of Italian Buddhists (UBI), to permit us to reallocate these resources to a project to construct a secure archive space, to preserve these 700 new arrivals, next to the office. This work was planned, designed and constructed just in time, this Spring. Thank you Curzio!



It's really impossible to express our gratitude to the Namkhai family for all that they have offered our Community and for the honor, personally, to see and be close to these sacred treasures, every day. On Saturday we had a visit from the Venerable Ponlop Trinley Nyima Rinpoche, who looking at the Collection, remarked: "Just imagine all that Rinpoche has accomplished."

Please continue to support your museum.
<https://www.macomuseo.org/supportus>





3rd Part of Khaita's Educational Program in Phendeling

Eva Leick

From 24th April to 1st May 2022, the third part of the Khaita Educational Program took place in Phendeling, Czech Republic. With these eight intensive days, the first year of the three-year Educational Program comes to a close. As usual, the course was held in a hybrid way. While seven participants were welcomed warm-heartedly onsite in Phendeling, other dancers from all around the world joined the program online via Zoom. In total, we were 17 participants, with two more joining onsite on the weekend.

In these eight days, we did not only dance, study Khaita's history and larger meaning but also worked with Elisha Koppensteiner on the voice and Klára Markuciová on Montessori pedagogy. In addition to that, we listened to a talk by Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo on the benefits of dancing Khaita and Vajra Dance. All of this contributed to the program's richness and represented the multiplicity of Khaita with its numerous areas of application.

Under the dedicated guidance of Adriana Dal Borgo, we studied several Kordro dances in detail, focusing particularly on their movement qualities, meanings and the coordination in the group. Adriana also shared precious material of Rinpoche explaining songs, commenting dances and talking about the relevance of dancing Khaita as Dzogchen practitioners. This further opened our understanding of the deep meaning of Khaita.

Since the Khaita Educational Program aims at training new Khaita experts and instructors, the third course of the first year concentrated on pedagogy and the didactics of teaching Khaita. For this reason, we dissected steps, looked at them at detail and tried to find words and movements to explain them in simple ways to others. We also had brief mock teaching sessions in which we could take on the role of an instructor, observe and discuss its challenges. Elisha's input on working with the voice while teaching was thereby very useful and facilitated the process. On Saturday, Klára taught us how to work with young children and motivate them for Khaita. She provided examples for adequate learning settings and solutions for conflict situations. Her experience with and commitment to teaching children was touching.

We left Phendeling inspired, full of joy and with a lot of information to process. The next course of the Khaita Educational Program will be held from 10th–17th July in Zhephenling, Rome. Registration for the full as well as part of the program is open to anyone interested. ©

Dzamling Gar Update Spring 2022

Dzamling Gar has been very active with public activities in collaboration with the Ayuntamiento of Adeje, as well as our regular courses, programs and activities.

Retreats and Courses

At the end of March there was a beginner's Khaita course with Yulia Petrova and Elena Kalistova, mid April a two day Calligraphy and Semantics course on the Song of the Vajra with Giorgio Dallorto and from May 12th to 16th we had a retreat live and by Zoom on The Mirror, Advice on Presence and Awareness with Adriano Clemente.

At the AGM on April 27, 2022 a new Gakyil was selected. (photo)



Blue:

Justin Hudgins (President)
Naomi Zeitz (Secretary)
Andrea Casetti

Red:

Maria Jung
Carles Jañez Brucet (Vice President)

Yellow:

Elena Ignateva
Gloriana Brenes

Gekö:

Thubten Rabgyi



Khaita for
beginners.

Public Events

There have been many exciting and successful public events this spring that Dzamling Gar hosted or was invited to participate in with Khaita, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance. Dzamling Gar hopes that these activities are the doorway to many more public events and collaborations with local cultural groups and the Ayuntamiento of Adeje.

YogAdeje for World Peace

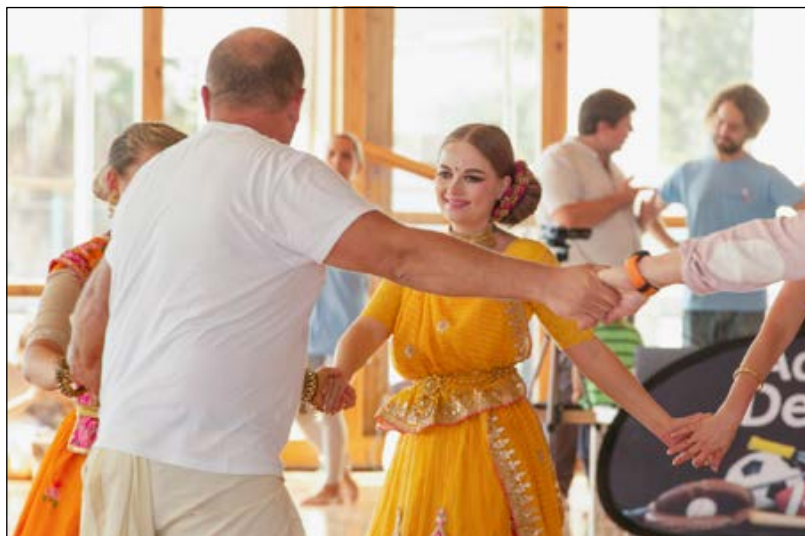
On April 30th we hosted a very successful first public event of this kind in Dzamling Gar. Local authorities came to the opening and closing of the event. We had the support of the Spanish National Commission of UNESCO, Cabildo de Tenerife, the Ayuntamiento de Adeje and the Indian Embassy. We invited schools of yoga from Tenerife and we also had the participation of the Iscon Tenerife (International Society of Krishna Consciousness). We presented Yantra Yoga, Respira and Khaita. The idea is to repeat the event once a year.



May 2022 Festivities of Santa Cruz

The next event was an important cultural one that took place in Santa Cruz on May 6 and 7 and Khaita was invited to perform. It was quite an honor to be invited to perform in such a distinguished event.

» continued on the following page



YogAdeje for
World Peace.



International Yoga Day.



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The program of the May 2022 Festivities of Santa Cruz, organized by the City Council through the Autonomous Organism for Festivities and Recreational Activities, included a wide range of activities that emphasized the Canarian nature of all its manifestations: leisure, sports, cultural and artistic.



The VIII Inter-religious Celebration for Peace in Adeje, Tenerife Island

The VIII inter-religious celebration for peace, organized by 'Juntas En la misma dirección' (together in the same direction), through the Tenerife interreligious dialogue group and Adeje council, took place on Saturday May 21st in Adeje. The event, which coincided with the global celebration of Cultural Diversity Day, was held in the Parque El Madroñal in Adeje, in the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Plaza. The goal of the event was to show that peace, respect and social harmony between different religious communities isn't just possible, but beneficial in places with a large cultural diversity, such as Tenerife. During the evening different communities presented cultural activities and a manifesto for peace with an inter-religious dimension was read. The Dzogchen Community presented the Vajra Dance for the Benefit of Sentient Beings.

The Yoga/Pilates event.

Yoga/Pilates Event

The Yoga/Pilates event on Friday, June 10th, was held in Dzamlng Gar as the closing of the sports campaign of the municipality of Adeje, finalizing the sporting activity of the municipality before the summer. As a result of the continuous and good relationship between the municipality of Adeje, the International Foundation Atiyoga and Dzamlng Gar the different schools of yoga and pilates of the municipality along with the group of new students of Yantra Yoga of the Mentalizate Project led by Alessandra Policreti in the Polideportivo Las Torres enjoyed an afternoon full of yoga, pilates and Khaïta Joyful dances. The councilman of the area of sports and tourism Mr. Adolfo Alonso accompanied us throughout the event and reiterated his appreciation and collaboration to help promote our activities.

International Yoga Day

Sunday, June 12, we celebrated International Yoga Day, which is commemorated at the initiative of the United Nations Organization. Dzamlng Gar was the host of the IYD in Tenerife thanks to the collaboration of the International Atiyoga Foundation, the Embassy of India in Spain, the Ministry of

Culture of India and the City Council of Adeje. The Sabai Dee School, Inspiraes School, Iskcon, TF Sur Hindu Community Cultural Center, Ghe Phe Ling Canarias, Respira Prana, Yantra Yoga Internacional and Respira Method participated in the celebration. The event was attended by different authorities from the Adeje town hall and representatives of the Embassy of India. The entire day was broadcast in streaming on the City Council's YouTube channel and a report was also broadcast on RTV Canaria with an interview with Fabio Andrico (YY International Instructor) and Casilda González (ATIF Institutional Relations). It was a massive event where visitors were able to enjoy classes of different styles of yoga, Joyful Khaïta dance and popular Hindu dance. There were information stands on the activities of Dzamlng Gar, Yantra Yoga, Traditional Tibetan Medicine, Ayurveda Medicine and a delicious vegan lunch. The day start at 10:30 am and ended at 8:00 pm. The Project Manager of the event was Nicky Hoedjes supported by the Red Gakyil of Dzamlng Gar and Casilda González Rodríguez of ATIF. ©



Pilgrimages to Emptiness

with Shantena Augusto Sabbadini, Ph.D

From May 27–29, 2022, Dzamling Gar, Atiyoga Foundation and the Ayuntamiento of Adeje hosted a special event and lecture series, Pilgrimages to Emptiness, Rethinking Reality through Quantum Physics with Shantena Augusto Sabbadini, Ph.D. in the Gönpa of Dzamling Gar and streamed via Zoom. Professor Sabbadini is the author of the book of the same title, *Pilgrimages to Emptiness, Rethinking Reality through Quantum Physics*.

The event was well attended by both members of the Dzogchen Community and the local people of Tenerife, as well as Zoom participants. Professor Sabbadini presented the challenging material in a clear and accessible way and included more than enough time for questions and answers,



taking great care to reply to each question to the satisfaction of the questioner.

Sabbadini's warmth, insight and humor, while helping novices and those with more understanding of the topic alike to gain some understanding of a topic normally out of reach, made for a delightfully enlightening and educational few days. We hope that Professor Sabbadini will return to Dzamling Gar to share his knowledge

with us, as it seems he has collected some students willing to take the challenge of grappling with the vast and somewhat daunting world of quantum physics.

Many thanks to Casilda González Rodríguez of the ATIF and Chiara Amadori, the Project Manager, the Ayuntamiento of Adeje, Fabio Andrico and the Gakyil of Dzamling Gar for their dedication and support in making such an event possible. ©

A Report on the First Wellbeing and Vajra Dance Retreat at Dzamling Gar

Urara Taoka

Vajra Dance Instructor and Coordinator of the Wellbeing Project

We just finished the first Wellbeing and Vajra Dance retreat. This retreat was a test run. The Vajra Dance course, which usually takes 3 days, was extended to 5 days with more time for practice, so that even beginners could master the steps, and those who could already dance a little deepened their knowledge of the dance.

In addition to the course, there was Ku Nye massage and a breathing session in the beautiful garden of Dzamling Gar with Yantra Yoga instructor Nataly Nitsche.

A lot of dancing will make you hungry! So Vicky and Manu's healthy and hearty meals were the lifeline of the retreat. During the lunch break, the participants recharged themselves with the sun and sea energy on the beach and seemed to be



very satisfied with the fulfilling and relaxing time they spent.

It was the first time for us to operate this type of retreat, so it was a bit of trial

and error, but everyone's shining faces and the improvement in dancing made me feel deep joy and very satisfied. I would like to thank Anna Apraksina, the other Vajra Dance instructor, the participants, the Gakyil, all those who helped and especially to our Master. I am so grateful to all of them.

Contact info:

<https://wellbeing.dzamlinggar.net>
<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=208187877652878> ©



The Merigar Archive

The Merigar Gakyil

What is commonly called the 'Merigar Archive' is actually the archive of many of the activities and events that have taken place for over 40 years within the International Dzogchen Community, obviously starting from the most important ones, which are the formal teachings of our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. There are more than 400 retreats, some audio only, others audio and video, all digitized and in the process of indexing.

In addition to this fundamental part, which constitutes the 'private' archive, there is another, generally much more extensive part, which represents the 'public' archive recognized to be of significant importance by the Archival Superintendence of the Tuscany Region, and of which Merigar is responsible and the custodian, not only for members of the Community, but also for Institutions, by virtue of this recognition.

This part includes the Master's public events, such as lectures, talks, presentations, and informal public moments; the Teaching retreats given at Merigar by other Masters; seminars and lectures by our Community instructors; photos and documents of various kinds, and much more.

This material remains still largely to be digitized and evaluated on the basis of its real importance, in order of priority, for the Community and for a potential external public.

An archive cannot be defined as such when it is a simple 'collection' of material. It becomes so only when this material is organized according to criteria that respond to archival logic, which make it easily catalogable, identifiable, and accessible to interested parties according to previously established criteria.

Over the years, the archive has been managed in various ways, with limits basically derived from circumstances that have taken place over time. In any case, we now have a lot of material available, thanks to contributions from the Gars, Lings, and individual practitioners who have documented activities and sent copies to the archive. This happened partly in an organized way, and partly thanks to the care and dedication of individuals.



Photo courtesy of the Merigar Archive

Over the past two years, thanks to a project in which the Italian Buddhist Union also participated, Merigar has been able to lay solid foundations to implement a structure that fully responds to the characteristics of a perfectly usable archive.

First of all, hardware equipment of adequate capacity was purchased which allowed the archiving of all the material, previously scattered across various hard disks, in a single server. An internal backup was created and one in a physically different place, to increase security levels. The servers are equipped with an uninterruptible power supply and protection systems against adverse events; all this is essential to ensure the conservation of our precious material.

The second step consists, as mentioned above, in the digitization and indexing of all the content. We are moving forward in this direction, starting with the Teachings of the Master, which are extremely valuable to us, and for the next few months we will still have the funds available from Merigar and the UBI related to the specific project.

It is worth noting that the financial commitment for the archive project has so far been around 160,000 euros, of which more than half has been covered by Merigar. This figure allowed for the purchase of equipment, the implementation of software for managing archived files, and the payment of the person who has physical-

ly worked on the archive for this project, Mirella D'Angelo, who kindly and diligently provides the material that is required for activities related to our Gars, Lings, and the International Dzogchen Community in general.

All this is to communicate, as perhaps we have not done so sufficiently, what lies behind the management of the archive and what efforts, work, and investments have allowed us to fulfill the requests for material that we receive.

What we are trying to do is digitize and index all the material, and provide a web platform that allows its use at different levels of access. Additional time and investments will be required to complete this work.

Following the dissolution of the Shang Shung Foundation, Merigar has custody of and is responsible for the archive, but the continuation of the work and its availability to a wider audience of interested parties will only be possible with the contribution of the whole Community. We have material of the highest level, in the spiritual, cultural and research fields, which is just waiting to be made available to those who can benefit from it.

We will try to keep you updated on the evolution of this project and future ones and we thank in advance those who would like to collaborate with their financial support, and everyone for their patience and understanding.

©

Summer at Merigar

After this long period of restrictions and difficulties in traveling, we are looking forward to a summer that we all hope will be wonderful and relaxing. At Merigar we have tried to create a program that can satisfy everyone's needs, including long-term practitioners, practitioners who have been following for less time, and people who have never visited Merigar or experienced the many teachings that single us out.

We have also tried to create somewhat new formats, combining different disciplines.

In particular we have the traditional Sangha Retreat, with videos of the Teachings of the Master and the related practices; a Contemplation practice retreat from the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha, which completes the annual course of the Base of the Santi Maha Sangha in Italian and English carried out on zoom during the year; two Teacher Trainings, Breathe and Eight Movements on a chair; meetings between teachers of Yantra Yoga, Kumar Kumari; a day dedicated to children, and much more.

By clicking on the link below, you can access the Merigar website where you can find all the details and the forms to register.

ITA <https://www.merigar.it/it/corsi-e-eventi/summer-at-merigar/>
ENGL <https://www.merigar.it/en/courses-and-events/summer-at-merigar/>

We look forward to seeing you at Merigar, and if you can't come in person you can use zoom or webcast for the events for which it is planned.

Greetings to all!
The Merigar Gakyil

Calendar of courses and events for this summer at Merigar open to all

July

Upon invitation of the Municipality of Arcidosso, in the months of July and August we will organize weekly appointments (on a day to be determined) for experiencing Yantra Yoga and Joyful Khaita Dances led by instructors of the Dzogchen Community of Merigar in the park near via Tibet in Arcidosso (GR)



Photo by MarijaDesal

At Merigar it will be possible to participate in weekly meditation appointments.

July 1–3
Meditation and Khaita Joyful Dances Seminar

with Fabio Maria Risolo and
Adriana Dal Borgo

July 3 3pm
Welcome to Merigar

July 9–10
Yantra Yoga introductory seminar for beginners, open to all
with Marco Baseggio

July 11–15
1st module of Respira, open to all
with Fabio Andrico onsite and online

July 16–17
The Dance of the Three Vajras for beginners

July 17 3pm **Welcome to Merigar**

July 18–24
2nd module of Respira for aspiring instructors, (includes participation in the 1st module)
with Fabio Andrico,
onsite only, max. 10 people

July 22–24
Course on Sa Che (Tibetan geomancy)
with Migmar Tsering

July 30–31
Khaita – Discover the joy of dancing! Introductory seminar of Khaita Joyful Dances
with Adriana Dal Borgo

August

August 1–3
In-depth study on Khaita joyful dances
with Adriana Dal Borgo

August 4 10:30
Welcome to Merigar

August 11 10:30
Welcome to Merigar

August 12–16
Meditation, Yantra Yoga, Vajra dance and Khaita Joyful dance course
led by instructors of the
Dzogchen community

August 15 18:00
Welcome to Merigar

August 18–September 7
20th Training for Translator from Tibetan
with Fabian Sanders

August 19–21
Seminar on the Potential of the Elements, only in presence
with Migmar Tsering

August 21
Children's day

August 22–26
Course on the Mandala of the Elements, only in presence
with Migmar Tsering

August 26–28
Ku-nye on a chair
with Aldo Oneto

August 28 15:00
Welcome to Merigar

September
September 3–9
Course for instructors of the 8 movements on the chair, only in presence
with Fabio Andrico

September 9–11
Seminar on the Four Methods of Development, only in presence
with Migmar Tsering

September 11 15:00
Welcome to Merigar



A Summer Beyond Hope and Fear

Merigar East news

Merigar East is a perfect place to observe our mental processes related to hope and fear. As the winter sky closes up and becomes more and more grey, fear starts to insinuate itself about the future of the Gar and its community. When it's windy and dark, the Gar's characteristic feeling of isolation makes us think that the world has forgotten us. At those times, we keep busy with bureaucratic activities to stay legal and in fundraising to pay the bills. These routine activities keep our days full and our minds regular (more or less).

Nonetheless, around the month of May, when the lilac flowers explode and the grass grows up to the knees, we start hopping. We daydream about the three mandalas full of Vajra dancers, about the sounds of Chöd practice filling up the evening soundscape and about future couples falling in love here while doing karma yoga. Trust us, it is not just imagination: we, the Gakyil members, all met our other halves and fell in love here.

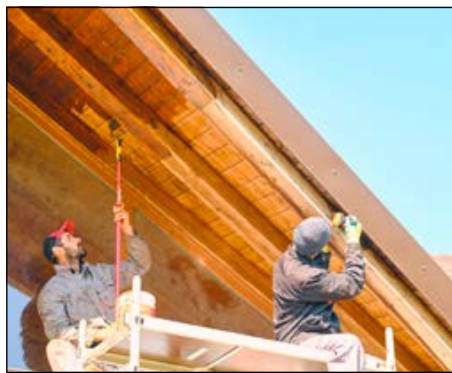
We involved other people in our daydreaming: instructors and community members close to us. So here is the result. What we have prepared for adventurers to the East lies below.

Gönpa renovation

Thanks to Migmar Tsering and Oliver Leick's ceaseless encouragement and some exceptionally generous donors we've passed the point of no return in Renovating our Gönpa. The works auspiciously started on the anniversary of Buddhas birth, attainment of enlightenment, and Parinirvana. Under the coordination of our Geko, the workers have insulated the building's walls



from rising ground humidity, repaired the damage to the walls, painted the outer part of the wooden ceiling, and coated the façade with a new silicate plaster. In other words, we have cut off the walls to get rid of mould and salt stains while giving it a new, improved outer coat to resist the elements for many years to come. The next phase will take part from 25th July to the 17th of August. It will consist of decorative paintings inside and outside, with Tibetan motifs, under the coordination of Migmar Tsering.



We are looking for artists & volunteers!

We already have seven artists who have registered to decorate the Gönpa, and who wish to learn about Tibetan art from Migmar. We need you, too! If you are skilled in painting or willing to support the works by cooking, cleaning and practicing together, you are welcome! Apply by sending us an email and telling us about your motivation.

If you are not coming, you can still help! We need to cover the costs for the travel and stay of the volunteers. Please donate!

General Assembly on the 17th of July

We are a community. Merigar East, like other places of the Dzogchen Community, is a project that counts on voluntary work for its regular maintenance. With the diminishing numbers of members and somewhat difficult travel circumstances over the past years, we have to figure out a way of sustaining our Gar. What will be the direction to take? Should we commercialize our activities more or try to access public funding? How will we manage the difficult issue of human resources, if the voluntary work of members is less available? How can we become more useful to our members and to the teachings?

These are the questions we are compelled to answer. We also wish to be fully transparent in the decisions and investments we make. For this, we need you to participate, to raise your opinions, to share your vision. We need a little bit of your precious time.

We are happy to say that we have received encouragement from Rosa Namkhai to continue our work and be creative. Moreover, The Namkhai family has donated Rinpoche's house in the village, as a means to generate extra income for the association. Join us in the General Assembly to be part of this process!

Courses and practice

We will start the summer with one of the high points of the program: a pranayama workshop with Fabio Andrico, between the 23rd and the 26th of June. It is not so often that the *pranayamas* of Yantra Yoga are thoroughly explained by the main instructors. Such occasions are very precious for experienced practitioners and instructors,

as they can take our practice to the next level, enhance our motivation and eliminate doubts. The course will also be transmitted online.

Then we continue with Zoli Cser, among Yantra Yoga lovers: five days for five Yantra Yoga series. It will take place between the 1st and the 5th of July. It will be an intensive retreat where we can practice the whole day and develop our knowledge and capacity. This retreat will also be both online and offline.

Next, from the 6th to the 10th of July, the Sangha and some new guests will be at the Gar in person, in a retreat incorporating various Dzogchen practices such as Yantra Yoga, Vajra Dance, Shiné, and Chöd. The retreat will be guided by Zoli Cser. People

opment, dedicated to those who have received transmission. Furthermore, on the 6th and 7th of August, he will teach a public course on Sa-Che (Tibetan geomancy) or on the Mandala of the Elements (we still have to decide).

On the 8th of August we start one week of teachings and practice to enhance the merit generated through the Gönpa Renovation. Oliver Leick will introduce participants to meditation, discriminating wisdom and meditative stability. These topics are of great interest to Santi Maha Sangha practitioners and such occasions to apply them together are very precious. But the novelty is that this retreat will be open to all, old and new practitioners.

Indeed, we are opening up almost all of

So, why should you visit?

Well, we were hoping that the previous points would be enough to convince you. But if you are still “remaining in doubt” whether to come here or not, let us give you some more reasons. The Gar’s life is real community life: we cook and eat together, we practice the whole day, share the work and the holiday joys. The Gar is accessible and friendly for families and children, has a strong ecological imprint and provides “spontaneous pet therapy”.

We have many options and comfort levels for hosting you within the Gar’s premises or in the village, at very accessible prices. We value DC member’s contribution in supporting the Gar and offer them a further 50% discount on accommodation (that means 6 euro in the dorm, 4 euro in the camping). The camping remains one of the cheapest and most entertaining options we know. It offers cooking facilities, toilets, showers and is as close as you can get to the Gönpa.

If you decide to invest a consistent part of your holiday to help (we require a minimum of 6 hours a day), then you are hosted for free (as a karma yogi/volunteer) and/or are offered 300 euro (as work exchange). We mention that in this latter case, it would be best to send us an application so we can agree before to your stay.

And, well, last but not least...we enjoy the seaside! ©



from our Sangha have already registered to be here so we have reasons to believe that at least a couple of mandalas will be full of dancers! We will practice from early morning to the evening and continue as much as we can in the state of contemplation.

After a short break, we start painting the murals of the Gönpa, on the 25th of July. Migmar will travel from Italy with a few art students and will join the Romanian artist volunteers in the mural painting and cultural exchange summer camp. On the 30th and 31st of July, he will give a course on The Four Methods of Devel-

our activities, aiming to bridge the gap between “community” and “the outside world”, a distinction that, at this point in Dzogchen Community’s life, is risking to paralyze us. The formula we have planned so far is to hold mixed retreats, in which morning and evening (or other specific time slots) will be dedicated to those practices that require transmission, while the rest will be open to all.

Spring-Summer Season at Kunsangar South

Elena Razumova

Although the sky over the south of Russia is now closed and getting to Kunsangar South is not as easy as before, life at the Gar does not stop.

Every day, starting from February 24, we have conducted online worldwide practices for peace. We invite everyone to join the practice of Odzer Chenma which has translation into English. Zoom connection link: <https://uso6web.zoom.us/j/5705776865>, password: KSTara, daily at 8:30 (GMT+3).

From May 2 to 8, we held an educational retreat on the 2nd part of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra with instructor Yana Sokolova (we studied the 1st part of the Dance with Yana in January). The Gakyil and the participants of the retreat express their heartfelt gratitude to Yana for find-



Gardening near the stupa.



Vajra dance retreat with Ulyana Sokolova at Kunsangar South.

ing the opportunity and taking the time to travel to the Gar from Moscow by train. This was very valuable and inspiring in these times of change.

In summer we also plan to host a number of events. July 4–10, there will be an onsite retreat “Lhagthong Practice and Integration with Movement Based on Ati Guru Yoga” with Grigory Mokhin (online individual sessions). Later Kunsangar South will probably join the Khalong retreat with

Prima Mai (on the mandala at the Gar with Prima's online connection). August 2–7, an onsite practical course on making a namkha with Sergey Antonyan will be held, open to everyone, and in the second half of September there will be an onsite Vajra Dance practice retreat with Ulyana Sokolova (possibly also with Yantra Yoga sessions). Also in September, we plan to hold the Kunsangar South Annual General Meeting in person and online.

From time to time, together with the Shang Shung Institute, within the framework of the All-Good Days of Health project, the Gar organizes some consultations with the doctor of Tibetan medicine Vladimir Bakshi.

Work on the land of the Gar is in full swing: mowing and hay harvesting and other horticultural work, landscaping work, as well as maintaining the stupa and landscaping the area around it.



Sang practice.

Summer Update from Kunsangar North

Dear friends, warm greetings to all of you from Kunsangar North!

This year there was a very long, snowy winter. It was not easy for the Gar, but thanks to the cooperation in the Community, the coordinated work of the staff at the Gar, joint practice, and the help of volunteers, we managed it.

During the winter we were able to establish a Dzogchen Community kitchen at the Gar. Small, cozy, our own. We thank the sponsors and everyone who participated in its creation.

Spring has come and the forest and the land of the Gar have been cleared by the efforts of the Gakyil and volunteers, and during the May retreat with Santi Maha Sangha instructor Sasha Gomonov and Yantra Yoga instructor Kirill Mironov, the participants of the retreat unanimously went out to clean up the area around the gōnpa and stupa, inspired by the red Gakyil. In this flow of cooperation, the idea arose to decorate the land around the Gar with beautiful plants, as Alix De Fermor has been doing for many years at Dzamling Gar. Thanks to generous sponsors, many trees and flowers were purchased for planting.

A beautiful warm summer has arrived and we have many retreats and activities planned. We remember that the main purpose of the Gar is to develop knowledge of Dzogchen so that Rinpoche's students can come here for retreats and personal practices. It is very joyful that there is now an opportunity to conduct more and more in-person retreats.

From June 16 to June 19, we will hold an onsite retreat with Yantra Yoga instructor



Cleaning time.

Vitya Krachkovsky. He regularly conducts classes in Moscow, and many old and new Yantra practitioners come to his retreats at the Gar.

June 17–23, there will be an in-depth retreat with Prima Mai and Adriana Dal Borgo on the essential aspects of the Dance of the Song of the Vajra, the Vajra Dance that Benefits All Beings, and the Dance of the Three Vajras. The retreat will take place in the form of a teleconference between Merigar and local instructors on the mandalas at Kunsangar North.

From July 16 to July 24, we will be doing Guruyoga and the Semdzin of the Song of the Vajra with instructor Grigory Mokhin as part of the Song of the Vajra deep study retreat.



And from July 25 to 30, there will be a retreat on the study and practice of the

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On the land of Kunsangar South there is a unique Longsal stupa. It was founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on August 1, 2012 and is one of the first stupas of this type. Filled with Longsal texts – the unique teachings that our Teacher transmitted – it was established with the wish to promote peace, harmony and prosperity and to purify negativity in all those who come into contact with it.

Crimea is a place with a very complicated history. These lands have seen a large number of wars, as well as a lot of violence and suffering. The stupa was founded in

the belief that its construction will help to avoid this in the future and calm the aggressive energies of the past. Even a simple glance at the images of this stupa has a calming effect, eliminating conflicts and negativity!

In spring and summer, the Gar is adorned with numerous blossoming plants, chirping birds, and the mating songs of frogs. There is always an opportunity to do karma yoga, study texts, participate in collective practices and conduct personal retreats, including dark retreats in a comfortable, specially equipped house (we re-

mind you that those who paid sustaining membership this year can stay for free in the dark retreat house for three days).

You can follow the latest news from Kunsangar South by subscribing to our information and news channel on Telegram: <https://t.me/joinchat/ixYnkIdTT9Y4OWE6>.

See you at the Gar and during online practices!

With love, Kunsangar South Gakyil Team ©

News from Tsegyalgar East

Celebrating the 40th Anniversary of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Teaching in Massachusetts

With the arrival of warm weather, activities are speeding up at Tsegyalgar East. The sacred land of Khandroling and the Universal Mandala are being prepared for intensive summer events. First on the calendar is the annual **Summer Sangha Celebration from Friday, July 8 to Friday July 15**. Yantra Yoga, Pranayamas and Chair Yoga will be led by Paula Barry and Naomi Zeitz, SMS teachings will be led by Lynn Newdome and Michael Katz and



Yantra Yoga and Santi Maha Sangha retreat.

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Dance of the Song of the Vajra of Space (Khalongdorjeikar) with Prima Mai via teleconference from Dzamling Gar with local instructors on a mandala at Kunsangar North. We are holding it for the fourth time, and it is of great interest to many students. In order for beginners to have the opportunity to take part in the retreat with Prima Mai (it will be for advanced students), from July 22 to July 24, we will organize a study of the timing of the Song of the Vajra and the steps (path) of the Khalongdorjeikar with instructor Ulyana Sokolova.

August 2-7, we are planning an in-person retreat with Zoltan Czer, instructor of Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga and Vajra dances, and a teacher of Buddhist philosophy at the University of Budapest.

We hope there will be favorable circumstances and the retreat will take place!

We also plan to wash and paint the Gar's Stupa and shoot a video about it so that more people know about this unique sacred object. One of its main purposes is to eliminate provocations, epidemics, disagreements and promote prosperity. We want people to come to the Gar and do practices, restoring their harmony and balance away from the bustle of the city, circumambulating the Stupa.

In such a large organization as Kunsangar North, the Gakyil and the Gar's employees always have a lot of ongoing work to repair the premises because our buildings are already over 40 years old! But we do not lose heart and try to maintain the working condition of this important place, where so



Vajra dance retreat.

many teachings were transmitted by our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and many Buddhist teachers, where there is still an opportunity to practice Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga, Vajra dances, Khaitea and obtain realization. We thank all the sponsors for their generosity and support. We thank the volunteers and everyone who selflessly works for the benefit of the Community and all living beings.

Kunsangar North Gakyil invites everyone near and far to come to our wonderful Gar to practice, enjoy and develop! The Gar is for you, it is always wonderful to practice there.

With love,
Kunsangar North Gakyil

©

Vajra Dance practices will be led by Bodhi Krause. Since this coincides with the 40th Anniversary of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's teaching in Conway Massachusetts, there will be a replay of one of his retreats given here. This practice retreat is open to everyone; we hope that anyone without transmission and with a sincere interest in these teachings will receive transmission when it is available.

All the teachings will be in an open air environment in the very spacious Vajra Hall. We encourage everyone to take whatever measures you deem right for you to stay healthy.

August 12–21, 2022 it will be time to join the celebration of life, dancing together for **Dance, Dance, Dance** on the Universal Mandala at Khandroling, the land of Dakinis! All the dances will be led by Vajra Dance instructors. Hope you can join us!



Finally, the Tsegyalgar East Community is happy to announce the continuation of our relationship with the Shang Shung Institute's School for Tibetan Medicine led by Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo. A new two-year

lease has been agreed on for the School to continue its programs on in-person and online teachings in the Conway Schoolhouse. ©

The North of Tashigar

Douglas Uzcategui

The experience of recent years in Tashigar Norte has been difficult but it is one of the most enriching, as a result of the multiple adversities that as a Community it has had to face.

We are not just talking about the complex crisis in the country, with multiple factors, the most intense and shocking in the last 100 years. Any reader could be surprised to learn that, just one fact, Venezuela was the only country in South America that did not have in its record a migratory wave like the one we have seen in recent years. Even though it was always a country with an unfair and unequal distribution of its wealth, economic and political crises were tolerated, rigorously, and endured. We also add to this data, the pandemic. It started in Venezuela right next to Tashigar Norte – in a baseball academy, our neighbors, the first epidemiological fence that existed in the entire territory was activated and, from there, all the dynamics that we know.

You can imagine what it meant for the residents of Tashigar North, amid the shortage of products and fuel. It was in this framework that our Community, with the invaluable support of the International Community, has been dodging the financial crises, the multiple maintenance tasks



of the Gar and the search for its support, loyal to the perspective and destiny of this sacred place. Multiple are the efforts, the initiatives of all kinds, the inexhaustible efforts and a tireless dedication of all, without any exception, that have contributed to hold us firmly in the confidence of our greatest treasure: the Teaching of our Master.

Today we can say that the data I mentioned above has changed. Many of those who emigrated have returned again and the pandemic no longer has the psychological impact or a worrying rate as a disease.

Fuel, energy, food and transportation are no longer the strongest drawbacks. Air and land communication within the country is considerably different. They openly operate national and international flights.

But in order not to go too far, we could point out that we are currently at a turn-

ing point in which notable improvements are being seen that favor favorable conditions for this revival of Tashigar Norte. The most recent initiatives and projects, part of countless attempts, are beginning to bear fruit. Let us briefly look at three cases.

Delekmargarita

It is a restaurant that operates in the Tashigar Norte dining room that offers, in addition to food service, related activities such as yoga, hiking, guided tours, among other activities. It is an experience that has gradually positioned itself on the island of Margarita and is offered as a reference for dialogue and meeting with the local population. In addition, some areas for activities that have a profile according to our place are already beginning to be requested for rent.

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valuable and recent example that clearly expresses this turning point forward is the visit and presence of Ralf Strehle, a German practitioner original member from Dzamling Gar who has decided to move here. He is the greatest testimony we have to confirm what we review here.

In short, it is a long road beyond optimism or mistake, which requires attention and presence in the face of the strong winds of the times we live in. It requires common sense and clear orientation in the point of view that communicates to all of us. In the midst of the complex, diverse and daily difficulties, we are driven by an inner spirit, a look, a rhythm, a few steps on the Mandala in which we all travel. ©

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Lodging houses

The conditioning of some houses as lodging for international visitors is a project that has been changing after the first attempt failed due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This project is still standing and could be reactivated at any time.

Real State Project

This is the most enthusiastic and concrete option that Tashigar North has found to overcome its difficulties, not only financial, but the most essential, calling practitioners to live in Tashigar North.

Some houses inside and outside the Gar are offered for those members of the community who are interested in coming to this beautiful place and continue the legacy of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. A specific,



News in Tashigar Sur: New Gakyil 2022

Dear Community,
We are very happy to announce that it has been formally appointed, by the Members General Annual Assembly held last May 29th, the new Gakyil of Tashigar Sur for 2022.

Blue Gakyil

Carlos Ney Mena
María Octavia Campins
Laura Losada (Secretary)

Yellow Gakyil

Susana Pogorelsky (Treasurer)
María Cecilia Elgueta
Sergio Osinaga

Red Gakyil

Marta Trillo (President)
María Carolina Mingolla
Emiliano Poncio

Gekö

Daniel Altamirano
Secretary
María José Alpañés

We want to give our special thanks to the former Gakyil and to the outgoing Secretary, Soledad Mariani, for their generous dedication and effort towards this Gar and Community; above all, during the hard pandemic times during which practice became a true and solid support and containment. Thank you!

Tashi Deleks!
The New Gakyil of Tashigar Sur



Tib Shelf – One Year Anniversary

Tib Shelf www.tibshelf.org is a non-profit organisation whose mission is to help preserve Tibetan literature in all its guises through translating and presenting our publications on our open-access website.

Tib Shelf has, at least for me, two sources of inspiration. The first is that anyone connected to Rinpoche will have witnessed first-hand his herculean efforts to help preserve, present, and educate the world on Tibet's incredibly unique history and culture in all its forms. The second came about whilst at the University of Oxford studying for a Masters in Tibetan and Himalayan studies. My fellow two founders of Tib Shelf, Ryan and Tenzin, discovered that there is so much roughly or partly translated material languishing on people's hard drives, never to see the light of day. This included fellow students, Tibetologists, and translators who were unable to find an open-source platform in which to share their work. On this basis, we made a commitment to developing such a platform where Tibetan translators can share their work. The key to our initiative is that we do not discriminate based on the topic, school, works, or lineage—it can be anything, so long as the original Tibetan material can be accurately identified.

As the discussions continued, the name Tib Shelf arose somewhat miraculously. When we were driving to visit Gomde, Chokyi Nyima Rinpoche's centre in the UK, right in the middle of discussing what we might call ourselves, a sign arose on the side of the motorway. I wish I could write that it was an omen of divine inspiration, but it was an actual road sign pointing to a small village called Tibshelf in the county of Derbyshire. It was a wonderful, if not humorous, moment in which we thought, 'Why don't we call ourselves Tib Shelf and play on the idea of a bookshelf filled with translated Tibetan texts?' As we further explored other names and iterations, we continued to return to the name Tib Shelf, and thus the name was born.

Since this auspicious beginning, we have developed a well-received website to house and disseminate a growing array of translated material. Current published material includes biographies, governmental documents, modern poetry, cosmogony,



TIB SHELF

TRANSLATE | PRESENT | PRESERVE

prayers and aspirations, institutional information, and much more besides.

In our first year we have become a registered non-profit organisation and published 37 texts with 10 external submissions. We have been allocated an ISSN number, which allows people to publish with us and use our links for academic articles. We were awarded an Ashoka grant from the Khyentse Foundation that has allowed us to translate the biography of Losal Drölma (1802–1861), a great Dzogchen master and the half-sister and spiritual companion of Do Khyentse Yeshe Dorje (1800–1866), which is in the final polishing stages.

Of particular interest to the Dzogchen community might be a short biography on Tamdrin Lhamo, Changchub Dorje's daughter, which demonstrates how she achieved rainbow body amongst other incredible details: www.tibshelf.org/a-biography-of-tamdrin-lhamo. Additionally, we have a seal designed by Drukpa Zhabdrung, Ngawang Namgyal (1616–1651), founder of Bhutan and whom Rinpoche was considered the mind-stream emanation. It is a powerful read and testimony to the independence of the Bhutanese people: www.tibshelf.org/sixteen-self-assertions. We have also translated the biography of Kunga Palden (1878–1944/1950), written by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche (1910–1991). Kunga Palden enjoyed a wonderful teacher-student relationship with Khyentse Chökyi Wangchuk (1909–1963), Rinpoche's uncle: www.tibshelf.org/kunga-palden-biography.

At the heart of what we want to achieve is to work and collaborate with other organisations rather than remaining a silo of independent translations. The more we can integrate and collaborate with other organisations, the more information will be readily available on a myriad of topics. To date, we have already published or collaborated with Lotsawa house www.lotsawa-house.org, The Treasury of Lives www.treasuryoflives.org, Easy Tibetan www.easytibetan.org,

www.easytibetan.org, and are currently working with the Khyentse Vision Project www.khyentsevision.org in assisting the translation of the collected works of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820–1892). We are also in the process of making our work accessible to those who are visually impaired or want to listen to recorded audio narrations of our publications.

In our next year, we want to build on what we have already achieved. We plan to translate a more extensive biography of Tamdrin Lhamo, Changchub Dorje's daughter, with the wider aim of publishing collected works of biographies focusing on great female Buddhist masters. We hope to create discussion around the importance of women and their place in the development of Tibetan Buddhism. We plan to reach out to more translators to submit their translations and to slowly and surely build the platform into a vast and rich resource. We want to begin to make short videos of some of the more compelling translations adding a new layer of interaction. We have plans to utilise our publications to become a vital source of material for aspiring Tibetan translators where they can hone their skills. Finally and most importantly, we will continue to publish more texts over time on a wide array of topics.

It only remains for me to write that we are always available for paid translation services and on the lookout for anyone to send us their translations for publication. We also are seeking people who feel at all inspired in our endeavours to assist us in any way they can. Everything we are doing is done in our own time, and any support can be invaluable, no matter big or small. This assistance could be anything from those with skills in digital knowledge, marketing, graphic design, and video, or through financial www.tibshelf.org/donate. If you might be interested in assisting in some way, please do reach out and drop us a line at shelves@tibshelf.org. Together we are legion.

We hope you enjoy or find some of our publications useful, and we encourage you to sign up for our newsletter to stay in touch with what we do.

Best Wishes,
Tom Greensmith, Tenzin Choephel, and
Ryan Jacobson



Part Four – From Galenteen to the Lhalung Valley

Raimondo Bultrini brings to a close the first section of his travel diary in Tibet with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1988 at Gheug, the birthplace of the Master.

The morning chosen for our departure for the site of the famous *terma* [rediscovered treasure teachings ed.] discovered by Khyentse at the Yedzong rock, was cloudy and promised rain. Under the house a group of monks and lay people had already arrived to pick us up, including many of the riders who had won the horse races. We had to go north towards the Qinghai region and Rinpoche was made to get on a horse with elegant harnesses while I was offered more than one along the way, in a competition between our companions to show off the excellence of their mounts. At a place where the trails crossed we saw for the first time the top of the mountain formed by a large white stone and surrounded by fir trees where it is said Lhalung Palgyi Dorje lived for a long time, opposite another lower peak where Rinpoche's uncle, Khyentse, often spent time in retreat. The master told me that they were sacred places due to the activities of numerous divinities and he would have liked to build two residences for spiritual retreats at the base of both.

Along the river we saw groups of Chinese gold panners who continued to scour the sand under the unrelenting rain and we stopped to eat under one of the tents of a nomad camp where, despite the dampness, they had managed to light several braziers for food and *sang* [smoke offering ed.] in honor of the lama.

We crossed several rivers and streams on horseback where I followed the master's advice not to lose my balance and to be aware that water flows downstream in order to avoid falling in. After seven hours we reached the first goal, at the foot of



The rosehip bush in bloom near the remains of the house where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was born.

the sacred rock called Yedzong or Badzong, in a small valley hidden by some hills and known as "Inner Hat Mountain". This was the place where his dream of the dakinis led Khyentse Wangchuk to discover the *terma* contained inside an object in the shape of a crane's egg hidden in the rocks at a rather high point. Rinpoche had been part of the expedition to discover it back in 1951, after having heard the details of the dreams (described in the biography of "The Lamp") directly from his uncle, and insisted on going there together. Our group was also accompanied by hundreds of people who crowded the valley at the base of the rock on June 15, a whole day on horseback from Galen.

The monks set up our camp in the rain and it was difficult to see the shape of the mountain tops right above us. In the meantime, we were housed inside the tents of the nomads surrounded by herds of bellowing yaks and monks to whom the master taught the rituals that he would per-

form the following day at the site of the *terma*. In the evening our tent was ready and, in spite of the incessant storm, we were able to sleep on the beds of branches that insulated our mattresses of saddle rugs from the wet ground. I felt a sense of enormous gratitude for that hospitality and the warm sheepskin jacket that one of them had been deprived of. I told the master that I felt sorry for our companions who were lying on the bare ground at the entrance to the tent with only one carpet and a blanket. Rinpoche said that they were very strong and devoted people and that they would stay all night to protect us from dogs and wild animals.

That evening he explained to me that above us, as I would see better with the light of day, there was a cave that had been visited and "empowered" by Guru Rinpoche (Padmasambhava) and – opposite – the site of the *terma*, the Palace of the Three Roots, that had been revealed by the dakinis to

his uncle in a dream. He said that it had the shape of the Tibetan letter A in the upper part and inside a strip of bright white rock where the container with five cycles of secret instructions was hidden. For the most part I brushed aside the deep meaning of that information but I asked the master how I could connect to the energy of those places, and prepare my mind to perceive their divine nature. He told me to relax and listen in silence, letting my thoughts vanish where they come from. As I wrote in my first account of our travels, I remained watchful and alert to every sound that seemed to transform itself into a mantra: the rain beating on the canvas of the tent and on the soft ground, the flow of the river below us, the distant thunder, the bells of the horses that were tethered and those free in the pasture, the regular breathing of the master who had fallen asleep and that night dreamed – as he told me – of the “energy of the local guardians”.

In the morning the rain had stopped and, after writing two pages of notes on the dream of which he did not speak to me as he usually did on other occasions, the master went up with a group of our companions to the point closest to the rock where his uncle had discovered the Yedzong *terma*. In my notes I mention my sadness for having already lost that fragment of the contemplative state I had experienced following Rinpoche's advice. The magic of the night had passed and a heavy rain was beating on the tent where I was left alone to observe my thoughts.

What made me go outside was the always heady smell of the *sang* and the sound of horns, cymbals, and drums that announced to the local “guardians” the arrival of the master, accompanied by a multitude of Tibetans, at the site of the *terma* discovered 37 years earlier by his uncle. The rumor that Rinpoche was there, who at that time was at the height of the cave surrounded by Tibetan prayer flags under the site of the *terma*, had spread to the nomadic camps in the district and many of them also arrived there on that rainy day in June. They knew the fame of the place and the role that the 13-year-old Norbu had played in the discovery, excited to be able to participate in such an important expedition with his mother's revered brother. His uncle had also shown him the scrolls with the syllables that he had received in a dream, the same ones found inside the rock in the shiny oval container where the text was preserved, and which later on

vanished. The disappearance took place at the small altar inside Khyentse's room, the same one where I had slept many nights, unaware of the facts, in a small bed next to Rinpoche. “My uncle said that it was the *da-kinis* who decided not to reveal the content because the times were not ripe and there was too much turbulence in the energy of the place and of the people”.

The morning of our scheduled departure for the cave where Lhalung Palgyi Dorje lived in retreat it seemed even rainier than the previous ones and I was a little worried. At the time Rinpoche took the two pages of notes written at dawn and, on his own with the assistance of a monk, conducted a ritual for the local “guardians”, the same he had evidently dreamed about the previous night. When at the end he gave the order to the caravan to proceed, the rain was not yet over and the master decided not to attempt to reach the summit of Lhalung, but promised that we would soon see another special place. There was only the problem of a horse that had a stone in its hoof and we witnessed the delicate work of extraction with a knife while the animal was tied up to keep it from moving. “Nomads love their horses as family members”, commented the master.

tion, the ancient kings of Derghe came to spend the summer months, attracted by its rare beauty and unparalleled equestrian competitions. “The most beautiful place in the kingdom”, said one of them, as Rinpoche told me. Four or five young men showed off by racing their horses bareback with stunts that would have amazed anyone. We slept in a tent close to the woods and after visiting a family who offered us breakfast, Rinpoche recited mantras at the base of the rocks we were about to climb, crossing muddy ground under a lighter but more persistent rain. Once we were at the top the sun appeared among the clouds and illuminated the sacred valley of Lhalung and – in front of us clearly visible – the mountain of Lhalung Palgyi on top of which there was a large fir tree surrounded by a flowery meadow, like the whole expanse of grass below.

On the way back down the hill the horses slipped in the mud and the path was narrow. We noticed some rhubarb plants nearby and a meadow of regpà herbs – if I have written it correctly – a cross between onion and garlic. Here Rinpoche indicated one of the retreat places because – he said – he had discovered the ruins of a Bon temple with carved mantras, and would



The horse with a stone in its hoof in the Lhalung Valley.

Finally the weather improved and we passed through an enchanting landscape of woods full of the intense scents of wild plants until the horses started running attracted by the vast plain that began to stretch out in front of us. It was the Lhalung Valley where, up to the time of the revolu-

have liked to allow monks of this important pre-Buddhist religion to do the practice of their “protectors”, who had been largely integrated into the pantheon of Vajrayana Buddhism by masters such as Padmasambhava and his disciples.

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In the information he gave me that day – detailed in the booklet “In Tibet” published at the end of the trip – there were some historical and mystical details about the place known as Suko’s Country in the Su Valley (these are phonetic transcriptions), at a height of 3800 meters. The whole region – he said – was known as Waja Country, or Continent of the Waja lineage, the center of which was Galen. The mountain where Lhalung Palgyi took refuge after the assassination of the king was consecrated to Vajrapani, the original divinity, and to Manjushri and Vajrapani in their peaceful and ferocious manifestations. In a cave on that mountain slope the yogi had obtained the body of light, the same place where Khyentse Wangchuck discovered the image of Vajrapani, which – after the disappearance of the Yedzong *terma* – he gave to his nephew Norbu for safekeeping.

Other smaller hills and valleys around us had exotic names such as the two main ones, the Valley of the Sun and the Valley of Heaven. One was called “the forest of the sentinels” from its triangular shape like “an eagle soaring”, another the “Mountain of the Valley of the Sky” formed by small round stones, another more simply “The Belvedere”, whose form – the master made me write – “represents the obtaining of the action of power”. The master said he would like to build a practice and study college here for 25 people that would be called Odzel or Radiant Light. At the streams where the cold water joined the hot springs that emerge from the subsoil Rinpoche wanted to finance a turbine to provide electricity for the college and the nomads so that it does not freeze in winter, one of the various public works that he thought would integrate religious schools and classes for the children of shepherds. “Now they grow like trees,” said the master, “without any education.”

In my notes, there are a lot of projects that have been written down but I do not know how many have been realized given the intervention limits imposed by the authorities, especially in times of great political tension. In the Valley of the Sun, for example, the master wanted to create a retreat house for only four Dzogchen practitioners to be instructed in the practices of trechöd and thögal in that solitary and generally sunny place where water and wood abound. Near the hermitage where his uncle practiced peaceful and wrathful manifestations he would have liked to cre-

ate another retreat place for another four chöd practitioners, while near the summer residence of the kings he planned to reopen a nunnery that had already existed at the time of Lhalung Palgyi but was now completely destroyed. All the new structures would have been part – he explained – of the Practice College scattered on the edge of the “most beautiful valley of Derghe”.



Gheug

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We returned to Galenteen completely soaked and exhausted. I forgot about the lighted candle and woke up to the glow of the flame that sizzled in the melted wax. “Chinese candles” commented Rinpoche before falling asleep. In the morning I went to wash our clothes in the river and on my return found hundreds of small cords that had been prepared by the master who was already concentrated on repairing the *namkha* of a nomad that was broken. For a long time I watched the skill with which he always moved his hands until two local official “bosses” came to ask for one of these “protection” cords and offered a donation of 10 yuan, about a dollar and a half.

The next morning, June 20, Rinpoche had pen and paper brought and, without a break, wrote an invocation to Lhalung Palgyi Dorje and the story of the monastery of Galen as he had received it several times in a dream during the journey, even before entering Tibet.

After the initiation of Avalokitesvara, which I have already written about, we

left on another important expedition to the origins of the lineage of families that have made the history of these regions since ancient times. We were about to go to their cradle, the ancient kingdom of the Wagmo from where the master had his origins, descending from one of the branches of this aristocratic lineage and born in a place known as Gheug. But first I

have to introduce people and places, again thanks to “The Lamp That Enlightens Narrow Minds” and the master’s biography of Ugyen Tendzin, who himself lived in long retreats in the same hermitages and caves of Lhalungar.

The Continent of the Wango

In the local dialect the word “Wa” of Wangpo and Wangchuk means “the hump” and came from the name given to the descendants of a family called Wamgo Tsan from a small village – where Gheug later arose – with only three people, a couple and their daughter who cultivated the land and raised goats. It is a long story told in “The Lamp” but in short, the daughter gave birth to a child with supernatural strength and intelligence, so much so that they called him Wamgo, divine son. He had a small hump on the back of his neck and was mythologized for having defeated enemy Tibetan armies and Mongols and receiving the Gheug valley as a gift from the kings of Derghe for

himself and his descendants, a practice interrupted by the Chinese occupation.

It was among these descendants of the Wamgo that Rinpoche's uncle Khyentse was born – as predicted before his death by Chokyi Wangpo – in the same valley hidden among the peaks of the mountain range overlooking the Yangtse River that was the cradle of many masters including Namkhai Norbu. When the day of his departure for the village of Gheug arrived, the master was still unwell with the after-effects of the flu that had kept him locked up for several days in his room in Galenteen, mitigated by a *sang* ceremony for the local “guardians” which he himself conducted. He said that many negativities from the past still weighed on the whole area, where even families of devotees had been seized with revolutionary fervor and subjected his uncle Khyentse – who accepted without batting an eye – and his elder sister Jamyang Chodron, a renowned poetess raised in the court of the king, disciple of Khyentse Wangchuck and other great masters, to torture such as having to drink the urine of “revolutionaries”. Jamyang spent 20 years mostly in forced labor and routine cleaning of cells in unspeakable conditions between 1959 and 1979 (I think Rinpoche met her in 1982, collecting her shocking testimony that was mentioned in “The Lamp”). Instead Sonam Palmo – the master told me – “had been luckier because she had been assigned pigs and chickens to raise and bred them in satisfying quantities for the Chinese, who in return made her life a little easier”. Even in Lhasa where she moved years later, her income came from herds, especially cows.

One day among the inhabitants who crowded around the house Rinpoche pointed out to me two elderly women who kept their distance and seemed not to have enough courage to approach. I recognized the women who often followed me during the walks and meditations around the place where the locals had collected a large quantity of sculpted stones with figures of masters and deities among which some wind bleached *lungta* fluttered. One day – after many previous and fearful attempts – they got so close that I touched their heads to make them go away. I told the master about this episode and he was not happy at all. “Those pious women were two of the worst torturers among the activists. They had received numerous teachings and initiations from my uncle, then persecuted him to save themselves and did the same

with many other practitioners. My sister was one of them, and I refused to forgive them when I returned to Galenteen years later and found them pleading and marginalized by the entire community. They know that they cannot approach me” – he added. “We cannot do anything for them because their karma of having broken the sacred relationship of *samaya* with their mas-



Rinpoche and Sonam Palmo's elderly cousin from Geug with his grandchildren.

ter in this way will not change with our forgiveness. I don't think it's very useful if you touch their heads, just to make them believe that somehow they have had contact with someone from the family of their victims”. It was one of the few direct reprimands I received, but I knew Rinpoche's severe face enough not to envy Fabio Andrico, his most assiduous companion around the world. It goes without saying that these were mainly tests of presence in the front of a life teacher who was as demanding with his students as with his own children.

Expedition from Galenteen to Gheug (Gheogh)

I was sorry that Rinpoche was not with us in the group of relatives who visited Gheug's surviving family members, now semi-isolated from the rest of the world. His flu had resurfaced and he was advised to accept the hospitality and care of his family in the valley just beyond the Yangtse River, in the territory of central Tibet. After

a transfer by car to the border between eastern and central Tibet, the master then continued with Phuntsok, crossing the bridge over the great river in that stretch that was not at its greatest extent as further downstream. It was Sonam Palmo who led me and the caravan of relatives and acquaintances who climbed on foot or on the back of horses and mules along steep stony paths that took us – without Rinpoche – to his village of origin. As soon as we got off our horses Sonam Palmo held my hands without words, except for those feelings of nostalgia that must have repeatedly manifested for her in the emotional involvement in the places of her own childhood and that of her brother, the *tulku*. For me they were also two intense days of wonder and sadness in that human outpost that clung to the mountain with a history so rich in legendary figures, despite the fact that they really existed, and miracles told by word of mouth, up to the time of those tragedies that were the occupation and the madness of the cultural revolution.

Approaching the village, Sonam Palmo pointed out to me a rounded rock like a white skull emerging from the forest of fir trees – that had not yet met the Chinese chainsaws – and which formed a dark and uniform mass at the base of the summit. The locals put their unwavering devotion in that place of the “guardian” Godrang and together with the others in our group Sonam threw prayer scarves and shouted invocations before resuming the journey with the increasingly tired horses. I offered to continue on foot since I was the heaviest of all, but I could only travel a few hundred meters due to the altitude which was higher than that of Galenteen and made the climb even more difficult.

When we got to a point just before the village, Sonam Palmo stopped the horses to show me a particular place, certain that I could understand. She simply said “Rinpoche”, pointing to herself and making a large circle with her hand that encompassed the few remaining stones of what was once their family home, known in the area as the home of the Norsangs. Tracts of the wall no higher than twenty centimeters were still visible and grazing grass covered them everywhere. There were two ruined buildings with the highest bricks and in front of one of these Sonam Palmo made me understand by her prostrations that it was the exact place where their mother Yeshe Chodron had given birth to

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the little *tulku*. “Rinpoche” Sonam Palmo said again, making the gesture of cradling a baby. Then she wiped away an emotional tear and from her *chugkpa* pocket took out a small box of tobacco that she loved to snort, for once without the reproaches of her brother who disapproved of it.

We met numerous descendants of the families who had seen the master’s birth and recalled the stories of the miraculous births of his uncle and his predecessor Chokyi Wangpo, all linked to the maternal side of the lineage. However, there were those still alive who had witnessed the arrival in Gheug of his paternal uncle, Togden Ugyen, with the announcement that the child was the reincarnation of his teacher Adzam Drugpa, who had died a year and a half earlier, leaving indications that corresponded to the characteristics of the son of his relatives on his father’s side. Drugpa had also appeared to the Togden in a dream, right in the house of the Norsang, and after prostrating, he saw him get smaller and smaller in the body of Yeshe Chodron. It was the Togden – the yogi who went down in history for realizing the rainbow body – who in his memoirs, collected by Rinpoche, wrote about the flowering in that cold December of the rosehip bush, still considered a true reliquary by the inhabitants of Gheug mostly related to the Norsang. Sonam Palmo pointed it out to me close to the remains of the former residence and I was able to photograph it in its natural flowering season at the end of May.

In one of the few houses in the village lived the extended family of the children of an uncle who had been killed by the fanatical revolutionaries because he was a “landowner”. Since then one of these cousins of the master had been paralyzed with psychic disorders and I was not allowed to visit him for fear that he would get agitated in the presence of a stranger. But I saw Sonam Palmo returning from the visit with tears in her eyes, as often happened in those days that were an immersion into extraordinary memories and intense suffering for her. With poignant emotion, I embraced another cousin of hers that she had not seen since the terrible days of the revolution, a man older than her and unsteady on his legs. One of the few people who remembered the days of Rinpoche’s birth and recognition by his uncle, we will spend many hours walking in the flowery meadows with with him and his grandchildren who ran around wildly and then re-



Gheug.

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Gheug.

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turned from time to time to hug the legs of their old grandfather while posing for the camera.

In the room where we were guests they laid out two mats on the ground for us where we spent the night and in the morning we visited the upper part of the village from which the guardian mountain of Godrang could be clearly seen. The sky alternated between sun and dark clouds and with suspicious coincidence the water descended with large grains of hail every time I took out the video camera entrusted to me by the master to photograph it, until at a certain point Sonam Palmo signaled me to show my respect and put the camera in the bag. The heavy rain stopped.

Rinpoche left Gheug at the age of five after being recognized by many other masters including the Karmapa who considered him one of the three incarnations of the Bhutanese Dharmaraja, (the Shabdrung). He went to study in the castle of the king of Derghe who prevented him from going to Bhutan due to the risks he could have run in a country where the “war of the tulkus” and the political situation could take on dangerous implications, given that two of his predecessors had already been killed in the past. The family also soon moved downstream just beyond the

Yangtse River which at that time divided – the Blue River in the east – the part under Chinese control from the western one that remained under the Tibetan administration of Lhasa, hence the Dalai Lama. It was here, in the village of Kuantu (‘phonetic spelling) that we reunited with the teacher and Phuntsog, who had remained to assist him, together with other relatives, and help him recover from a very severe cough that had now almost passed.

This concludes the two parts of the journey dedicated to the masters who were also relatives of Norbu Rinpoche. Entering on horseback the valleys without passable roads in the direction of the capital, Qamdo or Chamdo (within the so-called “Autonomous Region”), we diverted even further inland towards the village of Changchub Dorje in Khamdogar. I hope to soon be able to describe this experience that led me to meet the community of farmer-yogis created by the master of the master whose body I saw preserved in salt before the consecration of the stupas that will contain his relics. Here I will limit myself to transcribing a passage from one of the most beautiful poetic songs composed by Rinpoche for those disciples of his root guru, practitioners with already profound knowledge of Dzogchen.

All the various experiences are like
flowers in a summer meadow:
The beauty of their colors is
without deceit;
In the dimension of instant
presence, like heat and humidity
to them,
How marvelous is the spectacle of
single taste!

May the story of this journey be of benefit to the reader. ©

Editor’s note: The poem is taken from “Advice for Three Students of My Master” and is the third song “Advice to Lama Pema Loden”, Shang Shung Publications.

Rebirth – A Guide to Mind, Karma, and Cosmos in the Buddhist World

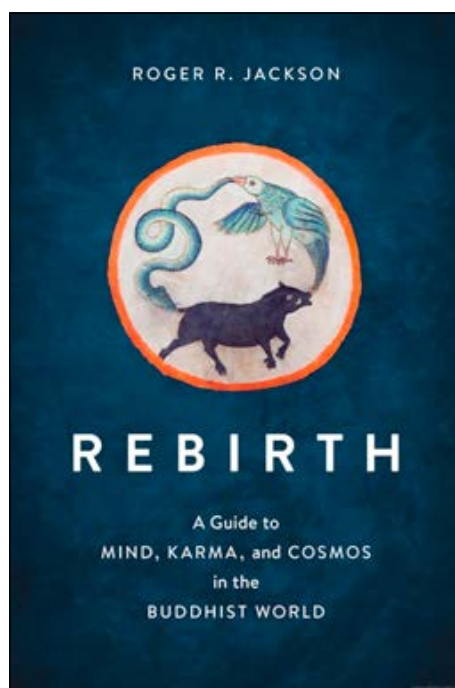
By Roger R. Jackson
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Review by Alex Studholme

Buddhists believe in reincarnation, don't they? For the vast majority of people, this is entirely axiomatic. If religion is an "immortality project", assuring us of some sort of life after death, then Buddhism does this by asserting the reality of a succession of rebirths, followed eventually by nirvana, a transcendent state beyond ordinary life and death. Yet for western Buddhists, things may not be quite so straightforward. Belief in reincarnation, not culturally ingrained, may actually be somewhat peripheral to one's identity as a Buddhist, hovering instead in an unresolved way somewhere in the background. Roger Jackson's definitive new work on this topic is a valuable guide both to the Buddhist tradition's treatment of rebirth and also to the way this idea has been received by modernity.

Those expecting a conclusive answer to the question of how rebirth takes place, or whether it actually takes place at all, will be disappointed. Instead, Jackson presents us with a dispassionate survey of the subject, contextualizing the question of reincarnation in the widest possible way. He relates rebirth to Buddhist ideas of cosmology (the realms of samsara) and ontology (the nature of reality), karma and dependent origination. He examines the different approaches to these issues in the early Pali canon, and in Mahayana and Vajrayana literature. And he looks at the way rebirth has been absorbed into the different Buddhist cultures of Sri Lanka and South East Asia, China, and Tibet, including sections on different attitudes towards rebirth as a woman.

No doubt this is all very valuable in leading newcomers through the multifarious ways rebirth is regarded by actual Buddhists: not simply as a philosophical idea or tenet of faith, but as an integral part of a diverse and highly evolved religious system. It is interesting to learn, for instance, that



the Sri Lankan custom of offering alms to monks as a means of transferring nourishment to hungry ghosts may derive from Hindu rites of feeding the dead. Or to encounter in China a bureaucratized view of rebirth, in which karmic punishments and rewards are meted out by purgatorial officials acting suspiciously like Chinese civil servants. Nonetheless, more seasoned Buddhist readers may want to skip over a lot of the other rather more familiar background material in search of the main arguments.

In this regard, Jackson provides a helpful précis of many of the Buddhist defenses of reincarnation, without engaging with them in any great depth, often content simply to point out the obvious drawbacks. Thus, justifying a common sense view of one's own personal continuity – in this lifetime, let alone from one lifetime to the next – is difficult to square with the Buddhist emphasis on radical impermanence. Similarly, attempts to assert what it is that is actually reborn are undermined by the Buddhist doctrine of non-self: various ingenious solutions to this problem may inadvertently smuggle a self in by the back door.

Jackson doesn't say it explicitly, but one suspects he assumes that none of these Buddhist arguments would pass muster in a modern philosophy department. Even Dharmakirti, the 7th century Indian pandit whom many Tibetans regard as mounting the ultimate philosophical case for reincarnation, is given short shrift. To back up the notion that the mindstream can continue without the body, Dharmakirti argues that the mind cannot be dependent on an emer-

gent property of the body, because the two are so fundamentally different: mind is clear, knowing and immaterial, while the body is coarse, insentient and physical. This, Jackson writes, "appears to beg the question, by defining terms in such a way that the desired conclusion is unavoidable."

Jackson does actually lay his cards on the table in his final, illuminating discussion of how reincarnation has been adopted by the modern west. He is not a literalist, recalling his shocked incredulity at a Tibetan lama's earnest account of the fates of two brothers who had committed serious, but slightly different misdeeds: one was reborn as red fish with a blue head and the other as a blue fish with a red head. But nor is he the kind of secular, humanistic Buddhist that believes the doctrine of reincarnation should be entirely disposed of, or perhaps interpreted in symbolic or psychological terms, leaving a set of core teachings shorn of speculative metaphysics and superstition. And unlike some of these secularists, Jackson finds no good reason for thinking that the Buddha himself did not believe in rebirth.

Rather, Jackson declares himself to be what he calls an As-If Agnostic, by which I think he means someone who keeps an open mind that reincarnation could operate in some way or another, whilst acting as *if* traditional attitudes to reincarnation were true, trusting that taking on such a mindset will help one to participate in the liberating and meaningful sphere of the *dharma* and, even, of the way things really are. Such an attitude might be supported by appeals to experience: the counsel of venerable teachers who tow the conventional line and, perhaps, the many remarkable case studies of children who recall past lives collected by the American academic Ian Stevenson.

In the course of this final discussion, Jackson makes two further arresting points. Firstly, many of the Buddhist teachers who gained most influence in the west were those who downplayed the importance of reincarnation. Secondly, the doctrines that these teachers have tended to emphasize – such as Dzogchen, Mahamudra, or Zen – center around direct experience of the enlightened mind, where considerations of karma and rebirth can seem somewhat remote. Perhaps, this is the answer to why some western Buddhists – even those involved in non-secular, traditional sanghas – feel that the question of

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Artists in the Dzogchen Community

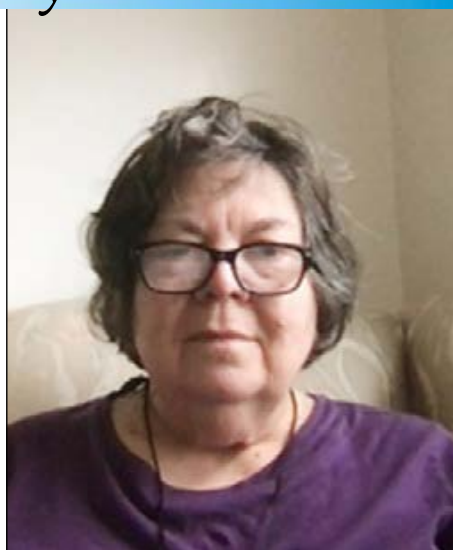
Poet – Jacqueline Gens

The Mirror: Jacqueline, you are quite an accomplished poet. When did you first become interested in poetry? When did you notice your first impulses?

Jacqueline Gens: Not sure about early childhood, but definitely around 13 years old when I happened to hear the voice of my future mentor, the late poet Allen Ginsberg on television; he had just returned from India. I distinctly remember thinking, "I want to know people like that."

M: Can you talk a little about your life and how your life experience may have influenced you to become a poet?

JG: Well, I come from a Russian speaking family and Russians highly regard poetry as do many cultures of Eastern Europe. By the time I was 15 years old I had read the entire canon of Russian fiction and the great poets in translation. Sometimes my mother, Olga, would read in the original. Around that time, my family moved from rural California to NYC. It was the era (1965) of folk singers like Joan Baez, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger and Americana classics drawn from what folklorist Harry Smith would come to call "Old Weird America"; the backroads of wild America. So, I became very interested in the poetics of witness, whether song or poems. Bob Dylan's "*A Hard Rain is Gonna Fall*" about nuclear fall-out written in 1962 still sends shivers in every cell of my body:



And I'll tell it and think it and
speak it and breathe it
And reflect it from the mountain so
all souls can see it
Then I'll stand on the ocean until I
start sinkin'
But I'll know my song well before I
start singin'

Anyone can watch on YouTube when he received the Noble Prize For Literature in 2016 sung by the poet Patti Smith.

M: Who have been some great influences in your life regarding poetry?

JG: It was really the Beat poets that spoke to me as a teen, especially Ginsberg with his poem *Kaddish* about his mother, which just inspired me to the magic of language as heightened emotion to wake one to the sorrows of life mitigated by this particular combination of sound, meaning and affect which might arise as a non-conceptual naked moment. What Trungpa Rinpoche

would come to call Mahamudra (the great symbol) not of something other but the present. As a girl I sensed the magnitude of this vocation.

And so I began visiting St. Marks Place, one of the great poetry venues of the era in the East Village, NYC much to my parents' chagrin because it was a quite dangerous and drug infested neighborhood in the 60's. But then I became exposed to a whole generation of living poets including Russians like Yevtushenko whom I heard read live his masterpiece *Babi Yar* so relevant today. (The first monument bombed by the Russians in the current conflict).

Later when I was an adult, Trungpa Rinpoche and the Naropa poetry school were influential. It also meant a lot to me upon meeting Trungpa Rinpoche for the first time – he kept repeating the word "poetics" although I came to do graduate studies in Buddhism. Other Lamas also called me a poet so I began to take it more seriously, not just as a private endeavor.

M: Also can you talk a little about your life and poetry and how that might have brought you to Rinpoche and the Teachings or vice versa? How did you first encounter Rinpoche and Dzogchen?

JG: I would say, that Rinpoche brought me to a more transcendent poetry. He was so remarkable in his communication openness and a poet himself who experimented with more contemporary forms. He had thousands of students and yet he always thanked me for poems I sent him or Rosa beginning decades ago. I found within aspects of his Santi Maha Sangha gems of great beauty. Mostly, my work in the Dzogchen Community was administrative with poetry taking a back seat. But every year, I wrote a Losar poem based on my spontaneous projections and posted on Norbunet and The Mirror which people seemed to appreciate. I was hoping to finish all 60 of the astrological cycle, which I don't think is now possible but I can't seem to let go of it each year as long as I am alive.

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reincarnation is not of paramount concern. For if Buddhism is a form of "immortality project", we may be encouraged to discover the "deathless" state first and foremost, not in some distant future, but in our own immediate experience. This may be the true direction of travel.

Jackson himself points to just such a conclusion in the story he uses to end his excellent book. In a previous lifetime, the Buddha says, he was a seer who was able to fly as

fast as the wind for hundreds of years, yet never reached the end of the world. But this, we are told, was a mistake: the end of the world he should have been seeking is the place "where one is not born, does not grow old and die, does not pass away and get re-born." And where is this to be found? "It is," the Buddha explains, "in this fathom-long body endowed with perception and mind that I proclaim the world, the origin of the world, the cessation of the world and the way leading to the cessation of the world." ©

poetrymind

Logo by Barbara Bush

Aside from Rinpoche himself, I would have to say that my slow development as a practitioner of Dzogchen as taught by him (and other Masters too) began to seep into my work to the point I now emulate the old cave yogis writing my mind which I call *Composed in the Tongue* (following Trungpa's advice to Ginsberg).

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

JG: Right now it is my everything. Oddly being on Chemo for a recurrence of a previous cancer has opened up a whole world of relaxation where.. Sort of the Zen notion of eat, sleep, and chop wood (the poetrymind version) is the presence of nowness due to less distraction and more effortlessness as in low energy. So that might be the silver lining of stepping closer to one's mortality. Do Nothing!

M: How do you see the value of poetry for a practitioner?

JG: Since the time of the Buddha (and before in the great Hindu writings or the thousand year old Cold Mountain poems of China and numerous other wisdom traditions like the Psalms of David from the Hebrew and so forth) that are still ALIVE, the narrative songs of the nuns and monks during the Buddha's time and later, through the great Mahayana literature, the Tantric Mahasiddhas, and Dakas and Dakinis from other realms recorded their pith Teachings or narratives. It is an aspect of humanity that is collective in nature.

While language is defined as provisional (the finger) pointing to the moon (not the moon) in Buddhist hermeneutics – those on a Spiritual journey never stop expressing or writing their minds. In other words, we just can't seem to shut up about the nature of mind and reality beginning with that slight vibration of sound. But as the bard said – now your song well, don't fake it.

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

JG: Oftentimes, poets speak for those who suffer and have no voice. Therefore, we serve the well-being of humanity.... To forget the sorrows of this life is to live in ignorance. When connected to the Teachings or "Big Mind" such labor is for love and beyond ego or personal reference. But then we all are trained to do this given whatever we do while integrating with the view of the Dzogchen Teachings or other Wisdom contexts. It's no big deal. That's what I learned from my main poetry guru, Allen Ginsberg.

Here is a momentary reflection written on this year's Saga Dawa

I pay homage to all my Teachers
Who introduced me and others to
the supreme
Mind of Awakening to forgo the
misery
Of this life and eradicate our
sorrows
Through the Wisdom beyond Time
Realizing that the Buddha is none
other
Than our own Mind-Thus was
said.....

M: Thank you very much Jacqueline for your time and your poetry. ©

Jacqueline Gens is working on a website called *Language in the Sky* which will offer a number of features as a virtual home for poet practitioners. The next round of events will focus on the Poetry of Witness in collaboration with poet and Tibetan translator, Constance Wilkinson relevant to current events happening in the world now.

Stay tuned for an announcement shortly inviting the international Dzogchen Community to participate in a live zoom poetry reading on July 23, 2022 Dakini Day to bring our voices and different languages of wisdom together.

Composed on the Tongue

Heaven

Amid the glittering citadels of encrusted
Jewels and crystal palaces wafting
With scents of perfumes
Languishing in pleasure and never ill
Or unhappy always content and self-absorbed
Never yearning nor wanting just having it all
We are the ephemeral kings and queens
Who begin to shrivel from our own delusion
Cast into the suffering of losing identity
Decayed, stink flowers avoided by others
The harsh reality of impermanence

Jealous Gods

Ah yes, we know you well- speeding
Forth into the continual race of competition
Disdainful of others better
You're the best of everything
The know it all, the Church lady whispering
The "green" of your jealousy so visceral
A toxic poison one drinks....until you
Slow down and take a breath

Human

We are the realm of hope and fear
Where dreaming creates myriad worlds
Of Heaven and Hell, our stories alive
With pleasure or pain, animating wild
Momentary projections imagined
Actors on a screen reflecting back to us
Whether welcome or rejected
An endless round of confusion
Empty of substantiation
We can never trust
For their coming and going
Yet, we are seers of the divine
Called numerous names
Within and Without
Outside time -A La Ho

Hungry Ghost

At night I hear their hushed murmurs
As they approach in the shimmer
Between sleep and waking
Their bellies swollen with throats
Needle thin, their cries pitiful
Babies hovering above me
Summoned to the great feast
Of transformation OM AH HUM
To drink the nectar of my body and blood
To taste for a moment-- freedom

Animal

We are the prey and predators
Living in constant fear of being eaten
Or hunting for our next meal
Darting here and there always moving
Or still in wait, the hunter out for a kill
And yet we are loved
Summoning forth
The best of us

Secret—

Somewhere between yearning
And the grunt of desire
The sacred urge towards union
With other, the nameless one
Who knows us in perfection
Accepting our mutual flaws
Transformed the spark
Of love ignites the flame
That burns the detritus of worldly lust
Combusting into the white heat
Of a shower of indescribable bliss
Where the seeds of compassion are born
And from which we are born from

Hell

Hell, you denizens of the dark
Forces are drawn to the crevices
And cracks of vulnerability
Like thieves in the night sneaking up
to drink our blood rending flesh and psyche
Asunder at the moment of emerging light
The ultimate delusion of believing us real
Consumed by our own ire in the fires of hatred

Jacqueline Gens
January–March, 2020

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Interview with Fabio Andrico

“You see Fabio, in life you do not need to renounce something, but should live everything with awareness.”

The Mirror: Today is June 5th, 2022, and we are in Tenerife near Dzamling Gar, interviewing Fabio Andrico for The Mirror. Fabio is one of the two main international Yantra Yoga instructors, a Santi Maha Sangha instructor and a long-time practitioner. Fabio also spent many years traveling with Rinpoche as his travel assistant. So we are honored to be able to interview him about his life and experience, about how he came to the teachings originally and if he wants to tell us some special anecdotes or stories about his very fortunate life with Rinpoche.

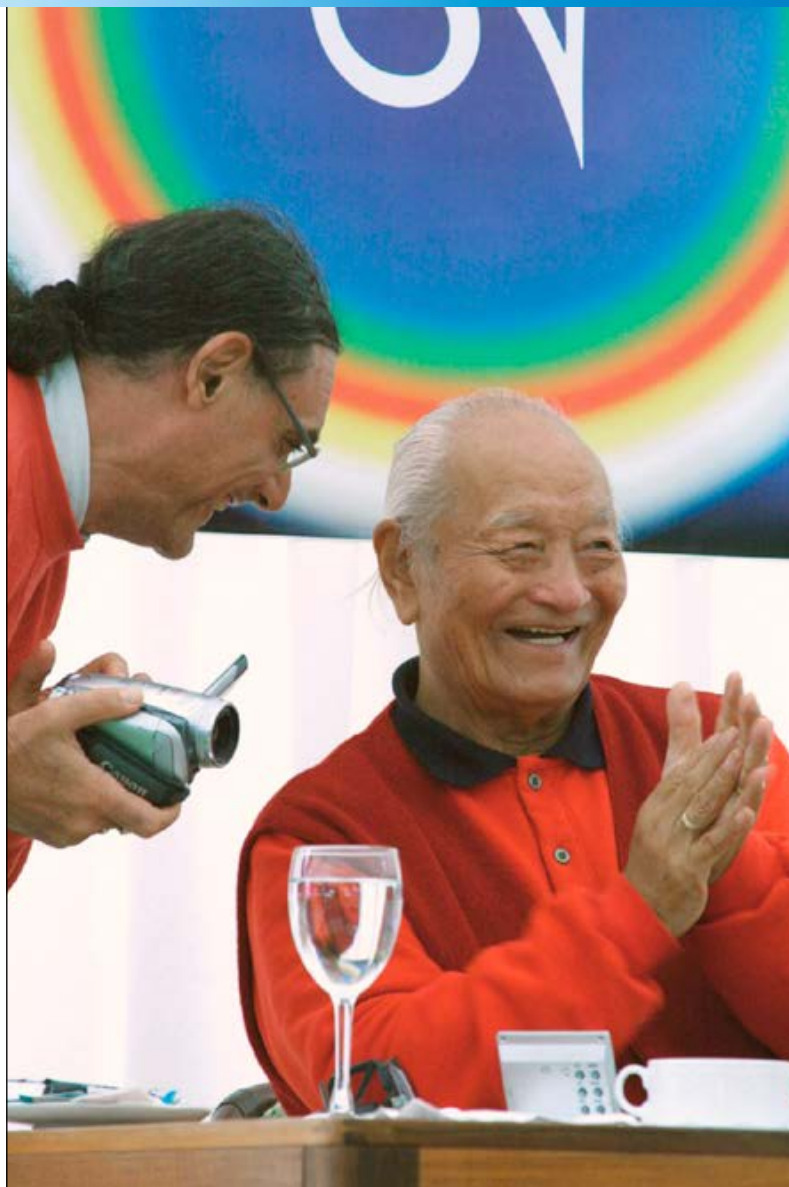
Hi, Fabio. Would you like to tell us a little bit about your earlier life and what led you to the teachings?

Fabio: A little bit, but very synthetic, otherwise it will take many hours.

I was in Italy, doing not very many things in the period just before, and somebody invited me to go to India. It's not very interesting to elaborate on what was my life. The point is that person told me that she would like me to go with her – she was not my girlfriend, she was a girlfriend of a friend of mine – and she said she would pay for everything; she was from a rich family from Peru, her father had a pharmaceutical company. I asked her, like in the movies, ‘Why me?’ And she told me ‘Because you are the only male I know who doesn't create the problem of the male for me.’ I said, ‘Ok, fine, no problem.’ She told me, ‘I can pay your flight, the return flight too, and I can give you 500\$,’ – that at that time was like 2000\$ now. – ‘Would you come?’ ‘Let me think about it – yes’.

M: What year was that?

F: I was twenty years old, it was a long time ago. And so we went. We arrived in Delhi and from Delhi we went to Goa. The beach and things – people in Goa did many other things, at least at that time. And I was ac-



tually horrified at these people doing drugs at the level where they were absolutely in bad situations. I was doing some of these things before – smoking things and doing things. I already decided that I would stop but when I saw these people in that kind of condition, I thought ‘That's really it. I don't want to waste my life.’ These people were just wasting their life, really terrible.

Anyway, there I met an Italian there who had studied for quite some time in India at the ashram of the Satyananda tradition of yoga, and he said if we wanted we could go to his place because his Vedanta teacher just died not long before and we could go and practice yoga there; his yoga teacher was at the ashram in Bangalore.

M: Did you already study yoga?

F: I did a little bit with Mario Franchini, a friend who showed me something, I could do *nauli*, but not very much. But I was interested. So we went there and spent three or four months – the span of the possibility to stay with the Indian visa. It was in Bangalore, in an ashram. He was teaching some yoga and we were practicing.

I was kind of stiff because in the previous years I had worked on the farm. It was not really a hippy farm, we were only two people and some friends were coming. The idea was an art project, that our life was the art. So we were documenting our life, raising goats, making orchards and things.

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We had a pig – originally she was small but then she was big, 240 kilos, – really she was a hog, called Rosella. She was so cute, this animal was so intelligent, so clean, really they are so clean. I was going in the mornings bringing her food like this *[showing full hands]*, she was waiting, doing all these kinds of things like a dog. And then I was there scratching hair on her neck and she was going like this *[shows movement up]* because she wanted me to scratch her belly, it was so cute. Then I put her on a chain, because there were no other things, a big chain, I was opening the sty and then she would basically take me out because if 240 kilos are running, you go with it.

Then the life went on and the day they decided to make salami and prosciutto out of her I could not stand it and I left. When I was there I became vegetarian because when you see all these little cute little animals... I also had 25 rabbits. When they are small they are so cute, people are coming, 'This I called this, this I called that.' Then they become bigger and bigger and then 'Which one do we eat?' and then you have to kill them and I did not want to kill anything and so I became vegetarian. But I was not there when they decided to end the life of Rosella. I could not take it, honestly. But I said, 'I want to eat a little piece of the salami you are making with her.' Interesting, I just wanted to create a connection with her.

And I had my goats, I was milking my goats, I was making fresh cheese, ricotta, I was making jams and other things. And I was kind of strong, I would carry big pieces of wood like this *[shows a big size]* so my body was strong, my muscles were those kind of muscles. When I practiced yoga in India, my muscles changed, they become more elongated, more flexible. Seriously, in three or four months my body changed, becoming more slim and different. I couldn't do more than this *[puts one leg on the knee of the other]* and after that, in the last days, I was doing a lotus. We were fasting three-four days and then practicing four, five, or six days all the time. I think 55% of the time I was fasting and 45% I was eating, totally vegetarian. But then the body became very supple, and that's why I was practicing at least six to eight hours a day. That's why I know when people teach Yantra Yoga and they say, 'Oh, we can't,' I know it's just the matter of how much time you dedicate and how much intention you have to use it for that. Because I have my example, my

body changed in three months. I went from nothing to be able to do a lotus.

And when I came back I basically decided to start teaching because I saw some people started teaching, honestly, I knew better than them, even if I was not trained

bit, I was mostly dedicated to the practice of asanas. So I was very interested in the advanced techniques of breathing. And so I went. That was Prata in 1977. I arrived there and Rinpoche gave many teachings, and at the end I decided that I really want-



so much. I came back to Italy dressed all in white, with long hair, only vegetarian, some time only fruits, some time only one kind of fruit. My eyes were like this *[shows big size]*. And at a certain point I even had a beard so I looked like a yogi. My intention was to study medicine because I wanted to help people, cure people with naturopathic systems, yoga. That was my idea – to become that kind of doctor.

And then when I was there, Giuliano Casiraghi had already met Rinpoche and he told me, 'Oh, there is this Tibetan teacher who teaches advanced techniques of the breathing.' I said, 'What?!' Because I studied more asanas and things like this, I practiced a little of pranayamas, alternative nostril breathing, bhasrika, etc a little

ed to follow Rinpoche. So, instead of going to study medicine I did that. Before I had done the artistic high school, I had done two or three years of architecture. Then I wanted to change but to change I had to do an integrative year because I wanted to do medicine. But in the end after I did the integrative year I decided to go to Naples to the Oriental University and study with Rinpoche. So I studied Tibetan, Eastern religions and these kind of things.

Then I found myself going with Rinpoche when he went to Austria for the first time. I was staying around, in Naples, I was teaching yoga and painting houses to live, to pay for my life and my university. At a certain point I had sometimes 50 students because I was teaching at a beau-

ty center and sometimes at the European Italian Yoga Federation. So I was teaching there and there were only women. Sometimes even 50 women came to my class and I would say, 'Well, I have to tell you that if you come to my class to learn yoga, that's ok, but if you come just to get skinny and have a more firm bottom, this is not the class for you.' Generally, 20 or 25 would leave the next month and find another class. Still these 25 remained stable for four years with me. Sometimes we were more, but never less than this number. Some of them would come even before for the class, so when I came they were already practicing for one hour.

When we went to Austria, there was one retreat in Vienna and one in the countryside. Rinpoche was teaching some Yantra Yoga. So I started learning yantra from Rinpoche and then Rinpoche authorized me to teach. Maybe because I was already practicing and teaching yoga, he gave me permission to teach there, so I started to teach yantra at the place of the Community called Parco Margarita in Naples. They were not called 'lings', they were places of the Community to practice together. In the morning I was teaching hatha yoga, and in the afternoon, yantra. I did that more or less for four years. Sometimes more hours, sometimes a little less. That's why, I think, that is my understanding, I started to understand, after three or four years, how yantra is working. That's why we try to explain as much as possible to shorten this period of time of having to discover by yourself, but it's not that somebody can do it for you; that does not exist. The only way to really understand how to practice yantra is by practicing it and discovering yourself how it works and so on and so on.

In the meantime, at a certain moment, Rinpoche gave me a diploma authorizing me to teach yantra from that moment. So that was the beginning, in Naples. Then I started to go to Rinpoche's retreats in the summers because the university had holidays and also the center was on holidays. So nine months a year I was working and studying and the rest of the year we were going to Rinpoche's retreats here and there and I started teaching some yantra at the retreats. After four years I finished the university. I also went to India to do my thesis, all these kinds of things, and then I came back. After a little while I went to live in Rome and I started to work making a documentary with Paolo Brunatto.

Then we started doing a project that we would go around to film where Rinpoche was giving retreats led. Lama Around the World. After teaching for four years, hatha yoga in the morning, Yantra Yoga in the afternoon honestly, I had had enough. For one year I said basta, I don't want to hear about yoga, basta. But then during the retreats they were asking me to teach yantra and when we went around people were asking me to teach at retreats and so on. At a certain point I had to decide: if I was working I did not have time to go where they invited me. If I was going to where they invited me, I could not work. In the end, the situation came out that I started traveling with Rinpoche and became his travel assistant, because I was also going there and doing a retreat teaching yantra.

One year when Rinpoche was on retreat in Merigar, I went around by myself only. I went around the United States – Santa Fe, Oakland – Jim Raschik was organizing there – New Mexico, and maybe not many people know, I was also teaching Vajra Dance. In Venezuela I went to Merida with Carmen Rivas and we painted a mandala in the yard to do the Vajra Dance. Then came this fund for the teachers, it was more organized that the teacher should be paid, the expenses should be covered. Because the first year when Rinpoche was in retreat and I traveled by myself, and actually I used my own money to travel. I had a house that I sold that my father had left to me, so at that time I used my own money to travel.

Then I came back, the expenses were more organized, so I started to travel more to teach yantra, and then since it was useful that somebody traveled with Rinpoche. Once Rinpoche said, 'It's not that Fabio is my assistant, I am his secretary.' Something like this. I felt like *[shows embarrassment]*. Rinpoche was sort of saying he had to take care of me instead of me taking care of him. So I started traveling with Rinpoche and almost all the rest of the time I was doing that; more than 40 years all over the world.

Then I started to do the webcast. The first one was in the year 2000, the year when some people were thinking that doom was coming. And that we did by phone. Of course, in the beginning it was only audio. It was Jacqueline Gens who organized the provider in the United States. You connected the phone with them, and then they sent it in the web, something like this. That was the eve of year 2000 from Namgyalgar South, that does not exist any-

more, the place was sold. That was the first webcast. Then I started to do these webcasts in this way in only audio, and the first attempt of doing it with video also was in Oakland, California, in the United States. Jey Clark tried to organize that. It was a Mormon temple, which looked very impressive. They had two or three Macs lined up. They looked like NASA. They rented the satellite, and then they couldn't align the satellite and so it was the same thing: the video did not work, so it was still only audio. The satellite could not be aligned and so it was done in the same way. Also in Margarita, in Tashigar Norte, in the beginning, it was just audio and slowly it started to become video and so on and so on.

M: Could you say if there was one thing, maybe one moment, in all your years with Rinpoche, that impacted you and left you with some way of approaching your life and practice?

F: Yes, one time he told me, after I had just let go of some of my tensions: "You see Fabio, in life you do not need to renounce something but should live everything with awareness."

M: How do you feel things are going in the Community since Rinpoche passed away? What do you see happening or what might you hope for? And because of your experience with Rinpoche, what have you understood as his wish for us how we could carry on?

F: This is a complicated thing to answer because I can never pretend to know what was in Rinpoche's mind. I know that most of the time he knew what was in my mind, and that was scary. I don't know, I really can't answer. The only thing that I understood is that the Community is about collaboration, about trying to understand each other and working together, to try that the teaching is understood and applied, also in the daily life of people who are not necessarily members of the Community or did not have the fortune of receiving Rinpoche's transmission. The teaching should be good for humanity. Always Rinpoche said that peace should start from the individual, individual evolution. And if it works like this, this develops, then we can really have peace and harmony in the world. As I understand, his way of thinking was how the Community can benefit the wide world, because we are all human beings, we are all born in the dimension of

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this planet. But also, by extension, generally, with other beings, we also use respect and collaboration.

Regarding the more internal aspect of the Community, we know, the way I understood, whatever Rinpoche gave of the teachings connected with transmission, they are connected with transmission. So everybody can reflect by herself or himself about what that means. We should try to preserve the purity. Rinpoche created Santi Maha Sangha to help protect and continue his transmission, that was the purpose of Santi Maha Sangha. Because he said many times, 'Not everybody needs to be a Santi Maha Sangha teacher or even to do Santi Maha Sangha because I am teaching everything anyway.' But the people who want to take responsibility of Santi Maha Sangha, they have the responsibility of that, specifically.

So I don't really know what I can say. All I can say is that the basic principle of the Community should be respect and collaboration. If there is not that, either internally or, if you want to make the distinction, externally, but if it is only internally, then it becomes a sect. This is not what Rinpoche ever thought, this I know. And external means integrating, externally. We are human beings, we are not different from other human beings. If we think we are different human beings with respect to other human beings.. we are all human beings. We have the fortune of receiving Rinpoche's transmission. This is our personal evolution related to the teaching and the method that Rinpoche gave, the understanding and so on and so on. If we cannot apply it also in the normal life, not always between ourselves but really in normal life, I don't think that was Rinpoche's.. now people use very much this word – vision. When I think of Rinpoche's vision I think of Rinpoche's visions, but we are talking more of an idea how to continue in the future. It's something beneficial for humanity and humanity becomes more harmonious and then everything can be understood with awareness; we can treat nature, all beings and everything with awareness. So the base, as Rinpoche always said, is presence and awareness in daily life. That's what Rinpoche was teaching for everyone, not only for his disciples.

I understand like this. And then in practice how it becomes or does not become – that's another story. You cannot have any-

body do it for you, it does not exist, it's not possible.

M: The way the things are going now, do you feel hopeful when you look around and see what's happening in the International Dzogchen Community? Do you have any concrete advice for how people might go ahead?

F: It's just what I said. Knowing that we are Vajra brothers and sisters but respect not only between ourselves, that would be already something very interesting. Also Rinpoche said one time in Hong Kong: 'You should not respect only me. You should respect everybody.' This was very clear: respect, awareness, being present, working with circumstances so that you can understand what can be done in circumstances. If some circumstances need to have rules, rules are part of the circumstances. Sometimes [people say], 'We are free, we are Dzogchen practitioners, we don't need rules.' But Rinpoche said that when he was in China, he followed all the rules, he was aware of the circumstances.

So, having no limitations, in my understanding, means you really know how to work. If you have to limit yourself, you have not the limitation of not limiting yourself. That's what I understood, in the normal life; if we talk about another dimension it is another story. I remember Rinpoche saying, everybody heard it, 'We have to keep our two feet on the ground.' Our two feet on the ground means we are on this earth, in this condition, that's our dimension now, and being aware means that. If we can follow these things and apply a little bit, whatever the future is I cannot see, things should be better for everyone. And maybe we would be able to do something good for not just the people of the Community. Because that was never my understanding of what Rinpoche taught.

For example, I remember, Rinpoche was not very keen on publicity in a sense of trying to convince somebody of something. But communicating the possibility of having some kind of understanding of something is another story. That is not conditioning people. He always said, 'If somebody is conditioning it means he is forcing something, constructing something. And if you construct something, sooner or later is going to fall down because it's false like blind faith or this kind of thing.' There should be understanding, comprehension. And then when you know something, nobody can strip it away from you because

you know, you have that experience clearly, it's part of you. So, if we can try to apply this, also people who have received transmission, Rinpoche gave so many incredible teachings, all the time, one life time is not really enough. That is another dimension, everybody should look for himself or herself and apply whatever they want to apply and try to mature in the practice. But also the relationships with everyone is very important, applying collaboration and respect.

M: Thank you very much, Fabio. ©

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