

Cat's story

I would like to share a story with you in the hope that it will bring clarity and answer some questions you may have about this project. Questions like: 'Why are that lot involved in this project anyway?' 'What on earth have they been doing?' and 'Why aren't we hearing more about what's going on?' It may also answer how this all started.

Who knows where the story really starts but I have to start it somewhere so we will go to August 2019. Some seeds had been germinating for a while following the Level 6 Teacher Training and I was feeling more and more strongly that I truly wanted to live in a REN XUE way - to uplift myself and make the most benefit in the world that I could. I was feeling a strong urge to try to help address issues I could see in the world. My children were growing older and I dearly wanted to offer them a bright and hopeful future, and teach them skills that would serve them in the uncertain future which may await them.

At a retreat run by my friend and local teacher, Natalie Meijer, I made a list of all the things I was doing in my life. I made a list of what I wanted to be doing in my life. I made a list of my life goals. It was so clear that I needed to not just make some changes to alter the path but to make a U-turn and leave the path to forge something new. I had a strong heart-felt impulse to change my life and start to truly live the REN XUE teachings I value so highly. I wanted to live with others who also wanted to live this way - in true harmony; a place where my children could grow up surrounded by a nourishing natural environment with positive values and a strong, supportive community. A place where people were all working to uplift their lives and those of others. Wow!

Impossible? During my experiences on REN XUE retreats, I realised that in a strong REN XUE Qifield this is truly possible and my heart sang with joy when I visualised this.

The feeling of responsibility to make a difference in the world was strengthened when I was given a generous financial gift by my father - an early inheritance. He worked all his life building up a business which turned out to be very successful. This gift was given to me with full trust and no obligation. When we received this gift, both my husband, James, and I knew we wanted to use this to do good things. We treated it in a REN XUE way. Before making any financial decisions our key consideration how it could benefit us and also benefit others. We saw ourselves as kaitiaki (guardians) of the money and our role was just to try to choose as wisely as possible how to benefit others most.

We also sought guidance from trusted friends and advisors on how best to use this money. One of those was Dorrie. She just asked me what my real heartfelt wish was to do with the money. I told her about my vision for a REN XUE centre and community. She was excited! She advised me to tell Melissa and Yuan Tze. Well that was a bit scary! But I mustered up my courage to send that email and was so touched by the gratitude, humility and excitement that met my idea. My heart continued to sing.

Have you ever been in situations where everything just falls into place? So you know you are on the right track? This is one of those stories.

Yuan Tze and Melissa arranged for an online chat with me. I have to tell you I was pretty nervous. I mean, we all know he is a lovely person but he is still Yuan Tze who sits at the front of the room and speaks wisely! But I nervously got through that first meeting and felt rather overwhelmed by the whole thing. It was quite an awesome thing to be speaking about this with them and seeing that this dream may really become something real. I was smiling to myself after signing off from the chat and feeling very radiant when I had a text from James (my husband who was over in Golden Bay that night working on the piece of land we had bought a couple of years back). He said 'Your conversation with Yuan Tze must have been pretty powerful because someone has just approached me to tell me some land may be coming up for sale and that they would love to see it used for something that would benefit the environment and the community!'

The next step was to work with Trina as she brought that vital link to the bigger picture of the REN XUE organisation. We needed a team that would bring complementary skills and knowledge to get this dream started. Natalie seemed a natural choice. Not only was she formative in the birth of the dream at her retreat but she and her husband Stephan (who is an architect) have managed the purchase of land and set up a successful community eco-village. In the early stages, we also had some guidance from Dorrie and Norberto, as well as checking in regularly with Yuan Tze and Melissa. Our next team member was Leslie who had been helping RXI with strategic planning. As an archeologist, she really has the ability to see the bigger picture!

At the time we made the announcement at the November 2019 retreat I was unable to share where the donation had come from in order to respect family wishes and would still appreciate discretion around this. The sharing of this information now comes from a desire to be truly open and honest, and for another reason which will become clearer at the end of the story.

In January 2020 our group gathered for a dreaming and visioning session where we brought together all the wonderful sharing Leslie had received in

her Dreamcatcher role. We met in Golden Bay and also walked around near the farm that we had been told about to get a feel for the place. As you will see from the photos it is beautiful. But how could we be sure that it would fulfil the needs of the community both locally and more widespread? We started a process of discussion and information gathering from planners, council, lawyers and people with experience of this type of project, as well as research around other similar projects. Luckily we had a solid vision from Yuan Tze to guide our search and our approach was to stay as open as possible to any opportunity which might present.

Another positive step was taken when Ollie Clifton agreed to step onto the planning team. In the last few weeks, he has agreed to take the role of Project Coordinator and we are very honoured to have his skills and wisdom. He will be taking a key role in the next steps of the project.

So, finally, at the start of July 2020 myself, James, Natalie and Stephan were able to visit the land for the first time. It was beautiful! Sea views, lush green fields, surrounded by national park. Plenty of space and potential. Yes - we had some green lights.

We also took the time to research other options nationwide casting our net over the whole country to look for real estate that might offer a comparable option in terms of cost of land, proximity to urban areas and existing buildings. As we went through this process, we realised that, although other places might tick some boxes, they missed a vital piece. There was no one living in the area to hold the role of relationship with land, community and council. The support of the local community in these ventures is key, as is the passion of those holding the project so we saw that the proximity of where James and I are living - close to the proposed site - is actually a key part in the success of the project.

Now it was time to get a vital green light - Yuan Tze's approval!! We organised a visit for 31st July with Yuan Tze and Melissa. This time we brought along two other special visitors. Jackie Blunt had contacted us to say that her husband Steve - an agronomist and farming specialist - could come and give us his professional feedback on the potential of the land for farming and food production.

It is hard to put into words how that day was. Expansive. Mystical. Beautiful. Qi-filled! As we wandered around the land, looking at potentials for sites and possibilities, Yuan Tze would often draw us to a spot and remind us to be quiet and just feel. I felt like it was letting the land talk to us in its own language. Aren't we lucky to have the input of someone who can truly be guided by the language of the universe and to learn to do this too?

The final part of this story is a special and tender part of my heart, which I would like to share with you. On the day that Yuan Tze, Melissa, Jackie, Steve, Natalie, James and I went to visit the land, I was thinking often of my father and my mother and that it was their generous giving that was making this possible. My heart was full of gratitude.

In the evening following the land visit I was doing a Di Yuan practice. With my arms in a circle at lower Dantian, I felt I was holding a baby - something had been born and it was so beautiful - full of gentleness, peace, trust and openness. There was a huge feeling of joy and full acceptance. I thought of my father that night again before I went to sleep with gratitude and a huge sense of forgiveness and peace came. I presumed that it was the effect of spending a day in the presence of Yuan Tze!

The next morning I had news that my dad had passed away suddenly - it would have been around the time of that Friday evening in NZ.

My heart is so strongly connected with this project in ways that I don't pretend to understand. Although I am not attached to where the land is and have remained open to any opportunities that present, the presence of my heart in this place and all that has happened to connect me to it, as well as Yuan Tze's full support and enthusiasm of it's potential, is enough for me to feel full trust in this process. The team of people who have joined around me have supported this process fully, gently guiding and allowing the wisdom of the universe to take a guiding role - the key is learning how to listen!!

I hope that this has been helpful and can join our hearts together in the most harmonious way so we can work together to bring light and wisdom into our lives and to the world in the way that is most authentic to each of us.