

Donors are generous and loyal, says the treasurer of the Association Triten Norbutse

written by Jitka Polanská



Olivier Rousval met his master Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in 1999 in Cergy, a small village situated about twenty kilometres from Paris, where Rinpoche's teaching was then organized. For the past eight years, Olivier has been treasurer of the Association Triten Norbutse. We asked him about the origin and activities of the Association.

Before the turn of the century, Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche's French students used to spend a lot of time thinking about ways to support Bon in France, Europe and Nepal. It soon became apparent that a formal organization was needed to manage retreats and the connected financial flows.

L'Association Shenten Dargye Ling and l'Association Triten Norbutse were both created at the same year, 1999. The former to disseminate the teachings, the latter - l'Association Triten Norbutse - to support Triten Norbutse monastery, the headquarters of Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Initially, the Association Triten Norbutse helped to meet the living needs of the Triten Norbutse monastic community. In particular, it collected money for the little "monks". (Technically, the children who live at the monastery are not yet monks. They wear monastic robes, but they take their

monastic vows later, as teenagers). The support was conceived as a sponsorship for an individual child at first, but later, it was decided by the Association to contribute to the general budget dedicated to all the children instead.



The noticeboard in the main corridor of Shenten Dargye Ling dedicated to the activities supported by l' Association Triten Norbutse.

Gradually, the Association has extended its support to other areas. "We helped with building a new kitchen and we also helped students attending the medical school belonging to the monastery," Olivier recalls. "Also, after the 2015 earthquake, we helped the monastery to rebuild and repair some of its buildings that had been damaged by the disaster," he adds.

Among other initiatives, members of the Association organized a public crowdfunding a few years ago for a monk's urgent operation. Sufficient amount of money was quickly raised.

The Association has around twenty members who make monthly donations. Other people give occasionally. "We receive donations from practitioners all over the world. Many donors are very loyal and generous," says Olivier. "It's not so easy to send money to Nepal as an individual, so I think we're doing a good service to those who want to help the monastery. We have the infrastructure to do so," he explains.

The Association allocates the donated money to a specific project to which people wish to help. This might be living expenses of the monks, salaries of the nannies for the little "monks", or costs of the medical school and clinic that are part of the monastery. "When donors transfer money to us, they specify how they wish it to be used and this is respected," says Olivier.

In recent years and until now, the Association's main objective has been to help Triten Norbutse's abbot, Khenchen Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, with the construction of a new multi-purpose building

on the monastery grounds, informally called “the temple”. “This is a huge project and the covid pandemic has made it even more complicated and expensive,” says Olivier.

The building contains much more than a temple. At the top a new residence of H.E. Yongdzin Tenzin Namdak Rinpoche will be located. Just below numerous teaching and conference rooms have been built. The new, large temple is situated on the ground floor. In the first basement, more rooms have been created where monks and lay people will meet for various events. The second basement contains a kitchen and a refectory.

The construction of the “temple” is now complete, decoration and furnishings are currently underway. It will be presented to the public at the celebration of Yongdzin Rinpoche’s one hundred’s birthday scheduled for early February 2025. Like many other members of the sangha, Olivier is planning to travel to Tritten Norbutse for the celebration. It’s the first time he is going. “I’ve never been to Nepal, although I lived for three years in India, in Mumbai, working there for a large French company,” he says.

The Association informs sangha members continuously and as much as possible about the progress of the construction. The board is in contact with the monastery management and with Khenchen Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, who is the project leader. The Association publishes a newsletter and feeds its Facebook page, which is followed by 2 600 people.



Claire Mosser, Olivier Rousval, Anne Demarty at Shenten Dargye Ling, September 2024.

The Association is managed by a number of dedicated people: Claire Mosser, President; Dordje, Vice-President; Olivier Rousval, Treasurer; Anne Demarty, Assistant Treasurer; Isabelle Martinez, Secretary; and Cendrine Lecaplain, Assistant Secretary. “Serge Thauvin also comes to give us a

helping hand,” Olivier says. “Some of us, like Claire or Dordje, often go to Kathmandu, collect fresh news of the monastery’s projects and their progress, and they take photos. Donors want to know what is the result of their donations,” explains Olivier.

Photos: Jitka Polanska, l’Association Triten Norbutse