

Come to ME! An open invitation for practitioners

Date : March 24, 2017



Happy Fire Bird Year to everyone!

[Merigar East](#) is one of the places on the [Vajra Dance Earth Mandala](#), a power place chosen by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to serve for the practice and collaboration of Dzogchen Community members.

The actual construction of the Gar is according to Khyentse Yeshe's vision, in which the Gönpa, the two Stupas and the three Vajra Dance mandalas are the key points of a large Longsal symbol.



Exploration and freedom

While spending a few months at Dzamling Gar I had the opportunity to travel beyond time and reconnect with Rinpoche's vision. I met with practitioners from several different national communities affiliated to Merigar East, such as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Macedonia, Croatia, and Serbia. I was surprised to find out that in some of these countries, for example Lithuania, there is now a strong community of practitioners. Merigar East has been growing "under the radar" of many of us and is now openly manifesting in a more extended version. Now I am able to see the potential of Merigar East as a communication-and-opportunity hub amongst all of us. There is a great diversity that everyone brings with them. Whereas in ordinary conditions all these people would face many challenges in connecting to one another, practice brings us together and helps us go beyond cultural limitations. This creates a unique space for creativity and mind-opening activities and this is one of the most important resources of Merigar East: space for exploration and freedom. Yes, this is Merigar East in its essence – an open space under the sky where we can meet, enjoy, and create a lively communication network together for the benefit of the entire IDC.



Local community

Merigar East is located in the Romanian region called Dobrogea, between the Danube and the Black Sea. In its Slavic etymology Dobrogea means “good earth”. Historically, it has been inhabited since ancient times and there is a rich collection of neolithic archaeological evidence. Geographically, this region has particular climatic conditions, offering a unique habitat to plants and animals specific to semi-desert areas, like the turtle. Culturally, it is a confluence of Romanians, Turks, Tatars, Lipovans, Greeks, Ukrainians and Bulgarians. In the village of 23 August, very near the Gar, there is the annual Kurash Championship – Tatar Belt Wrestling. Kurash is an old Turkish word that describes this type of traditional wrestling, still practiced in Tuva and other parts of Siberia.

Over the centuries this diversity has created an interesting combination of ethnic-tolerance and exotic atmosphere and the villagers are always happy to meet practitioners coming from far away, who want to be their guests or simply get supplies from the local vegetable market.



Fresh Growth

The Fire Bird year of 2017 will bring many new opportunities to Merigar East, so that regular Vajra guests can continue to feel welcome and more and more practitioners can benefit from the beautiful conditions of the place.

Everybody who has visited the Gar on the Black Sea has experienced the special atmosphere created by the vastness of the land, the remoteness of the place, the fresh salty sea breeze, steppe-like surroundings and special atemporal quality of the space.

This year we are extending the camping facilities, so that more Dharma-thirsty travellers can come and enjoy this oasis: we are building shady areas, increasing the number of toilets and showers, and increasing the number of tents that can be set up inside the Gar.

The intention is to provide an amazing experience in very affordable conditions, so everyone can feel welcome. There will be many available places in the tent-camping, and for those who want more luxury, the villagers are more than happy to receive us in their hostel-like houses.



What's Next?

May 11-18, Migmar Tsering will join us and lead one of the dearest karma-yoga activities: **painting the two remaining Vajra Dance open-air mandalas**, participating in this activity to create space for practicing Rinpoche's terma. In total there will be three usable VD mandalas, creating more secondary causes for VD retreats and also allowing more Dakinis and Dakas to dance together, at sunset, continuing this tradition of Merigar East. No words or even photos can express the plenitude of this experience, but I will just tell you that being able to see almost the entire line of the horizon while spinning in the centre of this vast space adds a rare flavor to the practice of this sacred dance.

July 21-23 Merigar East welcomes the new **Yantra Yoga** instructor, Magda Ourecka, who will lead **a beginner's course**. She will be staying with us for a longer time, so we can have morning practice sessions every day.

August will be "Merigar East month", as it is filled with opportunities to enjoy, explore and practice. At the beginning of the month instructors will come for a **Communication course** with Gianfranco Brero (August 4-7). A few days later, Zoli Cser will start teaching the whole **Dance of the Song of Vajra** (August 11-20). Then follows Elio Guarisco, who will guide us for a practice retreat of the **21 Semdzins** (August 21-27).



Health and Relaxation

Since its foundation, Merigar East has been collaborating with local **health centres**, especially “Doina”, which Rinpoche visits every time he comes for a retreat. These treatment centres offer professional and affordable **services** ranging from massage and lymphatic drainage, to hydrotherapy, and mudbaths, and are very near the Gar. All practitioners who want to benefit from these can do so, combining practice with purification and relaxation at all levels.



Walking 10 minutes from the Gar you come to a pristine beach, with only a few fishermen’s houses around. Here you can enjoy the sun, the sand, and the Black Sea waves. Come at night during the full moon to have a good time with your friends. If you’re lucky, you can swim in the sea

at night and find yourself surrounded by thousands of plankton microorganisms that make sparks around you as you move.



SMS Scholarships

Every Gar has its own unique potentialities. Merigar East enjoys a strong manifestation of the natural elements and especially the expanse of limitless space. There are perfect conditions to integrate with the elements – the Black Sea, the occasional strong winds, the generous sun, surprising intense thunderstorms, and also plenty of private space to do the special practices for the voice – many of which can be quite challenging in an urban setting.

For this reason, Merigar East is offering SMS scholarships for up to six months for up to 2 practitioners who want to complete their SMS practices.

The possibility to do karma yoga by participating in the various activities at the Gar is included, thus maintaining the continuity of contribution to the Dzogchen Community – an essential part of the SMS program.



Coming to ME

Although the country of Romania might still seem an ancient far-away place for those who have never visited, it is now quite modern and tourist-friendly, with most young people speaking very good English. Coming to Merigar East is now easier than ever. Several low-cost companies operate flights directly to the city of Constanta, which is 40 minutes from the Gar. You can fly directly to Constanta from Rome, London, Paris, Milano, Bruxelles, and Istanbul. Otherwise, fly to Bucharest, which is 3-4 hours from the Gar (a bus takes you directly from Bucharest International Airport to the 23 August village near the Gar).

For further information please contact us at blue.me@dzogchen.ro

See you soon!

Alexandru Anton for the Merigar East Gakyil

