

Santi Maha Sangha Level 1 Retreat Online

Date : May 24, 2020

With the help and support of the [Namgyalgar](#) Gakyil, a ten day Santi Maha Sangha First level retreat with Igor Berkhin was organized on Zoom at the beginning of May 2020.

I personally can't express my gratitude enough to Igor, the Namgyalgar Gakyil and all participants for having created such perfect circumstances. As organiser, I received countless messages and emails from participants explaining how much they received benefits from this course. Amongst them, I join the few that were written especially for the Mirror.

It was heartwarming to see the full engagement of everyone during this retreat and the way Igor allowed us through Zoom to interact and connect. Even though it was online, the feeling of community was ever so strong and present.

The Community is lucky to have so many wonderful teachers. During this retreat the skills and knowledge of Igor reminded me that we have so much potential to manifest a bright and amazing future for the continuation of the Dzogchen Teachings on Earth.

Thank you Igor for this timely retreat.

Arnaud Coquillard

For us the recent Zoom-based SMS Level 1 Retreat with Igor was a transformative life-changing event which profoundly deepened our knowledge and experience of our Precious Master's Teachings on Ati Yoga. We say this without exaggeration and with deep gratitude!

We therefore hope that Igor will consider providing another Level 1 Retreat online. We also hope that sometime in the future it may be possible for him to lead SMS Retreats at Namgyalgar.

Phil Brown & Veneta Amies



I loved the SMS1 retreat with Igor Berkhin. It focused on the essence of the teachings with real precision, and Igor is a superb communicator of what the practices involve, their purpose and function. He fielded a wide range of questions very deftly, and some of his jokes could even occasionally be quite funny (though for the most part they were disappointingly clean...) My experience was that doing the retreat via Zoom held no real obstacles at all. Of course practicing together in person is best, but I felt very connected with others and with Igor via Zoom, and see no reason why this shouldn't be used more widely for DC teaching during times of lockdown. This was a wonderful and unexpected gift – thank you to Igor, Arnaud and to everyone involved! *Julian*

This retreat gave me a lot of inspiration and impulse to move ahead in the study of SMS1 and refresh the SMS base. For me personally it means a lot. Thanks to Igor, Arnaud and to the participants!

Natalia

Through this Retreat I was very happy to feel Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's presence with us. Thanks to Igor for very clear instructions of 1st level. It was a wonderful occasion to apply precious methods and to get experience, while we did practice.

Looking forward to the next events in future.

Mariya

It was rare and precious to have had this SMS First Level training from Igor on zoom. Especially because he catered specially to us here in the Far East and Asia Pacific. I am so fortunate that I did not have to wait too long to have received teachings from such accomplished deeply profound nature of contemplation teachings.

These 10 days of training contained both intense and relaxed sessions, but I was always able to be attentive. Igor was very humorous and shared many episodes from his interactions with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. I enjoyed the question and answer portion that came after the meditation.

Students could freely express their internal concerns and thoughts in detail, in turn, Igor was very quick and accurate in analysing students.

I must express my gratitude to our Master for transferring us to the nine vehicle path, so that we have precise knowledge of the eight vehicles other than Atiyoga.

I will never forget his anecdote recalling a Russian man asking him: What is the truth? And Igor's reply: "It is yourself ". This indeed is what I am seeking, I am excitedly awaiting him leading us in that search soon.

Thank you for reading my reflections.

Kwa Peng Yong

Rinpoche in reminding us of impermanence would always say towards the end of a teaching that "we are living in time." In a real sense the Dzogchen teachings point out that we are in fact beyond time. In the time of Sri Simha, Manjushrimitra, and Vairochana I imagine that they would have never entertained that a technology such as zoom would even surpass 'fast walking' in order to gain access to the teachings. Through Zoom, SMS instructor Igor Berkhin skilfully and humorously gave 60 odd, SMS level 1 students, the royal tour of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's "The Treasure that Introduces Knowledge of Ati Contemplation." It is obvious as reflected in this online retreat that Rinpoche and his teachings remain ever present in many of his students. Thank you Igor for your tenacity and your diligence in retaining what has been transmitted by Rinpoche and helping clarify to a lazy practitioner such as myself, the great collection of Dzogchen Tantras that exist for our benefit. To meet a master in one's lifetime such as Rinpoche is like having effortlessly found oneself at the top of Mount Everest and then realising that like the mountain, Rinpoche has always been there, unmoving, unceasing, forever reflecting the view of Bodhichitta. To be part of his Sangha is like being part of the surrounding Himalayas, knowing that we will always have a relationship in Samaya until the illusion of duality is finally abandoned. Thank you also to SMS instructor Arnaud Corquillard and Namgyalgar who kindly initiated the opportunity to have an online retreat – may there be many more. And finally in those famous words of our master – "We are working with circumstance," so bring it on! An important point that Igor touched on at the end of our retreat which has also been on my mind of late, is that we are an ageing community so how are we 'working with circumstances' to bring young people into our community? I think this is an important point.

Mouri Ora

Paora

The last 10 days of my retreat (sorry confinement) were blissful, I woke up at a quarter to 8 made myself a cup of coffee and a bowl of weetabix and ZOOMED straight to a meeting with Igor Berkhin and a room filled with dozens of like-minded spiritual seekers. There, for four hours we united with our SMS level 1 instructor. Igor's relaxed style and jokes contrasted like breathing in and out with the profound experiences he has had as a practitioner, a teacher and translator for our maestro. For those who can and who have not had experience getting such teachings delivered at your doorstep I highly recommend you connect next time Igor ZOOMS around the world.

Andrew

The retreat with Igor was great; even brilliant. Not only was it enjoyable, but full of good

explanations, interesting insights and feeding my desire to hear more good teachings. Igor's deep understanding, clear explanations, wisdom and humour sustained us fully. I also appreciated the precise way in which he responded to our experiences and questions. This is something we don't easily get a chance to do and it was very valuable.

As a person who can no longer travel easily to retreats Zoom made this possible; this was a particular treat and I'm grateful to Igor and Arnaud who made it possible.

Angela