When I clean rooms and do laundry, I recite A KAR A ME, Cristela says

written by Jitka Polanská



Cristela Trujillo has been coming to Shenten since 2008 and everyone knows her magic hand. She is a karma yoga queen. When she became in charge of the laundry, sheets and towels stood in no time in perfect, one-color stacks and the place changed its vibes completely. And when she cleans rooms, as quick as wind, she purifies herself too.

I have been living in New York for quite some years. I do mainly housekeeping and baby-sitting. I have several jobs at a time, actually, to earn as much money as I can (she laughs). I came to the city when the owners of the store in Valle de Bravo, where I worked for a long time, had to close their business. There was nothing to do in Valle de Bravo and *narcos* began arriving in the area. I thought the time had come to go and try something different, somewhere else. I knew New York because I had lived there when I was young, with my husband and my little daughter. She was two-year old at that time. The marriage did not work well, and we decided to split up soon after. I moved back to Mexico, to Valle de Bravo because my mum is from there. I started to work there in a gym, as a spinning trainer, and in my spinning classes I met a nice lady. We became friends.

She was the owner of the store selling ethnic furniture. One day she asked me if I could take care of her business for two months because she was going on holiday abroad with her family. I said yes. The shop kept me busy only at weekends, while during weekdays I still worked at the gym. When she

came back, she offered me a steady job with her because she was happy with how I had managed. And sometime later, she invited me to join her for meditation in her friend´s house. Finally, one day she asked me if I wanted to go with her for a retreat. I said yes. Why not? It was a retreat dedicated to Red Garuda practice with Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, in 1999. I liked it, I felt very connected right away with the teacher and the teaching. Bon seemed to me like something close and familiar.

Since then I continued going to a retreat every year, and I went to group meditation with my friend every week. In 2008 the Mexican group of Bon followers invited me to come with them to Shenten. I did not feel like going. I had surgery to remove a cancer two months earlier and I was very weak. They insisted that I should come, and offered financial help. That year the teaching was about the healing practice of Yeshe Walmo. So I joined them.

When I saw Yongdzin Rinpoche for the first time, it was a shock. I felt fire in my chest. It was very touching. I remember me, during the teachings, leaning on the wall in the gompa, very weak, sitting still, my heart filled with this strong, special, emotion of awe. It was a kind of love for Yongdzin Rinpoche. I cannot explain in words what I feel each time I see him. And each time that I come to Shenten I feel his presence. When I see his photo, wherever I am, it is as if he is looking at me.

That time, when I came to Shenten, I also spoke with Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche, I told him about my illness, and he said: keep your practice of Red Garuda. I did not tell him about it, but he knew somehow.

When I was leaving Shenten for Mexico, I promised to myself: I have to come back, this must not be my last time here. But I continued having health issues and my condition did not allow me to come the following year. In 2010 I would have loved to come when His Holiness and Yongdzin Rinpoche were at Shenten together, but I had my second surgery. My Mexican friends all sent me photos from Shenten, and I followed events from a distance. I remember being happy.

I only came back to Shenten in 2013 and I felt immediately at home again. Each time I come to this place it feels like coming home. From then on, I came in 2015, and 2016… every year.

I always try to do something for the place, offer my help, mainly cleaning. To me it is like cleaning my house, and I really love cleaning a place where Yongdzin Rinpoche spent so much time. In 2017 organizers of the summer retreat asked me to take care of the laundry. It was my pleasure.



The laundry of Shenten has changed its vibes under Cristela´s magic hand. Shenten, August 2022.

In 2018 I decided to take a year off work and go to do a work retreat where I was needed. I saved money for that beforehand. First, I went to the center of Tenzin Wangyal Rinpoche, Serenity Ridge, in Virginia, and I met Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung Rinpoche there. He came to teach. From there I moved to Kathmandu and continued my karma yoga at the monastery. Finally, I arrived at Shenten. It was in April and there was nobody there, only Khenpo Gelek and Geshe Samten. Then, Yongdzin Rinpoche came. It was his last year at Shenten. I spent several months in Shenten in his presence, and it was a blessing. I saw him every day when he went out in the afternoon. When he passed by the laundry, going back, he would say “goodbye” to me. I was very lucky. I knew that his room was just above the laundry and I worked with joy in my heart.

In October of that year, Shenten organized a big ceremony of DUTRISU. I took part, and since then reciting A KAR A ME Du TRI SU is my constant practice. I clean and recite the mantra. I still have some health problems and I have to be careful. When my body tells me to stop, I have to take a rest. But my illness is in remission, and I am confident in my practice. In general, I have lots of energy and I like moving, working. I am very focused on what I do and I recite the mantra with it. This is meditation for me. While I am cleaning a room or doing laundry I purify myself.



Cristela: “In general, I have lots of energy and I like moving, working.” Shenten, August 2022.

Photos: Jitka Polanská