

Czech Dance Camp, summer 2004

The first ever Czech Dance Camp happened as planned. Sober words for a wonderful experience, shared with some 60 people, many of whom dancing for the first time.

As was to be expected, nothing really was as expected. The free tent didn't arrive and the army tent which replaced it was dark, leaking and too small to use. The workshop room in the old mill was actually too small for this size group. But who cares, we all had a marvellous time!

Almost with the start we reached the atmosphere needed for this kind of camp. With Nasrudin and his stories & children's Dances present at every Pow Wow, we grew quickly as a sangha, sharing dances, food, joy and comforting each other.

The last evening the Czech people surprised us with a Dance on a real Czech Mantra. Yes, they understand what it's all about.

We were fortunate to have Barbara with us as voice teacher and Dance teacher of the Dances of Universal Peace. All loved her and her teaching was strong, consistent, spiritual and joyful throughout. We gladly invited Fateah Saunders, a Dance teacher for the UK and paying participant to the camp, into the team.

For Lida, the only Czech Dance teacher to this moment, this was the first experience to be on staff in a camp. With the mixed sessions in the evenings and the feedback sessions every morning, in which many Czech participated, we managed to give the camp a Czech feeling. Next year we plan to give Lida more space, so she can grow in experience.

With daily staff meetings and shared sessions in the evenings we were able to transmit much of our experience in running a camp and using the dances to generate, support and sustain and steer the energy of the camp. Barbara gladly took on the job to elaborate on music skill, filling holes that we talked about before and that cannot be filled during Dance sessions.

Our goals and objectives were to broaden the Dance Family in the Czech Republic and make Dances available for more people; to do additional training by offering feedback sessions, so more people will be drawn into leading the Dances; to deepen the awareness of the Dances by relating them to every day life; to have fun and joy, while eating, dancing and praying together; to make SAM a living reality in the Czech Republic; to start creating a Dance 'sangha' in the Czech Republic and to empower the staff.

That's quite a mouthful, but we set to the task with full optimism. By recruiting an all Czech organising staff, we made sure that Lida will use her expertise (she's a wonderful organiser) but doesn't have to carry the whole load of the Camp. We trusted in the end a team will emerge, so the Czech Republic isn't solely the responsibility of the one certified teacher.

The camp was being organised with very little support from our side. After this year we hope to be able to be no more or less than the artistic/spiritual staff, leaving all earthly matters to the Czech People.

All felt the sangha as a living reality, SAM did become alive, we experienced depth and joy, ate together and did feedback session every morning, enabling many participants to lead a first ever Dance and even a second. On request Wali took on a guitar class.

Many Czechs at the end of the Camp were enthused to deepen their commitment to the dances and some have committed themselves to join us in the Estonian Winter Retreat.

Lessons learned

1. The spot was wonderful: an original German watermill, now owned by Dutch people, close to the German border. German participant Ernesto, now living in the Czech Republic expressed how healing this camp has been and can be in future for the karmically damaged relationship between the Germans and Czech.
2. The Camp was a good initiative and will help the Czech Republic to grow into a dance region.

3. The combination with Voice work worked very well, as Barbara Svetina has a keen interest in the Dances as well and is an accomplished Dance teacher in her own right, mixing the Dances with Circle dances and Voice work into her own unique blend.
4. Next year same team, same place, same time.

Feedback

Renée Grüning:

I was in the first Czech camp for the Dances of Universal Peace. It was my first camp too, and I've learned a lot of things. There were many dances and songs that were new to me. I had my first experience in teaching a dance to others, and I would say that it tasted like I will do more. I picked up a lot of knowledge about how to teach dances, like different styles of teaching, do's and don't's, how to communicate with the group and the musicians. Most of all I learned, by experiencing it, how music and dance unites people in a very fast and easy way. There were people from several countries, among them Czech and German people, and there was really some healing going on between them.

So after the camp I decided I will learn how to teach the dances, and I asked Wim and Ariëne to be my mentors.

Pavel:

Dear Ariëne and Wali,

I am writing to you from Czech Republic, I am calling the week in Tunechody to my mind again. It was great there, after that week several things have started and something re-born in my life.

With Dana we are preparing ourselves to lead little dance groups in Prague. I acquire knowledge of accompanying dances with guitar. At first I played in natural tuning, but now I mainly play in normal tuning.

At the end I would like to say, what I forgot to tell during the sharing last day in Tunechody: the highlight for me of week in Tunechody is what Wali said once in the morning: the heart can be pure inside as well as strong in this world. The closeness of this possibility, the touch of this reality, it enriched me best. So, thank you again.