*Guru Yoga*

* Gakyil Meeting Minutes 6-12-16
* Appoint a Moderator: Dominik
* Approve Last Meetings Minutes: Approval over Email
* In attendance: Liz Wickhart, Karen Prestwood, Matt Hayat, Cindy Thibeau, Amanda Pollock, Dominik Niceva, Diane Kramer, Lauri Marder, Jeremy Keaton and Tim Fisher.
* Next Gakyil Meeting: July 10 at 10AM

**Staff**

**Secretary**

**New Persons Program**

* Tim gives an update on New Persons Outreach Program. The Blue Gakyil and Tim are working on reaching out to our North American communities to get an idea of what happens in their local areas in terms of Dzogchen. This will be a base for developing connections with our distant communities and hopefully we can then facilitate growth.
* We are gathering data on what practices happen and where and how often as well as if there are new faces floating around. We are trying to create a stronger connection to our outposts so that when new people arrive they maybe will stay by discovering what is available to them outside of their local scene.
* So far the conversations have been very interesting. There are a lot of ideas and perspective to consider but I think that we are being provided with fuel to help us develop and evolve in terms of event planning and how we do business in general.

**ACTION ITEM**: Write Report for next Gakyil Meeting on New Persons Conversations

**Geko**

**Rinpoches Cabin/Khandroling Update**

* Scaffolding is up almost all the way on Rinpoche’s Cabin. The timeline is up in the air because Jeremy isn’t sure of his condition. David Hayes has been helping. He started at a perfect time. He’s been picking up Jeremy’s slack.
* Jeremy’s been recovering and there has been lots of support. Mainly has been functioning through email and slowly getting back into things.
* Amanda thinks we need a water rescue kit for the land. From surveying the land, we have first aid kits but we need more in terms of life saving objects: ropes, life preservers, hoops and boards to save people. There are first aid kits everywhere. But while we are talking about this. Those kits need to be updated and we should refill the supplies.

**ACTION ITEM:** Obtain the new items for water rescue. Cindy has volunteered to go to Costco. It will probably cost a couple hundred dollars. They will submit this to yellow.

**Gakyil**

**Schoolhouse Roof Update**

* Caroline, who sent a letter to the whole Gakyil, handed over a lot of the work to Ed and Ed is going over all of the drafts per Matt’s suggestion and he went through and looked at the restrictions that might affect us. The whole Gakyil got this in an email 2 days ago, the Gakyil should review that.
* We got a few more letters from community members which were really positive that Caroline will include. Right now Caroline is working with Ed and there is a collaboration to solidify the draft into a form that we can submit. From the looks of it, it seems like we can get that.
* The timeline is rolling but they also have a regular time that they want things submitted by. However, because no one has submitted in over a year the grant is a Rolling grant because people are not in competition for it. Do we know how large the fund is? We are under the impression that up to 100k could be asked for but Caroline would know more about that. Ed will look at it more from a lawyer’s perspective and then he will get back to us.

**Summer Festival**

* Anastasia has been a superstar about organizing things. About 17 people have registered. We need more people to preregister to figure out how much food we are going to need. It’s on cruise control at this point. We just need people to show up.
* Amanda has volunteered to be a point person for Anastasia. Tim will be doing registration on the land and will be handling the monies. We can use lanyards or Pins depending on what everyone want to do. There are items up for auction. Diane can manage the auction and she doesn’t want to be the auctioneer. We can set up a booth for fundraisers during the retreat and also send out internet reminders.
* There is a gift from a Community member of $200 to sponsor someone who cannot attend. We set up a Scholarship and someone submits a paragraph to see who should get the donation.

**IDC AFFILIATION**

* The statutes Enrico Dell'angelo and Scott Townell developed were meant to become either our bylaws or our charter.  However, until recently, we (David and Karen) did not understand that this was the case. David and Karen had planned to complete the process as a contract and amend our bylaws and charter to be consistent with the Statutes. However, this plan was not acceptable to IDC and so we are trying to set up a meeting to clarify the next steps.  Karen is hopeful that if we use the revised charter (based on the statutes where appropriate) and accept the so- called TE statutes as our bylaws that IDC will approve and then we will bring to the community to approve.
* Diane is having a lot of difficulty with Meriling, they haven’t’ told us what documents need to be translated, certified, or notarized. Now they sent it to the lawyer to get back to me, if our name changes in the middle of that transaction then all of those papers have to be redone. All these transactions have to be completed or the Gonpa will be on hold for another two months. Maybe it will speed Enrico up, they want the charter, now we are changing our name and changing he whole charter according to his specifications. Maybe he would go faster if we are under pressure from the Meriling Corporation.
* The charter and bylaws revision must go to a community vote; it has to be a 70% community vote. We can apply to the Secretary of State of Massachusetts in a different way if we can’t get a 70% vote. We will still have a community vote. This is not like we gather everyone at the Gonpa, every single member must vote to change the charter, we will have to do this over the internet. All official IDC members are included. Enrico needs an apostolie to be sent. It’s complicated. Karen says sometimes she hears nothing back for 6 months. It is slowly, slowly getting done.
* We just received a report sent to all coordinators about Dzamlinggar Gonpa. We have to make a formal written request for help from Dzamlinggar to get a loan to pay for the house. Diane will read it and write something and send it out. We are on the bottom of the list of donations made to Dzamlingar. After us its only Namgyalgar, in terms of participation our participation is lower and we have been bypassed by the other gars. We are low on the list. It is something that is important. It should be on our list of priorities, we haven’t done it yet. The only money we have to put out now is for the furnishings. We have to raise another $5,000 to furnish.

**Outreach to Existing Members**:

* Membership is really important and people, when they are involved, are more likely to be participating. We should solicit ideas from Community on how to build Membership and everyone take initiatives to gather more new faces in their own ways. We could do more to listen to our community members and to help to motivate for participation.
  + When we did a survey last year at the end of the year, lots of comments said basically that people would never want to attend a community meeting again. People are feeling despondent about being able to work and do things with ideas and idea processing. We should focus on learning how to open up and work with our Community Members and their ideas.
* In the schedule for the Summer Celebration. Each day there is group discussion time and we can use this time to discuss Community topics. How do we attract more members? It is good to get people involved. Sometimes people listen; the community that is local to the Gar may have different priorities than the ones on the Gakyil which are a broader stroke.
  + For example, the Gakyil thinks that people should understand that they are flat out with the duties that they have. And it would be great if people wanted to organize themselves and take responsibility. There aren’t really friends of colors; when you are a friend of a color you are able to help the Gakyil in a way. This Community discussion would be a good way to get friends of the Gakyil.
* The Gakyil’s experience is that people are friends until they are asked to do something and then they are not available. I know that there aren’t enough hours of the day; we are interested in hearing from the Community. Back in the fall, Cindy and Karen facilitated a meeting where we asked for Friends of Color. Community Members can come to any meeting and write to the Gakyil and become a Friend and do stuff and no one has. No one.
* We have a lot of people who are offering to be friends. Diane says there are Friends of Yellow. Blue tried to put out newsletters and we tried but everyone is limited because we are from a distance. I would love to have Jacqueline Gens as a friend of blue but honestly she hasn’t’ reached out to Blue. At the Summer Retreat, we should have a community meeting on this very subject. It’s all about communication. We want to be open to people’s plans, but if people have an idea and they dump it on the Gakyil then that’s not going to work. The Gakyil is already filled up. We need members to collaborate with the Gakyil.
  + Maybe we can create a more formal idea of what a “Friend of Color” is, but we need to address that not everything can get done. On this matter, there is a call out for Gakyil members, which is the most proactive way to participate. We have not received any responses. We will send out a response with the letter about Friends of Color and see what that gets us.
* Diane and Amanda will come up with a way to create a presentation for the Summer Celebration for getting Friends of Blue and Gakyil members. Dominik is sharing how people offered to write for fundraising - it is a little bit confusing. People criticize and make comments but when it comes down to it people aren’t there to actually do something. We have tried to open those doors, and we have invited people asking for Friends of Blue. We do have some very active friends. Some people when they step in they are invaluable, Nancy Paris is great Friend of Blue. It is difficult to deal with people who are full of talk and cannot act.

**ACTION ITEM**: Diane and Amanda will come up with ways to talk to everyone about the Friends of Color discussion at the Summer Celebration.

**ACTION ITEM:** Red Gakyil and Geko will continue to work on the 5-year Khandroling Maintenance Plan.

**ACTION ITEM:** Blue Gakyil will send out another notice asking for Q&A teachers who want to help the New Members Program.

**ACTION ITEM:** Reformat the Newsletter. Dominik wants to send the samples and we can create Format. Then we can use samples to create structure.

**Lauri Marder – Letter to Gakyil on Behalf of Community Members**

* I placed that item because I felt there has been some confusion about this process. I want to help bring points of discussion so that we can have a little more clarity between the membership and the Gakyil. I see from listening to your meeting and it’s been very interesting that you are all working hard, we here at Tsegyalgar we too are all working very, very hard. We are all trying to do our part. The need is, as Karen said, to have more communication and understand each other better. I have written something to read. And I will submit it to put it in the minutes. She reads the letter:

“Agenda item for June 12 Gakyil meeting.

Decision-making process, clarification, and transparency about topics which must involve entire community or various portions thereof.

As a community member, I would like to know how decisions are made by the gakyil on important topics. I would like topics to be put before the entire membership in a timely manner for discussion, if necessary, and wide input taken into consideration. If directives are being given by Rinpoche and the IDC I would like to know what they are. How can this process be laid out clearly, so there is much more transparency and openness?

Are Tsegyalgar-related decisions made based on the needs and wishes of the membership and the advice of our Master? I would like communications to be shared on topics of urgent importance, demonstrating clear understanding and total willingness to collaborate with those involved to reach a satisfactory and clear outcome.

The membership would like to be more involved with the Gakyil, with two-way communication.

I would like the membership to have clear advance notification of when the Gakyil will be meeting and what its agenda is to be so that we may participate.

When will we have regular current reports on any and all candidates who have put themselves forward for the new positions open on the Gakyil and have a chance to vote on them?

And finally, are there IDC guidelines on these topics, and can they be used to develop more confidence and trust within the sangha?

Thank you for your time. Awaiting your responses.”

* More from Lauri: I know it’s a lot to take in, I heard your discussion and I know you’re doing as much as you can. I am not asking to add to your burden, but it’s clear that everyone is doing a great deal and people have extended themselves as far as they can. What’s missing? That collaborative element of the fact that we are all working together to the same goal.
* Key question that I have: we can use the provost property as an example. Gakyil has heard from the members, there is a lot of interest and involvement going forward. And we would like to know how you are going forward to make decisions and how can it happen and can it happen in a timely manner. We would like to know what you are sending to Rinpoche and when it is happening. It is not just the local people but on the other hand the local people have the heavier burden of making this working out. We need to be transparent in order to collaborate effectively.
* Dominik is speaking, it seems the Gakyil is more concerned with a broader perspective and broader goals that we have as a Community. We are looking at the circumstances and the requests that Rinpoche has made to this Gakyil. This is the second year for us; the request has been focused on Dzamlinggar and Dzamlinggar development. We asked about Khandroling at our last meeting, he replied to that with going back to Dzamlinggar. We have 3 main objectives: Raise money for Dzamlinggar House, raise money for the Dzamlinggar Gonpa and align with the IDC.

**Provost Property**

* We have projects that have heavy financial needs with only so many members. How can we raise money from few people? Other countries can accomplish these tasks more easily due to more members. We have focused on numbers to discover where our finances go. We need $200,000 each year for just what we have now and so the $47,000 entering into 2017 won’t cut it. Whenever anything else is brought to the table it feels very overwhelming, it’s not that I don’t think it’s a good idea, I think it’s a very serious commitment that we need to think heavily about before entering. For example, our retreat cabins are the first priority and we have a problem with maintaining properly what we already have. This is my personal view, I don’t know but as a Yellow that what I wanted to share.
* Amanda thanks Lauri for bringing the letter, as a member of the Gakyil and also as a community member what you brought in your letter is important to take up with the Gakyil. In my own personal experience, I have run into difficulty for example with getting the announcements out. Many long term practitioners said that Rinpoche always wanted to hear about the Provost Property as soon as it was available. In regards to financials, it is well understood that neither DCA nor SSI are in a position to purchase the property. This is why the community is looking for other ways to pay for these things. As Red, I started to assess what is in place to support these properties. I have taken the initiative to raise money for these properties. It didn’t exist before. This is the Paper Lotus Project. I was told by the Gakyil that maybe SSI would be interested in doing this. I felt like it should not have been shoved off but instead should have been explored. We need programming that brings in interest. When I bring that up I am confronted with high emotions. I am told many things that are problematic to growth and having open communication. When I try to express this to the Gakyil, I don’t feel like you hear what I am asking for. Sometimes my delivery comes off as aggressive or critical, and so I am sorry for that. But really I just want to know why we don’t have these plans in place. Why was I made to feel that I could not reach out to Rinpoche? That is not ok. I have tried to come up with things in the proper manner, but I was told that I do not have business to do any of this. I am in a position to get information out about our properties, it should not be met with problems and I don’t understand and don’t want to offend anyone by doing the role that I was elected to do. I’m not trying to go around heads, I’m trying to go through with all of you, and I am desperate for things to change in this way. It’s okay for us to disagree but it’s not okay to inhibit information getting across or stopping the voices of community needs. As far as financial needs are concerned, everyone understands, that’s why everyone is working to have other solutions. I see members from our Community, members talking to you all, asking why this is happening. I would like to change that but I don’t know how if that is what I am personally coming up against as well. I thank Lauri for writing this, we are all struggling with this and it’s not just a few people experiencing this. We can do a lot better.
* Cindy says it’s not that we don’t want this to go forward. Our question is, what are the plans of the people who are trying to make this happen?
  + Lauri says that people are talking about long term sustaining donations over 3-5 year periods to cover costs and they’re talking about the future Gonpa plans and how this is cheaper to deal with this. There is urgency about this, how do we go forward? Lauri: we need the Gakyil approval to really want to see this happen before we can do anything. We need a more bridge of communication from the Gakyil to access the community at large and to Rinpoche.
  + Gakyil is opposed to DCA taking on another mortgage. What is the plan? Lauri: the people on the ground are feeling that it’s doable in terms of taking on commitments. I’m sure a lot of people feel that turning over the School is part of this story. This would be a great opportunity for a Community Meeting or invite people to a meeting. The Community has expressly asked that a letter be written to Rinpoche asking what his true views are on obtaining this property.
* Treasurer suggestion: $70,000 has been pledged already. That is an indication of a lot of interest and energy. I suggest we have a team from the Gakyil and key people who are doing this. Then we set up a meeting to work on this and get the information as to what the plan is to get the plan in place, right away. Amanda asks that the letter to Rinpoche is the first thing to do. Maybe this week.
* The property is going up for sale very soon and so its time sensitive. Right now, we have discussed putting $500 to hold the property for 2 months and perhaps we can figure out a way to work this out in the meantime. Paula is in Dzamlinggar with Rinpoche, but it’s our role to get the information to him timely. How can we design a plan of action without his vision?
* Suggestion from Blue: As a collaboration, put at least 3 options that we consider approaching it. We can include that in the letter. We need to explain the circumstances. We need to know the circumstances for him. The letter is simple: The property is available, there’s energy around it, and what do you think? Should we get it? It’s not about discovering what you are going to do with it. Maybe Rinpoche has another plan for it. The letter needs to say that we’re putting together a sustainable plan. The person who offered the $50,000 requests the long term commitments of community members.
* How about we have no views, we just ask the questions simply and we ask it in an open way. Lauri: Blue, can you have some input from people who are intimately involved in the process?
  + Over the last couple of weeks. Amanda has received very clear and concise questions from the Community Members, she will send these to Blue. Before Blue sends the letter out to Rinpoche we all just get to see the letter first. In terms of timeliness, I will have it to you all by Wednesday. Let’s get it out by the end of the week.

**ACTION ITEM**: Everyone send info to Blue Gakyil so that we can send a letter to Rinpoche

**Yellow Gakyil:**

* We have $4800 for Retreat Cabin Repair. 3 people have donated to Rinpoche’s retreat cabin. That’s it just so that you know. For Dzamlinggar Gonpa: $300 so far. The support for our current properties is not very strong. Diane says we need to do more than just send out a couple of emails. Maybe people could organize a talk during the summer celebration to talk about what the cabins need. Diane and Amanda will do this. Dominik will post a list of people who have contributed and then we will see who else signs up.