

# THE MIRROR

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The Life and Works of  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu





Above: Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1997 being welcomed to Ralung monastery where ASIA worked to rebuild the Study College and sponsor the monks.

Front cover: The area close to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's birthplace, Geug, a small village previously part of the kingdom of Derge, in Kham, Eastern Tibet.

Back cover: The Great Stupa at Merigar, Italy, at the end of September 2019. Photo by Laila Reiss.

# Celebrating the Life of a Great Dzogchen Master

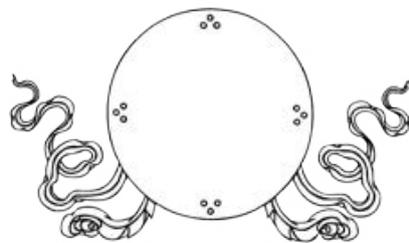
September 27th, 2019 marked the year from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's passing at Merigar West, Italy, where our Master established the first Dzogchen Community Gar in 1981. It seems fitting that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transitioned from his physical existence while at Merigar West, since Italy had become Rinpoche's second home, and therefore logical that the first Gar be established in Italy, and that Rinpoche chose to leave his physical body at this place so imbued with his powerful intention and energy and surrounded by the profound love and devotion of his family and students.

One of the last generation of great teachers born and educated in Tibet, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu brought his great knowledge and experience of Ati Dzogpa Chenpo to the West to numerous students around the globe, giving rise to the creation of the International Dzogchen Community not only in Italy, but also with centers in the USA, South America, Europe, Russia, China and Australia. On many occasions his expressed his wish that the Teachings he transmitted not remain simply an object in a museum, but be integrated into the lives of the individuals following them.

Rinpoche's boundless energy also expressed itself in his lifelong and groundbreaking research into the history of Tibet and Shang Shung as several of his publications attest to. He also spent much of his life working in different ways to promote Tibetan language and culture at a time in history in which they are so much at risk.

In addition to his enlightened activities as a spiritual master and world-renowned scholar, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's knowledge and expertise in traditional Tibetan medicine helped him to encourage knowledge and study of Tibetan medicine through conferences and the founding of an international school of Tibetan medicine.

Rinpoche's knowledge of Tibetan language and literature was without parallel and he was responsible for the translation into English and other languages of countless texts on Dzogchen.



His compassion was without limits as shown by his establishing ASIA, a charity and non-governmental organization, originally to help the situation of Tibetan refugees and then extended to assist the populations of Asia with post-emergency, reconstruction and income-generating development projects.

All those whose lives were touched by his presence as a spiritual teacher, an academic, a doctor, a professor, a friend will recall not only his great knowledge but his warmth, his sense of humor and his infinite kindness.

At Merigar once again, this past September 27, 2019, and the days that followed, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's students gathered from around the globe to spend a few days in practice and activities to celebrate his extraordinary life and legacy, as a teacher and academic. All the events were webcast around the world and each Gar, local center and individual were able to find their own way to honor Rinpoche.

This issue of *The Mirror* is dedicated to our beloved Master's life and work, which are of gigantic proportions. We present a timeline and photos that chronologically display the breadth and depth of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as professor, scholar, Dzogchen Master and man of peace. ©

*The Mirror Staff*  
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Photo by Ralf Pluschke

## Ati Yoga Teaching Retreat

Part one of day two of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Ati Yoga Teaching at Dzamling Gar, December 29, 2017. Part two of day one was published in the last issue of *The Mirror*, no. 144. Rinpoche gives an explanation of the principle teachings of the Buddha, which are related to the Three Gates or Three Existences of all sentient beings: body, speech and mind.

**G**ood day for everybody and everywhere. We start with our practice of the Ati Guruyoga.

In general we know very well that the teaching of the Buddha, the teaching of all enlightened beings, is for *all* sentient beings. We understand that intellectually, but practically not. If there is a teaching, it seems that this teaching is only for spiritual people. "All sentient beings", does not mean spiritual people only. For example, most people work and think about how to live. If we all become spiritual people or live in monasteries, then what do we eat, how do we live? Therefore the teaching for everybody means that we need to integrate the sense of the teaching, otherwise it doesn't correspond.

When Buddha explained the teaching, first of all he explained how the three existences of the individual are. Those existences are not limited only to human beings, but to any kind of sentient

being that possesses body, speech and mind. We live with these three existences, so we need to know how to deal with these three existences with the teaching. First of all, everyone is familiar with the aspect of the body. We immediately discover problems like illness or pain, but our existence is not only the body. There is also energy. The condition of energy is more difficult to discover or understand, and still more complicated and difficult is our mind. These three existences are interdependent. For example, if we have some problems on the physical level, to overcome them we need to understand how the problem is related with our energy. Also we need to understand how energy is related with our mind - judging, thinking, etc. Then if there are some problems, this understanding helps us to overcome all these problems.

The first thing that Buddha taught was The Four Noble Truths. In The Four Noble Truths, the first thing Buddha explained was suffering. We have so many different kinds of suffering. We not only have the suffering of the physical body, but also the energy level and still worse, the suffering of the mind. No one likes suffering, but we do not know how to overcome it. For example, we know we have some problems, but we do not know how to overcome them. Our idea is that one day, after struggling and fighting with those problems, we will win and no longer have these problems. It is true that we always think in that way; Buddha showed us that this is the not correct way to think. Buddha said, for example, even if you struggle all your life with suffering, you will never win.

You will never win because suffering is a fruit, an effect of something that we did. So if we want to change or modify something, we must discover the cause. If we think well, it is not so very difficult to understand. For example, if you go to a doctor when you have some illness, the doctor studied medicine and knows very well how to analyze your illness, so the first questions the doctor will ask you are what did you do yesterday, what did you eat and drink? So that means the doctor is researching the cause. You have this problem of illness as an effect of the cause. So instead of struggling with that problem, we try to understand the cause.

Buddha explained that 2000 years ago. And his students learned and understood. But not all sentient beings know that. So, still today we are doing the same way as we did in ancient times. When we have some problems in a country, for example, you know very well what we do. We struggle and fight and we have a revolution. What does revolution mean? Revolution means you change something without knowing the cause, you fight with what you see in front of you. If we learned what Buddha taught since the beginning, we can have much benefit. But in a practical way we do not know how to apply that.

Ordinary people don't know this so they don't apply this understanding in that way. Also, protagonists of the teachings, practitioners, for example, many people are struggling. We know we don't like to have suffering, so what should we do? We try to discover the cause. Then Buddha explained The Second Noble Truth, which says to learn how to change or modify the cause. That means we discover the cause and apply a method to stop it.

Most people, even if they understand the cause, they do not have sufficient capacity to stop it. A good example is when people say, "Oh, I understand when I drink or smoke too much, it is very bad



for my health.” So they know there is an effect that manifests in their condition and they have the idea to stop. There are so many people that cannot stop smoking or drinking. The omniscient Buddha knows this, so people who have no capacity take a vow. When you take a vow in an important moment, at an important place and with an important teacher, then you think the vow becomes very dangerous to break. In that way some people can overcome these problems.

We can understand why vows exist and why people take them. So, for example, the principle for a Dzogchen practitioner is not to take a vow, but relatively, if it is necessary, for example, we must be present and know how our real condition is. So in the time of Buddha Shakyamuni, for most people who followed the teaching of the Buddha, like Hinayana, the basic principle was to take vows. So, it is not a kind of Buddhist system, but it is related with the condition of the individual.

You see, in the time of Buddha Shakyamuni the teaching of Mahayana also developed. It is not always indispensable to take a vow in Mahayana. Of course, many practitioners take vows and apply them. The principle is not the vow, the Mahayana principle is the training. Training means that when you have no capacity, you train and you construct that capacity. Not everybody has the capacity to control themselves. So, if you have the possibility and need to take a vow you can, but it is not necessary. But in most of our traditions, particularly in Buddhist Sutra style, even if they are practicing Mahayana and Vajrayana, they give too much importance to the receiving of vows.

I told you many times, for example, about some of my students when they went to receive an initiation in Rome. An important lama invited the students and this lama was giving an initiation. When the students arrived they needed to ask to receive that initiation. The organizers, the Westerners who invited that teacher, asked my students if they had received a refuge vow. My students said they had not. They thought they had not because I was giving Dzogchen teachings, and even if I know very well and explained the meaning of refuge so that they could understand the sense of refuge, I did not give a vow. Of course they said that I never gave the vow and they never received it. So, then the organizers told them they could not receive the teaching. First they must receive a refuge vow and then later they can receive this initiation. This is the higher level in the Vajrayana system. For receiving the higher-level teaching you basically need to have a vow as the base. They told my students that if they waited, when the teacher was finished, he could give them a refuge vow. Then the next time there was an initiation they could participate and receive it. My students didn't stay and they arrived back and told me the story. I felt a little bad because this was something that was also my fault because I never explained, for example, that in the Dzogchen teaching it is not indispensable to receive a refuge vow.

This is a good example of how people see and think. They think a vow is very important. A vow is important if you have no capacity. First if you discover that you have no capacity, you try to do some training for constructing the Mahayana system. If you do not have even this capacity, then you take vows. In the Hinayana Vinaya system there are many different kinds of vows. For example, we say

Nacig Chodpa,<sup>1</sup> which means there is only one vow you can take for overcoming one problem. If you cannot stop drinking alcohol, for example you take only this vow. Then Naga Chodpa<sup>2</sup> is different and it means taking more than one vow. All people who take this kind of lower vow are called *genyen*. In Sanskrit it is called *upasaka*. That means they are taking only a few vows and they are paying respect to these vows and overcoming these kinds of problems. There are these vows Naga Chodpa or Nacig Chodpa, and then there are also superior vows when we become monks and nuns. Of course, there are so many rules, not only one. How did all these rules develop? In the time of the Buddha Shakyamuni, Buddha said there were certain activities not to be done. Then more and more rules arose, one by one; some are heavier and some are less heavy.

Particularly if you read and you study Vinaya, there are many explanations called *Drugde*.<sup>3</sup> This means there were six monks creating problems. Each time these monks were doing something strange, Shariputra, one of the best students of Buddha Shakyamuni, explained to Buddha and Buddha said, “Oh, they cannot do that.” So, basically when you are taking a vow then you know very well *Chomnga*<sup>4</sup> – the five rules that are the most important. If you apply these actions, then your vow is completely broken. The second heavier vow is called *Lhagma Chusum*,<sup>5</sup> there are also thirteen that are very heavy. Even if you did only one of these thirteen actions, you have not completely broken your vow but you should do purification.

Perfect monks should be in a monastery, because in a monastery there is a Sangha of monks and nuns. You should do purification each time there is a full moon and a new moon, two times a month at least. That is called *sojong*. So means if something is missing then you are adding. *Jong* means if you did something negative you are purifying that. Some Western monks and nuns are going to the East so they can receive vows of monks and nuns, and then they are returning and living ordinary lives. That is a wrong choice. If you want to be monks and nuns then you should be in the Sangha. Sangha means at least four monks or nuns together; this is called Sangha. Even if there are three monks or nuns, it is not a Sangha.

You should also receive a vow in the Vinaya system from the Sangha. In the Sangha there is one elder one called *neten*. When you first receive a vow, there are, for example, twenty questions or so. For example they ask, “Do you have some responsibility for your family?” You should say “no.” If you have some responsibility to your family you cannot receive a vow. There are so many of these kinds of questions. The *neten*, the older one, asks these questions. There are some three other monks, at least, who are listening and have understood; they have understood that this person does not have these conditions and can receive this vow. And when there is something a protagonist needs to ask or say, the older one is doing

» continued on the following page

1 *sna gcig spyod pa*: practice of only one precept.

2 *sna ga' spyod pa*: practice of few precepts.

3 *drug sde*: the group of six.

4 *bcoms lnga*: the five defeating vows.

5 *dge 'dun lhag ma bcu gsum*: it means that the ordination is totally destroyed, some remains.



» continued from previous page

that. But the older one is *not* becoming a Vajrayana teacher, he is only the oldest in the Sangha.

The vow is received from the Sangha. Also when you do purification you need at least four monks and nuns and then you can purify, otherwise it is not sufficient. So you see, we can understand that if you are monks and nuns in the Hinayana style you should be in a group of the Sangha. Otherwise it is better that you don't take this vow, because when you take this vow and you are not doing purification, for example, if you do not purify for one month, two months, three months, etc., these thirteen heavier actions become just like the first five. Then you are automatically breaking your vow. If you do not pay respect to the vow in a precise way, if you have broken it and you have not renounced the vow, it continues to develop and creates problems. If someone has studied Vinaya well, they understand.

For example, when I came from India to Italy with my friend a Gelugpa *geshe*, Geshe Lharampa Jampa Senge, a very high level *geshe*, a very studied one who knew Vinaya very well, at the beginning when we arrived we did not talk about these things, because he was a very studied Gelugpa. I also knew that he didn't like very much what I was doing. He always tried to control me. I knew that and I paid respect to him, but I did not discuss. After a little time passed, almost one year, we became friends, because he understood how my situation was, my way of seeing, etc., and that I did not have any competition with him. He had this competition with me from the beginning. Then he freed that.

He was very studied, particularly in Gelugpa logic. I also studied that Buddhist philosophy very well, but I never studied that logic. There is a book of the logic written by Sakya Pandita, which I studied. It is a Tsema Namdrel, (*tshad ma rnam ,grel, prmanavartika, Commentary on Valid Cognition by Chandrakirti*), a very famous book of logic. I never received that teaching. So, I saw that this *geshe* was very expert in this text. Then I asked him, "Can you teach me Tsema Namdrel, the text of the logic?" He said, "Yes, I am very happy to do that." We did not have so much work, so we were always studying. I studied the Tsema Namdrel. I was not really deeply interested in it, but I studied to know how it is. When I asked him some important points he said, "Oh, this argument is in Tsema Namdrel on this page in this line." He presented everything from the text of Tsema Namdrel.

So, I learned also a little Tsema Namdrel. And in the same way he became less limited. He said, "Oh, I never studied the grammatical system of the Tibetan very well, can you teach me?" Also he learned how to write Tibetan characters of *uchen*; to communicate and inform Western professors who needed to know *uchen*. They didn't know how to read and apply the cursive *ume*. I know *uchen* very well, also how to write and all the explanations one by one, all the words. So, we were exchanging; I taught him the grammatical system and he taught me logic. In this way, we slowly developed what we studied when we were talking. We spoke very much about Vinaya. I was not a monk, but I studied all the Vinaya two times. So I asked, "You are a monk, but you are not doing *sojong*, so how do you do then?" He told me, "Oh, please, don't tell me that!" He felt really afraid; he still felt like a monk. Then I said, "It is much better

you offer your vow and you live like a normal person. Otherwise you are accumulating all these problems day after day." He was a studied one, so he knew that very well. Later when Trichang Rinpoche, the younger teacher of the Dalai Lama, arrived, the Geshe offered his vow.

It was almost impossible for people to believe that Geshe Lharampa Jampa Senge was no longer a monk. The Tibetans who heard that news were very surprised. I was not surprised because I knew him very well. Later he became very happy. He got married and had a daughter who is grown up now. So that is an example of how Vinaya must be handled in that way. If you are applying all the rules of Mahayana, then you can do the training. From the beginning, when you take this kind of vow in Buddhist Mahayana, you are not saying, "I am taking this vow but I don't follow it, I only want to train." To train means you can apply the vow or not. If I apply vows, and I discover I cannot apply them, there is a cause, there are reasons I cannot apply them. So I discover the cause and reasons and work with them. This is the Mahayana system.

So, you see, there are many different kinds of vows. Buddha gave vows for people who have no capacity and in that way this Hinayana system developed. The difference between Mahayana and Hinayana is not only having vow or not, that is another question. The essence of the teaching is that Buddha said, "Everything is unreal." Unreal means emptiness and that there is no concrete existence. ❀

Transcribed by Anna Rose

Edited by Naomi Zeitz

Tibetan Language with the kind assistance of Elio Guarisco



## Training for New Editors

Dearest friends and supporters of the translation projects of the Shang Shung Institute Austria,

This is an information about our latest activity: the training for new editors in order to guarantee the continuation of the publishing of the teachings of our Master in the future.

This activity is a collaboration between the Ka-Ter Translation Project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria and Shang Shung Publications.

The new EDITORS are Experts, who are Diligent and dedicated to the teachings. The new candidates are participating in an Intensive training in order to become able to edit the Translations done by our main translators Adriano Clemente and Elio Guarisco of the Original texts of Rinpoche and other great masters.

As it is crucial that books published by Shang Shung Publications are worthy of their precious and unique content, it is necessary to meet high standards of editing. Due to the specialized nature of this work, Shang Sung Institute Austria in collaboration with the Shang Shung Publication already started with the online editor training program at the end of April 2019.

8 candidates were already chosen to become editors for English language, 4 were chosen for Italian language.

The training is held by the senior editors Nancy Simmons and Susan Schwarz for English editing, and Igor Legati for Italian editing.

The training will last for six months.

After this first six months training, two future editors for the English language and one for the Italian language will be selected to participate to the second phase of the training.

The 3 trainees selected will have the possibility to work as JUNIOR EDITORS to complete their training course.

Under the guidance of the senior editors they will collaborate to edit a book.

Here is the plan for the books they will work on, including the expected date of publication:

Books planned to be edited or translated in the training period	Editors training course June–Nov 2018	Editors training stage (6 months)	Publishing timing expectation
<b>English Editors Training</b>			
Enlightenment in the Palm of One's Hand	July–Dec 2019	Jan–June 2020	June 2020
The Flight of Garuda by Shabkar	July–Dec 2019	Jan–June 2020	June 2020
Adzom Druggpa's Advice for Dzogchen Practitioners (Los Angeles, May 2013)	July–Dec 2019	Jan–June 2020	Autumn 2019
Dzogchen Naslug Cherthong of Jigmed Lingpa (ChNN Commentary)	July–Dec 2019	Jan–June 2020	June 2020
<b>Italian Translators Training</b>			
The Secret Map of the Vajra Body	June–Nov 2019	Dec–May 2020	June 2020
Starting the Evolution	June–Nov 2019	Dec–May 2020	Summer 2019
Breathe as You Are	June–Nov 2019	Dec–May 2020	Summer 2019
Freedom from Attachment	June–Nov 2019	Dec–May 2020	June 2020
Khorwa Yedal	June–Nov 2019	Dec–May 2020	Jan 2020

The total budget for this so important activity is 25.000 Euro.

You can become a sponsor of one of the above listed books and your name will be published in this book.

Whatever amount to can donate is an extraordinary help and support for our work in order ensure the best quality of translation of the Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other great Masters done by our main translators Adriano and Elio, and to publish book in the best possible edited form. During the period of the training of the new editors, Adriano and Elio have continuously worked on the translation of various texts as described in my last mail in May 2019.

In order to be able to go ahead with our important work and activities we ask you to continue to support the Ka-Ter Translation Project.

You can also contribute and send your donation on a monthly basis.

Please send your donation to our bank account:

Account holder: Shang Shung Institute Austria

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or

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Thank you so much and very best wishes, Oliver Leick

Director of the Shang Shung Institute Austria

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## Surgery for Living

In the countries of the Himalayas where ASIA works, tackling disease is very distressing not only for the physical and psychological suffering that it brings, but also for the resulting financial problems, that are, at times, insurmountable.

In these countries, health care is not free but prohibitively expensive.

These areas are still characterized by a high prevalence of endemic diseases and a high maternal-infant mortality rate, where knowledge of basic health and hygiene standards is very poor, drinking water difficult to access and health facilities insufficient.

To cope with this situation ASIA intervenes in various ways: building hospitals and village clinics, training local health personnel, supporting traditional medicine, focusing on the diffusion of basic health and hygiene education and creating hygiene systems.

Another type of intervention in support of health that we have been pursuing for years is the **Surgery for Living Fund**, which allows us to **respond to the many requests for help we receive from sick people who need urgent care but cannot afford it**. Once the health and economic conditions of the person requesting it have been verified by our on-site teams, we **cover the costs of healthcare, hospitalization, surgery or medical treatment**, as the case may be, through this Fund.

For example, we helped Guamo Kyid, a girl who was burned using a kerosene stove and had to undergo numerous surgeries; Tashi Wangyal, a young student suffering from nephritis who underwent a kidney transplant; Karma Tseso, who fractured a femur during the Yushu earthquake. And like them, many other people who could not heal themselves and start living again.

Recently we have received another request from **Sonam Tso, a 30-year-old woman suffering from a severe and very rare form of rheumatoid arthritis**. Sonam has lived with this disease since she was 12 and requires periodic hospitalization and ex-



pensive medical treatment for which the family has had to borrow for years and is now in the greatest difficulty.

Sonam Tso was accompanied in her schooling, from primary to university, thanks to long-distance support and scholarships activated by ASIA, but was forced to interrupt her studies due to illness. **We do not want to abandon her now that our help is fundamental to her life.**

To help Sonam Tso and the other people who request it, we need to increase the Surgery for Living Fund.

To participate in the Fund you can donate by means of:

Bank transfer to ASIA Onlus  
IBAN: IT31L052160322500000013004  
Swift BIC: BPCVIT2S  
Paypal, Credit Card: <https://ASIA-ngo.org/en/what-you-can-do/donate/>  
Reason for payment: Surgery for Living

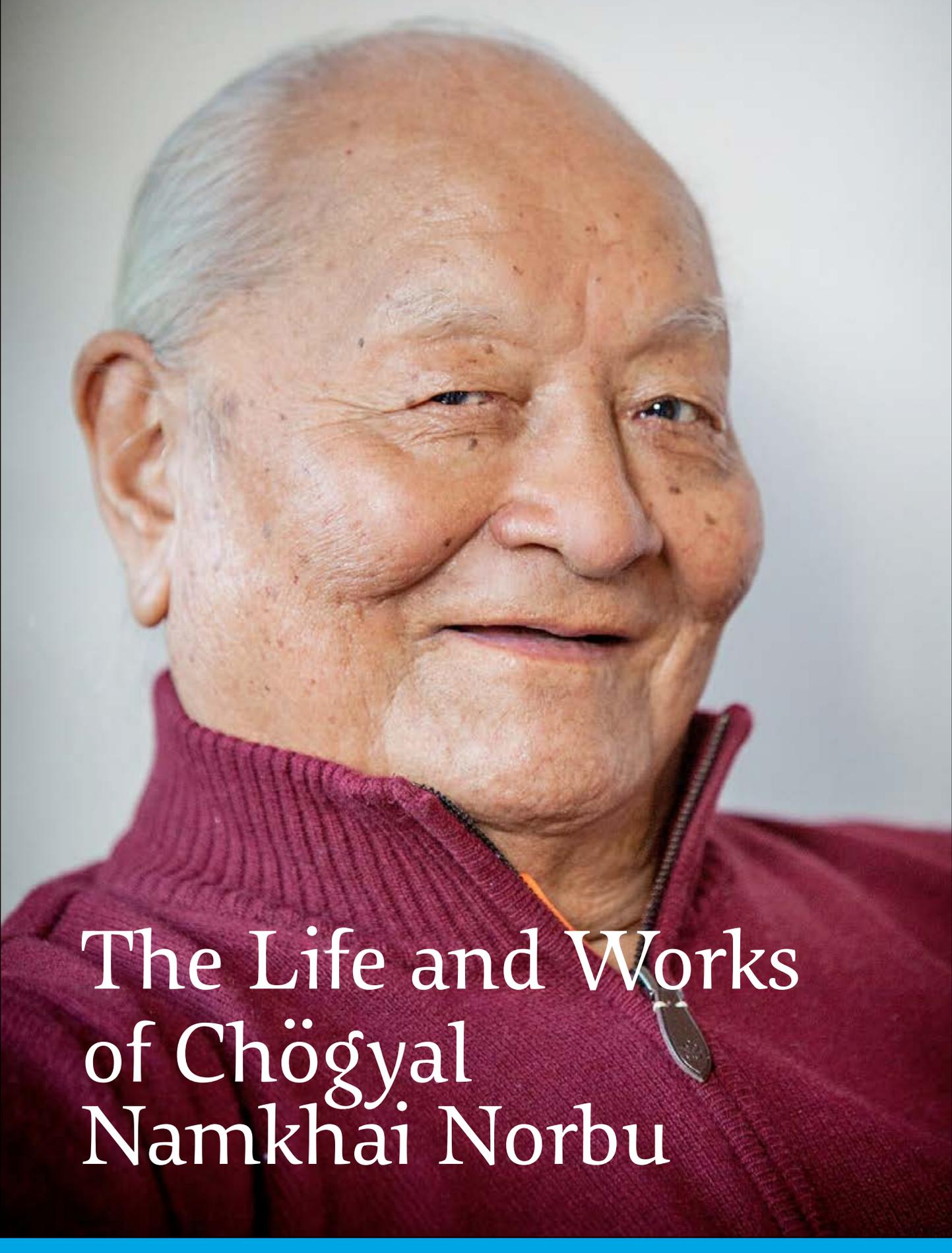
Health is one of the fundamental rights of a person, and acknowledges their dignity. We want to protect it and assure it to as many people as possible. ©

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A close-up portrait of an elderly man with thinning grey hair, looking slightly to the right with a gentle smile. He is wearing a maroon turtleneck sweater. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The entire image is framed by a blue border, with a decorative golden pattern at the top edge.

# The Life and Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Chögyal the Dharma King, Namkhai Norbu Jewel of All Space, was born a special person. He was not a common man. He brought from his past lives a great wealth of virtue, wisdom, and merits and transmitted authentic lineage treasures of Tibetan Buddhism, sharing genuine living teachings with very fortunate students in the modern world. He was highly learned in every aspect of Tibetan culture, history, and all academic subjects, as well as the holder of an inestimable heritage of Bön, Buddhist, and Dzogchen teachings. His great unique wisdom and skill was his knowledge in preserving these treasures in harmony and distinctly. He was such a wonderful warm-hearted person whose every aspect of life was selflessly dedicated for the highest benefit of others, bestowing from his heart the precious riches of his wisdom and care. I am so grateful for my connection with him and his Sangha born from his warm relationship with H. E. the Eighth Khamtul Rinpoche and H. E. Dorzong Rinpoche.

THE DZOGCHEN JEWEL OF THE SKY WILL BE ALIVE  
ALL THE WAY TO THE ERA OF BUDDHA MAITREYA.

A tribute to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu written by Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche, a Tibetan master and highly gifted artist of the Drugpa Kagyu tradition, invited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the 1990s to paint the figures of the primordial masters at the Temple of the Great Contemplation at Merigar.

## The Life and Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is one of the last great masters of Dzogchen to have been born and fully educated in Tibet, before the 1950s. He was soon recognized as a great, reincarnated lama. This short biography is divided in two parts: the first retraces his steps from his birth in the Tibetan autonomous region of Kham until his flight from Tibet to Sikkim, reporting also teachings and initiations he received from his Masters. The second part starts when he arrived in Italy in 1960, invited by Professor Giuseppe Tucci, the greatest Italian Orientalist of his time, to work at the IsMEO, now the Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient (IsIAO). In the 1970s Chögyal Namkhai Norbu began to give explanations of Dzogchen teachings to his first students. Interest soon became widespread and having received invitations from all continents, he began to travel and give more explanations throughout the world, founding the worldwide Dzogchen Community, whose main objective is to let the public know and develop an understanding of Dzogchen, as well as preserving Tibet's extraordinary cultural patrimony.

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Birth and Life in Tibet

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, one of the foremost masters of Dzogchen, belonged to the last generation of Tibetans to have been fully educated in Tibet. He was born on December 8th, 1938, the first boy after three sisters, in Geug, a small village inhabited by only seven families. Geug was part of the kingdom of Derge, in Kham, Eastern Tibet. His father, Tsewang Namgyal, of the Trokhe family, was a high government official. His mother, Yeshe Chödrön, was the sister of the Dzogchen Master Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug Rinpoche (1910–1960).

From the day of his birth, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was believed by the local people to be the reincarnation of Adzom Drugpa Drodul Pawo Dorje (1842–1924). This was due, among other things, to the fact that shortly before his passing away, Adzom Drugpa had donated to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's family some sacred objects symbolizing Body, Speech and Mind and many other personal belongings. The first one to recognize him as the reincarnation of Ad-

zom Drugpa was his paternal uncle Ugyen Tendzin. In 1940, the reincarnation was officially confirmed by the VI Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche and Palyul Karma Yangsid Rinpoche.

In late 1941, the king of Derge, Tsewang Duddul, presented him with the Rongpo Khang palace, in Derge Gonchen, inviting him to live there until his 20th birthday.

In 1943, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu started studying in Derge Gonchen, where he had a private tutor, and memorized several texts. That summer he went to the retreat place called Tsarashab, where his paternal uncle Togden Ugyen Tendzin was living in a retreat cave. Togden means "Endowed with Realization", and is a title accorded to highly realized yogis in Tibet. Here Chögyal Namkhai Norbu saw for the first time the practice of Yantra Yoga, a discipline combining breathing and movement, of which his uncle was a great master. At the end of the summer, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu went back to school, where he took an examination with very good results. He continued his studies, memorizing more texts, learning to paint and build mandalas with colored sands according to the Ngor system of the Sakyapa tradition.

» continued on the following page



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Kangkar Chökyi Senge, 1953.

» continued from previous page

In autumn of 1945 he went back to his family house, where he received the initiation and instructions of the Longchen Nyingthig from his uncle Togden Ugyen Tendzin. At the end of the year, he was recognized as the reincarnation of Jamyang Loter Wangpo by the Sakyapa head-lama Ngagwang Thutob Wangchug.

In autumn of the following year, 1946, his paternal grandmother, Lhundrub Tso, died in Wontod. To officiate at the funerary rituals, the family invited Khyenrab Chökyi Ödzer, head of Wontod college. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's maternal uncle, Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug, was also invited.

In 1947 Rinpoche went to Galenting, where he received teachings from both Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug and Kunga Palden (1878–1950). While his uncle Khyentse Rinpoche and Kunga Palden were doing a retreat in the dark, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu also did his first dark retreat, for a week. In spring, he started studying at Wontod College.

The following year, 1948, his younger brother Jamyang Phuntsog suddenly died, and to officiate the rituals Trungram Gya-

trul Rinpoche was invited, along with Negyab Rinpoche. After that, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu went to Negyab to receive initiations and Dzogchen teachings from Negyab Rinpoche. He also did a retreat of the Ngöndzog Gyalpo practice, passed an exam at the college and received the Ngöndro, or preliminary practices, of the Longchen Nyingthig.

In 1949 he completed the Ngöndro's five Bums. During the summer he went to Dzogchen Monastery to receive the initiations of the Guhyagarbha tantra and of the Chöd Dzinpa Randrol from the Khenpo of that monastery. He then went back to Wontod, where he received the initiation of the Gyudde Kuntu, the Collection of Sadhanas of the Sakyapas.

In 1950, the daughter of his elder sister, Jamcho, died of smallpox. To officiate at the rituals the family invited Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug. From him, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu received an initiation of Guru Tragpo. Then he went to Gakhog with his uncle and received various initiations and teachings from Khangsar Khen Rinpoche. After that, he and Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug went together to visit the Mahasiddha of Nalung, the Siddha of

Chamten and other masters. In the summer he went back to college.

From his uncle Khyentse Rinpoche he also received the Konchog Chidu and Guru Tragphur initiations, in Lhadrong monastery and Derge Gonchen respectively. In the autumn of that year he received the initiation of the Drubthab Kuntu from the college Khenpo. In winter, Kunga Palden died.

In 1951 he received the initiation of the Ati Sabdon and several other teachings and initiations from the college Khenpo, thereby beginning the study of the Four Tantras of Medicine and of Elemental and Zodiacal Astrology according to the Kalachakra system. During the summer he traveled to Dzachuka and other places, together with some monks. An account of this journey is found in his book *Journey Among the Tibetan Nomads* (LTWA, 1997).

In autumn, Khenpo Khyenrab Chökyi Ödzer advised Rinpoche to request teachings from the great woman master, Ayu Khandro Dorje Paldrön (1838–1953). So he first returned home, then set off towards Ayu Khandro's place, with his mother and one of his sisters. There he received teachings and initiations on the Khadro Sangdu, the Khadro Nyingthig, the Yantig Nagpo and others.

In the summer of the following year, 1952, he went to Galenting to help with the reconstruction of the temple, and then to Dzongsar, where he received the Lamdre from Khyentse Chökyi Lodro. In autumn he started a six-month retreat at Sengchen Namdrag.

In 1953, he received teachings and initiations from Gyurmed Dorje Rinpoche, Adzom Drugpa's son. Then he went to see his uncle Khyentse in his retreat cave, where, together with thirty or so other people, all packed into that small cave, he received the Nyingthig Yabzhi. In autumn, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and his uncle went to Tatsiendö, in the province of Sichuan, People's Republic of China, to attend a meeting convoked by the Chinese. He took the opportunity to visit the cities of Chengdu and Chongqing. He also accepted the invitation to teach Tibetan in Kangkar, in the region of Menyag. There he met Kangkar Rinpoche from whom he received instructions on the Six Yogas of Naropa and other Teachings.

From 1954 to 1955 he taught Tibetan language at the South-Western University for Minorities in Chengdu, and thus he had



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (center) with his family.



Geshe Jampel Senge and  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Sikkim, 1959.

the opportunity to perfect his Mandarin. But during the holidays he returned home, where he received from his uncle Khyentse Rinpoche the teachings of Thangyal Nyencho (a Chöd practice linked to Thangtong Gyalpo's oral transmission) and Lhalung Chagdor (Vajrapani). Also, with his sister Jamcho, he went to Dzogchen Monastery to receive the initiation of Tsogchen Dupa and others from Yabghen Ngawang Norbu.

In 1955 he taught Tibetan language for one month in Derge. In spring he went again to Tatsiendö. He was offered a new job, but he refused and returned to Tibet. During that year, he met Rigdzin Changchub Dorje (1826–1961), his main Dzogchen Master, or Root Master, who was also a Tibetan doctor, and stayed at his residence in Khamdogar for six months. From Changchub Dorje he received the authentic transmission and experiential knowledge of Dzogchen.

In 1956 he received initiations from Gala Khenpo, Khen Gonpo and Dzogchen Rinpoche. He went to Lhasa with his father, and then he left for a pilgrimage to sacred places in India, Nepal and Bhutan. At the end of autumn he returned to Derge, where political unrest had begun.

In 1957, while on his way to Lhasa with his family, he received teachings on the Chöd of the Surmang tradition from Khyache Chodgen. He also went in pilgrimage

to Samye and other Tibetan sacred places with his parents.

In 1958, he left Lhasa and went to live in Sikkim. He also began to study Sanskrit and Mongolian, and received teachings from Dudjom Rinpoche Yeshe Dorje. He did a personal retreat at Pema Yangtse monastery. At the end of autumn he went on pilgrimage to India.

In 1959, he tried to reach Tibet to help his family at a difficult time, but he wasn't able so he went back to Gangtok, where he started working as an author and chief editor of Tibetan textbooks for the Development Office of the Government of Sikkim. He never stopped trying to receive news of his family, but nobody seemed to know what had happened to them. Only many years later, when he had already been living in the Western world for several years, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to know that his father and brother had been imprisoned and died. His elder sister had also been imprisoned for three years.

As to his maternal uncle, Khyentse Chökyi Wangchug had been captured and put in the same prison with other two masters, Shechen Rabjam and Drukpa Kuchen. They were in different cells and couldn't talk or communicate between them in any way. But one morning, the guards found them dead in their cells, all three sitting in the meditation posture.

Also the XVI Gyalwa Karmapa, fleeing from Tibet, arrived in Sikkim, and in that period Chögyal Namkhai Norbu met him. He continued to study Sanskrit and learned a bit of Burmese. In the meantime, he received various and prestigious academic offers from different countries. Finally he accepted the invitation of the great Italian Orientalist, Prof. Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984), who in 1933, together with the Italian philosopher and Minister of Culture, Giovanni Gentile, had founded the Italian Institute for the Middle and Extreme Orient, IsMEO. Hence, at the end of the year Chögyal Namkhai Norbu went to Dharamsala, in India, to meet the Dalai Lama, then he left for Italy. ©

## Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Life and Work in the Western World

In Rome, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu worked for a time at the IsMEO, now the Italian Institute for Africa and the Orient (IsIAO). In cooperation with Geshe Jempel Senghe, he worked to establish and organize the Tibetan department, based on the large library of Tibetan texts created by Professor Tucci. The Rockefeller Foundation granted funds to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for his academic collaboration with Prof. Tucci.

From 1962 to 1992, he was professor of Tibetan and Mongolian Language and Literature at the Istituto Universitario Orientale di Napoli, now Università di Napoli L'Orientale, the same University where professor Tucci taught Chinese language. The "Orientale", established on April 7th, 1732 by Pope Clemente XII, is the oldest school of Sinology and Oriental Studies in Europe.

During that period, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu undertook extensive research into the historical origins of Tibet and Tibetan Culture, thoroughly investigating the indigenous Bön tradition and the monarchic age connected to the Shang Shung Kingdom. His books, which include works on history, medicine, astrology, Bön and folk traditions, are evidence of his profound knowledge of Tibetan culture and his commitment to preserving this ancient cultural heritage. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's many influential and profound works have given a concrete stimulus to the diffusion of Tibetan Tradition and Culture in the West.

## The Years at IsMEO and at the 'Orientale'

(1960–1992)

Giacomella Orofino

In 1960, when the very young Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche was in Darjeeling in Sikkim, Giuseppe Tucci was looking for two Tibetan scholars who could collaborate in the cataloging of the precious heritage of Tibetan manuscripts and xilographies kept at the Italian Institute for the Middle and Extreme East (IsMEO) of Rome. This unique and extraordinary collection of Tibetan texts had been brought to Rome by Giuseppe Tucci himself, following his numerous expeditions in Tibet, Nepal, Ladakh and Mustang, which took place from 1926 to 1954.

Luciano Petech, at that moment Professor of East Asian History at Sapienza University of Rome, went to Darjeeling to inquire about who could be the best Tibetan scholars to collaborate in the project for cataloging the texts retained at IsMEO. He

was referred to Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche, as an expert in extra-canonic literature, Dzog chen, Bön and folk heritages, and a Geshe from the Gelugs pa tradition, Jempel Senghe, as an expert in canonical literature.

The two left for Italy and since then they have not returned, if not occasionally, to their native land.



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with Phala Thupten Woenden and Jempel Sangyas.



Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984) second from the right.

For Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche a new life began in Rome, Italy, where he was able to study the Italian language and culture, learn about the Western academic world, starting with Giuseppe Tucci himself, and actively collaborate in the IsMEO Tibetan book collection catalog.

Perhaps not everyone knows that much of the information on the doctrines of the Tibetan philosophical schools, the folk and the Bön religions, along with all the drawings on ritual instruments and on the various types of *gtor ma*, contained in the famous book by Giuseppe Tucci, *The Religions of Tibet*, are the work of Namkhai Norbu. Together with Tucci, he also edited another important publication on Tibetan folk songs (*Tibetan Folk Songs from Gyantse and Western Tibet*).

His work of cataloging the "Giuseppe Tucci" Fund lasted three years and despite having little recognition from IsMEO it was a very important work.

Soon, however, in 1963 he moved to the "Oriental" University of Naples which was then called the "Istituto Universitario Orientale", where he was invited to hold courses in Tibetan Language and Literature and

Mongolian Languages and Literatures. He taught in Naples University, as an Associate Professor, until 1992 when he decided to retire ahead of time, because his commitment as a Dzog chen Master had become very demanding.

As a University Professor he is still remembered for the great following that his lessons at the Orientale had, especially in the 70s and 80s. In addition to teaching Tibetan and Mongolian languages and literatures, in his thirty-year academic career he focused his research primarily on the history of the Dzog chen tradition. His publications on the Dun Huang manuscripts are significant, to which he added his research on indigenous Tibetan culture, on Bön, on medicine, on astrology etc. His numerous studies on the ancient history of Tibet, original and rich with interesting and profound insights, have been the object of great attention, especially in the Tibetan world for which Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche became one of the most important intellectual figures of the last decades, universally considered an enlightened forerunner of contemporary Tibetan academies' historical research. ©



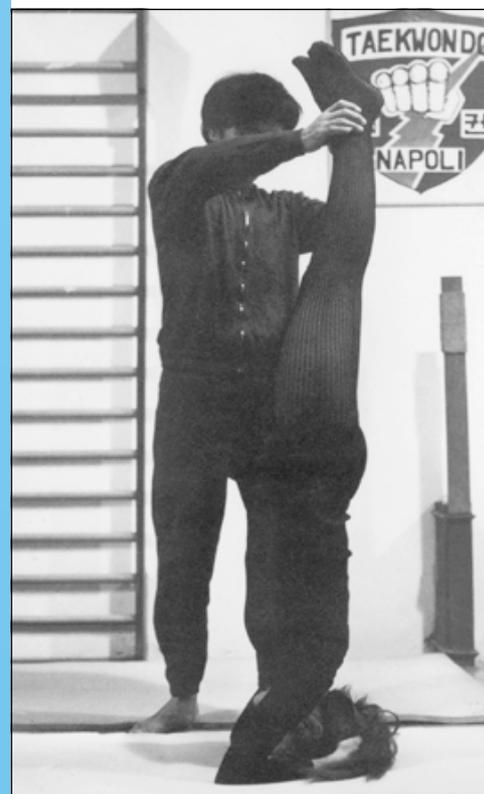
Chogyal Namkhai Norbu's house in Gaiola near Naples.

In 1968, Rinpoche started a family and acquired Italian citizenship.

In 1971 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu began to teach Yantra Yoga, an ancient form of Tibetan Yoga combining movement, breathing and visualization. The Yantra Yoga System of Vairocana, based on the text *The union of the sun and the moon* and one of the oldest systems of Tibetan Yoga, dating from the eighth century, had been transmitted to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by his uncle, the yogin Togden Ugyen Tendzin, and by other masters in Tibet. The principal aim of Yantra Yoga is to harmonize one's energy so that the mind relaxes and finds its authentic balance, which is the basis for getting into the state of contemplation.



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with Prof. Lionello Lanciotti, (Professor of Chinese Studies) (left) and at the very end on the right, Prof. Luciano Petech.



**In** 1975, during the official visit of the XVI Karmapa and the Karma Kagyu delegation, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had a private audience with Pope Paul VI in which occasion the Pope showed great respect and kindness.

In 1976, on the request of people from diverse social and cultural backgrounds, Rinpoche started to give Dzogchen teachings to a small group of Italian students, with whom he later founded the Dzogchen Community. To make them understand the correct pronunciation of Tibetan terms, he developed a special transcription system. At that time Dzogchen was hardly known in the West and he was the first to transmit this teaching in a way that made it accessible to Western students amid the conditions of modern society.



H.H. the 16th Karmapa and a Karma Kagyüd delegation with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Akong Rinpoche, and Freda Bredi, received by His Holiness Pope Paul VI in 1975.



**In** 1978 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, accompanied by some assistants, traveled to India and Nepal to collect films and interviews with experts in traditional Tibetan medicine, making the documentary 'Arura' for RAI (the national public broadcasting company of Italy).

**He** also began teaching Tibetan Medicine and Astrology during various seminars in Naples and Rome at the IsMEO.

Filming of "Arura" in Boudhanath, Kathmandu, in 1978. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Trogawa Rinpoche, a famous Tibetan doctor. Courtesy of A. Dell'Angelo

**In** 1980 the search for land in Italy suitable for becoming the seat of the growing Dzogchen Community began and the following year Chögyal Namkhai Norbu established the first "Gar" in the International Dzogchen Community in the hills of Tuscany, Italy – Merigar. Its name and its principle was based on Nyagla Gar, or Khamdogar as it is known today, the place of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's root master, Changchub Dorje.

Changchub Dorje was known as a doctor with extraordinary capacities and Khamdogar, where he lived with his fam-

ily and disciples, was a community based on the collaboration of them all. The Gar was not a closed hermitage but open to everyone with a well-defined function in the local community. This was the model on which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu chose to lay the foundations and principles of the International Dzogchen Community which has gradually grown to currently include eleven Gars spread over various continents of our globe – Europe, China, the Americas and Australia. Each Gar is the hub of a network of smaller centers called Lings and meeting points in the towns and cit-

ies forming a great Mandala that unites the different geographical areas of the world.

There are no hierarchical relationships among the different Gars but more a relationship of collaboration and cooperation. Since Merigar was the first Gar, it has become a symbol or a model for the other Gars. For example, the Temple of the Great Liberation that was constructed there in 1991 according to the vision and idea of Rinpoche has become a model for other meditation halls at the different Gars of the Dzogchen Community.

# Merigar is the Source of all the Gars of the Community

From The Mirror issue 115, March/April 2012

*"...Merigar is the source of all the Gars of the Community, all over the world, Merigar is the first, where the Community was born... After that, new Gars and Lings have arisen, all over the world, but everything started here."* (Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, July 2011 during a picnic at Gadeling, the Master's residence at Merigar West)

The search for the first permanent place for the Community started in 1980 in Italy, and after visiting sites all over the country, the following year Rinpoche's students took him to Mt. Amiata in the south of Tuscany, where Merigar is today. There were several auspicious signs on their arrival, and when underground steam jets were discovered under the earth (from ancient volcanic activity), Rinpoche gave the place the Tibetan name 'Merigar', 'the place of the energy of the fire mountain'. The first Gar was established.

The main house had been abandoned for years, had no electricity, running water, toilets or telephone and conditions there were very tough. With very little money available, Rinpoche and his students worked shoulder to shoulder with pickaxes and shovels, in the spirit and to the tune of the Merigar song – "There is no way of being in Merigar without working! It is really not that easy to be here – kali kapore".

The summer of 1982 the first retreat was held in a field of wild summer flowers and coloured butterflies under a large tent, and the small stupa, the symbol of the Gar, was built. Then at Christmas the first Gakyil and Gekö were nominated. Not wanting the Gar to be run by a hierarchical system Rinpoche set up the first Gakyil of three colours to serve the Community and be responsible for the continuation of the teaching and the Community, an organisational model which is the basis of the international Community today.

The Gönpa or the Temple of Great Liberation, the first of its kind, was constructed in the winter of 1989/90 based entirely



on the vision of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, down to the smallest detail in its form and decoration. The first teaching was given there in May 1990 by H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama, who had been invited by Rinpoche to inaugurate the founding of the Shang Shung International Institute of Tibetan Studies, which would later set up branches worldwide.

And so from these early beginnings more than 30 years ago, the abandoned farmhouse and the barren land on the 'Fire Mountain' has become a complex of beautiful buildings set in an extensive garden of flowers and tall trees. This rapid growth and change has created a number of buildings such as Serkhang, the Golden House, with the office, refectory, shop and accommodation for the Gekö or custodian; Zikhang, the 'capannone', which houses the library with an important collection of Ti-

betan texts, the reading room, the Mandala Hall for the Vajra Dance and the offices of the Shang Shung Institute. Midway between the Gonpa and Zikhang is the Great Stupa, a reliquary monument representing the Buddha's illumination and intended to promote well-being and prosperity in the surrounding area, officially inaugurated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1998. The small wood below the Gonpa has become a place for personal retreat with individual cabins, while the fields and hills of Merigar are now green with Tuscan cypresses, tall trees, flowering bushes and roses. ©



**Tsegyalgar**, the Gar of North America and the second international Gar after Merigar, was established in 1983 at Conway, Massachusetts, USA by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and since that time has come to be known as Tsegyalgar East.

The Dzogchen Community began at the Group House of the Gurudjieff community in Conway Massachusetts in 1982. Because many of the early practitioners were builders they were able to construct the first Dark Retreat Cabin in the international Community completed in 1985.

The Dzogchen Community of North America began to outgrow the "Group House" in Conway. One hundred and sixty-two acres of land in nearby Buckland was purchased in 1987, which became Khandroling, the Sacred Land of the Dakinis. Khandroling is where Rinpoche first began receiving a succession of images and sounds (*dream termas*) related to the Vajra Dance, where the first Vajra Dance Manda-



The Old Conway Grammar School.

la was painted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu himself, and now houses the only Universal Mandala in the international Dzogchen Community. The Old Conway Grammar School was purchased in 1993 and still

serves as the winter home for Tsegyalgar East and houses the Shang Shung Institute School of Tibetan Medicine.



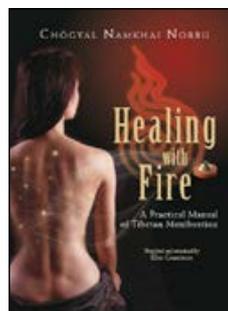
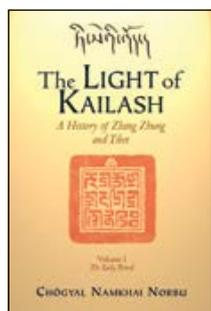
In 1983 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu coordinated the organization of the First International Congress on Tibetan Medicine, with distinguished Tibetan scholars living in the West, in the Tibetan Autonomous Region, and in China. The Congress was held at Ca' Foscari University in Venice and the Cini Foundation, Arcidosso.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with Dr. Trogawa Rinpoche (left) and Dr. Drolma Lobsan (right).

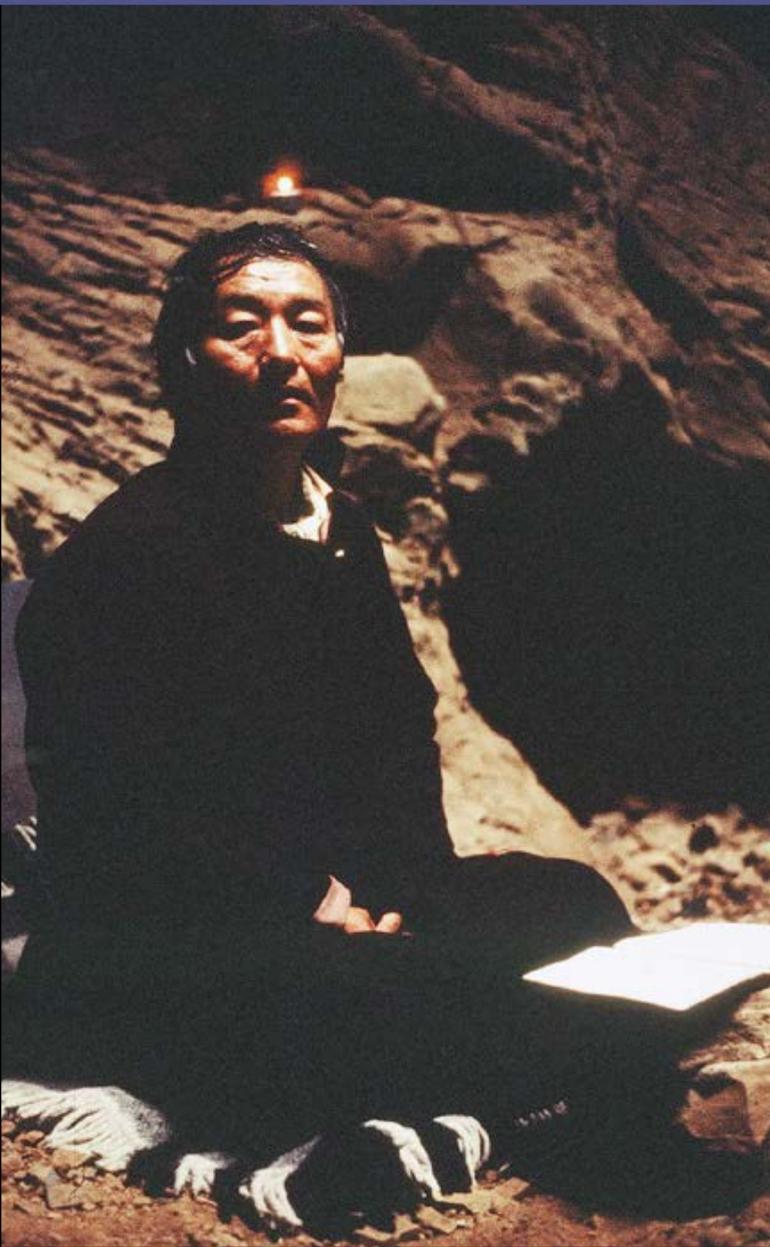


SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS

འགྲོ་མཚན་གྱི་ཡུལ་ལོ་

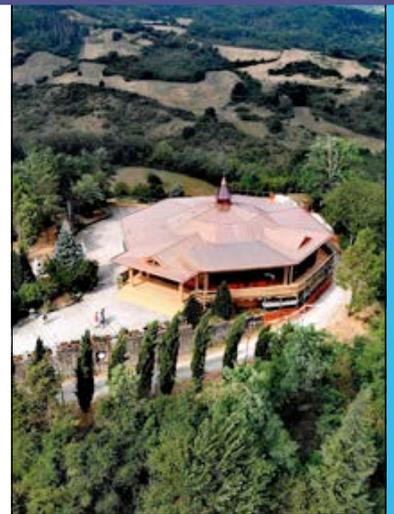


In the same year Shang Shung Publications was founded in Italy with the aim of publishing the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other masters belonging to the Tibetan Buddhist tradition, as well as translations of Tibetan texts on Total Perfection. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote and published more than 80 works translated into various languages, including books on Tibetan Buddhism, history, collections of poetry, biographies, and works on Tibetan culture and medicine. Some of his books, published in China, have also become a reference point for young people. *The Light of Kailash*, a magnum opus on the history of Tibet, is a groundbreaking work describing the earliest sources of the Tibetan civilization in the country of Shang Shung. *Healing with Fire* is the first ever manual of Tibetan moxibustion published in the West. *Yantra Yoga: Tibetan Yoga of Movement* is the first comprehensive presentation of an ancient method of Tibetan yoga as practiced for centuries in the Land of Snow.



**In** 1984 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu went on a pilgrimage to the holy place of Maratika, in Nepal, where he led a teaching and practice retreat. During this intense meditation retreat, he received indications for a long-life practice focused on the figure of Mandarava, which becomes of fundamental importance for him and for the Dzogchen Community.

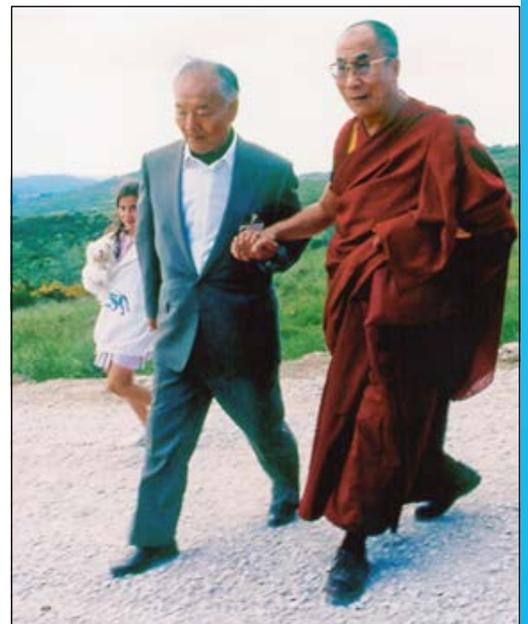
**In** the mid-eighties he also began to teach a corpus of very essential Dzogchen teachings, fruit of his profound spiritual experience, called Longsal, published today in ten volumes.



(left) A page from Rinpoche's hand written book describing the details of the decoration of the Gönpa.

**Around** this same period, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu began to plan the future Tibetan traditional temple (*Gönpa*) or Conference Hall of Merigar, conceiving and designing it in its entirety, from its octagonal shape to the smallest details of its decorations and iconography. The *Gönpa* is unique in the world for its particular form, its choice of building materials, and the symbols depicted in it. Constructed in wood, glass, and copper, it is octagonal in shape with each side corresponding to one of the eight directions of the *Mandala* (a symbol of interconnectedness and self-unity).

The *Temple of the Great Contemplation* was inaugurated by H.H. the 14th Dalai Lama in May 1990 while the paintings, inscriptions, and decorative motifs that adorn the temple were undertaken and completed in the immediately subsequent years. These deities, symbols, mantras, and floral designs were initially selected, described, and rendered in sketches by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in his manuscript *Merigar's Temple of the Great Liberation Through Seeing*; this text was used as a guide by the artists who came from Tibet



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Drugu Choegyul painting the Primordial Masters.

» continued from previous page and other lands to paint and embellish the temple.

The execution of the paintings, inscriptions, and decorations was mainly carried out in 1994. The painters for the interior panels notably included the renowned lama and artist Drugu Choegyul Rinpoche as well as Tsering Wangchuk and Sonam Palmo from Tashi Jong monastery in India (all three of Tibetan origin). Buryatian artists Batodalai Dugarov and his son Zorik Dugarov were in charge of carrying out and overseeing the decoration of the outside of the Gönpa. Many other skilled artists assisted.

**Chögyal** Namkhai Norbu's travels took him to Australia for the first time early in 1985 – the first retreat was near Mullumbimby, on the Far North Coast of New South Wales – with the intention of creating a Gar. It was ten years before that vision was realized. The land for Namgyalgar South was found in 1994 on the south coast of New South Wales and the inaugural retreat with Rinpoche was held over Xmas and New Year 1995/1996. Rinpoche also wished to establish a Gar in the Glasshouse Mountains on the Sunshine Coast and after much searching and some challenges Namgyalgar North was acquired in 2010. Due to the difficulty of maintaining two large Gars, Namgyalgar South was sold in 2015, and the northern Gar became Namgyalgar.

## Tribute to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from Namgyalgar

Rosemary Friend

**W**hat tremendous fortune our distant continent was about to experience! In 1986, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu first travelled to Australia from across the Pacific Ocean. In those days before internet, communication and movement seemed to be more measured. So, considering the vast distances of our wild continent, it was a considerable gathering of privileged folk who were first introduced to the concepts and experiences facilitated by this extraordinary Master.

While Rinpoche embodied a teaching beyond time and space, we are at a time, more than ever, when it is crucial to acknowledge the original guardians of these remote lands. From the beginning, with Maestro's generous regular visits, meetings with aboriginal elders were an important marker of the respect inherent within traditions of Knowledge.

Ten years and several retreats later, our community acquired beautiful land on the side of the sacred Gulaga mountain. Masses of love and mountains of applied presence and awareness later, Namgyalgar evolved into a deeply appreciated retreat facility for so many over the subsequent twenty years. Eventually another piece of land situated further north within the sacred Glasshouse Mountains of Tibrogargan (father), Beerwah (mother) and Coonoowrin (son) became the principal and sustaining base of Dzogchen activities in Australia and Oceania neighbours, including New Zealand.

Land, in the context of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, became a great teacher. We all discovered something in the journey of acquisition, working with creativity and generosity, discovering and experiencing without doubt the pure inner essential nature of our minds, relaxing, having fun and enjoying beyond limits, loving and grieving ... letting go.



While the beloved environment of land and its beings is a source of inspiration and memories, it is not the main point in this experience of Dzogchen ... discovering our real nature without doubt and continuing in the presence and awareness of our primordial potentiality. It is a useful and luxurious privilege to have a place as a base for collective experience. But it is the certainty of our essence that sustains us when we return to our individual places and life's circumstances.

It is impossible to measure the global and universal contribution of such a Master who privileged us with his devoted and unrelenting commitment to the evolution of humanity with all its associated realms of existence. All those who received and applied the experiential instructions are aware holders of the undeniable profound heritage that is already perfected and inherent in all of humanity.

Rinpoche offered introduction to knowledge in all paradigms – public lectures, university seminars, isolated retreats, city-based programs – with a variety of topics including Dzogchen knowledge, philosophy, healing arts, medicine, culture, visual arts, song, dance, yoga. The associated activities of the IDC (International Dzogchen Community), ASIA Onlus (Association for International Solidarity in Asia), SSI (Shang Shung Institute) and, more recently, ATIF (Atiyoga Foundation) continue to provide collaboration and integration activities ... enabling areas of need and opportunities for deepening knowledge.

Thank you, Maestro, for your deep and abiding loving presence that continues without interruption.



**In** August 1988 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, accompanied by some of his students, went on pilgrimage to the holy mountain Kailash. In September, he organized an expedition in search of traces of the ancient kingdom of Shang Shung in the Garuda valley (*khyung lung*), in the western part of the Tibetan plateau.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu with two of his sisters (on the right) visiting Ralung on the way to Mount Kailash in 1988.



**In** 1987 Rinpoche was invited to participate in the First Conference on Tibetan Language in Dharamsala, India.

**In** 1988 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is invited to participate in a conference on Tibetan Buddhism held in Bodhgaya and Sarnath, India, a gathering of all the main Tibetan masters of the time.

**In** 1988 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche founded A.S.I.A. ONLUS (Association for International Solidarity in Asia), an Italian Charity and Non-Governmental Organization recognized in 1999 by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In the 1990s ASIA's projects focused on Tibetan settlements in India, with the aim of improving the living conditions of refugees, later turning its attention to the vast areas in China with ethnic Tibetan inhabitants. After the Tsunami catastrophe in 2004, ASIA extended its area of intervention to Sri Lanka with post-emergency, reconstruction and income-generating development projects. Since 2009, bolstered by a decade of experience in the Himalayan region, the Association has started new projects in Nepal and forged contacts with the governments of Bhutan and of Outer Mongolia. Since 2016 ASIA extended its area of intervention in Myanmar and Mongolia.

## ASIA's Journey

Andrea Dell'Angelo



**A** SIA's journey began on 21 December 1988 in Rome, with the signing of a non-profit association agreement in the presence of a notary under the name ASSOCIATION FOR INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IN ASIA. A.S.I.A., with the aim of implementing cooperative activity in favor of developing populations on the Asian continent ... The signing of the deed was attended by Master Namkhai Norbu, then university professor at the 'Orientale' in Naples, and nine other founding members: Fabio Andrico, Giovanni Boni, Andrea and Enrico Dell'Angelo, Antonio Morgione, Giacomella Orofino, Gaetano Ruvolo, Leopoldo Sentinelli, and Giovanni Totino.

To understand what ASIA really is, when and how it was born, and what it represents today in the panorama of Italian cooperation, we obviously cannot be satisfied with official documents, but must travel backwards in space and time, until we reach Eastern Tibet in the first half of the twentieth century. Because its origins are inevitably intertwined with the birth and movements of its extraordinary founder, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, born in 1938 in Geu, a small village in the kingdom of Derge. When the political situation deteriorated, Namkhai Norbu moved to Lhasa with his family and then in 1958 went on pilgrimage to Sikkim. In Sikkim, the journey of Namkhai Norbu intertwined with that of a well-known Italian historian of Tibet and China, Professor Luciano Petech, sent on a mission to Asia by the famous Tibetologist Giuseppe Tucci to bring back two Tibetan scholars capable

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of cataloging the important collection of Tibetan books and manuscripts preserved in the IsMEO.

In 1961, the two scholars left for Italy, without knowing anything about our country. Namkhai Norbu's arrival in Italy was another reason for ASIA's journey to Asia. In 1976, aware of the growing interest in Buddhism in Italy, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu began to teach yoga and Dzogchen. In 1978, he went to India with an Italian troupe formed of Mario Maglietti, Andrea Sertoli, Andrea Dell'Angelo and Elio Rumma, and stayed with Tibetan refugees, with the aim of making some documentaries for Rai (Italian national broadcasting company).

Meanwhile in that same period, a new front opened in Bhutan for the Tibetans in exile. This small Himalayan country introduced heavy measures against the Lhotshampa, the Bhutanese population of Nepalese origin, which forced thousands of people to flee. In the mid-1980s, over one hundred thousand Tibetans were living in miserable conditions in refugee camps in India, Nepal or on the borders of Bhutan.

One day in 1986, Namkhai Norbu called me and asked me to help him carry out a project for the construction of a village to host a few hundred Tibetan refugee families in Nepal or northern India, in order to guarantee them a more dignified life and to preserve their culture. He looked at me

and asked if I was interested in following the implementation of the project. I still remember the amazement, the sense of inadequacy and loss that I felt at that moment. At that time I knew nothing about cooperation, my son Jampel had just been born, and I already had a demanding job to do, but, Namkhai Norbu was my Master, and I could not take his words lightly, nor back out.

In 1988, we went to Nepal to join Namkhai Norbu in Kathmandu, and after rejecting different areas of Nepal, we chose some land for the village in Dehradun, in northern India. To carry out the project, there was a need for funds and a recognized association that would be able to collect them and use them in a transparent way. Law number 49 in 1987, which governs co-

operation with developing countries, had recently come into operation and would back up the plan.

One day we went to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and presented him with the proposal for the establishment of the organization. We discussed with him the details of the statute and the terms of the mandate, which was extended to all the countries of Asia, in particular those of the Himalayan area. Together with the Maestro, we chose the acronym A.S.I.A., for the Association for International Solidarity in Asia. After many years of hectic groundwork, the real journey of A.S.I.A. in Asia had begun and continues without interruption to carry forward the Mission and Vision of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the world. ©

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu meeting Tibetan refugees from Derghe, his hometown, to discuss finding land for ASIA's first project of building a Tibetan village, 1988. Courtesy of A. Dell'Angelo



**In** November 1989, after Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's first Dzogchen retreat in Argentina, he established the Dzogchen Community there. The land was bought in 1990 in El Durazno, at the foot of the Los Gigantes mountain range in central Argentina, and the same year Rinpoche led the first retreat on the Song of the Vajra at the new Tashigar Sur.

The retreats were held under the trees at that time, and only later a temporary Gönpa was built, that would become a beautiful Gönpa, with two Dance Mandalas. A dark retreat cabin was also built, a dining area and a guesthouse. From 1997, some practitioners started to build their personal houses or cabins for retreats in a specific big area of the land now called "Tashigar Mandala."



**Thanks** to the untiring energy of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and to the interest of the members of the Dzogchen Community and of eminent scholars of Tibetan culture, the International Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies was created in 1989 (registered as Shang Shung Foundation in January 2015). The aim of the Institute was to deepen knowledge and understanding of Tibetan cultural traditions in their religious, historical, philosophical, artistic, medical and social aspects in order to contribute to the survival and preservation of this culture. Rinpoche was the founder and president of the Institute. After the founding of the Shang-Shung Institute in Italy, other branches of the Institute were created in the USA (1994), Austria (2000), and Russia. In particular the School of Tibetan Medicine was established in the USA and Russia.



The Shang Shung Institute was inaugurated by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama in 1990 at the Association's European center in Arcidosso, the Temple of Great Contemplation. Guests of honor included the local authorities, the chancellors of the universities of Rome and Naples, the president of ISMEO, and many other professors, including ethnologist and Orientalist Fosco

Maraini as well as many European artists. The meeting, with the participation of the local authorities and thousands of people not all of whom were interested in a spiritual path, was an example of the harmonic dialogue with people of different cultures and spirituality that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu pursued throughout his life.

**In** the summer of 1990, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu visited Tsegylgar, where he did a one-month personal retreat on the land now called Khandroling. Rinpoche had already had a dream about the Vajra Dance during his retreat at Khandroling the previous year. During his personal retreat in 1990, Rinpoche received, in many dreams of clarity, instructions on several of the Vajra Dances. At Khandroling Rinpoche himself painted the first mandala on a wooden platform.

In September 1990, Rinpoche returned to Italy and during the September retreat guided students in painting a mandala for the Vajra Dance and studied the details of the steps while explaining the dance to several of his students. Since 1991 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu has taught four different Vajra dances, each dance with its own specific characteristics.



Rinpoche dancing with Prima Mai, Fabio Andrico and Bodhi Krause in Hawaii in the very early days of the Vajra Dance.



# THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the International Dzogchen Community

In the same year The Mirror newspaper was established at Merigar as the 'International Newspaper of the Dzogchen Community Inspired by the Teachings of and under the Spiritual Guidance of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu'. The editors were Hamid Assem and John Shane assisted by several editorial assistants. The function of The Mirror was to bring the Dzogchen Community closer together, to present projects and initiatives put into action by local Communities, and to make the newspaper truly reflect all the colors of the Community's rainbow-like spectrum.

In 1992 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presented his program of study and practice called *Santi Maha Sangha*, which literally means 'Dzogchen Community' in the ancient language of Oddiyana, to the international Dzogchen Community. Its goal was to train practitioners so they are able to attain a real, in-depth knowledge of the Dzogchen teachings based on personal experience.

On many occasions, Rinpoche said that it was his sincere wish for all his students to study the base of the Santi Maha Sangha. He considered it a valuable foundation for every one, irrespective of their age, culture or their experience of the Dzogchen teachings.

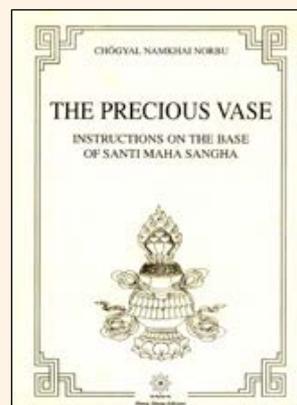
## The Precious Vase of Instructions

Donatella Rossi

The Teachings given by Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in the Merigar Gönpa during the Easter 1992 Retreat centered on a text he set down this year. Its full Tibetan title, Santi Maha Sangha'i rMang gZhi'i Khrid, Rin Chen jBun bZang, can be translated as *The Precious Vase of Instructions relating to the Base of Santi Maha Sangha*. Some years ago Rinpoche composed *Santi Maha Sangha* (meaning *The Dzog-chen Community*). This text presents in an extremely condensed form the various stages that need to be understood and applied by a practitioner interested in realising the Great Perfection Teaching, and in developing the capacity to transmit it correctly and completely to other beings. The instructions Rinpoche gave during the Retreat refer to the initial aspect of this: the *Base*. In order to give a complete overview of the sense of the Dzogchen Teaching – and above all to nurture and develop an inner understanding of this Teaching – the text first deals with topics related to fundamental concepts such as the Four Noble Truths, Compassion, Bodhicitta, correct attitude, morality and so on. It is necessary to study the theory or view illustrated in the texts of the three series of Dzogchen, as well as that expressed in the Sutra and the various classifications of Tantra so as to gain a proper understanding of the approaches related to the different traditions...

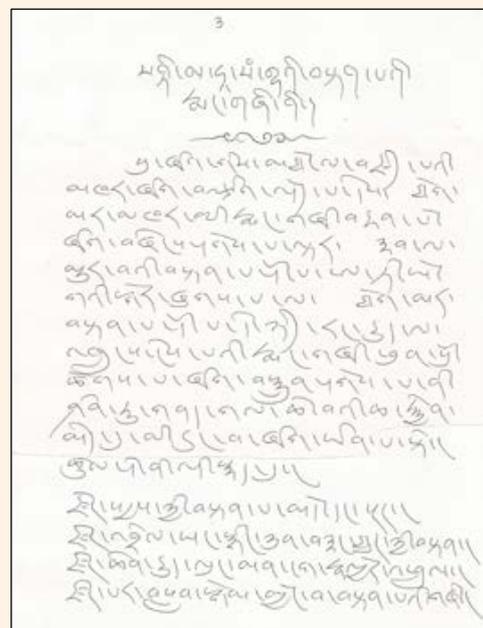
Those who wish to commit themselves in this way will study the texts and practise precisely in order to gain concrete knowledge. If, after this preparation, they concretely show Rinpoche that they have the necessary requirements, they can then commit themselves to the next stage: the first level of Santi Maha Sangha.

The original text of the instruction regarding the Base comprises roughly four hundred pages of hand-written Tibetan script. It is full of specific quotations, and it clearly describes not only the mental trainings and techniques to be applied, but also the different concepts underlying Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen. During the retreat, Rinpoche translated it concisely in its essence. He also let us know that he has



finished writing the text on the *first level* as well as part of the second. With his untiring kindness, Rinpoche has taped a literal translation of the text on the Basis – more than 130 hours of tape. Several people have collaborated on the transcription which is well on its way to being completed and printed. In good time, an annotated translation will be written. ©

Republished from The Mirror issue 15, May–June 1992



"If someone wants to build a tall house, first that person has to think about the foundation. It is the same to follow a Teaching like Atiyoga, which is very deep and a very fast way to realization. First of all, one must build a very solid base, so that the knowledge of the true condition of the individual can arise."

First page of *Santi Maha Sangha* by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.



In the same year, 1992, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu set up and participated in the Second International Conference on Tibetan Language, August 30 to September 4, held at the University of Siena and the Town of Arcidosso in partnership and with the patronage of UNESCO, UNICEF, the European Parliament, the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the University of Siena, ISMEO, Region of Tuscany, Province of Grosseto and the town of Arcidosso. The

conference was attended by Western Tibetologists and eminent Tibetan linguists and represented an opportunity for exchange among Tibetan scholars, some of them residing in the West.

As academic conferences go, the Tibetan Language Seminar was something rather special. For one, it was the first time that scholars living outside Tibet had had the chance to sit down and discuss the situation of their language with colleagues from within Tibet. The first edition of the Seminar was held in India in 1987, but sadly, no Tibetans coming from Tibet itself had been on hand to speak. Now, thanks to the organization of Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and the Shang Shung Institute, it was finally possible for Tibetans from all parts to gather, describe the differing situations of the language, and put forward concrete suggestions for its protection and continuation.

During the summer of that year the Italian film director Bernardo Bertolucci came to Rinpoche's residence in Tuscany to discuss the director's ideas for the film *Little Buddha*. Bertolucci later remembered the event with these words: "I went to see Namkhai Norbu in his house in Arcidosso, on the slopes of Monte Amiata, and after this meeting I began to develop the screenplay for the film".

## "Little Buddha"

Bernardo Bertolucci's inner quest

Fulvio Rossi

At the end of the 80's, the Italian film director Bernardo Bertolucci decided to direct a film about Buddhism entitled "The Little Buddha". The film was intended for all audiences but especially for children. He loved to define it as: "A film for children-adults and adults-children".

He then asked his dear friend Paolo Brunatto, a great author of documentaries and docu-fiction, to arrange a meeting with our Precious Master Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche in order to inform him about the screenplay and request suggestions on some focal points, such as the issue of reincarnation. Paolo Brunatto was already shooting his "Perché Buddha" (Why Buddha), a documentary on Bertolucci's own



Bertolucci and Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Gadeling.

movie, which was sold in eleven different countries. Paolo requested our precious Master to meet with Bernardo Bertolucci and also asked permission to film excerpts of their conversation. With great generosity, Rinpoche agreed and the date was set.

The first meeting took place one September afternoon at the small wooden

house in the Merigar forest where the Master had been in personal retreat for several days. Together with several other gifts, Bernardo brought a bottle of white wine produced by his Emilian family vineyards. Our beloved Master had it opened and invited Bernardo and Paolo to enjoy it, thus

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immediately putting at ease Bertolucci who was slightly tense, given the importance of the meeting. The conversation was serene and entertaining, as it was always the case with Rinpoche.

The meeting with Bernardo and the filming of the first part of the conversation were arranged for the next morning. The meeting lasted about three hours, at the end of which Bertolucci was enthusiastic and decided to review some parts of the script.

It was never explicitly declared but after the meeting with our Precious Master, an encounter was set up with His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso who received Bernardo Bertolucci, the producer Jeremy Thomas, and Paolo Brunatto (who filmed the beginning and part of the conversation). Bertolucci told His Holiness about the meeting with Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche and how impressed he was by his personality and the conversation. His Holiness smiled and replied: "I know, I know..." ©



In that same year, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu started to visit Russia. The number of people interested in the Dzogchen teaching was so huge that Rinpoche decided to open a new Gar there. It took several years and a great deal of help from the international Dzogchen Community to collect money; meanwhile a group of enthusiasts was looking for suitable land. In autumn 1998 they found a former children's holiday center 70 km from Moscow, in a very beautiful place, with 12 hectares of pine forest, several buildings, a big canteen and all utility systems. The new Gar received the name of Kunsangar from Rinpoche (to become Kunsangar North in 2010) – the Gar of Great Perfection and served as the Gar for all former USSR countries and for all of Eastern Europe.



The first retreat with Rinpoche took place at Kunsangar in July 1999 – it was the first presentation of the Longde teaching, and there were about 1200 people from all over Russia and the ex-USSR.

In 1995 Rinpoche was made an honorary citizen of the Town of Arcidosso, Italy.

Over a three year period, 1995–1998, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu conceived, organized and oversaw the creation of the Great Stupa at Merigar. A stupa is a sacred monument symbolically promoting the peace, welfare, and prosperity of the place where it is built. The construction of the stupa was primarily funded with contributions from the local population. Guests of honor at the inauguration in 1998 included the provincial councillor for Culture, the Prefect, the Mayor and the Arcidosso councillor for Culture.



On June 15, 1996 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu lays the first stone in the presence of the Arcidosso Mayor and the Prefect.

**At** the end of 1998 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu initiated a project to develop a center linked to Tashigar Sur in Argentina, but in the northern part of South America, on the Caribbean coast close to an airport. In March 2002 the Community purchased 30 hectares of land and the local authorities approved the construction of 34 houses together with an agricultural project involving the planting of 10 hectares of aloe vera. The land came with a house, a large barn, two wells and two large water tanks.

In February 2002 Rinpoche opened Tashigar North with the first Teachers Training and afterwards transmitted for the first time the Longsal teachings. People came from all over the world and it was a particularly special moment because although there was no proper Gönpa, no money, and no Gakyil, everything manifested spontaneously in a very serene atmosphere. The Gönpa was eventually con-



Signing the contract for the purchase of Tashigar North.

structed to hold about 300 people and later expanded to double the capacity and allow for the building of a permanent Mandala.

Some people changed their whole lives and moved there from far away to be the anchors of a residential community

Due to the current political situation in Venezuela, Tashigar North is undergoing a period of great difficulty.



**Over** the last weekend in May 1999, the Merigar Dzogchen Community was the venue for the Vesak celebrations held on the anniversary of the Buddha's birth, awakening and *parinirvana*. The opening speech was given by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. The event was organized in collaboration with the Italian Buddhist Union and participants included both monks and nuns, as well as lay people from the Vajrayana, Zen, Theravada and Chan traditions. The theme of the meeting was entitled, "Monks, nuns and lay people on the Buddhist Path". During the warm sunny May weekend The Temple of Great Liberation or the Great Flower was host to more than three hundred-fifty Buddhists, both lay people and monks from all parts of Italy.



**In** July 2001 the 20th anniversary of Merigar was celebrated and recognized by local political authorities for its vital contribution to the socio-cultural development of the Amiata region and the dissemination of cosmopolitan values. The opening ceremony took place in the Gönpa where Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave the introductory speech followed by the Mayor of Arcidosso who spoke about the growing friendship and collaboration that had been established between the Community and the territory over the years.

**In** 2000 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu inaugurated the exhibition "The Celestial Treasure. The Tibetan Art of Medicine", at the Museo Nazionale Etnografico L. Pigorini (L. Pigorini National Ethnographic Museum) in Rome, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. During the exhibition a cycle of seminars were held by Tibetan and Western doctors to discuss the relationship between traditional Tibetan medicine and conventional medicine. They also tried to confront the issue of sanitary development in Tibet.

WEB  CAST

**In** 2000, the teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu began to be transmitted online, with a system that was perfected over the years.

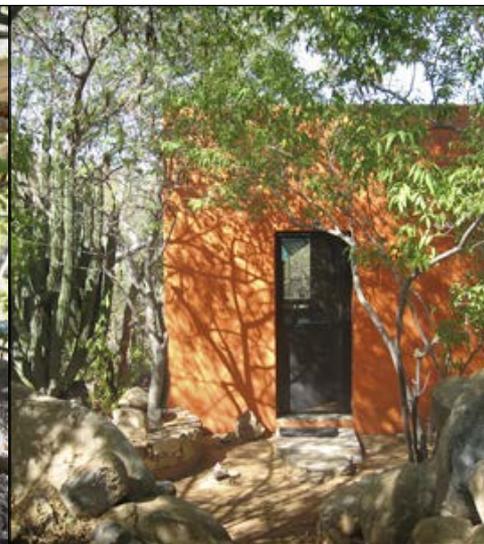
Since then his teachings and lectures have been able to reach thousands of people even remotely by webcast, with a record of 4331 active connections reached on December 28, 2017.



**In** 2002 the activities of the Ka-ter project began. The project funds the translation into Western languages of the most important texts of Dzogchen and the translation project of the complete works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Since 2003, the Ka-ter has organized Tibetan Translation Training every year.

In 2003 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu held a conference at the Pigorini Museum in Rome on the subject of a Development Education project to inform the public about Tibetan culture and the critical problems it is facing. Through the reconstruction of the daily life habitats of nomads, a photographic exhibition and a cycle of seminars, the event aimed at spreading knowledge about the culture of the nomads and drawing attention to the problems related to the survival of a unique ecosystem and an extraordinary civilization, with particular reference to the problems of selecting the type of development that could be envisaged for these regions and the role that could be played by international cooperation.

**Tsegylgar** West was moved to a warmer climate in sunny Baja, California, Mexico in 2003 at the request of Rinpoche after interrupted beginnings in Northern California beginning in 1979. The 3,000 acres of beautiful and wild land, donated to the Dzogchen Community, with natural springs and granite boulders, has a rustic retreat center. There are 14 casitas available for sleeping and a nice camping area with bathhouses. Many good spots exist in the natural environment for personal retreat. In addition there is a Vajra Dance Mandala platform with a thatched palm roof, a communal kitchen for group retreats, solar electricity, a big open courtyard and many hiking trails.



The project to found a Gar in Crimea started in 2004 on Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's second visit to the area when he said that the Dzogchen Community should have a Gar there. However, it was only five years later, at the end of 2009 that 35 hectares of land in a nice mountain valley were bought and immediately construction work started.

The Gar's real birthday can be considered May 27th, 2010, when Khyentse Yeshe and a group of students laid the precious vase, made and empowered by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, in the foundation of the Gönpa. A few months later, in summer 2010, almost a thousand people came to Kunsangar South for Rinpoche's teaching. It took place in a very large white round tent, supported by the concrete pillars of the future Gönpa. By 2012 the Gönpa was completely finished, decorated, and inaugurated by Rinpoche.



In 2006 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu celebrated the 25th Anniversary of Merigar in the presence of the local political authorities who thanked him for contributing to the development and wellbeing of the Amiata area and for the spreading of cosmopolitan values. Their addresses demonstrated a growing understanding and sense of solidarity between people of the surrounding area and the Community and a mutually beneficial relationship. They also reflected the increasing awareness of the stature of Merigar as an international center.



The First Graduating Class 2009 of the Tibetan Medical School, Shang Shung Institute, USA in Xining.

For some time Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had had the idea of establishing a Tibetan Medical school in the West. Beginning in the fall of 2005, the US branch of Shang-Shung Institute began a newly designed four-year program under the direction of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo that closely parallels the training of a traditional Tibetan physician. The core of Shang Shung's Tibetan medicine program was based on the book *rYud bzhi (gyud-zhi)*, the major teaching and clinical reference in all Tibetan medical schools. Today there are also active branches of the School of Tibetan Medicine in both Russia and Spain.



After 25 years of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's continuous teaching, the Dzogchen Community had grown rapidly and there was a need for a new center in order to serve the growing interest in his teachings in East Europe and Russia.

A place was pointed out that could possibly work well for both – in Romania, close to the summer resorts of the Black Sea coast, and not far from the Bulgarian border. Fabio Andrico came to see the land that was to become Merigar East situated in a vast expanse of sunflower fields where there was more sky than earth and the decision was made quickly. The land was bought in November 2006 and hosted the very first retreat the next summer with almost 600 people.





Chogyal Namkhai Norbu giving a public talk, *Knowledge of Our Real Condition*, at the University of Beijing, 2015.

**Interest** in the Master's works and public talks was also starting to grow rapidly in China in this period although none of his works had been translated into Chinese yet. As his works gradually began to be translated and his talks webcast through China a community of practitioners was created there in 2008, increasing rapidly with the many webcasts of his teachings around the world. With the acquisition of land in Yichun, Jiangxi province, a center that would take the name of Ati Yoga Center was constructed and inaugurated during Chogyal Namkhai Norbu's visit there, the first in mainland China.

**The** following year, 2009, back in Europe Rinpoche presented the Italian version of the first volume of his trilogy *The Light of Kailash: A History of Zhang Zhung and Tibet* at Sapienza University. This is one of the major works on Tibetan history by Chogyal Namkhai Norbu, which reconsiders the issue of the true origins of Tibetan culture. The following year he presented the English version at SOAS University of London and in May 2013 at the Rubin Museum of Art in New York.



**In** 2008, Prof. Chogyal Namkhai Norbu's nomination qualified him as a Nobel Peace Prize candidate.

**In** 2010 Rinpoche was made an honorary citizen of Tanti, Cordoba, Argentina, which is close to Tashigar South.



On September 11 2010 the ancient Tibetan medical system was the core of the Keynote Lecture given by Prof. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the main hall of Bologna University Anatomy Institute (Bologna University being the oldest university in the West, founded in 1088). The occasion of this address, entitled "Tibetan Medicine, Heritage of Mankind" was the first time that the Auditorium of the Anatomy Institute had hosted a public event.

The event was organised by the *Associazione per la Medicina Centrata sulla Persona Onlus* (Association for Person Centred Medicine Onlus, a Charity established in Bologna according to the Italian Law) in collaboration with the International Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies.



On the occasion of the Merigar 30 celebrations, a special postmark and three postcards of different scenes at Merigar were created. The Italian Post Office makes special postmarks for particular events that are of notable interest and which reproduce the theme of that event. The postmarks are only used for the day of the event and are then conserved for posterity in the Italian Post archive in Rome. On July 15, the Post Office set up a table in the centre of Arcidosso where people could get free postcards, prepared by Merigar, and have the dated postmark stamped on them. The dated postmark is not only a reminder of the event but also a collectors' item.

In 2011, the Dzogchen Community gathered from all over the world for the 30th Anniversary Celebrations: "The Joy of Being Here. From Mount Amiata to the Whole World". Celebrations included the inauguration and unveiling of the monument to Peace by artist Piero Bonacina in Arcidosso. The exhibition "Tibet Art Now" organized by ASIA with works by young Tibetan artists in Castel del Piano. "Friendship Meetings" help by university professors and other eminent personalities in three towns on Mount Amiata, as well as performances of dance and music created and offered by a large number of artists and students from all over the world. At this time Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was honored with the High Patronage of the President of Italy on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of the International Dzogchen Community Cultural Association.



The Relay (La Staffetta). As seen by the local people of the Amiata area where Merigar is based. On the left the 18th century Christian visionary Davide Lazzaretti who founded his Giurisdavidica community on the peak of Monte Labbro – in the background and facing Merigar – passes the spiritual-religious baton to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to carry forward. Credit: by Jacopo Ginanneschi, reprinted from *Il Corriere Dell'Amiata*, anno XI 7 Luglio 2011 ed. Effigi



**In** 2011 the Third International Conference on Tibetan Language was convened by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and held at Columbia University in New York, USA. The conference, jointly organized by Columbia University, Shang Shung Institute, Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center and Trace Foundation and coordinated by Enrico Dall'Angelo followed two previous conferences convened in 1987 and 1992 in India and Italy respectively. The opening ceremonies were attended by about two hundred and sixty people who had traveled from all around the world – including the many corners of the Trans-Himalayan plateau, Europe, Oceania, etc. This group was comprised of Tibetologists, linguists, grammarians, technologists, researchers and interested observers.



Signed agreement with Arura in January 2013 in Tenerife.

**From** October 2010 until January 2013 there were three week-long Tibetan Cultural events aimed to introduce Tibetan culture to the general public in La Laguna, Tenerife. The first event was organized by the Shang Shung Institute, the Dzogchen Community, ASIA, la Fundació Casa del Tibet de Barcelona, the University of la Laguna and the Laguna's city council. At the opening of the first cultural event, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu lectured at the Aula Magna in the Laguna's University (ULL), attended also by the local authorities. The second week-long event in October 2011, took place at different venues in La Laguna, the highlight being Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's lecture at the University of La Laguna on The Tibetan Book of the Dead, which gathered his students, local people and students of the ULL. The third week-long event, focusing primarily on Tibetan Medicine, took place in January of 2013. Most events were held at the former Monastery of Santo Domingo de Guzmán, with the collaboration of the City Council and the participation of some members of one of the largest Tibetan medical organizations in the world, Aura, and its President, Dr. O Tsokchen, with whom Rinpoche signed a very important collaboration agreement for the future of Tibetan Medicine. This event was organized also in collaboration with the Shang Shung Institute, ASIA, the Dzogchen Community, the University of la Laguna and local authorities.

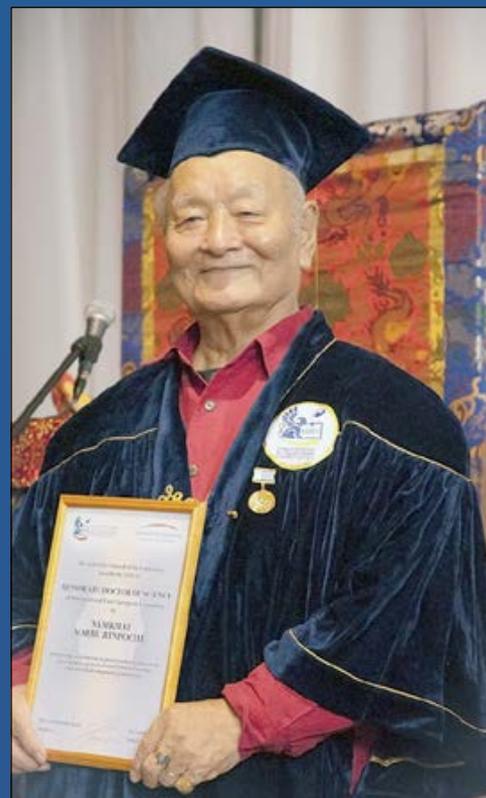
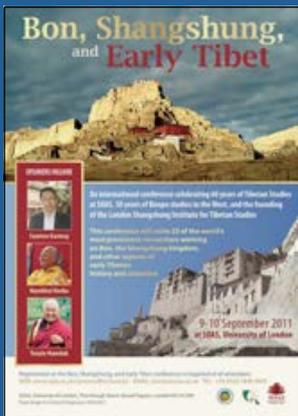


Photo by Paolo Fassoli

**In** 2011 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was awarded an honorary degree for studies on communication and evolution by the International East European University, Izhevsk, Russia.



In September 2011 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was invited to participate in an international conference entitled “Bon, Shang Shung and Early Tibet” celebrating 60 years of Tibetan studies at SOAS, University of London, 50 years of Bonpo studies in the West and the founding of the Shang Shung Institute for Tibetan Studies in London.



In 2011 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu began to select, transcribe and translate a selection of traditional as well as modern Tibetan songs that would later be published as the Khaita collection of songs and dances. In addition to preserving Tibetan culture, language and traditions, his aim was also to use music and dance as a form of meditation. Rinpoche dedicated himself to Khaita Joyful Dances until early 2018.

Hundreds of people have brought the message of Joyful Dances all over the world, performing them at the British Museum in London, the Madre museum in Naples, and the Dora Stratou Theater in Athens, which included them in their cultural programs.



## Khaita – Harmony in Space

Adriana Dal Borgo

The Khaita songs and dances united the two aspects that most characterized the life of the Master: his great

erudition in all fields of Tibetan culture and his unparalleled activity and wisdom as a Dzogchen Master.

Among the numerous publications with which the Maestro contributed to making Tibetan culture known to the world are his collections of popular songs, the first published in 1967 – *Musical Tradition of the Tibetan People. Songs in Dance Measure* (Orientalia Romana, Essays and Lectures, 2. Rome, ISMEO).

In the introduction the Master himself says that his interest in this genre of music began when he was 16 years old. In the last years of his life this interest was renewed and gave form to the Khaita collections of songs and dances on which he worked constantly and with great commitment from the end of 2011 until the first months of 2018.

Rinpoche selected more than 400 songs from among the numerous videos of young Tibetan authors and singers available online, choosing them for their meaningful lyrics and engaging harmonious rhythms. He carefully transcribed them in Tibetan first, often correcting their grammatical form, and then transliterated them into the *drayor* system so that they could be read and sung by all of us. Not only that, for each song he indicated the rhythm, the modulations of the voice, and the repetitions of the syllables with particular symbols.

One of the aims of this immense work was therefore the preservation of Tibetan culture and in particular of the language without which we would no longer have access to the ancient Buddhist texts and to those of the Dzogchen teaching.

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Khaita dancers in front of the British Museum, London.



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However, the use of music and dance as a contemplative practice was original and decidedly innovative, as a tool to discover a relaxed and joyful state and as a form of training for presence and awareness.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, incomparable master of Dzogchen, a teaching whose purpose is to recognize and overcome one's own limitations, presented his students with a method that astonished all their expectations or preconceived ideas of 'spiritual practice' by using 'worldly' melodies and movements, rather than 'sacred' sounds or movements, to train in presence. A path that leads us to train in integrating body, voice and mind with the support of rhythms, movements and choreographies that constantly change, with the only stable point being presence, anchored only to itself.

Dancing the Joyful Dances there is also the mandala of the Dzogchen Community, that is, the place and the self-perfected space where practitioners dance together harmoniously.

How many times have we danced together with the Maestro during retreats with hundreds of people moving in unison in large concentric circles as in a large mandala, relaxed and joyful.

I think that Khaita, which was in a sense the last great gift from the Master, brings with it an important message for the future of the Dzogchen Community: it shows us the way to relaxed collaboration, it shows us the way to be and practice together aware and respectful of each other and at the same time aware of belonging to the mandala of the Master which can manifest and resonate only through harmony.

In this regard, I would like to mention a brief episode: in August 2018, Rinpoche was watching a series of videos of the songs, as he often did. When it was the turn of Tundril sung by Tsering Choenyi, one of the songs included in the Mekhor collection, Rinpoche began to hum softly, nodding simultaneously with his head. I immediately saw the meaning of the text discovering that, through different examples and metaphors, it is an invitation to harmony, friendship, to 'move' together, and indicates these as the road to happiness. ©



**Toward** the end of 2011 Rinpoche's desire to build another center in Tenerife Spain, where the weather and geographic circumstance seemed very favorable for his many students to gather, meet and practice together, started to focus on property in the South of the island. When he first saw the land eventually purchased in Playa Paraiso, with its 13 houses, he conceived of the vision to have a global gar with all Gars, ASIA, SSI and other Dzogchen Community entities represented; a 'United Nations of Gars', as he put it. By summer of 2012 the name Dzamling Gar was given to this inspirational concept and a team comprised of the International Gakyil and members of the Meriling board were pursuing the fund raising and purchase of this unique piece of land in Playa Paraiso.

was new in 2012 was that a formal legal entity was created with Statutes written to help ensure long-term survival of the Dzogchen Community. Through the combination of a 'code of use' for the Longsal logo and a 'global membership agreement', the IDC Statutes served to drive convergence and alignment, for the first time, from all the 10 Dzogchen Community Gars around the world.

As the two projects gained momentum toward the end of 2012, there were clear opportunities for collaboration between the two teams. Fund-raising efforts for Dzamling Gar on behalf of the International Gakyil were soon merged with the new IDC Board. With Dzamling Gar not yet formed as a legal entity, it soon became the responsibility of IDC and Meriling to



Dzamling Gar 2013.

Photo by Paolo Fassoli



The birth of the IDC, 2012.

Simultaneous to the Dzamling Gar project launch arose another important development led by Enrico Dell'Angelo, which was the establishment of the International Dzogchen Community (IDC). Rinpoche's vision for the IDC had a long history, with many aspects of the international linkages when the first International Gakyil was formed in 2001. What

make the property purchase. This initial confluence of events cemented the global aspirations of our Master. Through this centralized, physical location for all of his students, to the network of facilitation and energy that the IDC provides to Gars around the world, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu sought to tie all that he created in his lifetime together.

**In** 2014 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu presented the publication *The Temple of the Great Contemplation: The Gönpa of Merigar* at the Aldobrandesco castle in Arcidosso and at the University of Bologna. The richly illustrated and detailed volume was based on Rinpoche's original handwritten text.



**From** 2014 until 2016, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu requested the Dzogchen Community to organize, together with the School of Tibetan Medicine of the Shang Shung Institute, an annual integrative medicine conference in Barcelona, in collaboration with the Associazione per la Medicina Centrata sulla Persona ONLUS – Ente Moral.

All Conferences were held in the historical building Casal del Metge – the headquarters of the medical care fund – located next to the Cathedral of Barcelona. Although the conferences were open to the general public, there was a great number of interested medical doctors in the audience, due to the high level of the speakers and the specificity of the topics.



All conferences had simultaneous translation, were transmitted live via webcast, followed on Twitter and Facebook, counted on a total of more than 50 speakers and moderators and the precious participation

of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who filled the 326 seats of the auditorium at every one of his appearances.

These Conferences became a reference in Barcelona for other future meetings related to integrative medicine. Furthermore, some important long lasting and important relationships were established among the different speakers, participants, the SSI and the Dzogchen Community. They were a real example of integration, thanks to the collaboration of participants and all volunteers in the Dzogchen Community, who made it possible.

**In** December 2016, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu formally opened the Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO) in the Aldobrandesco castle complex of Arcidosso. The mission of the Museum is to collect, preserve, and communicate the precious Himalayan and Asian cultural heritage, and increase and stimulate intercultural dialogue. It is a small interactive museum, very specialized, where workshops, guided tours and meetings with schools of all orders and grades are held regularly.

Many guests attended the event including political figures such as the Mayors of Adeje (the Municipality in Tenerife where Dzamling Gar is situated) and Tanti (Tashigar South, Argentina) and representatives of international universities and research centers, as well as representatives from the Merigar Dzogchen Community Cultural Association and Dzogchen Centers around the world.

## “Why is There an Asian Art Museum in Arcidosso?”

Jacobella Gaetani

**T**here are of course, also the many members of our Community from around the world, who know why they have come to Arcidosso and why the Museum is here.

The Museum of Asian Art and Culture (MACO), is situated in what was once the 17th century Chancellery of the Granducato of Tuscany and is one of the three museums in the Aldobrandesco Castle complex.

From the first two small gallery spaces which Chögyal Namkhai Norbu inaugurated in 2013, to our official inauguration on his birthday in 2016, the Museum has grown to fill the entire building, with 9 thematic gallery spaces on the ground floor and our Project Space dedicated to contemporary Asian art and temporary exhibits, which opened in 2017, on the second floor of the building.

This year, with the support of the Town Hall of Arcidosso, we were awarded a 100,000 euro grant from the Tuscan Region and the EU, to restore the exterior of the Chancellery, and repave the terrace behind the Museum with cobble stones, where it will be possible for us to stage events next year. Work will begin in the autumn of 2019.

While providing a home for the Namkhai Family Collection, and its many priceless artefacts and fine art objects, the Muse-



um also hopes to, in a small way, be a manifestation of Rinpoche's enlightened activity and compassion. Through each of his many fields of research and study, which are reflected in our exhibits, Rinpoche provides a bridge leading to the Teachings.

The Museum is a precious gift that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Rosa envisioned and offered to Arcidosso, to the local community and to all of us, a bridge bringing people closer together and closer to the Teachings,

This is perhaps one of the most significant answers to the question of why the MACO is here. The Museum has become a part of the cultural landscape of Southern Tuscany, our combination of media installations applied to storytelling in our exhi-

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bitions, has attracted class visits from Umbria and other parts of Tuscany.

Among the events being planned to celebrate Rinpoche on 27th September, the Museum will inaugurate an exhibition exploring the world of Tibetan sacred dance, called Meditation in Motion. We are also planning a 360 degree video installation in the Gönpa of Merigar, which will feature material filmed at our many Gars around the world. These two events are only part of the program being planned.

For 2020 and 2021 the Museum is planning exhibits in collaboration with the National Museum of Archeology in Naples and the Museum of Sichuan University. In 2020 the Museum is planning a group tour along the Silk Road, we will post more information about this trip in the near future. Thank you all for your support. ©

For more information, please visit the web site: <https://www.merigar.it/en/maco> or email us at: [maco.arcidosso@gmail.com](mailto:maco.arcidosso@gmail.com)

**Until** 2017 Chögyal Namkhai Norbu continued to travel constantly all over the world, giving talks and holding retreats attended by thousands of people: he has led more than 600 Dzogchen retreats around the world (since 2005 transmitted also via web-cast), and given lectures, public talks and seminars at many universities.



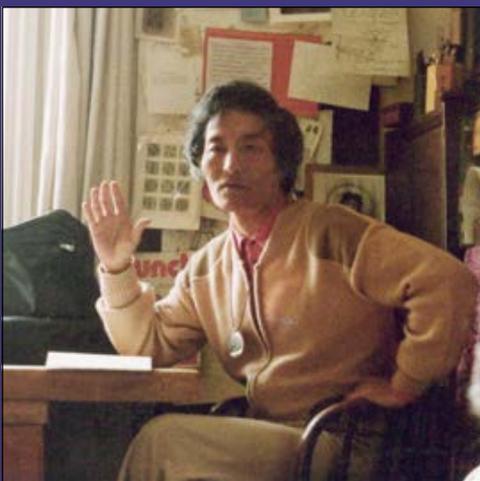
**On** July 2, 2018, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu founded the Atiyoga Foundation (ATIF), the umbrella for all the organizations in the International Dzogchen Commu-

nity, with its headquarters and legal address at Dzamling Gar. ATIF is a cultural Foundation, with the aim of supporting the evolution of the individual, thanks to the legacy and the cultural heritage of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, through the different cultural forms or areas of the mind that Rinpoche developed during his life.



**On** September 10, 2018, in the Arcidosso Town Hall, the Prefect of Grosseto, Cinzia Teresa Torracco, conferred the honor of 'Commander of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic', the highest honorary award, on Prof. Namkhai Norbu, for having dedicated his life to activities that have brought benefits to the community and the nation.

**The** passing of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu is not only of enormous consequence to his vast body of students around the world, but also to the world at large. As a man of tremendous wisdom and compassion, with an unsurpassed ability to transmit this supreme knowledge to countless people from all walks of life, his loss is really a loss to humanity. Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's vision and wish that human beings live in a peaceful and harmonious way is something most certainly needed in these times. His legacy lives on through his copious writings and teachings, as well as in the hearts and minds of those fortunate to meet him. ©



The first part of this biography is based on the Review "Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Master Who Revealed Dzogchen to the Western World" by Paolo Roberti di Sarsina, Alfredo Colitto and Fabio Maria Risolo and published in the online magazine Religions in April 2013. This information regarding the Life of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu we believe to be correct and apologize for any inaccuracies or omissions.

## Preface

*In my youth I loved the poems of Carl Sandburg especially his robust poems about the American urban landscape – remember his “Chicago” of Hog butchers? ...For some time I’ve wanted to write a poem of homage to Tibet celebrating the country’s unique qualities in all its gritty reality rather than our fantasies.*

*I wrote this on the occasion of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu’s publication of the first volume of The Light of Kailash – when such an occasion arose and this Ode came together in a jumble of extravagance and love drawing on three decades interest in the country from which I benefited so much and in honor of the Master who has been a tireless steward of his country’s history and my inspiration.*

# Ode to Tibet: Motherspeak

Jacqueline Gens

For Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1938–2018)

Top peaked mountains  
Roof of the world  
Land of *Drala*  
Bare elements alive  
Blazing naked breasts  
Belly and thighs  
In darkness of modern demise  
Wrought by imperialism  
And petty bureaucrats  
Squinting in luminosity  
They can not bear.

Tibet O Rugged Haven  
of saints and rogue bandits  
hard working herds women and men  
home to rebel daughters and sons  
derelict monastics, secret yogins  
enlightened beings  
imperial kings and queens alike  
not without rival clans and despot  
warlords  
cut throat greed mongers  
or masters of intrigue, murdering  
their rivals,  
soft spoken sycophants in robes  
xenophobes  
or fresh faced soldiers yielding  
batons of torture.

Here in the Land of Dakinis at play  
among scant clad yogis and yoginis  
who move through rock like clouds  
incubating primordial wisdom  
in the heart of your iron fortress  
poised at the barren plains of  
Northernmost plateaus  
or remote mountain caves  
far from worldly efforts  
eating air for sustenance

O Tibet you are mother  
to all human greatness and failings

Once empress of vast kingdoms  
Your mantle flung  
Wide from Taksang to Yarlung  
in Glory

Now, beaten down  
yet standing tall  
Land of Healing  
where flowers bloom  
redolent with special properties

I praise your still splendid beauty  
your haughty stance  
now just a memory

Tibet –How you wound us with your  
suffering  
woo us with your cantata of Universal  
Love

*Om Tare Tutare Ture Svaha*  
Mother of the Universe  
You astound us with your learning  
where fresh head waters still roar with  
torrents of blessing  
to quench universal quests for  
knowledge

filling the coffers of impoverished  
seekers  
from the West, thirsty legions  
parched by lords of materialism  
and so unhappy with too much of  
everything

Our open mouths a house for your  
poured out waters  
replenished eternally from your flow  
of *Bodhicitta*

We bow down to you Tibet  
We thank you brave Mother  
We praise you  
We cry for your rightful offspring  
Your warriors inspire us to abandon  
all grasping  
Vain pursuits that evaporate like mist  
In azure sky  
Vibrating with sacred sounds.

May we prove worthy of your bounty  
May you live forever  
through your bastard progeny  
your blood coursing through us,  
nurtured by the milk from your  
teats of loving kindness  
May your river of nourishment never  
run dry.

Arise  
Younger daughter of geo history  
and elder crone among hominoids  
ignited from bone and stone flints  
littering uninhabitable plains  
24,000 years ago  
your footsteps skipping across time  
embedded at the edge of pleistocene  
glaciers

O Mother Dear, arise—for  
You will be the last one Dancing  
in your bower beyond time  
forever Queen where

Tibet Lives!

In loving memory of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu  
by his humble student ... I taste your mind.....

# The Worldwide Guruyoga and the Unification of the State of All Practitioners

All over the world the Dzogchen Community observes the anniversaries of Garab Dorje, Guru Padmasambhava, and Adzom Drugpa, which fall on the 15th day of the first month, the 10th day of the sixth month, and the 25th day of the ninth month, respectively, of the Tibetan calendar. To honor the transmission received from our Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, Dzogchen practitioners around the world celebrate each anniversary by joining in the state of Guruyoga, facilitated by a live webcast of the respective practice at the precise times found in the Tibetan Calendar published each year by Shang Shung Publications.

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An excerpt from a short explanation of how to do the Worldwide Guruyoga given by Adriano Clemente August 9, 2019 at the Merigar West Gönpa

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“Good afternoon everybody. I want to explain very briefly how we are going to do this practice [Worldwide Guruyoga] tomorrow morning. In the last 10 or 15 years Chögyal Namkhai Norbu started to give the worldwide transmission three times a year. It was very important because at that time everybody in the world could receive an introduction to one’s primordial state through the webcast connection.

In general we say that in Dzogchen Teaching the main essence of the practice is to be continually in the state of what we call instant presence. This state of instant presence is not something we can understand or have experience of by reading books or listening to some explanations. We can gain access to this knowledge or recognition through one of the three main experiences: the experience of emptiness related to our mind, the experience of clarity which is related to our voice or energy, and the experience of pleasure or physical sensation which is related to our body. In this case, when the Master gave direct



introduction it meant that he used one of these three experiences.

In the last 10 or 15 years Rinpoche very often used this introduction called *yeshe sangthal*, which means wisdom without obstruction and is related to the experience of emptiness. Another way of introducing through the experience of emptiness is the way that Rinpoche used to give the Worldwide Transmission using the sound of *phat*. When we did this Worldwide Transmission three times a year first we would visualize the Guru, empower this visualization, and then receive the four empowerments. This is what we always do in general even when we do the Ganapuja or Medium Tun. First of all we ask for blessing from the Guru, then we take the four empowerments, dissolve the Guru into ourselves after which we reach that state of unification with the guru called the state of guruyoga. In this way when Rinpoche was giving the direct transmission at that time after this unification Rinpoche would tell us to relax, not to follow thoughts, not to expect anything, then he would shout “*phat*” and in that moment we would try to recognize this state of instant presence. Rinpoche did this for many years and we received it many times.

Now of course we cannot do it that way because there is nobody who can give this direct transmission. Or even if there is somewhere, we still don’t know. So what we have to do now is we have to work with the same principle of transmission. We don’t have to think that now that Rinpoche has passed away and is no longer here we are left alone, we don’t know what to do, we are lost. That is the wrong view. Rinpoche’s transmission is alive and con-

tinuing in each of us, in some in a greater way, in some in a lesser way, but it is still continuing. So what we can do now is to continue working with the transmission as Rinpoche is still present with us, so we do the same invocation in the form of Guru Padmasambhava in this case. We do the same practice, only at the end since we cannot work now with the experience of emptiness, we have to work with the experience of clarity. That means that when we are doing unification with the OM A HUM, then we relax in that state with that clarity – we have the white OM, the red A and the blue HUM. We are in that presence, and then we relax and in that moment, turning inwardly, we observe our state and relax in instant presence. That is a very important point and is called the unification of the state of all practitioners. In that moment there can be great benefit for everyone. So that is how we should do the WORLDWIDE GURUYOGA tomorrow morning.” ©

# Memories from the Special Opening of the Stupa of Enlightenment

10 August 2019  
at Merigar West, Italy

Elerin Uibu and Hubert Kotowicz

It is still nighttime, soft morning darkness at Merigar, on this special day in August. Lit by stars, the moon and flashlights we progress silently from all directions joining the main light, the Gönpa. We all sit here together from different continents to practice the worldwide Guruyoga also with our siblings connected by webcast.

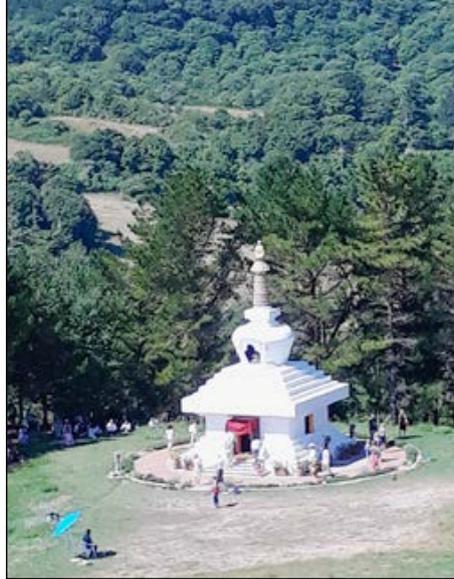
This time it was not our Dear Master who leads the practice in front of us or on our screens. Adriano Clemente speaks to us about recognising our real nature through the experience of clarity produced by vajra breathing.

Once the practice is done, we have to integrate our presence into the nice surprise-breakfast offered at the Yellow House. An hour to enjoy time with old or new friends, trying to understand our condition.

Then, from 7am onwards the daylong Guruyoga practice starts in the Gönpa. It is an opportunity to gather for collective chants and mantras to relax together guided by different instructors or *umzes* of the day. Continuously, without a break, every hour new arrivals join the group while others leave.

At 10am the doors of the Great Stupa of Merigar open. In a naturally silent and respectful way we proceed, everyone in their own time and at their own pace, down towards the Stupa to pay homage to the bodily remains of our Beloved Master, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, some of us circumambulating around the Stupa, some of us sitting in the shade, practicing or dwelling softly on our emotions, our memories. Seeing the body of the One who gave us so much, an immense gratitude arises.

A little photographic overview of all the Dzogchen Gars is on display in the Mandala Hall. Some people dance the Vajra Dances on the mandala, integrating.



A few moments later the blazing sunset strikes the Stupa in all its glory.

As the day draws to a close each person returns to the place they came from, like waves spreading out from Merigar. The beautiful memories we take with us and our bodies need to rest from the long day.

Thank you!



It brings the thought that today we are just at the beginning, that the Master has not left us. Our community is strong and evolving within His vision. In a way miracles happen every day at Merigar.

After a great worldwide collaboration workshop of Ganapuja preparation, we are ready in and around the Gönpa to start the Ganapuja with the Invocation of Samantabhadra and the Invocation of the Lamp. Together, meeting sights full of energy and light. Just after the ritual, the joy of Khaita Dances brings us even closer.

The day draws to a close dancing the Dance of the Song of the Vajra on the outdoor mandala, until we can hardly see it in the twilight, naturally remaining still seated in silence, in the rays of setting sunlight.



# Turning the Wheel of Vajra Song and Dance at Khandroling

“Dance Dance Dance”  
August 1–25, 2019

Kyu Kyuno

Thirty years ago on July 7, 1999 Chögyal Namkai Norbu had a dream of the Vajra Dance for the first time while he was staying at Khandroling, the seat of Tsegyalgar East, USA. Khandroling is where the only Universal Mandala (that we know of) exists on this planet. In his dream, Rinpoche found himself in a circular temple with four glass doors, watching over a thousand people singing and dancing the Song of Vajra.

Our Vajra sisters and brothers from all over the world – including Chile, China, France, Holland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, and Poland – gathered for the 30th anniversary of the first dream of Vajra Dance. The celebration continued for twenty-five days as “Dance Dance Dance”.

The International Vajra Dance Instructor Prima Mai taught two courses – the Advanced Song of Vajra Dance and the Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of Vajra (Khalong Dorjeikar). She trained us to sing and dance on the mandala without prepared music, which gave us more confidence and another aspect that she helped us to deepen was awareness of our breath while dancing.

Prima Mai began to teach Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of Vajra (Khalong Dorjeikar) with the approval of Rinpoche after showing him the performance video in the spring of 2018. Rinpoche told Prima Mai that perfecting the “Tsom” (open round movement with arm and leg moving in unison) in an elegant and harmonious way is important for this dance, and that the practice is connected with inner sounds. As Prima Mai had previously taught this dance in Merigar and Dzamling a couple of times, she showed us everything including the mudras. She demonstrated the magical manifestation of the Tsom on the Longsal mandala, touching us deeply within as we received the blessing of Rinpoche’s last encouragement before his passing. May this dance flourish everywhere!



During the afternoons of the Advanced Course for the Vajra Dance of Song of Vajra with Prima, local Vajra Dance instructors taught this dance for beginners and ‘refreshers’. Robert CeZet, second level Vajra Dance instructor from Poland, who is a regular Khandroling summer guest, graciously joined the instructor team to work with the more than thirty participants. Thus, dancers new and old entered the joyful mandala of “Dance Dance Dance”!

Prima Mai also instructed us in “How to apply the Dance of Vajra” for five days. Each day we started with Gomadevi practice with Rinpoche’s recorded voice, fol-

lowed by Vajra Dance of long/extensive, medium or short Thuns according to Rinpoche’s Vajra Dance book, “The Luminous Clarity of the Universe, Innermost Essence of the Dakinis”. This was the first attempt to apply “The Way of Turning the Wheel of Vajra Song and Dance”. It happened here at Khandroling on 30th anniversary of Vajra Dance. How marvelous and auspicious it is!

One day during the Thun, gusty wind almost took our portable mandalas away but we managed to finish the practice. A little later, we were pleasantly surprised by the beautiful and expansive rainbow manifesting over the Vajra Hall, which remained



Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra for Beginners and Refresher Course, August 1–13, 2019, with instructors Kyu Kyuno, Carisa O’Kelly, Robert Czabanski and Bodhi Krause.



Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra Advanced Course, August 3–9, 2019 with Prima Mai.

# Tashigar Norte Report, Fundraising and Projects

Rolo Carrasco, TN Yellow Gakyil

**D**ear IDC members, Greetings from Margarita. I hope this message finds you well and happy. Here we are fine, with the usual limitations due the current circumstances, some of them in minor proportions than before like the electricity that seems to be more or less regularized. In terms of economics the country is being dollarized (unofficially) which certainly is affecting everybody's finances, including us. The salaries are still at a very low level and in bolivares. Most of people prefer not to work on a payroll as they earn much more taking free lance jobs that they can charge for in dollars.

Even circumstances are difficult. We keep on working to maintain the Gar as much we can. In recent years it has become impossible to budget anything. I will try to outline our activities in the following report:

## Gakyil Finances, Fundraising and Membership

As you may be aware, we launched a fundraising event on July 30 aimed at collecting funds to complete our 2020 budget. Being very conservative I think we can maintain our basic structure with US\$ 12,000 per year. The intention is to collect at least US\$ 8,000 with this campaign. It is not going to be easy, as we are not the only IDC organization running a fundraising event. So far we have collected US\$ 2,850 (36% of the target).

On October 15th we will end the first phase of the campaign. If you have the in-

*» continued from previous page*

more than 20 minutes and became a double rainbow. We were overjoyed and happy to be in this magical land of Dakinis!

The celebration ended on Dakini's Day, the worldwide Vajra Dance Day, August 25, with an eight hour Vajra Dance Thun followed by Ganapuja. Carisa O'Kelly completed the thun non-stop, Prima Mai took a short break but remained throughout. Both of them made me cry as I felt their dedication and determination. Many danced much more than planned as inspiration kept us going.



Transformers after the work.

tention to contribute to our cause, try to do it before that date because all the funds collected until that moment will be delivered in cash to Tashigar Norte Gakyil and will have almost 30% more value in current local circumstances that having them



Western surveillance tower with new mosquitero and UPS system.

We filmed our dance over the Universal Mandala with four cellular phones to create a 360 degree video for the MACO museum. Bodhi Krause and John Shannon directed, with the help of a spontaneous crew. We hope that Alex Siedlecki will be able to complete the video!

Without the enormous effort of our blue Gakyil members Miranda Shannon and Nancy Paris as well as all participants, this event would not have been so special and memorable in every way!

Khandroling, where the starting point of the Longsal lineage and the transmis-



New internet tower surrounded by electric fence.

in a bank account. Then we will continue the event until December 31st. We really are counting on you!

You can visit this our website to know more about this. Read carefully about all

*» continued on the following page*



Repairing the wooden doors.

sion of Rinpoche is strong and apparent, will be hosting Prima Mai again next year for another celebration, the anniversary of the first year of Rinpoche teaching us the Vajra Dance!

If you missed the magical and intense experience of "Dance Dance Dance" this year, join us next year! Celebration will continue at Khandroling. The land of Dakinis is waiting for you in the summer of 2020!!!

with all my love,  
Kyu Kyuno

©

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the specifications to make your donations possible through PayPal. Any doubt you can contact me directly on [rolocb76@gmail.com](mailto:rolocb76@gmail.com) [https://tashigarnortesecreta.wixsite.com/tdn-fundraising?fbclid=IwAR3XeAEXH2GXjHmmdjclc9nLo7iTj8elqN183\\_oNNYbcx2tYE2VKnnVxDM](https://tashigarnortesecreta.wixsite.com/tdn-fundraising?fbclid=IwAR3XeAEXH2GXjHmmdjclc9nLo7iTj8elqN183_oNNYbcx2tYE2VKnnVxDM)

I want to remind all lot and house owners at Tashigar that you can choose Tashigar Norte as your Gar of residence and become a member here. This is really important. Our budget is being structured taking into consideration that we will count with this extra support from 2020. Paying your membership at international level here, it will make a huge difference to us. On the other hand keep your PCTN Fee up to date.

We want to thank all people who are showing generosity towards our cause, helping us to maintain this sacred place for future generations. Thanks also to IG for a first wire of US\$ 2,000 that allowed us to start the restoration of the Gönpa wooden doors and windows. Thanks to Kunsangar North and Dribselling Gakyil for organizing a collection for us.

#### Recent Projects

**Gönpa Restoration.** Since we were notified about the contribution of the IG with our Gönpa restoration, we started the works 8 weeks ago. We are renovating the doors and windows. We also have to restore part of the floor and to fix the electricity connections.

**Securing the Internet Tower:** the only area we had out of remote surveillance (no electric fence or video cameras) was the internet tower placed in the top of the adjacent mountain. A few weeks ago about 200 meters of cable (power supply) and some devices were stolen. So we had to take everything down and re do a new electricity line from the camping kitchen area to the flat mountain (Universal Mandala Meseta) and then to the top. We use some aluminum wire we have around the Gar to create a new line to bring electricity again to the tower. We use some back up equipment and we built a new electric fence surrounding the tower in the top. We also, with the cooperation of a young local electronic engineer, setup a remote control device to operate the fence, alarms and lighting from home. All the system is supported with a power back up installed next to the Sangkhang. Part of the labor was done as an exchange deal (we will provide internet to the worker who setup the new line) The fee of the engineer was \$ 100.

**Improving the Western Surveillance Post.** There is a little tower on the western side of the Gar, to cover the most vulnerable area we had. All this perimeter line is covered by an intermittent night watch (it is one of the posts the walking guard visits per shift) but it is being covered 24 hours by 3 IP cameras. We still need one more to cover the lower part of the mountain. 2 of these cameras work with an electricity backup system installed in the same tower. We bought a battery for US\$ 110 and spent another US\$ 100 in manpower and materials.

**Transformers Maintenance.** We contacted some workers from the electricity company to give maintenance to our main set of transformers. They charged us US\$ 300 for all the work. They took them down, changed some parts, oiled and painted them with anticorrosive paint.

**Free from Fear.** Our Project aimed to relieve the suffering of stray cats and dogs keeps growing. The Gakyil have recently decided to give one of the rooms from our "Posada" as a permanent place to treat ambulatory cases that require medical attention. Also it will host further sterilization events that are being permanently scheduled during this last years since the project started. If you want to contribute to this particular project contact Marina to [kashkurova@gmail.com](mailto:kashkurova@gmail.com).

**Rental Project.** Previously we tried to run a project to rent the houses located inside the Gar. As tourism in general is declining, we did not have the expected response. Now we are trying to rent "Casa Diego" located at Zaragoza beach using a commercial partner a local operator located directly on the beach, next to the house.

I don't want to finish this report without inviting you to come. Here we have plenty of space to offer according to different possibilities, from free comfortable rooms to some fancy rentable spaces. We are a little group, we have the courage and desire to keep doing our best for Tashigar Norte, our home, this place we all love, but we really feel refreshed each time some one visit us. I know there is fear, but we are here right? I really – and this is very personal – don't think there is a risk for visiting us for a short period. Many of you told me not until the regime changes, but honestly, when will this happen? We just don't know. I trust impermanence, but it is not an easy thing, we don't know when and how. ©

Love,  
Rolo Carrasco  
TN Yellow Gakyil

## Visionary Encounters

The Dzogchen Teachings of Bönpo Treasure-Revealer Shense Lhaje, compiled, introduced and translated by Adriano Clemente, Snow Lion, Boulder 2016

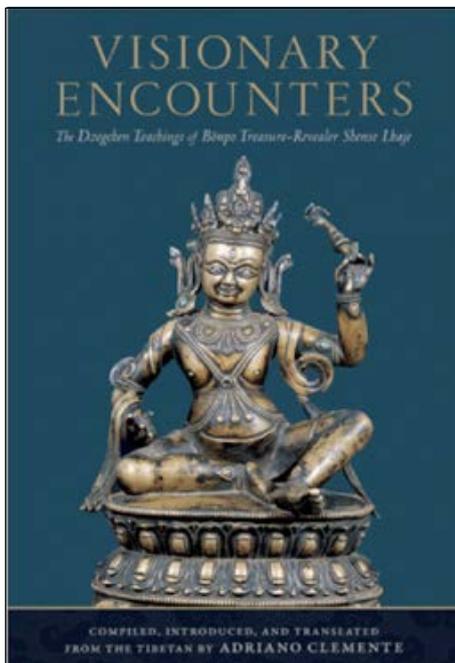
Dorothea Franck

This is one of the most fantastic Dzogchen books I have ever read. Fantastic – in every sense of the word. Inspiring and profound, with literally hundreds of short essential pointing-out instructions, touching the very essence of the Natural State. It is also very readable, one might almost say entertaining (at least for Dzogchen students), often funny, full of magical encounters, humorous self-observation, and fairy-tale like visionary episodes that stagger the imagination.

The book came about through our Teacher. When Adriano Clemente, "our" main translator, studied at the Istituto Universitario Orientale, Rinpoche, then professor of Tibetan Language and Literature, suggested for his doctoral thesis to investigate and translate a particular Dzogchen text from the Bönpo tradition: *Advice from Eighty Dakinis, which is part of Trenpa Serdam, or The Golden Teachings of Trenpa Namkha*, which were transmitted to the yogi and tertön Shense Lhaje.

In 1982 Adriano went to India, because for this project expert assistance was necessary. In 1978 Rinpoche himself had spent some time with Yongdzin Lopön Tenzin Namdak, the highest authority on Bönpo studies, at the Bönpo monastery at Dolanji, and since 1981 had sent some students there. So already the preface is worthwhile reading, giving precious historical information about the connection between two great Dzogchen Masters. The preface also tells heart-warming anecdotes about the many hours Adriano spent with Lopön who patiently sat with him for countless hours "with his saintly presence and sharp wit", "displaying some of the noblest qualities of a human being: humbleness and simplicity".

What's more the introduction explains concisely the basic principles of Dzogchen, the lineages and transmission and the main series of teachings in Bönpo Dzogchen, including short biographies of Tren-



pa Namkha and Shense Lhaje. En passant he also clarifies the relationship between the two strands of Dzogchen teachings – the Bönpo and the Buddhist tradition.

Later Rinpoche asked Adriano to extend his studies to other texts of *The Golden Teachings: Besides The Precious Golden Lamp: Advice from Eighty Dakinis*, we find:

- *Visionary Encounters with Knowledge Holders and Dakinis*,
- *Clarifying the Real Nature, The Upadesha that Reveals Nakedly the Wisdom of Clear Insight*.
- *The Garland of Nectar: Orally transmitted Advice from Eighty Knowledge Holders in the Form of Questions and Answers*.

The titles of the texts can be taken literally, as precise descriptions of the content.

In *Visionary Encounters*, the first text in the book we find the most spectacular, at times juicy tales, where autobiography, visions and received teachings are combined. Just to give one example. He is not lacking in self-irony when he tells us: *One morning, when the sun was already warm, I was drinking a cup of yogurt when I saw a tigress arrive above in front of me. The tiger spoke (...) Don't have doubts, mount me, and we will go to the great scholar Tongyung!* I was terrified by the tigress, and not daring to ride it, replied: *"I have nothing urgent to ask the Great Scholar at this moment, therefore I am not coming. You go, tigress!"* *"Don't be afraid son! the tigress reassured me. There is no viciousness in me. If you don't overcome the mind of fear and find*

*the imperturbable condition, you will not be able to be in the state of contemplation, and you will act like an ordinary person.*

It's only after a longer discussion that he mounted the beast. We will not be surprised to find the tigress later turning into a radiant dakini and him receiving teachings and initiations from his four main Teachers on thrones of rainbows and flowers. The teaching is an exhortation congruent with the beginning of the tale: *"Hey son! You are not in the real condition! You have not overcome the demon of fright, and of hope and fear. As long as the demon of this attachment is not pacified, it is essential that you practice hard."* Then, *as if waking up from sleep I returned to where I was before."*

Except for *Clarifying the Real Nature*, the texts are in the form of dialogue, sometimes even becoming a debate, between Shense Lhaje and Knowledge Holders he encounters in his visions, most of them Dakinis. All of them give pointing-out instructions in a nutshell: condensed teachings on the Nature of Mind in four poetic lines. Sometimes these essential teachings are given in the form of definitions and instructions, sometimes in poetic allegories and symbols, presenting fresh and insight-revealing images, a few of them remaining a bit mysterious and koan-like to us beginners and non-Tibetans.

The author, Shense Lhaje, comes forward as a fascinating colourful figure, at times humorously self-critical yet without false modesty. He presents himself as "a beggar and a liar who knows nothing" but also says, "Without looking I recognized my real state. Without meditating, I achieved concrete realization." The visions and teachings he transmits do not leave room for doubting his veracity and capacity.

Whomever he meets, he asks for instructions. It is amazing, how it is possible to describe in four lines the essence of the Dzogchen Teachings again and again, literally hundreds of times, and never find a repetition. We find countless, seemingly inexhaustible variations of descriptions of the indescribable, our original natural state, together with guidance on how to recognize it, trust it, stabilize it, remain in it.

To conclude, just three examples out of eighty from *The Precious Golden Lamp, Advice from Eighty Dakinis*, p. 128 and 139

13

I asked the four Goddesses of Flowers, and Saldrön Gyenchigma said:  
This mind, which is the empty essence of enlightenment  
From the beginning abides inside you, unmodified,  
In a condition of primordial self-perfection that does not need to be accomplished  
Remain without distraction with nothing to achieve or modify!

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I asked Thogme Mingyurma and she said:  
In a kingdom without an owner  
A child not born from parents  
Suffers for lack of food and clothes.  
An inexhaustible treasure is there, but he does not know how to enjoy it.

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The vulture in the sky is skilful in flying,  
Without impediments he soars everywhere.  
How quiet is the country without an owner!  
How happy are the deer without an enemy!

The book includes explanatory footnotes, a glossary and rich appendices to satisfy all scholarly questions about the textual and spelling variants and even iconographical details of knowledge holders and dakinis. It is exemplary in its combination of thorough academic study, profound Dharma teaching and poetic reading. Thank you Adriano! ©

# Artists in the Dzogchen Community

## Mònika Lakatos

Dancer and Choreographer,  
from Hungary

When I was small child, around seven years old, I had already been dancing a lot, at elementary school and in my family, in different situations like birthday parties, New Year's parties, weddings, etc., and I remember when I was twelve or thirteen years old, I was together with my best girl friend at the Theater Erkel and we saw a wonderful Hungarian contemporary style performance with young amazing dancers. After that event, we danced on the road while we were going home. That was the real first moment when I felt, "I want to be dancer and I CAN do all the steps, jumps and turns." I felt that I am a dancer.

After that experience, whenever I saw a movie or other performances or fantastic dances, I felt the same feeling in my heart, in my body, and in my blood, and also at the same time I felt inside myself something special that distinguished me from others.

My elementary school was a singing and music faculty so that is why I learned music, sang in the choir and played the piano and flute. That was a very nice period of my life with many precious experiences of sounds and the rhythm. But I really missed the movements and eurhythmic, so that's why I kept looking for the possibilities to study dance.

Finally, at sixteen years old, I followed my classmate from high school to a very high quality dance school and I learned modern and classical ballet very intensively for two years. Before my exam at the end of semester I was very excited and I looked very much forward to it! The other dancers were afraid of that situation, but for me it was very safe and joyful. I was happy because I had waited for the stage.

After a half year of theater practice in musicals, I was continuing the study at the other higher level school. There were different techniques: Graham, tap dance, acrobatic, classic, contact improvisation, etc. After one year together with my dance



Photo by Paolo Fassoli

partner, we created our first choreography. That period was very inspiring for us and we were very active and devoted to creating and "work".

I had strong contact with dance and creating movements and at the same time I had a special feeling that made me feel a

and that's why I felt strong and safe. But the question was really an "emergency"!

The first time I found many answers in the Buddhist biographies, books and films, and I had many conversations with my friends about this. I read almost all books from His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama. In



little different from the others through my questioning. How are the things of life and what is the source of everything? How is the life and, of course, the death? The feeling was very natural, smooth and stable

one of those I saw the word "Dzogchen" and I read some details about that, but I didn't really understand how it was connected to Buddhism.

When I was about twenty-eight years old I began to grow a wish in my heart: I would like to find a Buddhist tradition or somewhere, a sacred dance that I can do as practice. I thought maybe not only sitting meditation exists and it would be very nice to use my main activity of the dance to do spiritual practice, to dance with real knowledge.

One day I heard from my friend at the Buddhist College in Budapest that every Monday a few practitioners of the Hungarian Dzogchen Community practiced a dance on a beautiful, huge Mandala with six females and six males with very nice slow movements and melodious mantra!

That was in November, 2003, when I was almost thirty-five years old. I was really happy and after the first meeting with Vajra Dance, I knew I had found what I was looking for.

In March of 2004, I got the first direct introduction from dear Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and step-by-step I studied the Vajra Dance, sitting practices and Yantra Yoga and the connection with Rinpoche, the Teachings and the Community became stronger and stronger. I found the source of everything.

Dancing and choreography for me is freedom, a joy and a kind of home. If I dance or create choreography, I am totally myself and it becomes easier to do the daily life and if the daily life becomes easier, so does the creation of the choreography. This is a very inspired state.

My method to create is very simple. The main or the base inspiration for me is the music. I listen to the music many times and let it manifest the first the character of choreography. The movement takes shape, and then I see a kind of picture about the whole performance. After that come the directions and dynamics or timing, and finally the small details like the steps of the concrete movements, ornaments, and finesses. The teachings and practices help that process very much. My mind is more open and free and my emotions more deep, clear and, at the same time, lighter. That way the movements come more easily and my body is joyful; that's why I can better express myself, and what I want to show.

Before Dzogchen practice I worked in the same way, but together with this knowledge, I am totally relaxed about from what everything manifests and it is why I am calm and at the same time energetic in my work and in my art. So the teachings definitely help that wonderful journey.

Almost thirty years ago I met wonderful artists: singers, musicians and dancers. We are in the same company and we work and play together on big stages mainly in Hungary, but sometimes outside. We are friends and colleagues. Although I did more kinds of contemporary, folk, jazz ballet, and butoh style dances, nowadays I'm dancing my favorite style, the joyful dynamic show dance with acrobatic elements.

In this year I turn fifty years old, so I don't know how much longer I can do this artistic form. I am almost a retired dancer and choreographer, but only sometimes I feel myself old.

Together with Teachings and practice, I balance my work, my art and my daily life. Obstacles are more transparent and easier to overcome and to continue the life. In this way, every moment is precious and the unique help is to be present. I'm very humbled by my instructors, my Vajra brothers and sisters and the precious Master. I'm really home now, out and in. ©

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# How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Michael Katz

During the summer of 1982 I had traveled to Northern California to participate in an important retreat called Yeshe Lama. The practices on this retreat include outer and inner Rushen as well as Dzogchen teachings. Many of us were also practicing and completing the conventional Ngondro. The highly esteemed teacher leading the retreat was a Nyingma Dzogchen master by the name of Lama Gampo.

Simultaneously we heard that another Dzogchen master whose name was Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was conducting a retreat some hours south of us, but also in California. We also heard that these two masters had a strong connection from previous lives and we were very excited to hear that he would visit us and meet with Lama Gampo.

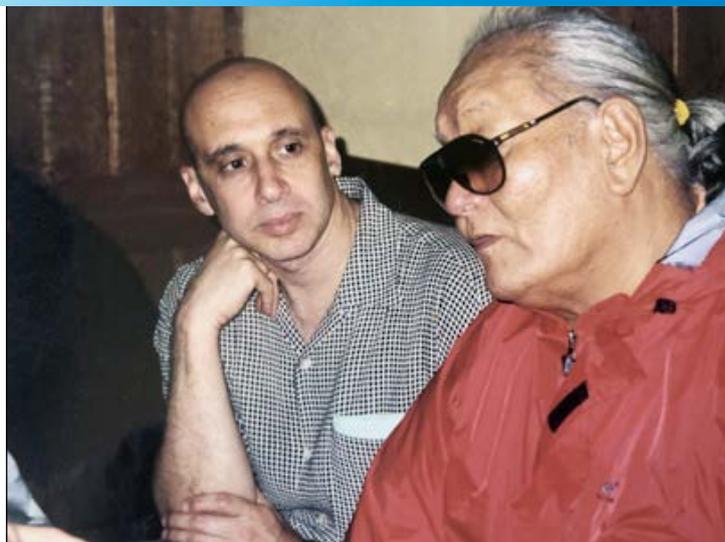
When that day arrived we were excited in anticipation. I must admit that the arrival of Rinpoche with his entourage did not conform to our expectations.

Lama Gampo was typically dressed in colorful Nagpa robes and the students mainly wore white lunghis and Indian style clothes. In contrast, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's entourage, including his chief translator Barry Simmons, arrived dressed in Western clothes. Several others were dressed completely in black. My first impression was perhaps a motorcycle gang. A few looked like some of the punk rockers I had left behind in New York's alphabet city where I lived at the time.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu spent most of his time during the visit with Lama Gampo and I only had a brief chance to see him as he walked by. Despite this uneventful first encounter, I was soon exposed to recordings of his Dzogchen teachings.

His unique style and extraordinary teachings completely entranced me. He was invited to teach at the Gurudjieff community in Conway, Massachusetts the following year. I made a point to be there.

The early years were magical. He typically taught twice a day and in the evening led practices which included the long Thun as well as Chöd. Even after all of that, he stayed with all of us playing games often into the morning hours. He would tease



me when I would sneak away to try to get some sleep.

Rinpoche visited us in Conway at least twice a year during the early years. During one of his retreats I had a series of clarity type dreams with Rinpoche. In one of them he and I were discussing the health of one of his close disciples Laura Albini. She was the mother of our Vajra brother Costantino.

This dream inspired me to ask his permission to collect his dream yoga teachings and compile them into what ultimately became the book "Dream Yoga and the Practice of Natural Light". The book was subsequently translated into many languages and has been a secondary cause for many to meet Rinpoche and the Dzogchen Community.

Although Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Upadesha teachings were extraordinary, some of my most vivid memories were of impromptu teachings. During one retreat I was suffering because my long-term girlfriend had broken up with me. He was alternately patient and consoling but one day he looked at me made a disgusted face and said "attachment."

On another occasion he spontaneously gave me a small slap on the face and said Om Ah Hum. I immediately felt lighter as if some obstacle had been lifted. He said "that will be helpful." Apparently he had seen some sort of negative influence.

On another occasion a friend and I were walking with him. She was singing this song "we are the children" Rinpoche turned to her and said no, we are the adults.

I observed and was inspired by how Chögyal Namkhai Norbu conducted his life. He continuously did great service, all the while supporting himself in the world.

I also recall Rinpoche explaining what a student could do to please his teacher. He said that for the Master the student doing practice was the most precious action, second their physical service activity in support of the Community, and third donating money or necessary resources.

I have tried to take this to heart and his familiar refrain "do your best" has guided me. I first followed Rinpoche into a career in education, which afforded time to do



practice. I also have been teaching continuously in the Dzogchen Community since 1986 for thirty-three years, first as a Yantra Yoga teacher, and then as a teacher of dream yoga and as a Santi Maha Sangha instructor. It has been a great honor to visit so many countries and forge deep relationships with many in our international Community. It has been in the words of Hemmingway, "a movable feast."

# Global Dzogchen Gars

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## Dzamling Gar

Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain

Contact: [blue.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net](mailto:blue.gakyil@dzamlinggar.net)

Website: <https://dzamlinggar.net/en>

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## Merigar West

Italy

Contact: [office@dzogchen.it](mailto:office@dzogchen.it)

Website: <https://www.merigar.it>

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## Merigar East

Romania

Contact: [office.me@dzogchen.ro](mailto:office.me@dzogchen.ro)

Website: [www.dzogchen.ro](http://www.dzogchen.ro)

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## Namgyalgar

Australia

Contact: [namgyalsecretary@internode.on.net](mailto:namgyalsecretary@internode.on.net)

Website: <https://www.dzogchen.org.au>

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## Tsegyalgar East

Massachusetts, USA

Contact: [bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org](mailto:bluegakyil@tsegyalgar.org)

Website: <https://www.tsegyalgar.org>

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## Tsegyalgar West

Baja California, Mexico

Contact: [secretary@tsegyalgarwest.org](mailto:secretary@tsegyalgarwest.org)

Webpage: <https://www.tsegyalgarwest.org>

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## Samtengar

Yichun, China

Contact: [2857749959@qq.com](mailto:2857749959@qq.com)

Website: <http://www.samtengar.net>

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## Kunsangar North

Russia

Contact: [kunsangar.blue@gmail.com](mailto:kunsangar.blue@gmail.com)

Website: <https://kunsangar.ru>

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## Kunsangar South

Crimea

Contact:

[kunsangarsouth@googlegroups.com](mailto:kunsangarsouth@googlegroups.com)

<https://www.facebook.com/kunsangar.south>

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## Tashigar Norte

Venezuela

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Website: <https://www.tashigarnorte.org>

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## Tashigar Sur

Argentina

Contact: [secretaria@tashigarsur.com](mailto:secretaria@tashigarsur.com)

Website: <http://www.tashigarsur.org>

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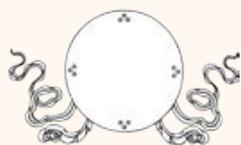
Also, over the years, I found other ways to be useful. In addition to serving on the Gaykil many times, I assisted Rinpoche's fundraising in the capacity as auctioneer. I also occasionally served as his foot reflexologist, particularly during the difficult times when he was recovering from leukemia at the Sloan Kettering Hospital in New York City in 1994.

Another great and memorable experience for me was the opportunity to accompany Rinpoche to Tibet and to visit Ralung monastery. The monks at this monastery recognize him as the incarnation of their former master. Disciples from the local population came from everywhere to pay their respects. Many gave him traditional

gifts such as butter or other agricultural products. An entire room was filled with these gifts.

Mainly they wanted his blessing and Rinpoche observed that they were less interested in receiving formal teachings. At one point on this trip he turned to me and said, "I am a modern man".

I am so very grateful for having met this great Master who has done so much to turn the wheel of dharma. Once he confided with me some details of a previous life when we had been together, and I am looking forward to seeing him again in a future life as well. ©



## THE MIRROR

Newspaper of the  
International

Dzogchen Community of  
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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