

Tsegyalgar East General Assembly - 2023 Meeting Summary

Overview - On March 24-26, 2023 Tsegyalgar East convened its General Assembly combining it with a Community Practice Weekend. The weekend began with a Potluck Dinner on Friday evening and concluded on Sunday with a Ganapuja. In between a group of Community Members gathered in person and online to practice and to collaborate on all aspects of the Community's activities and future. In addition to formal reports by the Blue, Red and Yellow Gakyils, members received updates of ongoing issues such as the future of Lower Khandroling, the use and availability of Tsegyalgar's video and audio archives and a comprehensive Membership Report. Meetings were attended by approximately 25 people mostly in-person and the discussions were characterized by attentiveness, active participation and respectful dialog. Written reports which were circulated prior to the meetings are attached again to this summary [You can read the formal meeting reports here>>](#)

Summary Reports

Lower Khandroling Study Group - Nancy Paris gave an update on the Lower Khandroling Study Group. She reviewed a survey in which members indicated their preferences for development including building a small gumpa and developing housing opportunities. The group also expressed interest for various improvements on Upper Khandroling, many of which coincide with priorities of the Red Gakyil and were discussed in more detail during the Red Gakyil presentation.

Tsegyalgar East Digital Archive - Marit Cranmer presented a report on the video and audio material in the Tsegyalgar archive. Due to the tireless work of Bodhi Krause all of Rinpoche's teachings at Tsegyalgar are now available on hard drives. Marit explained that Merigar uses "WeTransfer" in order to allow communities to access Rinpoche's teachings. Tsegyalgar's gakyil has approved a subscription to WeTransfer so that Rinpoche's teachings at Tsegyalgar can be more easily accessed. Formalization of the protocol for using WeTransfer will be finalized in May 2023 after consultation with the Merigar archive.

Blue Gakyil Report - Blue Gakyil members Marsha Ellison and Robert Derr presented a three-part report which included a review of programs offered last year with attendance figures, a review of a survey of members who expressed preferences for programs in the coming year and proposed plans to invite two teachers from outside the Dzogchen Community. The later issue resulted in conflicting opinions from members. Some members were strongly opposed to inviting outside teachers while others expressed the view that outside teachers can bring new energy to the community. After some extended respectful discussions the decision was made to postpone plans for outside teachers until after Yeshe Namkhai's May retreat in Merigar so that we might gain greater understanding about the direction and wishes of the International Dzogchen Community.

Red Gakyil Report - The Red Gakyil report was given by John LaFrance and David Hayes, Tsegyalgar's Caretaker. After reviewing the projects that were either fully or partially completed last year, the focus was on priorities for 2023. Listed as "Must-Do" projects were completing the painting of the schoolhouse and repairs to the base of the schoolhouse fire escape. A lot of lively discussion ensued about other priorities for 2023. Paving the road from the pond to the stupa and improving the water supply on Upper Khandroling are high priorities. Vern Harrington will seek estimates for paving the road on Upper Khandroling and the schoolhouse parking lot. There is enthusiasm for improving access to toilets near retreat cabins. Cindy Thibeau and Kathleen Fekete agreed to form a subcommittee to research compostable toilet options. There is also a lot of enthusiasm for exploring the possibility of building tent platforms around the Vajra Hall so that members can stay on the land during the Summer Sangha Celebration and Dance Dance Dance. Nancy Paris, Dominik Nlceva, Marit Cranmer and Gerry Steinberg agreed to form a subcommittee to research platforms, tents and possibly yurts. There is also interest in improving the roadway to the Mandarava Cabin and other projects including fixing the schoolhouse doors and removing trees that threaten the cabins. After receiving reports from subcommittees a fundraising strategy will be developed for the Retreat Lands.

Yellow Gakyil Report - Mark Alston-Follensbee presented the Yellow Gakyil report assisted by Domink Nicviea and Al Daggett online. Mark explained the time-consuming and tedious process that ensued as a result of theft from the community's checking account. The Yellow Gakyil spent hours and days over a period of months negotiating with the bank for the funds to be returned. With the help of the community's bookkeeper who identified all the missing funds, the bank finally restored all missing funds. As a result of the poor performance by the bank, the Yellow Gakyil has transferred all funds to other banks. Unfortunately final reports from the former bank were not available in time for the General Assembly and as a result the draft budget was not based on final P&L and balance sheets. It was agreed that another online meeting would be convened once a final budget is available. Mark also reported on the successful fundraising last year that has resulted in our paying off nearly half of the remaining schoolhouse loan and a new arrangement with Dzamlingar regarding the transfer/sharing of income from Tsegyalgar House. Dominik provided a detailed review of current membership and membership trends over the past few years. The good news is that membership seems to be stabilized around 230-250 members with slight increases in the number of Sustaining Members.

New Gakyil Election - A request for nominations to the Gakyil was disseminated prior to this meeting, yet no nominations were received. At the end of 2023 three of the five existing Gakyil members will end their terms. The Gakyil will continue to seek nominations.