

Shitrò with Ana Maria Humeres at Gyamtsholing

Date : November 22, 2021

Study and Practice Seminar

“*Shitrò* is a very common practice in Tibet; there are many types of *shitrò*, the most common being the *Karling Shitrò* discovered by Karma Lingpa, a great *terton*, which is known as ‘The Tibetan Book of the Dead (*Bar do thos grol la*, Liberation by Hearing in the Bardo)’. In our Community we use the Mingyur Dorje *shitrò*”. Thus begins the Study and Practice seminar with Ana Maria Humeres, Santi Maha Sangha Base teacher, organized online by Gyamtsholing (Venice) for Sunday 24 October throughout the day. A seminar that “we will try to transform into an opportunity for practice, because I believe the most important thing is to apply this method which is so precious all together”.

The *shitrò* used in the Dzogchen Community is “very condensed, not too long”, continues Ana Maria, as our Master has preferred because “the Master chose methods for us that are within our reach”. And she adds: “The Master chose the Anuyoga practices for us because this has the same principle as the Dzogchen practices ... it is not about transforming an impure vision into a pure vision ... it is about instantly manifesting the potential of our primordial state”.

The seminar begins, therefore, with an explanation of the practice both for slightly more experienced practitioners and for beginners. Step by step Ana Maria goes through the individual phases of the practice focusing on the visualizations of the divinities. “*Shitrò*, as the name implies, is the method that allows us to manifest peaceful manifestations, *shi*, and fierce ones, *tro*, both manifestations of our original purity, *kadag*, and of our capacity for infinite manifestation and movement which is *lhundrub*“. The mantra and the One Hundred Syllables of Vajrasattva follow. “We add the Hundred Syllables to the practice of Mingyur Dorje because they are a very powerful mantra that greatly purifies our condition”.

After a short session of questions and answers, the seminar continues with the study of melodies

by listening to the mantras sung by Rinpoche in order to memorize the tonality well.

We can now do the essential practice, all together, applying what we have carefully learned or reviewed.

In the afternoon we dedicate ourselves to the longer practice. In fact the *shitrò* “is a modular practice and we can organize it, order it a bit as we want, that is, the mantras are grouped five by five ... this morning we did a group of five mantras at one time, but if we have more time and want to dedicate more space to this practice, for example we have someone we particularly care about, we can do the mantras several times, such as the cycle of five mantras each three times and the same for the specific mantra for the dead”.

The first long practice is done in a “somewhat didactic way, stopping every now and then to explain a little what we are doing and what we need to do”. Then follows an uninterrupted practice which concludes this beautiful day which was attended not only by practitioners of the Venetian Ling but also by some from other Lings. In this period when it is still difficult to meet at the Ling in person, the innovation of the internet connection has been a great support. A special thanks goes from all of us first of all to Ana Maria for her great dedication and profound generosity and to the active and ever-present Venetian Gakyil for making this wonderful meeting possible.

Homage to our precious Master!

Sabina Ragaini