

For Our Liberation - Mandarava Retreat in Paris

Date : June 24, 2019

June 16th 2019, Paris,



June 6th 1944: D. Day! British troops land in Normandy to liberate France from the Nazis!

June 6th 2019: Nina Robinson lands in Paris to contribute to the Self-Liberation of 30 participants in a three days Mandarava Retreat at [Palriling](#) !

Mere chance or inspiration?

Do Dzogchen practitioners believe in coincidence?

After having briefly introduced herself and her personal landmarks on the Path, Nina told us how she decided some 33 years ago to leave her native Great-Britain to live near Merigar near our

beloved Master, Chögyal Namkhaï Norbu.

She then started recounting us the different and significant stops of Rinpoche's pilgrimage in 1984, to the sacred Cave of Maratika, Nepal, where Guru Padmasambhava and his Consort Mandarava practiced together and attained immortality. On the way there, Chögyal Namkhaï Norbu first received the transmission of the Mandarava Practice in a dream and visions in the sky. As Nina was recalling these fabulous moments vividly again while recounting them, she gave us more than a taste of this spiritual and sublime adventure. She allowed us too, to make this inner journey with Rinpoche and receive his gift, just like we do when we immerse ourselves in the volumes or his Longsal Teachings.

Nina showed us a copy of the short practice he gave in Devon, England in October 1984, She offered us to make copies of her own precious original document with Rinpoche's handwritten transcription in Tibetan.

She explained the precise meaning and benefits of The Long-Life Practice of the Immortal Dakini Mandarava and taught us how to do it with Mudra, Dadar and ritual instruments, as well as its connected practices: Sogthig breathing for Chülen, Tsalung of Thigle Khajorto generate, stabilize and enhance the experience of pleasure, one of the most important means for having knowledge and realization, and the Tsalung of purification of all suffering through the Wisdom Fire.

She reminded us, timely and patiently, which principles each one should apply in a collective practice : to be present, remain undistracted, so as to sing together in unison, to harmonize and unify, as a group, our movements, our voices i-e our energies, and coordinate and integrate our timing with that of the "only one person" guiding, in order to fully get the specific and powerful benefits from a collective practice.

She pointed out that feeling the vibration of the sound of the seed syllable throughout our body was more important than straining our mind to visualize its shape.

In the same way as Namkhaï Norbu used to do, Nina naturally integrated to her accurate explanations and guidance of these practices, inspiring stories (that of Rinpoche's little Damaru made from the kapalas of a 16 year boy and girl that were offered to Rinpoche by a Chöpa, and his ritual bell that once belonged to Adzom Drugpa; anecdotes, testimonies of Rinpoche's clarity, "Lhundbrub style" actions or behavior, all full of meaning, love, joy and laughter, making the teachings, the presence and State of the Master alive for her audience.

She did not even forget to pay a smiling homage to her first Tibetan teacher in England, who could easily put his feet behind his head to remedy his stiff neck. Amazing!
Neither did she forget to recall "pioneers days" in Merigar with this improvised translation of a yantra class from Italian into English, delivering this strange and radical instruction: Inspire! Expire!:" instead of Inhale! Exhale!

Nina's authentic devotion for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was vibrant throughout the retreat. She generously shared with us her personal feeling and took this opportunity to kindly remind us all of our humanity:

“As Rinpoche passed away, I felt sad, very sad. Some people said: “you must not be sad!”. it is no use to tell me not to be sad! I am sad and I don't feel any sense of guilt about it! I feel what I feel! Who are they to tell us what we should feel? Don't try to make others feel guilty for feeling sad! We are human beings aren't we? We have emotions and feelings! We 're not fully realized! Never let people tell you what to feel!

All that we perceive is part of our clarity. Leave it at the perception level.“

In a deep silence, hearts opened, we listened to Nina reading a passage of the Invocation in verse composed by Lhundrub Tso (1864- 1946), Namkhai Norbu's grand-mother, recalling briefly the life and Liberation of her “loving supreme Guru” Adzom Drugpa, expressing her profound sadness, and praying to him as he passed into Nirvana.

O King, you who are everything for me,

From now until I attain enlightenment,

Without a moment's separation,

Dwell in me as the essence of my instant presence:

Sustain me and all beings with whom you have had contact

With the hook of your compassion!

Impelled by unbearable sadness over the passing into nirvana of our loving Master, feeling that we disciples remain without protection like children abandoned in a desert, I, Lhundrub Tso, the worst among us, have written this invocation from my heart during a pause in a retreat devoted to the practice of White T?r?.

(In: “Rainbow Body: The Life and Realization of Togden Ugyen Tendzin”, by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Shang Shung Publications)

In her concern to release pains created by our sometimes too narrow minds, Nina spontaneously set a certain number of things straight: to some Christian people she happened to meet, interested in the Dzogchen teachings but fearing maybe to infringe their original religion or “betray” Christ, she claimed: “But Jesus too is the (primordial) State!”.

Then came the final Ganapuja and, in the same vein: “Try to eat with awareness, not to select food from your likes and dislikes, but if something can damage your health, or you can't drink alcohol (weaned alcoholics might relapse) respect your condition. Understand the principle, importance of giving a good cause to animals for slaughter, but if you definitely can't eat meat, better come to the Ganapujanot forcing yourself than renounce to participate. “

We were reminded to look in our own plate ... and in our own mirror, to look at ourselves and see therewhat is there to be changed.

It was time for Invocations ... “Jidar Kala Ni Xar Xin” : Like the sun when it rises in the sky...

“Namkhaï Norbu means “Jewel of the sky”, Nina said, what a beautiful metaphor for the sun!”.
And started singing this song of the 40 ‘s “You are my sunshine, my only sunshine...
Someone softly joined in. “You make me happy, when skies are grey, you ‘ll never know dear,
how much I love you, please don’t take my sunshine away” ...

You made us happy, Nina, and skies were bright in Paris, those days.
Thank You. Please, come back soon!

Dominique Courtier