

Chöd in Australia

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Easter Chöd Retreat at Namgyal Gar South

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Chöd Retreat led by Angie Gilbert at Namgyal Gar South, Australia

A lush green Namgyal Gar South welcomed twenty-seven practitioners for the Easter Chöd Retreat with SMS base instructor Angie Gilbert. How fortunate we felt be in this place where 20 years ago Rinpoche held the first Namgyalgar teaching retreat. How wonderful to benefit from the depth of Angie's knowledge and experience of this extraordinary practice which she learned long ago from our precious master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Hearing the stories of how Rinpoche began to teach this practice after receiving a significant dream, we were reminded how lucky we are to be in the Dzogchen boat with access to such profound methods and teachings. As the days progressed and our tensions and worries fell away, we entered fully into the practice.

Each morning and afternoon began and ended with the Chöd practice ensuring a place in our brains for the enchanting and lilting tunes. In between Angie explained the background and meaning of the verses and tutored us in drum and bell technique. There was little time for beach going on this intensive unless you rose very early, and late afternoon and early evening was taken up by the Namgyalgar Dance Team practicing their moves for the Dancing Under The Stars Comp at Tsegyalgar East in July. Under the direction of theatre maker Suze Smith, nine (non) dancers not only created a routine but also performed it on the last night to an appreciative audience. What they performed is of course top secret until all is revealed in front of Rinpoche and the audience attending the Inauguration of the Universal Dance Mandala July 11-13 in Conway.

For both dancers and chöd practitioners the retreat was an opportunity to catch up over delicious communal dinners with Vajra kin who traveled from Melbourne, Sydney, Canberra, Tasmania and the North Coast. A chance also to admire the hard work that has gone into upgrading to the accommodation on the land for rentals to other spiritual and meditation groups, which is helping to support our two gars, North and South. The next activity at Namgyal Gar South is our annual karma yoga long weekend in June, and the Namgyal Gar North team is busy preparing for Rinpoche's visit to Qld in October 20 – 26, with Yantra Yoga and Vajra dance courses with our international teachers also planned. It will be a great time to visit Australia, (it's not so far if you stop off in Asia on the way). We hope to see you there!

Some pics from the Chod Retreat here: <http://dharmagoss.blogspot.com.au/>

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