

THE MIRROR

News Media of the International Dzogchen Community

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**FROM THE DEPTH
OF MY HEART**

**PILGRIMAGE
TO MARATIKA**

**ASTROLOGICAL
FORECAST**

**INDO-TIBETAN
DOCTRINE
OF SOUND**

**CHÖGYAL
NAMKHAI
NORBU
DZOGCHEN
MEDJUNG**



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Front cover: On February 28, the first day of the new Wood Snake year, the Stupa with Eight Sides was placed on a specially made plinth just below the Dzamling Gar Gönpa with a short ceremony. This miniature stupa

is part of the Changchub Dorje Stupa project based on a terma of the same master to place 108 different Stupas around the globe in order to harmonize conflicts and avert natural disasters. Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov.

Back cover: Hanging Lungta flags as part of the Shang Shung Uk project near the Mandarava cave during the pilgrimage to Maratika, Nepal.



THE MIRROR
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INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN
COMMUNITY

DZOGCHEN TEACHINGS WITH NAMKHAH YESHI AT DZAMLING GAR 2025

It all started when our Yellow Gakyil, Titi (Gloriana Brenes), invited Namkhah Yeshe to help improve the acoustics of the Dzamling Gar Gönpa.

by Gisela Martinez

All of a sudden, Titi informed us that Namkhah Yeshe had offered to give Teachings on February 13th and 14th, Valentine's Day. With only six weeks to go, people from all over the world came together to offer support and advice. Despite being the peak of the high season in Tenerife, everything unfolded smoothly, from organizing collaborations, painting and arranging Rinpoche's house, creating graphics, finding suppliers, to making agreements between ATIF and the Adeje City Hall for support. All was accomplished at incredible speed, thanks to the hard work of so many people.

The Gar filled with smiles and people overjoyed to return to Dzamling Gar, some after five years, some seven, and even longer. With the Gar full of joy, Namkhah Yeshe and his wife Daria arrived and immediately began working on the acoustics. In collaboration with the Dzamling Gar Webcast Team, they spent hours conducting an acoustic site analysis for a future project and optimizing the stage, speakers and equipment to ensure the best possible setup for the event. Many of us at Dzamling Gar were deeply moved, having waited so long to receive Teachings in the Gönpa that Chögyal Namkhah Norbu worked so hard to build. It felt as though welcoming Namkhah Yeshe's Dzogchen Teachings was the true inauguration of the Dzamling Gar Gönpa. Finally, the 13th arrived and Namkhah Yeshe offered an incredible two days of Dzogchen Teachings. In particular, on Valentine's Day, we received the precious gift of singing the Song of the Vajra in one of the most beautiful and powerful ways many of us had ever experienced, guided by Namkhah Yeshe. We also engaged in a magnificent meditation, which he created, after a month of dedicated work. Whether onsite or online, we all felt that Namkhah Yeshe was at ease here. We were filled with joy and gratitude for his incredible gen-



Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

erosity and kindness. We offered translation in at least 12 languages and had approximately 3,999 registered participants with around 380 attending onsite and the rest online. Among them, 689 people had never attended a retreat with Chögyal Namkhah Norbu or Namkhah Yeshe before. Beyond the extraordinary event, we received fantastic news: next year, on the same dates and for more days, Namkhah Yeshe will give Teachings at Dzamling Gar again, expecting 2,000 attendees. Come to Dzamling Gar for Valentine's, and receive a warm welcome to your Global Gar.

NAMKHAH YESHI IN PARIS TEACHINGS ON THE ESSENCE OF GURU YOGA AND MEDITATION IN THE STYLE OF DZOGCHEN LONGDE

We are delighted to make an update for Namkhah Yeshe's teaching retreat in **Paris, May 9-11, 2025**.

Please, preregister below to book your room or zoom place. To preregister IN THE ROOM, please click on the link below to access the form:

<https://tinyurl.com/33fmn673>

To preregister IN ZOOM, please click on the link below to access the form: <https://tinyurl.com/yck2arx6>

Your definitive registration will be confirmed by e-mail. If you have any problem registering, contact: ny.paris2025@gmail.com

The forms have links to inexpensive accommodation in Paris. The full program will be announced at a later date. Palriling Gakyil

NAMKHAH YESHI AT MERIGAR WEST

Dear all, we are pleased to confirm that **July 2-8** this year a retreat of Dzogchen Teachings will be held at **Merigar led by Namkhah Yeshe**.

By mid-April, we will send everyone the link to be able to register, either in attendance or to follow along remotely, as well as all the information you need to participate.

If you plan to come to Merigar and need accommodation, there is a link below with a list of the main places in the area. We have made arrangements with some of them for retreat participants to have a price reduction during the retreat period.

<https://www.merigar.it/it/visita/alloggi/>



གོལ་དུ་དོགས་པ།

There are also people who are always worried about making mistakes. This is also something that is very important for our practitioners. When they learn something, even if it is a very simple practice, instead of working and applying it in a simple way, they think and judge about many details and ask me so many questions. Sometimes I cannot reply because I've never thought about those things. People work very much with mind – this is also a wrong direction. When you receive a teaching method, you should try to do it in a simple way, not always worrying about doing everything so precisely. These are called limitations and the principle of the Dzogchen teachings is going beyond limitations. So it doesn't correspond and for that reason it says here that it is a mistake to worry.

ལས་སུ་རུང་ནས་ནམ་ཞིག་གྲུབ་པར་བྱེད་འདོད་པ།

When you are doing practice you immediately need to have some obtainments and are always concentrated on them. In the real sense, there is nothing to obtain. You have already had all the obtainments since the beginning. That is why when we pronounce the mantra to empower – ‘Jaya jaya, siddhi siddhi, phala phala’ – ‘siddhi siddhi’ means obtainments.

It explains that very clearly here.

དམིགས་པ་མེད་པར་སྒྲིལ་ཞིང་དམིགས་མེད་ལ་དམིགས་པ།

With our mouth we say that there are no concepts, but that is already a concept that we uphold.

དགག་སྒྲུབ་མེད་པར་སྒྲིལ་ཞིང་བྱུགས་ཤིང་རྟོག་སྒྲིལ་སྒྲོང་བ།

It also states in the Dzogchen teaching that there is nothing to negate and nothing to accept and you say that too, but in the real sense you are always worried about your condition. When you do practice sometimes you have a bit of a sleepy state, other times your condition is a little agitated and then you enter into negating and doing something. རེ་དོགས་ཀྱི་ལྟ་བ་ ཅན་ནི་གོལ་ཏེ། So if there is any kind of hope or fear, it is a wrong point of view, དེས་དོན་དེ་མི་འཕྲད་པས། people who have this wrong point of view cannot be in the real primordial state. This is how things are explained in the Medjyung tantra and there is a quotation from this tantra:

འདི་ཉིད་ལས། བྱང་རྒྱལ་འདོད་པ་དེ་ལ་བྱང་རྒྱལ་མེད། ས་དང་ཟག་ནམ་ལྟར་རྒྱུང་རྒྱལ་ མཆོག་ལ་རིང་།

“People who want to have total realization, that means being totally in the primordial state, དེ་ལ་བྱང་རྒྱལ་མེད། those who

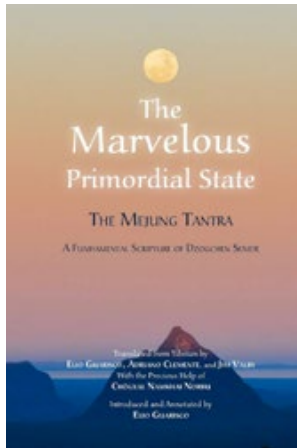
desire that cannot have that. ས་དང་ཟག་ནམ་ལྟར་རྒྱུང་རྒྱལ་མཆོག་ལ་ རིང་། Realization is as far from our condition as the distance between the sky and the earth.” So you must not be in any type of concepts. This is the quotation.

གཞག་ཐབས་མ་ནོར་བ་ནི་གང་ཞེ་ན།

How can one be in a state of contemplation without making mistakes?

བྱང་རྒྱལ་གྱི་སེམས་མ་དུ་བྱང་བའི་དོན་མ་ནོར་བར་ གནད་རྒྱུད་པའི་མི་ཆེན་པོས། དེ་ ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་ལ་སྒྲིལ་འཕྲུག་ཤིང་མེད།

For a person who has that knowledge of the primordial state as explained in the ‘Medjung’, དེ་ཁོ་ན་ཉིད་ལ་སྒྲིལ་འཕྲུག་ཤིང་མེད། there is nothing to enter or to accept.



བསྐྱོམ་ཞིང་དམིགས་སུ་ མེད་མེད་ཀྱང་། དོན་མ་ནོར་བའི་སྐྱོམ་ ཐབས་ངོད་གའ་ཅམ་དུ་མཆོན་པ་ནི།

There is nothing concrete to meditate on. But for a person who has no knowledge of the primordial state, then it is necessary, on the relative plane, to have this kind of explanation.

བསྐྱོམ་དུ་མེད་ པ་ཉིད་ཤེས་བསྐྱོམ་ཞེས་བཏགས།

For that reason it is called the meditation on which there is nothing to meditate.

སེམས་ཀྱི་གཞག་ཤིང་ཟག་ནམ་

To keep [up] the nature of the mind, there is nothing that we consider the state of *dharmata*.

སེམས་གང་དུ་འང་མི་འཛོག་པ་ཉིད་ལ་གཞག་ཤིང་ཟག་ཤིང་བྱ།

When we say that we are in the state of contemplation, knowing that there is nothing to do or to add, དེ་བས་ན་གང་དུ་འང་སྐྱོམ་ ཤེས་པོའི་སྒྲིལ་པ་མེད་པ་ལ་ཞུགས་ཤིང་ཟག་ཤིང་བྱ། for that reason there is nothing, no place or no dimension to enter. However, relatively we say that we ‘enter’ and are ‘in’ the state of contemplation.

འདི་ཉིད་ལས།

Then there is a quotation from the ‘Medjung’ tantra.

ང་ཡི་རེལ་སུ་སྒྲོར་བ་ལ། ཟེའབྱང་རྒྱལ་མེད་ཅིང་བསྐྱོམ་པ་འང་མེད་པའི་རེལ་སུ་ སྒྲོར་། “Those who are in my dimension, that is, in our own primordial state, བྱང་རྒྱལ་མེད་ཅིང་བསྐྱོམ་པ་འང་མེད་པའི་རེལ་སུ་སྒྲོར་། there is nothing particular to say like we are getting realized or that we are now in the state of contemplation because all of these are concepts.” This is the quotation from the tantra. For that reason it is explained in more detail here.

ཅེས་ཟག་སྤྲུངས་པ་དང་། ཡང་།

Then there is another quotation from the Medjung tantra.

སྤྱོད་བ་མེད་ཅིང་ལེན་པ་མེད། །སེམས་ཉིད་གནས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་མེད་པས། ཟེའོ།།
།ཟེབས་སྤྱོད་དུ་མེད་པའི་འབྲུང་བ་སེམས་

སྤྱོད་བ་མེད་ཅིང་ལེན་པ་མེད། “There is nothing to abandon, there is nothing to accept,

།སེམས་ཉིད་གནས་ཀྱི་ཡུལ་མེད་པས།” there is no concrete dimension which we can say is the place of the state of contemplation. So the state of contemplation is that in which there is no meditation.” This is also another important quotation from the Medjung.

དེ་ཕྱིར་སེམས་གནས་པ་དང་། རྟོག་པ་དང་། བསམ་པ་
དང་། དམིགས་པ་སྤྲུངས་ཏེ། མི་གནས་པ་དང་། མི་
རྟོག་པ་དང་། བསམ་དུ་མེད་པ་དང་། མི་དམིགས་པའི་
དོན་རྣམས་ཆེད་དུ་མི་ཐེད་དོ།

For that reason we don't do anything to remain with our mind. This means that when we are doing shiné, for example, we do fixation that is for calming the mind, but that is not the primordial state, it is working with concepts using mind, fixation etc. Also when we have རྟོག་པ་ thoughts, བསམ་པ་ judgments, མི་རྟོག་པ་ any kind of concepts, then we abandon all these things and try to obtain མི་གནས་པ་ not remaining (or staying somewhere), མི་རྟོག་པ་ thoughtlessness, བསམ་དུ་མེད་པ་ being without judgments མི་དམིགས་པ་ conceptlessness [but] we do not get attached or force ourselves to do something like that.

དེ་ཅི་འདྲི་ཕྱིར་ཞེ་ན།

Why should we do things in that way?

གནས་པ་དང་རྟོག་ཟེབས་པ་དམིགས་པ་ཉིད་རང་འབྲུང་གི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཉིད་རང་ལ་
འགགས་པ་རེ་གི་ནས། གང་སྤྲུངས་ལ་གང་ཞིག་དང་དུ་སྤྲུངས་ལ་བསྐྱོམས་ཏེ། སྤང་
སྤང་མེད་དོ།

All these desires we have to remain in the calm state, all our thoughts and concepts are, in the real sense, part of our wisdom when we have real knowledge, our wisdom without interruption. གང་སྤྲུངས་ལ་གང་ཞིག་དང་དུ་སྤྲུངས་ལ་བསྐྱོམས་ཏེ། So there is nothing to accept or reject in the relative condition in a dualistic way. This is very important because some people think that in the primordial state all actions are blocked. That is a wrong idea. It is not like that. You remember that when we talk about Enlightened Beings like Buddha Shakyamuni we say that they are omniscient which means having wisdom of quality and quantity. All our thoughts and concepts, everything enters into this quality and quantity of wisdom.

We do not block anything and become like a small piece of stone. This is important and here it is explained very clearly.

བདག་དང་ཆོས་ཉིད་སོ་སོར་གྲུབ་ན། བདག་ཉིད་སྤྱོད་པ་པོས་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ལྷན་གྱི།
ཆོས་དང་གང་ཟག་མ་སྤྲུངས་པོར་གཉིས་སུ་མེད་པའི་ཡེ་ཤེས་ཉིད་དུ་ཟག་ཅིག་པོར་ཕྱིར་
ལས་སུ་བྱ་བའི་བསྐྱོམ་པ་མེད་དོ།

When we consider that our condition and our real condition of *dharmata* are separate, or something with different aspects, then they become like subject and object. But it is not that way. When we are in the state of *dharmakaya*, which means we are in the primordial state with its infinite qualities of wisdom, then, of course, we become omniscient, not without thoughts. When we are in our real nature, our thoughts and concepts do not manifest in an ordinary way – བསམ་གཏན་ལ་ལས་སུ་ཁུར་བྱུང་གྱུར་ཏེ། བདག་གིས་བསམ་གཏན་གྱས་པར་

ཐལ་བས་གཟུང་འཛིན་གྱིས་བཅིངས་པར་དེས་སོ། and here it continues – otherwise they become like subject and object. སྤྱི་བྱ་དམ་པས་གདེང་ཚུད་ན། For people who have the fortune to discover their real nature and know how to be in their real nature, there is nothing to do, to put in order or to coordinate with the mind. སེམས་ལ་ལས་སུ་བྱ་བའི་བསམ་གཏན་གྱར་མེད། སེམས་

*The root of the three
poisons having been
cut, in me there is no
cause and effect of the
three worlds*

སྤྱི་འོད་ལ་བཞུགས་ཤིང་གསུང་གི་ཟེར་ལ་འོས་པས། The nature of mind is in the dimension of the light of the *dharmakaya* so its aspect of voice, all energy manifestations, are like light rays manifesting from sunshine so then it is the way of manifesting of the *rolpa* energy. སྤྱི་གསུང་ནས་མཁའ་འོད་པར་ཟེར་ལ་རྒྱུ་འོད་ཀྱི་འོད་ཀྱི་ལྷོ་ལ་འོད་ཀྱི་ལྷོ། The mind is just like the state of the vajra which is like the condition of the sky.

ཀླན་ཀྱང་སྤྱོད་པ་པོར་འདྲི་གི་ཡེ་ཤེས་འགྲོ་འོད་མེད་པར་རང་སྤང་བའི་སྤྱི་གསུང་
སྤྱི་གསུང་གི་བདག་ཉིད་ཡིན་པའི་ཁྱེད།

For one who applies that meditation everything is an aspect of the three dimensions of body, speech and mind. བསྐྱོམ་ཐ་སྤྱོད་པ་པོར་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ལས་མེད་པར་ནས་མཁའ་འོད་གིས་གསལ་ལ་མི་གཡོ་བ་ལྟར། There is nothing to meditate on and nobody who is meditating [one is completely] beyond these concepts.

རྟོགས་པའི་གདེང་ཅན་གྱིས་རང་གི་སྤྱོད་རང་བཞིན་གྱིས་ཅིར་ཡང་མ་བསམས་པས། རང་
བཞིན་མ་བཞག་པར་མི་གཡོ་བའོ།

Everything manifests its qualifications through its wisdom, without interruption, but at the same time it is not something like our ordinary dualistic vision, because dualistic vision interrupts and creates problems for us to be in our real state. རྒྱུ་ཆེས་བྱེད་པོར། There is a quotation from the root tantra about this.

མ་སྤྱི་པ་པོ་ཡི་ཆོས་རྣམས་ལ། །དོ་བོ་མེད་དེ་བསྐྱོམ་པ་འང་མེད།



Translators Adriano Clemente, Jim Valby and Elio Guarisco working with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu at Tashigar Norte, Venezuela, on the translation of *The Marvelous Primordial State*

"Marvelous Primordial State of Great Perfection"

The Marvelous Primordial State of Great Perfection is a profoundly important root text of the Mind series of Dzogchen.

Although this ancient text is not as large, nor has it as many chapters as *The Supreme Source*, it teaches all the essential principles of Ati Dzogchen that can be subsumed in the view without fixations, contemplation beyond concepts, and the fruit that is not obtained by treading a path.

"All phenomena unborn from the beginning, there is nothing that is their essence and there is nothing to meditate on. རྣམ་མཁའི་ཚུལ་དུ་རབ་འབྱོར་བས། Just like the dimension of space. So this is called Samantabhadra, everything is fine."

ཞེས་གསུངས་ཏེ། དེ་ལྟར་བསྒྲོམ་པའི་ཚེ། དབང་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཟག་ནའང་སྒྲུང་དོར་མེད་དོ།

This quotation means that when we are applying that, doing meditation, དབང་པོ་རྣམས་ཀྱི་ཐུགས་ཟག་ནའང་སྒྲུང་དོར་མེད་དོ། for meditators there is no difference or limitations whether all their senses are open or closed. For example, if you open your eyes you can see, open your ears you can hear. If you close them, you cannot. There is no difference, which means you should not be conditioned by these things. Sometimes we say that when Dzogchen practitioners are in the state of contemplation, their eyes are open. Then some people think that it is a kind of rule of Dzogchen teaching that the eyes should be open. But it doesn't mean that. Just like in the practices in tantric style, there are many complicated visualizations and it is much easier to close your eyes [to do them], and for that reason practitioners close their eyes. Here it says that it is not always necessary to close your eyes. You can open them and have sense contacts with objects. But it depends. Sometimes you close your eyes and can still be in the state of contemplation. You could be resting on the bed with your eyes closed and in the state of contemplation, so it is not necessary you open your eyes. This is an example. It means you should not be limited this way. And this is not only valid for the eyes but for all the senses.

འདུག་ཟུངས་ཀྱི་ཁྱད་པར་ལྟར་བྱས་ཀྱང་དོན་ལས་མ་ཉམས་ནའང་དམན་པའི་དོན་གང་ཟློལ་མི་ཁྱད་དང་ཚོགས་པུར་དཀའ་ཐུབ་མེད་པར་གནས་སོ།

Then the position. You can stay in any kind of position. There is no difference in order to be in the state of contemplation. But for people with lower capacity who are starting to learn, we give them some information on the position such as crossed legs, or with the knees drawn up to the stomach in the position of the rishi. You can also do this. By doing this it is easier to control your energy and when you control your energy you have fewer problems with your mind and it is easier to control it otherwise it disturbs you getting and being in the state of contemplation. For new practitioners this is useful and it is also not limiting. In general in the Dzogchen teaching we say that there is no need to have a particular position and then people think that all positions are negative. It is also very important to understand the condition of the individual.

ཡོངས་ཅི་ཡོད་གཤིབ་སྒྲོམ་པ་མཚན་མ་དང་ཚེས་ཉིད་ལ་སྤང་སྤང་མ་བྱས་པར་གང་དུ་འང་མ་བསམས་མ་བཀག་པས་ཚེག་མོད།

For people who have knowledge of Dzogchen teaching there is no need for these kinds of relative limitations in order to follow the practice of Ati Yoga.

འགོ་རུང་འདུག་རུང་ཉལ་རུང་སྤྲོད་རུང་། ལོངས་སྤྱོད་བདེའང་རུང་། སྤྱག་བསྐྱེད་ཡང་རུང་། སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་གང་ལའང་མ་བཟུངས་པས་མཚན་མའི་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་མི་འགྲིག་གས།

When walking, sitting, sleeping, standing etc., when feeling that it is a happy or easy moment, or a sorrowful and difficult one, སྤྱོད་ཀྱི་གང་ལའང་མ་བཟུངས་པས་མཚན་མའི་སྤྱོད་ཡུལ་མི་འགྲིག་གས། a Dzogchen practitioner can integrate everything and these are not particular defects. But of course for people that do not have this capacity, they become obstacles.

ཡོན་ཏན་དུ་གང་ལའང་མི་བྱེད་པས་གཞིགས་རྣམས་ཚེས་ཉིད་ལ་བསྒྲོམ། བདག་དང་གཞན་དུ་སྤང་བ་ཀྱན་ཡེ་བསྐྱེད་མི་དགོས་པར་གཅིག་པས། བདག་གི་ཟག་ནའང་ནས་ནས་

ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ཕར་མི་དམིགས།

When we have this kind of knowledge then we do not hope to obtain and have all of these qualifications and བདག་གི་ཐག་དན་ ཟུག་ཆོས་ཉིད་ལ་ཕར་མི་དམིགས། being in our real primordial state we do not concentrate on the condition of the dharmata because that also becomes a concept.

སྒྲིབ་ལ་མ་གང་ལྟར་བདེ་བར་འདུག་ལ། བསམ་དུ་མེད་པར་ཉལ།

When we do practice, any kind of comfortable position is OK. You remember that when we do practice, I always say that if you want to sit cross-legged that is OK. If you have difficulties you can sit on a chair or rest on your knees in Japanese style. There is no difference. Only it is important to keep our backs straight to coordinate our energy at the relative level. You see all these explanations come from these sources.

སམ་དུ་མེད་པར་ཉལ། མི་བསམ་བསམ་མེད་དུ་འོངས་སྒྲིབ། འགྲོ་ཉལ་འདུག་བདེ་ ལྷག་བསམ་ཡང་། གར་ཡང་མ་བསམས་པས་རྟོག་པ་རང་གིས་མེད་དོ།

We do not limit any kind of activities of daily life, and we can integrate them. དེ་ལ་གཟུང་འཛིན་ཐམས་ཅད་མ་སྤངས་པར་མི་རྒྱ་བས་འཛིན་ རྟོག་པར་མ་གོ་ལོ། For that reason we are not conditioned by dualistic vision, even though we have it and live in a normal human condition. We shouldn't worry about falling into the ordinary condition.

ཡུལ་སེམས་སོ་སོར་མེད་པས་མ་འགགས་པའི་སྒྲོམ་བར་མ་གོ་ལ་བའོ།

We also do not fall into the consideration of subject and object etc., so we also do not fall into the wrong direction.

གང་ལ་ཡང་སྤོང་ལེན་མེད་པས་ཉན་ཐོས་རང་རྒྱལ་དུ་མ་ལྷུང་དོ།

There is nothing that we accept or reject and we do not fall into a dimension like the state of the Hinayana.

རང་རང་གི་ལྟ་བ་ཕྱོགས་ཅན་གྱི་གཞུང་རྒྱུགས་སུ་ལྟ་སྒྲོམ་མེད་པས་ཐེག་པ་གང་ དུ་འང་མ་གོ་ལ་ཏེ།

Even though there are many different kinds of points of view, because every school has a different point of view, we do not particularly accept or enter into those limitations so we do not fall into that kind of direction.

རང་བཞིན་མི་རྟོག་ ཟུག་འདུག་པས་ལས་སུ་གྱུར་པ་མེད་དོ།

We are beyond any kind of mental concepts so we do not have any of these types of problems.

ཐམས་ཅད་ཀྱང་མ་སྤངས་རང་ས་ན་གསལ་ལ།

We do not refuse anything. Even if we do not refuse, everything is clear in our clarity.

དེ་ལ་ཕར་བཟུ་བའང་མེད། ཉན་དུ་བསམས་ནས་བཟུ་བའང་མེད། Even if everything is in our clarity, we do not do anything in particular, or enter into concepts or accept something and enter into that concept.

དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་རང་རིག་ཡིན་ཡང་ཡིན་པར་མི་བསམ། Even if everything is part of the potentiality of our primordial state, we have no concept of that.

མི་བསམ། མི་དམིགས། མི་རྟོག་པར་མ་འདྲེས་པར་ཡོངས་སུ་རྟོགས་པ་ལ་

When we do not think or do analyses etc., when we do not enter into these kinds of limitations but do not interrupt our clarity, everything is clear and དེ་ཉིད་དུ་དམིགས་པའི་བསམ་པ་མ་ཞུགས་ པ་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པའི་བསྒྲོམ་པ་ཅེ། that is the state of meditation of omniscience.

ཟག་ཉིད་དང་བྱིང་ཟུགས་དང་ཚོད་ཕྱར་དུ་རང་དགར་མ་ཟག་ཏོང་། དེ་ལ་སྒྲིན་དུ་མ་ ཟུག་ཟེ།

Sometimes when we are too conditioned by sleepiness, and we have a sleepy state, not clarity, or we are too agitated, we are not particularly conditioned by these things and we do not remain in the concept that these are negative things.

དཀའ་ཐུབ་མེད་པར་རང་སྤྲོད་ཅིག་ཟེ།

We do not sacrifice anything. This seems a little contrary to the Mahayana system in which it says Bodhisattvas make sacrifices for the benefit of others. Also in the Hinayana style they have very much this Kathub (*dka' thub*) which means sacrificing. In the Dzogchen teaching it does not say that you have to make sacrifices to have realization. Also in Tantrism sometimes they also make lots of sacrifices. You can understand this by reading the wonderful biography of Milarepa. What Milarepa did was always positive and very good but his way of practicing was in a tantric style. He used to put a butter lamp on his head to do meditation because if he fell asleep the lamps would fall down and he would have a problem. That is an example of making a sacrifice. Then he remained all his life on the mountains with nothing to eat but vegetables. This is also called sacrifice. But the Dzogchen teaching does not say that you should live on the mountain and make sacrifices and live without food. But it also does not say that you don't have to make sacrifices – of course sometimes in circumstances it is necessary to make sacrifices. The Dzogchen teaching says that you have to work with circumstances. If it is necessary to make sacrifices in that moment, then of course you make them.

There are many different types of sacrifices we can make but in the Dzogchen teaching we don't need to make any sacrifice. We need to learn how we can discover our real nature. How we can have that capacity to integrate. If we have no capacity, to discover it, to learn about it we need to do practice in a limited period of time. Sometimes we need

to do a personal retreat for a week, two or three weeks, one or two or three months. We consider three months a very long time, and we never say it is necessary to do a retreat for three years, three months and three days. This is the tantric tradition. Of course if somebody likes to do this, Dzogchen teaching doesn't say that you shouldn't do it.

For example in the Dzogchen teaching we have three series – Semde, Longde and Updesha. Longde is mainly if you have doubts, for not remaining in doubts. This is the main point of Dzogchen Longde. First there is the Dzogchen Semde and direct introduction with which you try to discover your real nature. This is a more gradual way for people with less capacity to be able to discover it. In the Upadesha we have a series of teachings called Dzogchen Yangti. The Dzogchen teaching is called Ati which means primordial state and is considered to be a very important teaching – the supreme path. Yangti is considered to be even more important than Ati. What we find in this is things like a dark retreat for developing our capacity of integration more quickly, so it means we integrate, apply this practice for some weeks and some months and then when we have the capacity we try to integrate it in our life without limitations. This is the Dzogchen way.

Sometimes there are practitioners like my female teacher, Ayu Khandro. When she received Yangti teaching she became very interested in it and considered it was the path for total realization for her. She dedicated her whole life to doing this practice in dark retreat. There are no limitations that you cannot do that, but there is a normal wider path that we can follow and learn in general.

There are many quotations from the root tantra to explain this.

སེམས་ལ་མིགས་པ་བདག་མེད་པ་

The mind – when we are in the nature of mind there are no concepts, but if we are in the mind, it always creates many different kinds of thoughts. Most people are conditioned by mind and for that reason in the Dzogchen teaching we have many practices like rushen and different types of *semdzin* first of all to distinguish what is the mind and what is the nature of mind. We do not follow mind. Mind is useful at the beginning for applying some types of methods, something related to teaching and instructions and we work with that. But we do not go after our thoughts, our imagination and all the thoughts that arise. Many people say that they have problems because they are agitated, confused or always feel afraid. All of these things come from the mind. Mind creates many different kinds of tensions and day after day we accumulate tensions. Even though we accumulate a lot of tensions, the mind is never satisfied and creates more and more.

Sometimes mind also collaborates with our energy channels and then you can have experiences of visions and sounds that come from that energy. Then you think that it is not only mind but something concrete that you can see or hear talking in your ear telling you what to do or not to do. Some

people even ask me if they should follow these things or not, thinking it is a bad spirit that is talking in their ear. There are no spirits. It is only the function of your energy. Now mind is associated with this energy and making you have more problems. For this reason you shouldn't always go after your thoughts.

Of course, if it is something necessary, for example, you think what shall we have for lunch today? Shall we go home and cook or eat out in a restaurant? That is not fantasy. That is something concrete. Of course we should think but fantasy means you have nothing to do and are just fantasizing – what is he doing, is he doing something bad for me, what is he thinking, is there a person doing some black magic etc. All these kinds of things are called fantasy created with our mind. Sometimes it seems real. You must be careful about this and not always go after thoughts. Try to relax in your dimension, and not become a slave of your mind. In this case you can control it and know that it is nothing more than your mind. So this is what you should do. Here it says that if you are in your real nature, you do not have that problem, but when you are dependent on or dominated by your mind, your confusion is endless.

Then there is another quotation:

ཐམས་ཅད་མཁྱེན་པ་བསྐྱོན་པའི་མཚོག་ ། རིག་ཉིད་ནི་དམིགས་སུ་མེད།

This means that when we are omniscient, that means in our real nature, we are not conditioned by all our visions, even if they are ordinary dualistic visions. When you are in your real nature, it doesn't mean that your visions disappear but they are an aspect of the wisdom of omniscience. This is the supreme meditation and ། རིག་ཉིད་ནི་དམིགས་སུ་མེད། there is nothing concrete we consider to be a concept of this.

ད་བྱུང་རྒྱུ་གྱི་སྒྲིབ་པོར་ཞུགས་པའི་ཚེ། སྟོང་པའི་ཚོས་ལ་སྟོང་པའི་ཡུལ་མེད་དེ། མི་གནས་སོ།

When you are in the primordial state, in what you call the phenomena of emptiness, there exists no subject or object of emptiness. མི་གནས་སོ། Even not being in that concept. ཞེས་འབྱུང་བས་གསལ་ལོ། Then we can understand that.

དེ་ལྟར་ཤྲོམ་པ་པོས་འདོད་ཆགས་དང་མ་གྲུབ་བས། ཡེ་ཤེས་གསལ་པོ་ཞིག་འདོད་པ་དང་། བསམ་པ་ཅང་མེད་པ་འདི་འདྲུ་ཤེས་མེད་པ་འཇམ། འགོག་པར་ལྷུང་སྒྲུམ་པ་དང་། ཐེ་ཚོམ་ཟ་བར་འབྱུང་བ་ནི། སྤར་བསལ་ཏེ། འདི་ལ་བདག་མེད་པ་ཞིག་ཞེས་མ་བསམས་པར་འདུག་སྟེ། ཡུལ་སྤང་བ་སྒྲིམ་སུ་དོགས་པའི་བདག་གཞན་གྱི་འཛིན་རྟོག་མེད་དོ།

When we are in our real nature, any different kinds of ordinary emotions we have are part of our wisdom and we do not fall into our ordinary emotions. And when we are in the primordial state we also do not worry and think that it is like the Hinayana type of Gogpa (*'gog pa*), which means blocking all thoughts and there is nothing, only a kind of dimension of emptiness in which some kinds of practitioners remain for

centuries and centuries. You shouldn't worry about falling into this when thinking or judging does not arise immediately.

འདིལ་བདག་མེད་པ་ཞེས་ཆོས་མ་བསམས་པར་འདུག་ཅེ། ཡུལ་སྤང་བ་སྤྱོད་སྤྱོད་
དོགས་པའི་བདག་གཞན་གྱི་འཛིན་ཆོད་མེད་དོ།

When there is nothing, with this kind of fear then you are creating some concepts of that.

ཉམས་སྤང་བ་ཅི་ན། ཕྱི་ནང་ཇི་ལྟར་སྤང་བ་ཐམས་ཅད་རང་རིག་པས། ཀུན་ཤོང་ཡེ་ཟུལ་
ཟློང་ཡངས་ཀུན་གསལ་བ་ལ། བསྐྱེད་པའི་བཀག་པ་དང་། རེདོགས་མེད་པའོ།

This is another explanation of not having hope or fear.

Editing by J. Winkler, F. Sanders and L. Granger

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“FROM THE DEPTH OF MY HEART TO MY MOTHER YESHE CHÖDRÖN”

AN excerpt from an explanation by Adriano Clemente at Tashigar Norte, Margarita Island, Venezuela, 31 January 2025.

“From the Depth of My Heart to My Mother Yeshe Chödrön” is a text that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu wrote at the age of nineteen and compresses in a few pages the view and meditation practice of the Dzogchen teaching. Addressed to his mother by the author at the moment of their final leave-taking, when he was very young.

Good day to everybody. I'm very happy to do this second course here at Tashigar North. This is a very important place because it is the place where our teacher opened the gate of the Longsal teachings and where for the first time he gave this very important empowerment of the Jnanadakini, which is the root of the Longsal. For many years Rinpoche spent much of his time here on this island, in this place. At the time there were many problems related to the social condition of this country as well as other negative circumstances, so the Gar has barely managed to survive

these last ten years. However, thanks to the effort of just a few practitioners who continue to reside here, we still have this wonderful place.

I really hope that in the future if the situation changes here that other practitioners can come and enjoy and stay a few months here to do practice and deepen their knowledge. This is a very positive place for deepening the Dzogchen teaching.

Then of course we also need to maintain the place and collaborate according to our situation. Since I'm here, I'm trying to help, and I already

gave a retreat course last month and now I'm doing this second one before I leave in a few weeks. When we do a retreat, we concentrate on the Dzogchen teaching because we are called the Dzogchen Community. If we are introduced

This is a very positive place for deepening the Dzogchen teaching



to the Dzogchen teaching by an authentic teacher just one time and we follow the teaching, receive that method, that knowledge, then we can simply continue by ourselves. This is what we call basic knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching. But we have so many difficulties and obscurations due to our karma, emotions and lack of clarity that we often need to refresh that knowledge or that

kind of experience we had in the beginning. Therefore it is very useful to have different ways to approach the knowledge of the teaching. For instance, if we speak about

Tregchöd, which is the basic essence of Dzogchen practice, many Tregchöd instruction texts exist. Although they are all very similar, each one focuses on a different aspect or angle. So if one method or instruction doesn't work for

us then we can work with another text and another teaching.

For this course I chose a text that Rinpoche wrote when he was quite young. It is an Upadesa teaching. In general we have three subdivisions in the Dzogchen scriptures: tantras, *lungs*, and upadeshas. The tantras are the main original texts transmitted from the dharma-kaya or from Samantabhadra to the sambhogakaya. There are many tantras in the Dzogchen teaching, such as the *Kunjed Gyalpo* (The Supreme Source Tantra) and the *Drathalgyur* (Sounds and Dimensions Tantra). The *lungs* are the main points and are generally excerpted from tantras and have a more essential, condensed meaning. An example is *The Total Space of Vajrasattva*.

Then we have the *mennag*, or upadeshas. An upadesha is a teaching that a realized teacher transmits through their own experience of the tantras

and *lungs* and communicates to their students. Then it becomes an upadesha.

For instance, if we look at the Longsal cycle of teachings there is more or less one original tantra, although it is not complete. There are also initiations and sadhanas belonging to the Anuyoga, such as the Mandarava, Gomadevi and Jnanadakini practices, which are mostly Anuyoga transmissions. Then we have a series of Dzogchen teachings that all belong to the Upadesa category of teachings. They are in the Upadesa category because Rinpoche received all these teachings in dreams through different teachers such as Vairocana, Padmasambhava and other manifestations. In the end they are all mostly unified in his root teachers Rigdzin Changchub Dorje and Togden Ugyen Tenzin.

So we can understand clearly that the teacher is the main bridge for a practitioner to any kind of realization. And even though a practitioner may have contact with Padmasambhava, that teaching goes through the teacher and is a manifestation through the knowledge of the teacher.

In the same way, we have all these Dzogchen Longsal teachings related to

a specific terma. A terma is a kind of teaching that was transmitted, at the time of Padmasambhava for example, without necessarily being explained to a student, and that transmission entered directly into the mindstream or the consciousness of the student. This consciousness may transmigrate through different lives, but the seed still remains. Then, when secondary causes manifest, this mind treasure, or *gongter*, appears. However, for that to occur one must be a highly realized practitioner. If you read these Longsal histories it is very clearly explained. This particular text, however, was not received as a terma but rather is a text that Rinpoche wrote for his mother

in Lhasa, just before he parted from her for the last time, in March 1958.

Rinpoche's family was from Kham in the region of Derge. In 1956, Rinpoche went

on a pilgrimage to India and Nepal with his father. When they returned, at the end of 1956, the beginning of 1957, the situation in Kham in eastern Tibet had very much deteriorated because many Khampa fighters were rebelling against the Chinese armies there. Tibetans from Kham were trying to escape to Central Tibet because they thought it might be safer there, but the Chinese were stopping them. Rinpoche decided to escape to Central Tibet with his family and although it was not easy, after three months they succeeded to reach Lhasa.

While they were there the situation with the Chinese also started to become difficult and Rinpoche had many doubts. He did Ekajati practice in the Jokhang, asking if it would be better to remain in Tibet or to go to India. He also consulted some means of divination and it became quite clear that they should go to India as soon as possible. His father and mother, however, were not sure how they could go to India because they had a lot of yaks and other animals that they had brought with them from East Tibet. They said that first of all they would have to sell all these animals in order to have some money and then go to In-

Adriano Clemente

Adriano Clemente is the main translator for the project "Complete Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu." He met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 1975 and was part of the original group of students who received the first Dzogchen teachings in 1976 in Naples. That same year, he joined the University of Oriental Studies in Naples, graduating with a thesis on a Dzogchen Bönpo text. At that time he started working on translations of Tibetan texts, mainly authored by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, such as *Drung*, *Deu*, and *Bon*, the ancient Bön tradition, and *Yantra Yoga: The Tibetan Yoga of Movement*. He compiled and edited *Dzogchen: The Self-Perfected State*, and is the author, together with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, of *The Supreme Source*, a pioneer work on the tradition of Dzogchen semde. He is mainly responsible for translation of the Longsal cycle of teachings and of the *Santi Maha Sangha* training. Since 2003, Adriano Clemente has also worked for the Ka-ter Translation Project of the Shang Shung Institute Austria.

dia. They decided that Rinpoche, with his younger brother, Pema Gungtsen; an assistant monk and Rinpoche's younger sister, should go to India and their parents would join them later. So in March 1958 Rinpoche said goodbye to his parents in Lhasa. After a few months when they had reached Sikkim some of the animals accompanying them were not well because the weather was different from that of Tibet. Rinpoche's brother thought it was not good to keep the animals with them because they were dying and thought it better to return to Lhasa and sell them. In that way he could come together with his parents to join them in Sikkim.

The day after his brother arrived in Lhasa he was arrested together with his father by the Chinese. At the time Rinpoche was an important tulku and the Chinese were trying to catch all the important tulkus. But they thought he was in India with one of these rebel groups trying to fight against the Chinese so they arrested his father and brother. They were put in prison where they died after a few months as hap-

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pened to hundreds of thousands of Tibetans. Rinpoche attempted to go back to Tibet because he was concerned that his family were having these problems because of him. But he was unable to return and remained in Sikkim and then at some point he left for Italy.

So this is just a brief introduction, because that was the last time that Rinpoche saw his mother.

"From the Depth of My Heart to My Mother Yeshe Chödrön" is an important text because it's a very essential Tregchöd teaching. Previous to this, Rinpoche had written another shorter text for his father, which was also an essential Tregchöd teaching. I chose this text because it addresses in a simple and essential way the knowledge of the nature of mind and how we continue in that knowledge.

Every time I teach, I now read from the original Tibetan text and I want to explain why because people might think that if a text has already been translated, I could read directly from the English.

When translating from Tibetan we have to interpret some expressions. Sometimes we have a Tibetan word with two slightly different meanings and we have to choose one expression for that. When we have a translation, it means the translator made an arbitrary choice to go in one direction in the interpretation, but often it does not convey the whole meaning that is expressed in Tibetan. In other words, when we are reading a translation, depending on the translator, some percentage of the translator's understanding of the text may sometimes not be correct. For this reason I always prefer to read from the Tibetan.

First of all, the text gives an introduction to the nature of our mind. Then it introduces a method for discovering it concretely, and in the last part it clarifies what it means to continue in the state of Tregchöd, which

is the essence of Dzogchen meditation. So now we start with the text. Usually when we speak about the mind it seems to be something really very concrete and very active because everything we do is always related to our mind. If there



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (center) with his family, Lhasa, probably 1957. Standing from the left Rinpoche's sisters Trashi Yangdzom and Sonam Palmo, and his mother Yeshe Chodron. Sitting from the left Rinpoche's brother Pema Kungtsen, Rinpoche, and his father Tsewang Namgyal.

is no mind, there is absolutely nothing. Everything we do, everything we think, is based on our mind, on our thoughts. At the same time the origin of this mind that is creating confusion, ignorance and duality is the same as that of the primordial Buddha Samantabhadra.

We always say that the Dzogchen teaching is the teaching of the mind of Samantabhadra. This text says that Samantabhadra recognized that original condition and since he recognized it, he liberated himself. We, however, have not recognized that original condition and therefore we began to transmigrate in infinite samsara. Samantabhadra is very important in the Dzogchen teaching and is referred to as the Adibuddha, or primordial Buddha. Ultimately, Adibuddha means our primordial state,

that original state called primordial Bodhicitta that has never been stained by delusion, ignorance, karma, emotions. As it has always been, it always will be.

That is also called Samantabhadra, but Samantabhadra of the base. It means we have that potentiality but until we have realized or actualized that potentiality, we are dreaming, we are sentient beings, we are transmigrating. That is

the difference between Samantabhadra and sentient beings.

We can understand what a sentient being is because we have that experience. But who is Samantabhadra? If we take as our starting point our limited perception, our dualistic vision, we are told that in the beginning there was one kind of being that never fell into dualism, that never started to dream, but awakened at the same moment as this manifestation of the base. That is called Samantabhadra. From our dualistic perception Samantabhadra can be explained as a being who never fell into dualism. That is the reason why it is said that our mind originated at the same time as Samantabhadra.

In the invocation of Samantabhadra it says, "I, Samantabhadra, have recognized the condition of the base. The state of Rigpa arose in this base condition from the beginning, but all other sentient beings did not recognize it and so the only difference between myself and all sentient beings is that they are dreaming. So through my aspiration, my invocation, may all sentient beings awaken from this dream to the real state, which is the same as my own."

This invocation is a very important teaching and is the essence of Dzogchen. According to some interpretations

This is an important text because it's a very essential Tregchöd teaching

it is a metaphor, and in the real sense Samantabhadra is just a symbol for our real state. That is, of course, the ultimate meaning. The text goes on to explain that now we have this great fortune to have met the Dzogchen teaching we should really go to the essence. We should not follow it simply because other people are following it or because we want to feel important or different. We should follow the teaching in an honest and sincere way, not with the motivation of the eight worldly dharmas. In general the eight worldly dharmas are the actions that we carry out in samsara, like a dance of the six lokas: we try to get what we like and avoid what we don't like; we like people to speak well about us but we don't like them to criticize us; we like to be happy but we don't like to suffer. It means everything we do is based on our selfish interest. Sometimes we apply or mix that with the teaching and then it really becomes a very wrong approach. You may remember that some years after he started to teach, Rinpoche wrote twenty-seven commitments based on that principle.

Now that we have this possibility to follow the teaching, we have to really understand what the real nature of our primordial condition is: what we call the view in the Dzogchen teaching. When we say it is a primordial condition or primordial nature, we use a name like the nature of mind or the absolute state because that means not being conditioned by all the relative phenomena of our perception. This condition is itself self-originated, which means that no cause has created it. We have that kind of primordial condition and we must discover it in ourselves so that it does not remain just a concept. How can we do that? We should not make any kind of effort with our mind or point toward it like a target, because if we have a target it means that we already have a concept that we are trying to reach. That concept, however, is a creation of our mind. For instance, we think that the primordial state is white and we try to be in that

condition—we do some meditation and our effort is to remove all other colors just to be in that white. This means that we are correcting, adjusting something and that becomes an obstacle.

When we do meditation, the first thing is that we should not enter into working with our mind. If we start working with our mind, it means we are following our thoughts and if we follow our thoughts it means we are distracted. We know what

we should do to remain present and undistracted. In any case we should not apply any kind of effort with our mind.

We relax this mind, or our presence, our consciousness; we leave it as it is in its condition, without changing anything, without following our thoughts, just keeping that presence and observing. If we do that, what manifests or what we can experience in that moment is called the wisdom of the self-originated state, of instant presence manifesting nakedly. This is one way of observing our mind. It is like muddy water. If we don't do anything with this water but just leave it as it is, gradually the pure part separates from the impure part and in that moment the water becomes limpid. In the same way we can have that natural clarity of our mind, and if we have that recognition, this self-originated wisdom can manifest nakedly.

We can have that experience of this self-originated wisdom, but we cannot express or explain it. We cannot say it is like this or like that. As we said at the beginning, we should not try to make a concept of our real condition because it is not something we can define. It is not something that has a cause for it to arise, or a place where it dwells or where it ends. It is beyond all our dualistic concepts. If we relax in that condition we are no longer involved with our attachments and aversions, our desires or repulsions and everything based on our thoughts. When we are relaxed in that state, even if thoughts or emotions arise, we do not follow them and so they disappear in the same way that they arose. All these

concepts of liberation, of illusion and delusion, are concepts arising from our dualistic mind, from our thoughts, and in that moment we don't need to follow them. We simply relax in that condition that is beyond all dualistic concepts.

When we consider the state of dhar-makaya it means that all our concepts are pacified or dissolved in that state. It is not that we are doing something with our effort but naturally that condition arises. It is also called the essence, which is pure from the beginning, the dimension of all-pervading immense emptiness. When we make a subdivision from our dualistic point of view to consider the condition of our mind or our consciousness, we say that the essence is empty because we cannot find anything concrete, while its nature is clarity, because thoughts and sense perceptions continually arise. And this manifestation of clarity is related with our potentiality of energy that continues without interruption.

The text explains that first of all we are in the essence—the state beyond all concepts—then at the same time we have that self-perfected nature or the aspect of clarity. These two aspects, emptiness and clarity, are inseparable. They are without duality, and that is called the primordial condition of our state. The nature of the three kayas of the three dimensions is already contained in our state of Rigpa, or instant presence, and if we have that recognition it is called having the view of the self-perfected Dzogpa Chenpo teaching.

Edited by L. Granger

Final editing by S. Schwartz

*These two aspects,
emptiness and clarity,
are inseparable*

REFLECTIONS

MAINTAINING THE TRADITION AS IT IS

“We are trying to continue to keep Rinpoche’s transmission as it was taught originally, in a pure way, hoping that in the future it can benefit all those who are interested in doing that.”

An excerpt from the Umdze Training by Adriano Clemente for the Practice of Mandarava February 24, 2025, Afternoon

I started doing this umdze training when Rinpoche was still alive and he very much supported the idea of learning how to sing the practices correctly. Of course, this does not mean that everybody can become a good singer, because for that you need training and some kind of natural talent. But still, we should try to sing with the correct rhythm, be in tune, and learn at least the basic melodies. Everybody can do that.

This is important because whatever we do in the Vajrayana tradition is on the level of our three gates. Sound is related to the principle of energy or voice and melody is part of the principle of sound and how we move with the musical notes.

It is important to understand that most of the practices that Rinpoche transmitted to us and that we do did not come from monasteries in Tibet or from practices that Rinpoche learned from some lamas. Most of them originate from other dimensions that Rinpoche visited in his dreams. For instance, in his dreams he saw how to do the Ganapuja. The way we do the Ganapuja is not found anywhere else and if you go to Tibet or Nepal, they don’t do it like we do. Everything comes from Rinpoche’s own experience and he taught us what he learned through his dreams. This is something very important and we should try to keep this tradition. Even



when we receive the eighteen empowerments of Dzogchen Semde with its presentation of the mandala and so on, one of the important principles is to maintain the tradition as it is. For that reason we should try to continue in that way because it is not something only related to culture but to transmission. We should distinguish between culture and transmission because they are not the same thing. We are trying to continue, at least I am trying to continue with all my

teaching that Rinpoche received in 1984 and is part of the Anuyoga transmissions. Anuyoga is a path of transformation but deals more with the essence of our condition rather than external factors or elements, such as asking for blessings. Anuyoga is based on the principle of primordial potentiality in the same way as in the Dzogchen teaching, although it mostly works through the three gates of body, voice and mind, especially through energy.

“...keep Rinpoche's transmission as it was taught originally, in a pure way”

effort, to keep Rinpoche’s transmission as it was taught originally, in a pure way, hoping that in the future it can benefit all those who are interested in doing that.

The Mandarava practice is a terma

We have a long version of this practice as well as medium and short versions, and its benefit on the relative level is basically to harmonize or coordinate the energy of our five elements. In Vajrayana, when we refer to the five elements, they are generally personified as five dakinis and for this reason we could also say that the Mandarava practice is a practice of the five dakinis. This is why we have all these mantras with the seed syllables of the five dakinis BAM HA RI NI SA related to the nature of the five elements, which in turn is related

to our primordial condition. This is not something outside ourselves and we are not asking for an external blessing but activating our natural energy, power and strength. The Mandarava practice is considered a long-life practice because long life refers to our elements. Generally, we have different elements of life such as *sog*, the vital force, and *tse*, or the capacity of our life force to remain stable. We do that through coordinating the five elements. This is the principle. Then of course all Vajrayana practices

are related to transmission, which entails the principle of what in Dzogchen we call the state of Guruyoga, or being in our real nature. That is the ultimate level.

If you know the Mandarava practice, in the end after we do all these stages of visualization, we finally discover what the real dakini is. Dakini is not only a female manifestation of something. This is on the relative level. The real dakini is our primordial state with its energy, this is called primordial dakini. When we reach

that level it means that Anuyoga arrives at the principle of Atiyoga or Dzogchen. This is the main principle of this practice.

MEET SONAM TSERING

SONAM Tsering is a 32-year-old young woman from Bhutan and a brilliant student enrolled in the second year of the **Bachelor of Arts in Cultural Heritage Conservation at the University of Vienna** on a scholarship funded by the **Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund**.

After graduating with a degree in architecture from the School of Planning and Architecture in New Delhi, India, she worked for a year at the Department of Culture and Development of Dzongkha, a Bhutanese government agency responsible for the preservation, protection and promotion of Bhutan's cultural heritage.

The Director of the Department told us that Sonam Tsering has proven herself to be not only a very professional but also a friendly and compassionate person and a resilient colleague. "Her contributions to various projects have been exemplary," she told us. "She has contributed to the design of a restaurant for the Bhutan Women's Technical Training Institute, public toilets in Lhakhang Karpo, a new temple in Tsirang (one of Bhutan's twenty districts), and other

small projects, demonstrating team spirit leadership skills."

Sonam is very committed to the preservation of Bhutan's cultural and architectural heritage, and she has her own distinct vision: a balance between progress and preservation, in which contemporary architecture can evolve while integrating traditional elements. She believes that this balance should be founded on a multidisciplinary and

coordinated approach between government, local communities, and other stakeholders to protect and enhance traditional architecture, which is also considered a key element for tourism and environmental sustainability.

The Cultural Heritage Studies Program at the Central European University in Vienna is highly qualified and offers students a comprehensive view of cultural heritage conservation practices.



Thanks to the Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund, we were able to cover the first year of Sonam's scholarship, but **we still lack the funds to support the current year, the second, and the final year, which amounts to 9,300 euros.**

The Fund was established in 2018 to honor the memory of Enrico Dell'Angelo, with the goal of supporting university or professional studies of young Himalayans in order to improve the quality of life in the areas where they live and spread their culture and traditions around the world. So far, thanks to the contributions of many generous people who care about the preservation of culture and the welfare and development of Himalayan communities, we have been able to fund the studies of 15 male and female students, who can really make a difference because of their high level of education and training. If you would also

like to contribute to the Fund and participate in the Sonam Tsering Scholarship, you can do so through our website by clicking on this link

<https://dona.asia-ngo.org/donate/> and choosing "make a single donation" on the "Enrico Dell'Angelo Fund" dropdown menu. It is through an excellent education that a capable and a determined woman like Sonam will be able to emancipate herself and be a key player in the future of her country.

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LATEST RELEASES

Tibetan Calendar for the Year of the Wood Dragon Year 2152

Updated annually, this pocket agenda contains concise indications of the practices recommended by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for special days, astrological aspects from the Tibetan lunar calendar, individual influences affect-



ing those born between 1926 and 2025, and positive and negative days for Naga practice. It is indispensable for identifying favorable and unfavorable days for daily activities and remembering special practice days. The calendar also includes a table indicating the days of the month to avoid surgery in specific areas of the body according to three Tibetan astro-

logical systems as well as a table with the first days of the Tibetan new year according to the Phugpa system. To better understand the information contained in our Tibetan calendar, refer to "Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar", also published by Shang Shung Publications and available in our webstore.

BOOKS IN ENGLISH

• Illuminating the Gateway to the Teaching. From Sūtra and Tantra to Dzogchen

The Lamp Illuminating the Gateway to the Teaching (*Bstan pa la 'jug pa'i sgo snang gsal sgron me zhes bya ba*) was conceived by the Author, the late Dzogchen master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (1938–2018), as a book that can provide in-depth insight into the nature and characteristics of the Buddhist teachings in their totality, introducing and displaying the various steps of the path much in the way as presented in the Lamrim, or "stages of the path," literary genre.

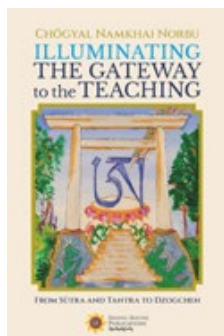
Largely extracted from *The Precious Vase: Instructions on the Base of Santi Maha Sangha*, the textbook of the foundation level of the Santi Maha Sangha training devised for his students of the Dzogchen Community, this book expounds the fundamental aspects of the Sūtrayāna and Vajrayāna that practitioners are meant to approach and integrate in themselves in the course of their journey toward Buddhahood.

Supported by Ka-Ter Translation Project

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/it/prodotti/product/e-book-illuminating-the-gateway-to-the-teaching>

• Special Practice Calendar 2025 - 2026

The Special Practice Calendar was first compiled by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu many years ago and contains his indications for each special day in the lunar year. In addition to describing specific practices for



Padmasambhava Day, Dakini Day, and full and new moon, this calendar covers anniversaries of many masters from the Buddhist and Bön traditions in Tibet who are also connected with the Dzogchen transmission. This booklet is conceived as a companion to the Tibetan Calendar published annually for Tibetan New Year (Losar) and containing detailed astrological aspects such as elements and major and minor combinations.

eBook only

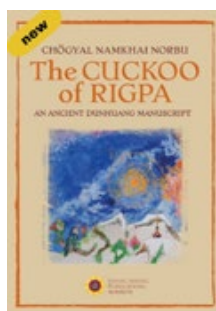
<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/new/product/e-book-special-practice-calendar-2025-2026-pdf>

• The Cuckoo of Rigpa (hardcover edition)

The Cuckoo of Rigpa (*Rig pa'i khu byug*), or Six Vajra Verses, is known to be one of the first five translations through which the great Tibetan translator Vairocana (eighth century) introduced the Dzogchen scriptures from Oḍḍiyāna. Although its essence is contained in only six lines, it unmistakably expresses the principles of the base, path, and fruit of Dzogchen in their entirety. In the Dunhuang manuscript the six verses are followed by a commentary, possibly the work of Vairocana himself, that explains the meaning of each verse with utmost clarity, including in relation to specific points of the view and practice of the Vajrayāna path of transformation.

Supported by Ka-Ter Translation Project

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LIBRI IN ITALIANO

• Consigli di Padmasambhava sulla Perfezione Totale

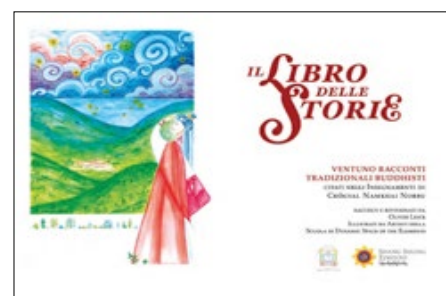
Gli insegnamenti della profonda via della Perfezione Totale o Dzogchen con-

sentono a chiunque sia interessato di scoprire la propria vera essenza. Questo volume offre il commento a un antico testo tibetano riscoperto da Dorje Lingpa, venerato maestro del XIV secolo. Questi insegnamenti, rilevanti oggi quanto secoli fa, offrono ai praticanti un accesso diretto all'esperienza della natura della propria mente. L'incisivo commento di Namkhai Norbu, un maestro di Dzogchen contemporaneo, accompagna perfettamente la meticolosa traduzione del testo radice e sottolinea la quintessenza della pratica spirituale, che non dipende da una data epoca o da un dato luogo. L'essenza dello Dzogchen può essere integrata perfettamente nel rumore della vita quotidiana, consentendo agli individui che vi si dedicano di raggiungere le stesse altezze spirituali degli yogin tibetani.

In coedizione con Om Edizioni

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/it/prodotti/product/e-book-consigli-di-padmasambhava-sulla-perfezione-totale>

• Il libro delle storie - Ventuno racconti buddhisti tradizionali citati negli Insegnamenti di Chögyal Namkhai Norbu



Le storie contenute in questo libro si basano su antichi racconti narrati in molti anni di insegnamenti spirituali da Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Nato in Tibet nel 1938, ha ricevuto l'educazione tradizionale di un lama reincarnato di alto rango. Avendo dimostrato una straordinaria capacità di apprendimento, era considerato uno studioso già in giovane età. La maggior parte delle storie raccolte in questo libro sono state narrate dal mio Maestro durante centinaia di ritiri



o conferenze pubbliche. Spesso diceva che tutte queste storie, alcune delle quali divertenti, fanno parte di un grande tesoro di racconti narrati in Tibet per molti secoli. Ricordo molte situazioni in cui il pubblico rideva di cuore mentre il Maestro raccontava queste storie con accenti diversi, espressioni facciali e con una mimica sorprendente.

Realizzato con il sostegno di Merigar West

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/it/esplora/novita/product/e-book-il-libro-delle-storie-pdf>

• Insegnamenti Dzogchen Upadesa di Rigdzin Changchub Dorje

Questo meraviglioso libro contiene, nell'ordine: la traduzione del testo tibetano originale del terma di Rigdzin Changchub Dorje intitolato *Istruzioni quintessenziali sulla pratica principale (dngos gzhii don khri yang snying bcud dril bzhus)* e le trascrizioni di tre commenti orali sul terma che Chögyal Namkhai Norbu ha dato: a Namgyalgar in Australia durante un ritiro che si è svolto dal 17 al 22 aprile 2009; a Taiwan dal 23 al 27 ottobre 2015; e a Barcellona dal 28 dicembre 2016 al 3 gennaio 2017.

Le Istruzioni essenziali sulla pratica principale appartengono a un ciclo di insegnamenti terma Dzogchen Upadesa di Rigdzin Changchub Dorje chiamato *Quintessenza nera dell'essenza suprema del cuore (bla med snying thig yang tig nag po)* che comprende un tantra e vari testi sulla pratica. Questo testo in particolare contiene istruzioni sulla pratica del Rushen e le due pratiche dello Dzogchen Upadesha, Tregchöd e, in breve, Thögal, nonché il modo in cui i praticanti, a seconda delle loro capacità, raggiungono la liberazione nella loro vita o nel bardo, ed una descrizione dello stato che ne è il risultato finale.

Dipinto della copertina di Giorgio Dalorto

Realizzato con il sostegno di Merigar West

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/it/prodotti/product/e-book-insegnamenti-dzogchen-upadesa-di-rigdzin-changchub-dorje-epub>

• Longsal Rushen. Commento orale

All'inizio del 2017, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu ha trasmesso gli insegnamenti sulla pratica della Separazione del Samsara e del Nirvana appartenenti al ciclo di insegnamenti noto come *La Luminosa Chiarezza dell'Universo, Essenza del Cuore delle Dakini* (Longsal). Queste pratiche permettono ai praticanti di scoprire rapidamente la loro vera natura separando la mente e la presenza istantanea utilizzando vari metodi legati al corpo, alla voce e alla mente. Questo libro contiene il commento orale di Rinpoche ai due testi principali pubblicati in *Insegnamenti Longsal, Volume Dieci: Le istruzioni sul Rushen esterno, interno e segreto* e il relativo commento che chiarisce le pratiche della voce: *l'Upadesha sui quattro allenamenti della voce dal Longsal Rushen*, tenuto a Dzamling Gar, Tenerife, dal 27 gennaio al 3 febbraio 2017.

Il libro è accompagnato da una registrazione audio per facilitare la pratica della voce.

Realizzato con il sostegno di Merigar West

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/it/prodotti/product/e-book-longsal-rushen>

• Scoprire uno per scoprire tutto (NUOVA EDIZIONE)

Tra i testi tibetani appartenenti alla serie dello Dzogchen Semde, si considera che quelli più antichi siano le prime cinque traduzioni di Vairochana, ovvero Rigpai Khujug, Tsalchen Trugpa,

Khyungchen Dingwa, Dola Serzhün, Minubpai Gyaltzen (chiamato anche Dorje Sempa Namkha Che) più il Mejung. In tempi relativamente recenti, nel 1971, è stato scoperto un altro libro che contiene le istruzioni essenziali sul modo di applicare la pratica nel puro stile Dzogchen in accordo con i sei testi citati. L'autore di questo scritto non è noto, ma può essere attribuito a Nubchen Sangye Yeshe.

In questo ritiro, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu spiega le istruzioni su come integrare e applicare la conoscenza del Changchub Dorje scritto da Mañjushrimitra.

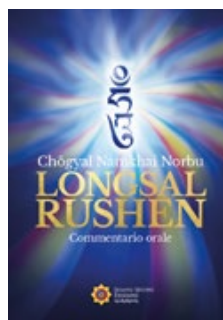
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LIBROS EN ESPAÑOL

• Abriendo nuestra mente

Era 1959 quando un hombre joven de la lejana tierra de Tibet aterrizó en Roma, Italia. Llevaba en su mano solo una pequeña valija, inseguro de cuánto tiempo se quedaría en Occidente. Llevaba también el gran título de una antigua herencia espiritual: era un tulku, un lama reencarnado, que personifica el entrenamiento más alto en sabiduría y compasión, el núcleo del budismo tibetano. Y en lo más profundo de su corazón llevaba un conocimiento vivo llamado Dzogchen, con su profunda enseñanza y práctica, dirigida a descubrir directamente el verdadero potencial de cada ser humano, más allá de cualquier contexto religioso o social. Namkhai Norbu había planeado quedarse en Italia por poco tiempo para ayudar al profesor Tucci, un



famoso tibetólogo, a llevar a cabo una importante investigación sobre la historia y las religiones del Tíbet, de las cuales era un experto apasionado. Sin embargo, terminó permaneciendo en Italia toda su vida. Se integró en la sociedad y en las costumbres de su nuevo lugar, se convirtió en profesor de la universidad, realizó investigaciones académicas, hizo amigos y contrajo matrimonio. Dado que el conocimiento del Dzogchen era la esencia misma de su vida, impregnó cada aspecto y acción de su existencia, y esto muy pronto comenzó a manifestarse externamente como un modo significativo pero distendido de vivir la vida y de relacionarse con los demás. Muchas personas —estudiantes, colegas, amigos— que percibieron y reconocieron esta profunda sabiduría que de él emanaba, se reunieron a su alrededor, cada vez en mayor número, para aprender y poner en práctica este conocimiento atemporal llamado Dzogchen.

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• Evolucionar

Las antiguas enseñanzas de la Total Perfección o Atiyoga, practicadas por siglos en la tierra nevada del Tíbet e introducidas recientemente en Occidente, nos ayudan a descubrir la respuesta a estas preguntas. Ellas presentan la esencia de nuestro ser como completamente pura y espontáneamente perfecta. Estas enseñanzas también nos proporcionan una vía para pasar desde el nivel de la mente ordinaria confusa al nivel más profundo de la consciencia primordialmente pura. En un plano relativo, pueden ayudarnos a superar miedos existenciales y a vivir una vida feliz y relajada.

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• Guruyoga

A través de la transmisión directa, el maestro y el estudiante, utilizando una de las experiencias de cuerpo, voz y mente, están en el estado primordial en el mismo momento. El maestro tiene un conocimiento concreto de esta experiencia, mientras que el estudiante puede que nunca lo haya tenido; pero debido a que no hay dualidad entre el estado del maestro y el del estudiante es posible para ellos estar en ese estado al mismo tiempo. No hay separación, son uno y la misma cosa. Estar en presencia instantánea, aunque sea solo por un segundo, es estar en el estado de Guruyoga. Yoga y Guruyoga son palabras sánscritas. En tibetano, Guruyoga se traduce como lamai naljor. Naljor significa yoga (generalmente traducido como unión, también dentro de la tradición tántrica). Pero en la palabra naljor, nal indica la verdadera condición tal como es, donde no hay nada que cambiar ni modificar, mientras que jor significa tener conocimiento. Este es el estado del Guru. Estar en el estado de Guruyoga es el aspecto principal de la práctica del Dzogchen.

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/books-in-other-languages/product/e-book-guruyoga-espanol-pdf>

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A TRIP TO MEET THE DAKINI

AN account by Cheh Goh of the recent pilgrimage to Maratika in Nepal organized by Shang Shung UK and the MACO Museum.

Prologue

In 2024 September I met Jacobella in Italy at the funeral of the late Nina Robinson. Nina was asked by Rinpoche in 2002 to lead Mandarava retreats and did so all over the world to become the embodiment of the practice and spirit of Mandarava. Under that circumstance, Jacobella told me about a trip to Maratika during Losar. I was sold the idea immediately.

Blessings in Sacred Places

I remember from the Kathmandu 1992 Dzogchen Community retreat something Chögyal Namkhai Norbu said. I paraphrase, "Nepal has many sacred places, and Kathmandu is a powerful sacred place. We should remember that the inconvenience, pollution and difficulties staying here compared to our normal life is very insignificant compared to the benefit of being here." This is indeed true also in this trip, just on a physical level, because we got to meet several teachers and felt blessed.

In Kathmandu, thanks to the long standing deep relationship with the Bon monastery Triten Norbutse, we got to visit the Khenpo Tenpa Yungdrung followed by watching their pre-Losar "cleansing spiritual dance" on the day before Losar. On the first day of Losar, Jamyang our super networker guide took us to Sechen Monastery to visit Adzam Gyalse, who is considered to be the reincarnation of one of the sons of Azam Drugpa. Sechen Monastery has the "Kudung" of Dilgo Kyentse, a visit of which is considered to be very spiritually auspicious.

In Maratika, we got to meet up with



Group picture with Özal Dorje Rinpoche. His father was a disciple of Rigzin Changchub Dorje.

Özal Dorje, a lama who can trace his lineage to Rigzin Changchub Dorje also. His father was a tertön – treasure discover – and was like Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, also a disciple of Changchub Dorje. Where he stays is roughly five minute walk from our Padma Guest



Natural beauty and artistic talent blend seamlessly in the streets of Kathmandu.

House. We were very warmly welcomed by Özal Dorje, who after our presentation of the white scarf kadag, kindly offered us snacks and spoke with us for a long time. He also agreed to our request for some teachings and gave a reading transmission of a terma (a discovered teaching) by our common "grand-guru" Changchub Dorje. We finally ended with a group photo plus 50 separate individual photo shots with him, because he looks remarkably like Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and made several people cry.

On the last day before our return from Maratika to Kathmandu, we finished our practice in the lower Heruka cave to discover many people lining the two sides of the road leading to the monastery where we opened the dance mandala to do vajra dance the day before. Shortly after we heard a helicopter arriving nearby with the "yangsi", the reincarnation of Tushik Rinpoche. I caught a glimpse of the 8 or 9 years old boy under a somewhat ineffective parasol heavily surrounded by various people. The entourage quickly moved on to enter that



Dancing on the mandala in Maratika monastery.

monastery. Later in the afternoon, we were informed that we could go to the monastery for some blessings. It was a routine present-kadag give-money-of-fearing return-kadag go-away parade. Perhaps I am so schooled in the habit of “blessing is not enough; I want some teachings”, I found it unfortunate that the little reincarnation boy was working really hard ringing the bell and beating the damaru leading some 10 to 15 monks in a ritual of some sort. I didn’t even have the kadag put on my neck by the boy himself; the kadag was returned from his assistant together with a consolatory red thread. It was all very strangely free of meaning, like an illusion.

Caves

Visiting Maratika means going to the Mandarava cave to me. My ignorance was exposed when we arrived in Maratika: there are many caves in that area. Not only the Upper Heruka Cave and the Lower Heruka Cave, there is also the “secret cave of Mandarava”, the Garuda Cave, the Naga Cave, the Tara Cave, the Majushri Cave... It turns out that Guru Rinpoche went to so many places to do his retreats. Everywhere he or Mandarava went, that location became a power place and an important sacred location.

Trouble is, Guru Rinpoche could – so I understood – fly, or could spontaneous-

ly appear in a cave (I think) without having to climb the hundreds of steps on the steep hills. We poor mortals have to purify ourselves with the knee wrecking long descent and long ascent – the secret Mandarava Cave for example – in order to visit any sacred hole in the mountain. Once there, it felt like the painful knees or sore feet were all worth it, however. After all, isn’t a pilgrimage a journey of purification as long as we still have some strength even though we are mostly retired?

The most interesting caves were probably the Secret Mandarava Cave and the Naga Cave. Both of them have very narrow passages from the cave entrance to arrive at the inside that opens up.

In the Secret Mandarava Cave, we bared our feet so as to negotiate the seemingly impassable gap, pulling our own bodies on the rock to arrive at a space big enough for five people to hang around. Our wonderful guide Min was able to encourage and reassure us so that we got in and out of the place like lizards.

The Naga cave was even more challenging, where one literally had the rock a few centimetres behind one’s back and above one’s head when crawling chin tucked-in through these slits. Before taking up the challenge, we passed through a rock chamber with many snake-like shapes on the wall and ceiling, clearly

showing why it was called a Naga Cave, where Guru Rinpoche was said to have subdued the Naga and made them the guardian of the teachings. After successfully going through the cracks in the rock, we arrived at a large space and a statue of Mandarava. The space was good for six people to rest a bit and to chant the mantra of Mandarava. We did not stay too long, as the air was not circulating and we wanted to get out before any sign of oxygen shortage hit anyone!

These caves were lit as the caretaker has run electric cables and light bulbs to enable visitors to see the interior of the tiny space. Great merit to the caretakers indeed.

The Practice Cave

Where I was most looking forward to visiting is what I call “the practice cave”, where Rinpoche taught and did the practice of Amitayus in 1984. It is called the Lower Heruka Cave at Maratika. The spaciousness is extraordinary. The spot where Rinpoche selected to sit down 41 years ago still has that strong presence, feeling which we sat around the spot to do our practice. Our group of about 40 people could spread around comfortably, while other visitors looked around or did some chanting and tour guides gave explanations of the symbols on the rock faces.

A place like Maratika is considered to be a sacred place, with special power to bless the visitors. Clearly, the best blessing for our Dzogchen Community people would be to help us with the practice of Guru Yoga. Sure enough, a complete tun of Mandarava led to greater clarity than when it is done in the city where many of us live.

Another highlight of doing practice in the cave for me was the 12A Vajra Dance we did after the mid-morning Mandarava practice. It was absolutely amazing. Later in the trip, Kyu, our Vajra Dance teacher, managed to put her mandala there and did the long dances. All Vajra Dance practitioners would be delighted to experience the dance in the Lower Heruka Cave for sure.

Even though the burning of all sorts of things such as supposed “butter lamps”, or incense of the Indian variety, and other things I didn’t recognize caused a

certain level of pollution within the cave and led to sore throats in many people, I felt that there is some truth in what was quoted by a lama: "Doing practice in the cave for seven days is equivalent to doing practice for seven years in an ordinary place."

Cave Manifestations

The walls of all the caves are full of figures, manifestations, appearances or traces of all sorts. The most commonly found are the handprints, knee prints, crown prints and the footprints of Guru Rinpoche. He appeared to have changed size in the series of manifestations, because in my untutored eyes, some are bigger than others, and the alleged impressed-in-the-rock prints definitely did not clearly show the same size.

Similarly, there were Mandarava-looking statues and rock formations in many places, and of various sizes. The size of Guru Rinpoche or Mandarava or their handprint was not the pressing issue for me, because in many cases, when our guide shone a

beam of light to tell us that some symbols or prints or something was on the wall, I simply could not figure it out. It was clear that my inherent lack of visual imagination and a terrible insensitivity to vibrations and power of sacred walls stood out nakedly to confront myself.

I secretly made a general prayer that everyone else could see and thoroughly enjoy the self-arising Tara, or Garuda, or Genesha and everything the tour guide said existed.

Practice

A major purpose of our pilgrimage was to do practice at the sacred location. Hence, we had a full program of three sessions of Mandarava practice every day: a short version at 7:00 am plus a long version at 10:00 am and at 15:30 in the afternoon. Then, there was a suggestion that maybe we could do our Sogtig in the open space at the

rooftop of our hotel, and catch sun rise at 6:01. So in the last three days of our stay, the fourth practice sessions was added. There were at least four people fanatical enough to show up each day at 5:30! Unfortunately, the weather did not support the early morning practitioners' efforts. We had the space, but not the blue clear sky – only mist and cloud and a mixture of mist and cloud.

Steps 48, 312, 90, 90, 222.

No, they are not magic numbers that appeared in my vision after nine days of practice. In order to go Buddhist style to the practice cave, we should climb clockwise up 48 steps to the square outside the Upper Heruka Cave, before going clockwise down 312 steps to arrive at the entrance of the Lower Heruka

Cave. Then we needed to climb another 90 steps to arrive at the wide open platform area where we did our daily three sessions of practice.

Once we were done, we would go back down 90 steps to arrive at

the cave entrance, and climb 222 steps up to where we started at the beginning. On route, on the very first day of our practice retreat, we could see the Himalaya snow-capped mountain directly. It was truly a sight to behold. In the subsequent days, the weather became misty or cloudy, and we did not have a chance to see such beautiful peaks again.

Food and Drink

By all accounts, the food we had in Padma Guest House, our home for 10 days, won universal praise. Yes, the thukpa, the bean soup, the chapati, the potato dishes were excellent. Yet, after 8 days of similar food for three meals per day, the Italians decided to help the kitchen staff get some time off. The Italians would cook pasta!

The result? Two big pots of spaghetti. Yes, no parmigiano, no ground pepper, no bread on the table and no vino ros-

so. But Maurizio got a standing ovation when the hungry pilgrims ate the pasta how an Italian would cook it. He won everyone's heart.

On the last evening before the return to Kathmandu, we finally got some whiskey into the big guest house kitchen. But we had a relaxed time, washing down delicious Greek cheese with three bottles of whisky which were emptied in a steady yet rapid pace. There was presence of awareness throughout our mildly alcoholic session. Bravi!

Arrival and Departure

Our excellent organizers shone in the attention to details in taking care of the participants in all the arrivals and departures from Kathmandu.

On my arrival on 25 March evening I was met by the pickup at Kathmandu airport and effortlessly checked into the guest house which is a seven minute walk from the Boudhana Stupa. The departure 15 days later was also perfectly timed. In equally meticulous fashion, we got ourselves organized into different Jeep numbers and travelled without a hiccup between Kathmandu and Maratika, with no luggage missing. This smooth arrangement was similarly experienced by other groups joining the trip.

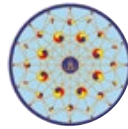
Full credit to the organizers!

Epilogue

I do not like to travel in packaged tours. This trip was a rare exception, and a happy and beautiful exception. Things ran smoothly. I was not aware of any hiccup or trouble. All practitioners were friendly, aware and collaborative. To experience a pilgrimage plus retreat with such great atmosphere throughout the 11 days is to experience the miracle of successful application of Rinpoche's teaching: being present and working with circumstances.

If there is another Maratika trip organized next year, I will seriously consider going again!

The walls of all the caves are full of figures, manifestations, appearances or traces of all sorts.



MEMBERSHIP APPEAL 2025 RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE INTERNATIONAL DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY!

DEAR Vajra Family, we warmly invite you to renew your 2025 International Dzogchen Community (IDC) membership. Your commitment helps sustain the continuation of the precious Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, and ensures that they remain accessible for all practitioners.

We are immensely grateful to be receiving the Teachings of Namkhai Yeshe, whose guidance and dedication inspire us to deepen our practice and maintain the continuity of our Community. As we move forward, your support is essential in maintaining the vision of our Master.

Renewing your IDC membership is an act of support and a way of reaffirming our connection to our Masters, the Teachings, and our Community. Your continued participation helps sustain retreats, webcast streaming, and the many other activities that allow us to

practice and grow together.

We thank you for your continued commitment to the Dzogchen Community, and encourage you to renew your IDC membership today. Please note that after March 31, 2025, your access to closed webcasts will be interrupted until your membership is renewed.

To renew your IDC membership, please visit dzogchen.net to view and choose the payment methods for the Gar or Ling closest to your geographical area of residence. Many of them offer the opportunity to renew membership

online through your personal profile at <https://dzogchen.net/profile/membership/>. Alternatively, you can contact the Gakyil and/or the Membership Coordinator of your local Gar or Ling directly for assistance.

Best wishes,

The International Gakyil and International Membership Coordinator,
Miranda, Gabriella, Piotr, Richard, Oni, Fabrizio, Rosa, and Marija

LOSAR 2152, YEAR OF THE WOOD SNAKE (2025)

This year, do you plan to be happy?

Will you follow the nose of the snake
to get down deep inside yourself?
Will you shed the thought
that happiness could be found
anywhere else but within?

A tiny snake
sticks out its tongue
to greet you
and uncoils at your feet:
let go of thoughts
about the future and the past.

Dear Vajra family,
Losar Tashi Delek!

We send you the warmest greetings
on Tibetan New Year of the Wood Snake.
May it bring you happiness, prosperity
and good health.

The Mirror team
Naomi, Liz, Nastya, Andrea and Paolo



Art by Sara Magnelli

The woodland ephemerals,
bloodroot, hepatica, and the rest
will soon be flowering—
they don't care their springtime
is so brief.

Peter Fortunato

RETURN TO PARADISE

A longtime cherished vajra sister reached out to me, seemingly out of the blue, to invite me to Dzamling Gar for Losar.

By Beth Norris

She plucked me out of samsara. I had never been to Dzamling Gar and I hadn't been to a retreat since our precious teacher transitioned. Obstacles instantly manifested in my mind...dog, job, grandkids, baby shower, money. Truth be told, I haven't been a great practitioner in the recent era. Mostly I had just been doing shitro for my dead homies...people dying from fentanyl, old age, and illness... and guru yoga...alone.

I booked a ticket within the hour. I registered for two online preparation courses, ordered some chudlen, borrowed a book and text on the Mandarava practice from a Vajra friend, and made a dadar from one of my son's hunting arrows. Fearing I'd be living on air and rice, I gathered an arsenal of foraged and purchased herbs for tea.

When I finally arrived...it was as if I hadn't left, as if Rinpoche was still seated before me in the flesh, as if Fabio hadn't mellowed like fine wine, as if I didn't have bad knees, extra pounds, and graying hair. Suddenly I was a beautiful immortal dakini, manifesting orgies of yab yum, spewing blue molten lava like a volcano, relaxing in a misty rainbow on the horizon at dawn. At sunset, I'd chop open my skull to satisfy my debtors. Sleep became solid. Dreams became vivid. The essence of Margarita Island, Khandroling, Baja, and Argentina arrived with me, a mandala of merged memories, familiar faces, and blissful winds. I hugged people I knew and kissed dear ones on the head. I teased a friend about the tent I once traded him for a bottle of Los Gatos wine. I negotiated sleeping arrangements with my Vajra sister Monica and marveled that we were in an actual apartment



with amenities, instead of tents. The immersion was intense. All days began at 7:30 a.m. and included three Mandarava practices, interspersed with yoga, dance, replays of Rinpoche, and Tsalung teachings. Some nights included Chöd. I was often the first person to the Gönpa in the morning, though a few others often joined me. One practitioner did yoga on the balcony as the sun rose. The Gönpa was so magical and beautiful with views of both the mountains and ocean. Practitioners helped me with mudras, melodies, texts, and with where to find a nearby beach of polarity with black sand in one direction and white sand in the



The author Beth (on the right) and her dear Vajra sister Monica Neff at Teide with a rainbow

other. Though we ate less, we ate well. My vajra sister Monica raced to the farmers market the moment we arrived and again the next weekend, the moment it opened. She prepared fresh veggies and rice daily. We feasted on her daily creation accompanied by local cheese, olives, papayas, and tea. Neighbors joined us someday. I called my kids to let them know I wasn't living on air after all. Every day I went to the café for a golden milk. Irma from Switzerland, Martin from Germany, and Sebastien from France were often sidled up at the counter. Naomi often made an

appearance. I savored the carrot and plum cakes. (Seriously, could someone share these recipes?). Dr. Phuntsog's wide advice was a precious gift. Seeing her and Rosa Namkhair participating in practice daily felt so special. Fabio was patient and diligent. I spent much of my intention trying to pull my nose back so it lined up with my belly button. I felt proud that Naomi was from my home Gar and I came to wonder if Sebastien ever actually slept. He was everywhere. During breaks, I ventured across the street for things like oranges, water, toilet paper, garbage bags, postcards, Canarian cuisine, and a really interesting massage. Though we rode cars to beaches, forest trails, and Mt. Teide, I was content living on foot, away from the traffic that is such a relentless part of my daily life back home. Each day, I meandered along stone paths under archways of blooms. I could live forever in the beauty of the plants and flowers--- the smell of the roses, rosemary, fruit, honeysuckle, and angels trumpets-- in the garden that is the Dzamling Gar. The rosemary bush outside my door was as large as a tree! The birds were so loud that when I called a friend, he asked what he was hearing in the background. I spied the bird from the t-shirt. A moment came when I realized the incredible preciousness of the folks hosting and leading the retreat. Their well-grooved efforts were a quiet perpetual dance surrounding us at all times. We were in a mandala of grace. I am incredibly grateful. Thank you so much dear ones. Happy year of the Wood Snake. Cheers to an immortal vajra life.

March 2025

THE STUPA WITH EIGHT SIDES IS PLACED AT DZAMLING GAR

THE Dynamic Space of the Elements team led by Migmar Tsering recently delivered their latest work, the Stupa with Eight Sides མཆོད་རྟེན་བླ་མ་གྱུ་དམ་, to the Global Gar in Tenerife.

The eight-sided stupa represents the heart shrines of the bodhisattvas residing in the ten directions.

On Friday, February 28, Losar, the first day of the new Wood Snake year, the Stupa was placed on a specially made plinth just below the Gönpa with a short ceremony in the presence of many practitioners from around the world who were present at the Gar. This miniature stupa is part of the Changchub Dorje Stupa project based on a terma



of the same master to place 108 different Stupas around the globe in order to harmonize conflicts and avert natural disasters. The project was initiated by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in 2012-2013 when he asked one of Changchub Dorje's grandsons to begin creating technical drawings of each of the stupas, based on the Master's terma. Although the original collected works of Changchub Dorje (sungbum) were destroyed during the cultural revolution, fortunately

a copy remained and the designs are based on that. The Dynamic Space of the Elements is trying to take the project forward. By placing this Stupa at Dzamling Gar, the intention is to create unification and eliminate obstacles as it contains a great number of mantras to eliminate and control negative energies.

The Stupa has been placed in an auspicious place according to Tibetan geomancy, west of the Gönpa and just below it, in a niche in the garden, protected by plants and trees. The Stupa is well sealed so that its precious contents are well protected but to keep it beautiful a protective glass case will be created to protect it. Although this Stupa is small, it contains everything that a large brick stupa would contain such as mantras, relics and so on. And, in fact, there is more attention to filling it because everything has to be very precise.

For practical reasons and in order to avoid any possible problems with the customs, the Stupa was brought to Dzamling Gar empty and the many precious objects to fill it were brought separately and finally the Stupa was authenticated. Some of the authenticated objects contained within the Stupa include tsha tsha made with many different types of relics from various famous masters as well as precious medicinal substances, thousands of mantras such as those of the 25 Spaces of Samantabhadra, the Song of the Vajra, the Tantra of the Single Son of the Doctrine of the Golden Letters, the Mantras of Kilaya, of Simhamukha, of Guru Dragphur, and others that are specific to this Gar such as

མི་ཁ་དག་བསྐྱོད་, མི་བསྐྱོད་, ཐམས་ཅད་, 'མཐུན་པའི་བྱ་ཤིས་སྟོན་ལམ་མཆོད་རྟེན་རང་གི་གུའུ་དམ་'

Mikha Dra Dog, Sri Dog, Thamcad Thunpai Trashis Monlam Chorten Rang gi Zungs.

In addition, the Stupa contains the Eight Auspicious Symbols, the Eight Auspicious Substances, the Seven Precious Royal Emblems, Double crossed vajras, the powder of six different medicinal substances, 25 substances com-



Photo by Giorgio Dallorto

prised of five sets of five substances which include five medicines, five kinds of grain, five valuable things, either precious gems or metals, five aromatics, five essences and so on.

Up to the present time, the Dynamic Space has allotted the following Stupas from the project to the following Gars, Lings and places: The Stupa of the Heart has just been placed at Dzamling Gar, Canary Islands. Paldenling in Poland has already placed the Stupa of Fire to eliminate negativities. The Stupa of Peace has been placed in the house of practitioners in Germany. Another Stupa is being prepared to go to Germany where it will probably be placed in the autumn.

Yeselling in Austria has already placed a Stupa of Peace at the Ling. The Stupa of the Earth is being prepared for Majorca and will be placed there later this year.

Once the financial goal has been reached the Stupa of Jewels will be placed at Merigar, Italy. In order to continue the project, financing is urgently needed to cover the costs of creating and filling the next eight Stupas. In particular, the Dynamic Space would like to be able to place Stupas around the Baltic and nearby, in an attempt to pacify the tensions and negativities in the area.

Please consider donating to the Changchub Dorje Stupa Project to bring peace and harmony to our planet:

<https://108-stupa.dynamicelements.org/en>

MERIGAR WEST - ITALY

CLEAN ENERGY FOR MERIGAR: A STEP TOWARD ENERGY INDEPENDENCE

THE *Clean Energy for Merigar* project was made possible through the support of the Italian Buddhist Union (UBI), which believed in our vision and contributed the necessary funds for its implementation.

Thanks to this grant, Merigar has been able to embark on a concrete path toward energy autonomy and environmental sustainability, reducing its dependence on fossil fuels and improving the efficiency of its facilities. This intervention is not only a benefit for the Gar, but represents a model of sustainable development that can inspire other similar realities. On behalf of the entire Community, we express our deep gratitude to UBI for this extraordinary opportunity.

The main goal of the project was to reduce fossil fuel consumption

Merigar is a place of great spiritual and cultural value, founded in 1981 by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, it welcomes practitioners from all over the world. Located in the hills of Mt. Amiata, the center has always tried to harmonize its activities with its surroundings. However, harsh winter weather and high fossil fuel consumption have necessitated a significant shift toward a more sustainable energy model.

With the *Clean Energy for Merigar* project, a transformation was initiated that has improved the center's energy autonomy and reduced its environmen-



tal impact. Two photovoltaic systems of 17.80 kWp each, equipped with 40.5 kWh storage systems, were installed to ensure energy continuity and reduce dependence on the power grid. In addition, high-efficiency heating systems were implemented with heat pumps, optimized to ensure uniform and programmable air conditioning in the main buildings.

From Vision to Implementation

The main goal of the project was to reduce fossil fuel consumption and ensure a more efficient energy system for the main buildings: the Yellow House, the Gönpa (the Temple of Great Contemplation), and the Zi House (Zikhang). The intervention consisted of several key phases:

Installation of photovoltaic panels

The photovoltaic systems, placed on the roofs of the Yellow House and Zi House, ensure a constant supply of energy, reducing dependence on the national grid. The energy produced is collected in storage systems, making it possible to manage peak demand and ensure continuity even in case of blackouts, a rather frequent phenom-

enon in Merigar. For both facilities, the photovoltaic panels were chosen to be embedded in the roof covering, improving aesthetic integration and ensuring maximum solar exposure.

Roof maintenance and improvement

The installation of the solar panels was accompanied by extraordinary maintenance work on the roofs. At the Zi House, deteriorated materials were replaced with stronger cement tiles, waterproofing tar paper was applied, roof ridges were redone, and copper roofing was installed on the wooden rafters to increase their durability. In addition, gutters were repaired and lifelines installed, which are essential to ensure safety in future maintenance. Similar work was also carried out at the Yellow House, with the ridges being repaired and tar paper being applied in uncovered areas. In addition, photovoltaic panels were embedded in the roof, improving its aesthetic integration.

A more efficient heating system

The new heat pumps installed in the Gönpa and Zi House provide a more efficient heating system than the old fossil

fuel burning systems. Using a remote management system, our Geko caretaker can schedule the heating according to the needs of different activities. For example, a higher temperature is maintained for Yantra Yoga, while a cooler environment is preferred for Khaita dances.

In the Gönpa, the system has been upgraded by replacing all the convectors and adding two units for more even heat distribution. In addition, the new system offers the possibility of cooling the area during the summer.

Monitoring and Expected Results

To ensure maximum system performance, the project includes one year of monitoring through a dedicated system that records in real time:

- PV energy production
- Building consumption
- The use of the batteries and the energy fed into the grid.

Annual production is estimated at 42,720 kWh, which is enough to cover Merigar's energy needs and provide greater autonomy than traditional energy sources. At the end of the first year of operation, data on production and energy savings achieved will be shared.

A More Sustainable Future for Merigar

As a result of this project, the Gönpa will be able to be used more frequently even in the winter months due to reduced heating costs. In addition, maintaining a more stable temperature will help preserve its valuable paintings and decorations, as well as preserve the wooden structure and ensure its longevity.

This transformation is not only an immediate benefit for Merigar, but also an example of how spirituality and environmental sustainability can be combined. Reducing ecological impact, improving comfort and ensuring energy efficiency of the facilities means investing in a more environmentally conscious and harmonious future.



**Realizzato con il contributo
dell'Unione Buddhista Italiana**



A Special Thanks

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Italian Buddhist Union for making this project possible, to architect Gabriele Franza for directing the work, to Cvetko and Domenico for their daily commitment, and to the patience of Francesca, who followed the entire administrative part with dedication. It was an honor to participate in the realization of this project, which

was successfully completed thanks to the effort of many people. We believe that an excellent job was done, which is fundamental for the energetic future of Merigar and for allowing practitioners to experience the center to its fullest, throughout the year.

MERIGAR EAST - ROMANIA

MERIGAR EAST: A TIME OF TRANSITIONS, CELEBRATIONS, AND FUTURE VISIONS

EXCITING news has reached all of us, Namkhai Yeshe will be giving teachings everywhere!

What makes this even more special is that, even before this was confirmed, we had already envisioned inviting him, along with the Namkhai Family, all the Lings from our region and beyond, to celebrate Merigar East's 20th anniversary in 2026. Twenty years—neither too much nor too little—but certainly, an incredible amount of work. Here we are, a



Losar, A New Gakyil, and a Joyous Reunion

As we were printing and sewing Lungtas together with volunteers from Romania, Transylvania, and Hungary, we were also moving steadily toward Losar and our General Assembly. After a long time, the Romanian Sangha gathered

What Else Have We Been Up To?

Spreading Lungtas across European countries—sending windhorses far and wide, with many more now hung in the Gar for the benefit of all.



Gakyil of only two colors, in the middle of nowhere, with a General Assembly ahead, staring at a candidate list as empty as our mind when trying to grasp Rigpa. Sounds like a bad joke? Maybe. But what we truly have is genuine enthusiasm—and hope that everything will manifest at the right moment.

So, we sent our invitation to Namkhai Yeshe and opened the doors wide for the entire Community to join in this milestone event. And not just to join, but to actively be part of it—whether through presence, ideas, collaboration, karma yoga, or work exchange.

Get in touch with us here:
office.me@dzogchen.ro

in person, and an important decision was made—on March 1st, just a day after Losar, Merigar East welcomed a new Gakyil.

Yellow Gakyil: Balla Krisztina

Yellow Assistant: Gyongyi Balla (Romania)

Blue Gakyil: Oxana Cojocari (Moldova)

Red Gakyil: Lucian Maidanuc (Romania)

Red Assistant: Juraj Michna (Slovakia)

It was a true celebration—lots of momos, Khaita, practice, cooking, laughing, playing, and more dancing! A heartwarming moment of community, marking a fresh beginning for those stepping into the roles of Gakyil and assistants.



Continuing our program “Meditation Training and Secondary Practices in the Dzogchen Community” in collaboration with Sangha App. We’ve just launched the second module! [Sign up here>> \(https://dzogchen.ro/events/meditation-training-and-secondary-practices-module-2/\)](https://dzogchen.ro/events/meditation-training-and-secondary-practices-module-2/)

Collaborating with the Hungarian Sangha, creating a space for deepening our understanding of Gakyil and Karma Yoga, thanks to the invaluable contributions of Oliver Leick and Fabio Risolo.

Releasing our 2025 Program! You can now pre-register and choose the best time to come and practice. The program is intense—so the practice should be at least as strong!

[Check it here>> \(https://forms.gle/JsEUzzKaeGQyGqWJ6\)](https://forms.gle/JsEUzzKaeGQyGqWJ6)

Gonpa Renovation Second Phase

Now, we turn our focus toward the next big effort: the second phase of our Project: Gonpa Renovation with Migmar Tsering. This place exists to manifest the Dzogchen Teachings, and every contribution—whether through volunteer work or donations—carries immense merit. If you feel called to help, you can find out [more here>> \(https://mailchi.mp/57ea8af4ee35/come-to-merigar-east-to-experience-the-evolution-21066377?e=\[UNIQID\]\)](https://mailchi.mp/57ea8af4ee35/come-to-merigar-east-to-experience-the-evolution-21066377?e=[UNIQID])) If you're ready to come for Karma Yoga, write to us directly at office.me@dzogchen.ro

is [open here>> \(https://dzogchen.ro/events/dzogchen-series-of-mind-retreat/\)](https://dzogchen.ro/events/dzogchen-series-of-mind-retreat/)

Upcoming Courses and Retreats

Clarifying the State: Bonpo Book with Elias Capriles (14-19 March). Register [here>> \(https://dzogchen.ro/events/clarifying-the-true-nature-bonpo-book-with-elias-capriles/\)](https://dzogchen.ro/events/clarifying-the-true-nature-bonpo-book-with-elias-capriles/)

Dzogchen Series of Mind retreat. Nyang System of Semde with Igor Berkhin(1-8 May,2025)—this will be onsite only and in English. Registration

Stay connected by subscribing to our [mailing list! \(https://dzogchen.ro/subscribe-to-our-newsletter/\)](https://dzogchen.ro/subscribe-to-our-newsletter/)

With love and hugs,
The Merigar East Team

KUNSANGAR NORTH - RUSSIA

KUNSANGAR NORTH ON AIR!

WE celebrated the snowy New Year with mulled wine, a bonfire, a tea ceremony and a fire show, which is already becoming a regular tradition. In the absence of a real snake, a gecko became a living symbol of the coming year.

On December 31, we arranged a festive dinner and gathered around a fire near the center of the School of Tibetan Medicine. The participants warmed themselves with hot mulled wine and celebrated the arrival of the new year in an informal atmosphere. And for the birds, we made a bird canteen.

During these days, there were retreats on Yantra Yoga, classes on children's Yantra Yoga Kumar-Kumari, Vajra Dance and Santi Maha Sangha.

An important event in February was the retreat with Namkhay Yeshe. We were waiting for it so eagerly that we melted





the winter. The weather was almost Italian. Compare two Februarys - for 2024 and 2025 (photos from the same angle with a difference of exactly one year - with and without snow).

At the end of February, we all celebrated Losar together. We actively prepared, and sewed Tibetan prayer flags in our special workshop. And then we spent time hanging them up almost around the clock.

"We send a big hello to everyone!"

With love,
Kunsangar North Gakyil



KUNSANGAR SOUTH - CRIMEA

CONTEMPLATING THE SEASONS OF KUNSANGAR SOUTH

E NTERING Spring 2025, we send you warm greetings from Kunsangar South, from its sunlit blue-sky valley framed by a patchwork of hills.

The days are gradually lengthening, and preparations for the spring-summer season are in full swing.

But what happened during autumn and winter at Kunsangar South?

Autumn began with changes to our Gakyil when Elena Sautkina (Blue Gakyil) and Elena Sycheva (Yellow Gakyil) joined us. At the Gar, work was tirelessly carried out and the program of retreats and practices was carried out.

In November, we organized an online retreat with Fabio Andrico on the Pranayamas of Yantra Yoga, attended by participants from 27 different countries. And on December 8, in the warm company of our Vajra family, we celebrated the Birthday of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

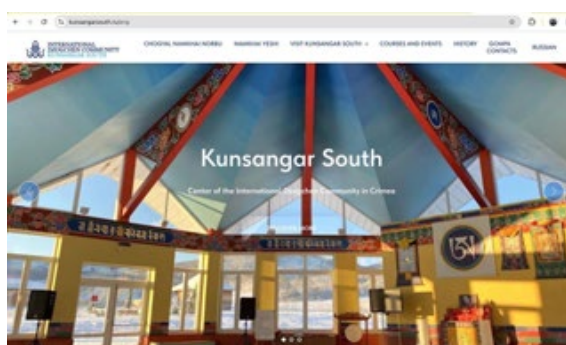
From mid-December to early January, a series of offline retreats with Alexander Gomonov took place: on the first group of semdzins, the Green Tara practice, purification practices, the three principles of Khaita and the Dzamling Gar dance, as well as the Song of the Vajra semdzin practice.

In January, we held an online retreat with Alexander Pubants on Chöd, as well as a wonderful series of online lectures by Igor Berkhin: Nubchen Sangye Yeshe on the principle of Dzogchen, in which more than 300 people took part.

Mid-February brought us back together to the Kunsangar South Gönpa to attend the webcast of Namkhai Yeshe's



Dzogchen Teachings. We received precious instructions from the very Heart of our Teacher and are now eagerly awaiting the May retreat.



In the second half of February, we organized an online retreat on the preliminary practices of Yantra Yoga with

Fazilya Nigmatullina, as well as a series of purification practices in anticipation of the Tibetan New Year. Losar itself and the beginning of the Tibetan year were marked by the Mandarava practice, watching teachings in webcast and the joy of connecting with friends.

Thanks to the efforts of the Blue Gakyil assistant Natalia Nemeny, we now have a new website: <https://kunsangarsouth.ru/eng>. Here you can learn about our Gar and keep up with the retreat program. This year, we will continue to develop our website.

Watch this space!

During the teachings of Namkhai Yeshe at Dzamling Gar, a presentation



of the international Gars was held. On this occasion, our Red Gakyil Alexander Popov created a short film: "Kunsangar South. Season 2025 (in color)". Please enjoy watching it [HERE](#).

In the Fall and Winter, various works were carried out at the Gar: we continued the construction of the shower complex, replaced the underfloor heating in the dormitory, and carried out many repairs. We looked after the trees at the Gar, ensuring their trunks have protective white paint and pruning them. We replaced the bed linen sets, bought a new stove for the summer kitchen and added new kitchen utensils, so that when our friends come to the Gar they always have everything they need at hand, and everyone feels cozy and comfortable.

We have many interesting projects ahead and are always looking for helping hands. We are currently looking for a third Yellow Gakyil, as well as a Blue Gakyil assistant. We ask those of you who wish to join our friendly team to fill out this [form](#). We also invite karma yogis to our Gar. Kunsangar South, according to many, is one of the best places for practice in our Community. Come here for a personal retreat (dark or regular - the choice is yours), join the in-person retreat program - we have so many wonderful events coming up this year. Come connect with friends and enjoy!

With love,
Kunsangar South Gakyil



OUR CONTACTS

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TSEGYALGAR EAST - USA

SAVE THE DATES!
AT TSEGYALGAR EAST

8th Annual Dance, Dance, Dance at the Vajra Hall, Khandroling, Land of the Dakinis, Tseg্যালgar East

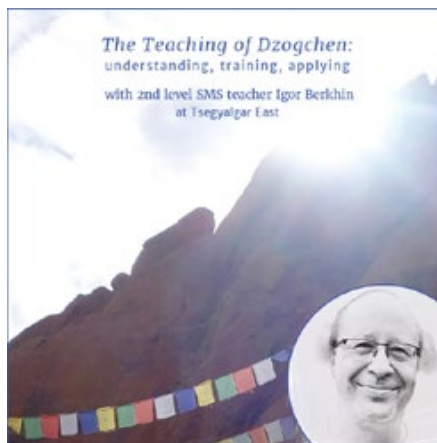
Save the Dates!

We are happy to announce the 8th Annual Dance, Dance, Dance Retreat at Khandroling, Land of the Dakinis, Tseg্যালgar East with Prima Mai and local Vajra Dance teachers Kyu Kyuno, Carisa O'Kelly, Bodhi Krause, Justin Hudgins and Sarale Lizdas. **Saturday August 30th - Sunday September 24, 2025**

Attendance is in person only. Additional details and the full schedule will be coming soon. We hope to see you there!

Tseg্যালgar East Gakyil

<https://www.tseg্যালgar.org/tseg্যালgar-east/events-calendar/dance-dance-dance3/>



The Teaching of Dzogchen: Understanding, Training, Applying with 2nd level SMS teacher Igor Berkhin **August 8-17, 2025**, Tseg্যালgar East In-person only at the Vajra Hall, Khandroling, Buckland, MA

<https://www.tseg্যালgar.org/tseg্যালgar-east/registration/registration-igor/v>

TSEGYALGAR WEST - BAJA CALIFORNIA

WINTER DANCE, DANCE, DANCE
AT TSEGYALGAR WEST,
BAJA, MEXICO - JANUARY 2025

by Marta Lopez Astrain



ONE year ago, just before the Wood Dragon Year started with its evolutionary energy, Carisa O'Kelly together with enthusiastic practitioners painted a wonderful Mandala in Tseg্যালgar West Gönpa that was finished just in time for the annual Losar celebration with a course of the Dance of the Three Vajras.

The Wheel of Dharma was turned and the Dance of the Vajra was present once more at the Gar. Now, one year after the wonderful manifestation of a Mandala and with the Wood Dragon Year coming to an end, we had the opportunity to participate in the Winter Retreat of Tseg্যালgar West with Vajra Dance teach-

er Carisa O'Kelly. From January 19th to 29th we practiced and delved into the three Vajra Dances of the Earth Mandala.

When one arrives at the Gar you immediately become fully aware of an ongoing cleansing process of your three dimensions. Your elements integrate with all what is going on here. The envel-

oping sound of silence of this space, the sound of our daily collective practices of Guruyoga and the dance melodies, the deep blue sky and warm sun shining every morning, the cool wind, the old rocks wrapped around by the beautiful fig trees that bring us memories of our dearest Nina Robinson practicing

Mandarava, the old Tamarindos and the Pochotas in YabYum, where a hanging hammock is inviting you to watch the vast night sky with all the stars and planets shining above, or lie down in the afternoon and listen to the sound of cow bells or hummingbirds being territorial or laughter present here and there.

Relaxing, singing and dancing. In the first days of the retreat Carisa started with the Dance that Benefits all Beings and she made emphasis on the importance of listening carefully trying to recognize and reproduce each melody and, by integrating the internal and the external sound, realizing the timing of each movement and the magnificence of the Mudra of compassion and unconditional giving.

Practicing and deepening the Dance of the Song of the Vajra. Each one with its own attention and capacity was able to correct, clarify and attain stability with this dance. When you find out that there is something you have not been doing right, a Mudra or the position of your feet on the Mandala or the correct way to do the turnings, it becomes so naturally clear how to refresh it, just as in our daily

lives. We had the chance to listen and dance to different melodies, some slower and other faster, one of them was only with the music, no words, somehow difficult to follow. When we danced during the Ganapuja the melody was very fast and we were all doing our best but some laughter caught us, as if joyful dakas and

dakinis were surrounding us. This dance is such a wonderful challenge but at the same time it gives us the chance to experience what “abandon the dis-

ease of an effort” means. The Dance of the Three Vajras. This dance is cherry on top of cake! Or in Spanish: “la cereza del pastel”. For the first time I experienced Pawo energy, it was strong and so moving and I just had to stop and observe what was happening within my whirling state. By then we had a full Mandala with six Pamo energies and six Pawo energies. Dancing the long version of the Dance of the Three Vajras and with the accumulated energy of all the practices we had been doing, gave us the opportunity to experience as Janina commented: a “collective state of contemplation”, and this is absolutely awesome.

*Your elements
integrate with
everything that
is going on here*

We also enjoyed two other activities. Carisa proposed watching a wonderful video that contains a selection of teachings on the Vajra Dance given by our Teacher between 1991 and 1999 and an interview with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu by Prima Mai. We can only be so grateful after watching the explanations of his dreams, how the Mandala and the dances took form and how he began to teach them.

Then, to finish our retreat and just before we left the Gar, we were invited to play the Liberation Game; goodness gracious!!! This is a serious game, it leaves you really pondering on life, after life and maybe lives before, and it is also so much fun. Deep deep thanks to our beloved Teacher, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for all his Teachings, his presence then and now; thanks to Carisa for her loving kindness and for being an amazing Vajra Dance teacher; thanks to our Vajra sisters and brothers that organized this retreat and last but not least, thanks to Lulu, who cooked delicious and Satvic food for all of us. We could all be so grateful for having the privilege to participate and do collective practice. OM AH HUM

TASHIGAR NORTH - VENEZUELA

MUSINGS FROM TASHIGAR NORTE IN 2025

By Rosemary Friend

I N 2002, Tashigar Norte was the destination for the first round of potential Santi Maha Sangha, Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance instructor enthusiasts who travelled for their assessments with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in Isla Margarita.



It was an exciting time. We met in a building that was to become the future gonpa, relished the raw primordial elements, swam in the invigorating Caribbean waters and bathed in the glorious

radiance of a Master who graced us all with his acutely, provocative direct introduction to our mind's nature. His benevolence permeates the land still today. Slowly thawing from a deep freeze that

traversed both the Venezuelan 'Crisis' and subsequent Covid phenomenon from 2016 to 2022, it is truly astonishing that this gar still exists and is functioning, thanks to the extraordinary commitment of Marina and Rolo, and more recently Douglas. We are forever grateful for the energy required to protect the vision and purpose of practical application for our Dzogchen community as referenced in the famous 'blue book'.

Something I am struck by, and I am observing how it manifests, is the evolution of Rinpoche's precious gift of the Vajra dance and its intended potential as a means for integration of our real nature in movement. More recently we have been fortunate to extend the profound application of "where, how and when we move" by slowing our pace even more – in the expression of our sound, light and rays in the form of the Khalongdorjekar. Whether we are dancing the Vajra dance of Space 12 A's or the Song of the Vajra, the Innermost Essence of the Luminous Clarity of the Dakinis of the Universe invites us to discover more concretely our rolpa energy as that inevitable realization that actually ... there is no outer ... and that everything is inner.

I recently came across Chogyam Trunpa's words from the 60's, in relation to how we deal with the chaos in this positively collapsing world of ours – reduce speed, reduce aggression and fall in love with something somehow; and if it is 2 people falling in love, not just with each other but with the whole world.

Our human tendencies for conflict and ego play have played havoc with our Dzogchen Communities everywhere. And with the rapid and profound technological advances hurling towards the transhumanist ideologies, we can easily and increasingly be dominated by the screen with its formidable sounds and images, increasingly difficult to discern in terms of their authenticity. What is truth? What is real? Who am I? How do I traverse this myriad of chaotic sensory and intellectual challenges?

I am reminded of a beautiful moment during Namkhay Yeshe's recent retreat. Looking into the mirror every day, recalling the depth within the mirror, I see my potential. Every morning looking and

seeing myself ... I remember who I am. I connect with that unswervable knowledge of my deep clarity ... and memories of those undeniable moments with Master and community. Crystalline vision ... light emanating ... youthful Garab Dorje playing with us profound presence and awareness.

Nature reminds us of the anchor of reality and limitation, beauty and cruelty, awe and wonder, fertility and brutality. The windy season has arrived in Tashigar Norte. When the wind stops, the heat reminds us that we are still close to the equator. I used to love the wind, embrace it at every opportunity. That was when my earth element was very heavy. Then Rinpoche encouraged us to

We are exploring each other. So we discover.... how to continue with respect for each other.

discover and balance our elements. The space element, being mother of all, is very helpful for balancing all. I remember contemplating "if only I could increase my capacity for contemplation, then my space element will be stronger". Slowly, slowly, we evolve and relax more and more.

Utilizing the abundant land and excellent growing conditions as long our water supply remains stable, we are playing with growing rainbow bodies ... in the form of banana trees, papaya trees, nispero, coconut trees, melon, watermelon, cucumbers, mangoes, aji margariteno, guanabana, pan del ano, pimenton, cacao and more. Local gardens created by Marina, Massimo, Ralf, Dina, Rosemary and Douglas are establishing, along with the Posada gardens which hopefully will evolve into a Vivero.

Rinpoche used to say that Margarita could be a place for some of us to retire to. A place to practice and grow old together. He also referred to the power of the region with respect to local guardians and the potential benefits for this part of the world.

What are we doing here? Now that the retreat season with Adriano and Dina,

Claudia and Pietro, Grisha, Olga and Tatiana is over, we are 8 people living here in Tashigar Norte. Marina continues to shelter and care for many rescued animals alongside preparing to receive Airbnb guests and blue gakyil matters. The many demands on Rolo to manage all the government and bureaucratic aspects of our existence here continue unabated. Douglas manages the 24hr on call security detail, infrastructure, roads, ACTN buildings and PCTN private houses. Some are fortunate enough to be able to take time out for a private retreat. Dina, Massimo and Rosemary have joined the gakyil – fresh blood for energizing our activity together. Red and yellow affairs always have their continu-

ous needs. Blue matters are much more dependent on the environment which strongly determines the degree of participation possible here. Zoom and international connections help maintain our bond.

We are aiming to meet as a Community at least for regular Ganapujas and Vajra dance sessions. It is easy to melt into the ether heat. Disappear for a while. The Khalong mandala is being finalized and is a permanent structure on the Gönpa floor adjacent to the existing earth mandala that has sustained the beautiful colors made possible by marble dust.

I am older now. Young people come to visit. They never met Rinpoche. But they have connected with Namkhay Yeshe. There isn't the same shared experience of immersion in the Dzogchen formal practices. But there is, without doubt, the shared experience of continuing presence and awareness. We are exploring each other. So we discover.... how to continue with respect for each other. And with those who come to visit or work or play ... we go ahead .. while we are still alive.

We hope that the limiting circumstances impinging on those geopolitically unable to visit, because of visa or fear restrictions, will one day dissolve.

But either way, we continue to do our best, while we are here. And as long as this Gar exists, we are thankful for the privilege of being here. We send our love and best wishes to you all.

A POEM FROM MARGARITA

POETRY CORNER

DEAR Vajra Brothers and Sisters, next Tuesday I return to Italy after almost 3 months in this magical Gar, a place where you can still breathe the energy and teachings of the Master.

Certainly the social, economic and political situation in Venezuela is very difficult; however in the Gar one can live and practice very well, also taking advantage of the beauty and energy of the land. I thank all the people who shared with me these 3 months in Tashigar

Norte. Special thanks to those people who with great commitment keep the place alive, and also to those who, being unable to come here, still contribute to the maintenance of the place.

Below I share a poetic composition I wrote at this time. E MA HO.



KNOWING WITHOUT UNDERSTANDING

Knowing without understanding
it is the highest and most healthy
form of knowledge

When you cling
to conceptual knowledge
it's like carrying a heavy burden

Because you are identified,
then ideas, beliefs, concepts
they limit you, chain you, most of the time, unconsciously

As soon as you lay down the heavy burden
and rest in the bare knowing, even for a moment,
finally you find a space of freedom and lightness

Getting used to dwelling with confidence and continuity
in this spacious and clear recognition
the attachment to thoughts decreases naturally

Comments, judgments, comparisons, analysis,
in general, all the incessant mental proliferation,
it calm down by itself in this spacious and clear presence

Thoughts-emotions obviously continue to rise
but they are only thoughts, only emotions
you can welcome them with a smile

The need to understand is born essentially from fear
when you fearlessly flow with things as they are
all questions cease by themselves

In this space without fear and questions
you can rest with ease and contentment
without doing anything and without being distracted

Friend, I ask you: what is more important and, at the same time, healthy and pleasant?
The heavy burden of thoughts-emotions
or this spacious, clear and gentle presence- recognition?

Pietro Thea

<http://www.sedendoquietamente.org/>

NEW GAKYIL OF TASHIGAR NORTE

BLUE:

Blue Gakyil:

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Blue Gakyil Assistant:

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RED:

Red Gakyil:

Douglas Uzategui
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Red Gakyil Assistant:

Massimo Catalfo
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YELLOW:

Yellow Gakyil:

Dina Priymak
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Yellow Gakyil Assistant & Secretary:

Rolando Carrasco
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We are happy to contribute our energy
for the benefit of the Dzogchen Com-
munity!
May this collaboration be auspicious!



TASHIGAR SOUTH - ARGENTINA

YANTRA YOGA IN TASHIGAR SOUTH

I N January 2025, two train-
ings to form instructors took
place in Tashigar South, led by
the international teacher Fabio
Andrico.

By Marisa Alonso

The first one, from January 3rd to 10th,
for the Eight Movements, adding some
days for supervisions, and the second
one, from January 15th to 23rd, for the
First Level of Yantra Yoga.

The first one was open to the public,
and mandatory for those who wanted
to train as instructors of the First Level,
while the second one was only for mem-
bers of the Community.

There were more than 120 hours of
powerful, harmonious, and dedicated
work, under the watchful eyes of Fabio.
Marisa Alonso and Carolina Mingolla
who assisted Fabio in the courses.

With the precision, patience and humor
that characterize him, Fabio explained
the whys and wherefores of each move-
ment, with special emphasis on the



and helping people to really understand
how to do the movements properly to
help the breathing do what it has to do,
and how to overcome or how to train
to overcome the barriers of the bodies

corresponding
breathing.

At the end
of the training
sessions, the
supervisions
took place,
which were an-
other learning
opportunity
for all partic-
ipants, with
Fabio correct-
ing every detail

that are not as flexible as we would love
to have!

Finally, Sergey Sedler, from Russia,
Ivonne Ruiz Martínez, from Barcelona,
Spain, Fera María Luque from Argen-
tina, and Malena Quevedo, also from
Argentina, were approved to teach the
Lungsang (Eight Movements).

Sara Pinet, from Mexico, and Pablo
Flores Guerra, were fully approved to
teach the First Level, and Carmen Torres,
from Chile, Dannae Ruiz from Mexico
and Malena Quevedo from Argentina,
are approved as a "work in progress",
and as soon as they fulfill the little issues
that need to be fixed, they will be fully
authorized as well.

TIBETAN ASTROLOGICAL FORECAST FOR THE YEAR OF THE WOOD SNAKE

A talk by Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo on the occasion of Losar at Dzamling Gar



Happy Tibetan Losar! Today my topic is the condition of this year according to Tibetan astrology.

This year is the year of the Wood Snake. According to Tibetan elemental astrology, the Life element and the Health element of the year is Fire and the Fortune element is Wind so this combination means there will be a lot of movement.

The characteristic of the Snake is that it's very honest but also direct which means that it may tend to clash with others. The Snake is determined, has a sharp mind and is a hard worker although at times it does not think well about the effects before taking action. The Snake can be a little rough when it gets angry. The Snake always has a lot of ideas, often trying to do two things at once. It is smart and talented, especially in the arts and easily falls in love. When people born in the year of the Snake find something they really like, they try to move very quickly, like fire. The Snake can be quite jealous. However, on the positive side the Snake is very honest and if he/she puts a little effort into whatever they do, there is a very good chance that they will succeed.

Those born in the year of the Snake will get along better with those born in the Ox and Bird years.

If your birth animal is Snake or Horse, there is a tendency to have physical problems such as blood disorders or conditions connected with heat - skin problems, gallbladder and bile disorders. Emotionally you may tend to be a little more angry so it's good to do peaceful practices such as Avalokiteshvara, Medicine Buddha and Vajrasattva.

If you are a Snake, you should not plan important things in the year of the Pig

which is the seventh "corner" or "house" [ed. in opposition] and is considered a difficult time. If your birth year is the Pig, you may encounter some challenges in the year of the Snake so it will be beneficial to take special care of your health.

If your birth animal is Tiger or Monkey, they are both the fourth house from the Snake which is considered cutting or harsh, which means you may have some obstacles. It may be health issues but more likely whatever you try to achieve, something sharp may cut your path and create a blockage. This year the Tiger and Monkey should pay attention to their fortune or prosperity.

In general, there are two ways to consider the aspects of the year. One way is to look at the condition of the outer nature of the year and the second is to look at the condition of beings, including human beings, who live in that nature. For this there is the divination of the Ox.

The Ox Divination

When we look at the image of the Ox for this year, the color of the ox's body is red which symbolizes Fire. This means it will be a dry year and crops may not be abundant. This astrology method is very ancient so by "crops" today we mean any material wealth that we may receive and since the land is very dry it means that financially we may have some challenges. This year may also bring intemperate weather such as rainstorms, hail and thunderstorms.

The mouth, lips and abdominal area of the Ox are also red, which means that the digestive system or capacity to digest will be fine, not weak.

The horns, the ears and the tail of the Ox are green hence the first month of

spring, of summer, of autumn and of winter will be more windy.

The four hooves of the Ox are yellow indicating that the general situation will be more favorable in lower areas such as at sea level, rather than in the high mountains. This year the mouth of the Ox is closed and the tail turns to the right which indicates that domestic animals may encounter some challenges although the year should be a little better for people. The oxherd is a young child which means that this year is positive for children, but not very good for senior people and more harmful for middle-aged people. The childhood period is represented by the element opposite to Fire which is why this year is good for children. The predominant element for senior people is Wind. When Fire combines with Wind, Wind becomes stronger which is why it is not very good for senior people. The predominant element of middle-aged people is also Fire, so double Fire means that this year won't be the best for them. The color of the oxherd's clothes, chuba, is green. Since Fire is the main element, the green color is supportive of Fire which will become a little stronger and be positive for the energy aspect. Although the chuba is green, the color of the belt is white which represents the Water element, hence the Fire element will be well balanced.

This year the oxherd is barefoot indicating that this year people will be very busy and it will not be easy to find peace or calmness. The right side of the oxherd's hair is close to the ear and lies more to the front while the left side is close to the shoulder and lies more to the back indicating that this year is positive for women, who will be less busy while men will be a little more busy.



The oxherd is holding a whip made of a soft material and dragging it on the ground which means he doesn't plan to hit anyone. It indicates that this year won't be the best in general but it won't be particularly difficult.

Mewa 2 for this year

This year is quite particular - we call it a "black" or dark year - because the mewa of the year is 2. Among the 12 astrological animals there are four animals - the Snake is one of them - that when they are combined with mewa 2 become a little heavy so in Tibetan this year is a black year. Although there is not much we can do to change that particular aspect, we can do something to protect ourselves.

The year is not good for starting a new business or starting a new life activity. If you are already engaged in something, then you can continue and finish it but it's not the best year to start a new project. It is not favorable for building a house or an activity that involves digging the ground or an activity related to water. If you have already started a project, you can go ahead and finish it.

If your birth animal is Tiger or Rabbit, this year you may encounter some challenges, especially with your fortune. It will be beneficial to hang prayer flags to strengthen your energy and wear clothes that are green or blue. Green is the mother of Fire and since your Fire element may be stronger this year the green color will be a good protection. The blue is also good because it symbolizes the Water element which can control the element of the year.

If you are a Snake or Horse your life element is Fire so this year it's better

to avoid wearing green and red as well as blue. The best colors for you will be yellow and white. Once you are wearing one of those colors then the other colors are fine.

If you are a Monkey or Bird, your life element is Metal which is represented by the color white. This year the best color for you to wear will be red and also yellow.

If your birth animal is Pig or Mouse, your life element is Water. This year should be quite positive for you and you are naturally protected. If your birth animal is Snake, this year will be a little challenging. Newborn babies, people who will be 13, 25, 37, 49, 61, 73 and 85 years old this year will encounter some challenges. [ed. These ages are according to the way Tibetans count the years. In the Western calendar they will be 12, 24, 36, 48, 60, 72 and 84 years old.]

If your birth animal is the Horse, your situation is similar to the Snake because these two share the same Life element and are like neighbours. The Snake [the animal of the year] is in the "fourth corner" - which means obstacles - to the Tiger and Monkey so these two signs should be extra careful. It will be beneficial to do practice of Odzer Chenma because it helps to clear the path from obstacles. If your birth animal is the Pig, this is in the "seventh corner" in relation to the animal of the year, the Snake, so you may have some health issues. In this case it will be good to do practices such as Mandarava or Medicine Buddha.

For those whose birth animals are the Dog, Sheep, Dragon and Ox, this year the first three animals are in a neutral position. The Ox, however, may meet some challenges because its Fortune element is the same as that of the Snake so for

this reason the Ox is not in a strong position this year.

The 5th Tibetan month, from 26 June until 26 July, may be rather a challenging month and if your birth animal is the Snake you should be a little more careful at this time.

The 6th day of the 11th month in the Tibetan calendar, Friday December 26, is not a good day, not only for the Snake but for everyone so if you are planning activities such as travelling, buying or selling, it would be better to avoid them on that day.

February 18 is Tibetan Losar in 2026.

It is important to bear in mind that this astrological forecast is general and does not talk about us as individuals even though we are also a part of the global situation. It is important to enjoy our lives no matter what a year brings. We have such wonderful teachings, such a big family, such a great Master and we are here together in this amazing place [Dzamling Gar] which is the gift of Rinpoche and also the result of collaboration and the hard work of many people. No matter what astrology says we should continue to move ahead with our lives and try to learn something each day: how to become a little calmer, how to become a little kinder to each other, how to use our time in a more useful way, how we can respect each other, and how we can be humble. And then we try to do our best.

Thank you.

Menpa Phuntsog Wangmo

International Director of the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine

MODERN GORSHEY NEW TIBETAN DANCES COLLECTION



WE Khaita teachers, Salima Celeri, Giulia Yangcen Mimaçiren and Lena Dumcheva, are very excited to share with you the Modern Gorshey* project: a new collection of contemporary Tibetan dances.

This project is our homage to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's work on Tibetan songs and dances and a sincere expression of our understanding of Khaita, with the intention of ensuring its infinite future. Salima and Yangcen: "In 2017, we were in Chengdu, China, for a series of events that later did not take place. This gave us the opportunity to spend every evening for about a month dancing with Tibetans in the square. It was an intense experience, as the Master's words became clear in our minds when he advised us to dance in a relaxed and joyful way. They truly dance very naturally. Thanks to this opportunity to dance with them, we deeply understood the Master's precious words about dancing with presence, joy, and harmony - without judgment - just dancing in a relaxed way."

Later, during the pandemic, Yangcen started her YouTube channel and began posting new Gorshey that her grandfather sent her from Lhasa. Many Khaita teachers took interest in these new dances. Together with Svetlana Vajnina, Thomas Edgar, Soledad Suarez, and others, we learned, filmed, and published numerous dances. In one of the videos, Yangcen shared the story of how she started dancing thanks to our precious Master and together with all the practitioners of the Dzogchen Community. This inspired many people from all around the world who subscribed to her channel to take an interest in Khaita and follow it on social media.

In 2023 we began to structure this activity. Following Rinpoche's example, we started organizing Modern Gorshey

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Dzamling Gar, Tenerife,
December 31 afternoon, 2017

"In the last years we have had so many new dances... So I am preparing a third volume: about 72 songs are already ready, but even when I am no longer working on that, if we hear some interesting new music with dances, then I want to add these... We can use this group and add to it for many years."

dances into the groups of ten. Currently, we have more than forty dances. While inspired by contemporary Gorshey performed worldwide, we carefully select songs that we believe align with Khaita principles. We verify the meaning of the songs with Tibetan language experts to ensure they meet Khaita criteria - such as having meaningful, auspicious lyrics



or being folk songs often reinterpreted in a contemporary style. We have compiled a list of song titles, their meanings, and the singers, and our next step is working on the lyrics texts. As for the choreography, we follow existing dances performed by Tibetans.

This is very much a work in progress, carried forward by a small group of volunteers. The project is coordinated by Salima and Lena, Khaita Committee members, while Yangcen leads the choreography aspect. Once the Modern Gorshey collection is properly structured and the related materials are ready, we will share it with everyone.

We now hold regular Gorshey sessions on Wednesdays led by Salima and Yangcen at Merigar West, and by Lena, Yulia Petrova, and Nicola Cassano at Dzamling Gar. In 2023, we also conducted two Modern Gorshey courses.

We are fortunate to have the support and collaboration of international Ti-

betan communities, including those in China, where we are in touch with local choreographers and dancers, and the UK, where we have worked with Tibetan artists on several projects, such as the

British Museum performance in 2019 and the recent Oxford University event.

These connections have fostered cultural exchange and a strong

sense of solidarity, with people sharing dances that are part of their daily lives. Through these collaborations, not only are we learning from Tibetan artists, but Tibetan communities are also becoming increasingly aware of the Khaita project and discovering Rinpoche's invaluable work on Tibetan culture.

With Khaita, Rinpoche taught us the importance of songs and dances in preserving Tibetan culture and language. We now aspire to build upon the foundation our Master left us by working with the circumstances we are given. Through the Modern Gorshey project

we hope to make our modest contribution to preserving the beauty of Tibetan culture and celebrate through dance together in a relaxed way, just as we did with our beloved Master.

We hope that these Modern Gorshey will inspire our Dzogchen Community dancers and serve as an auspicious cause for the wider audience to connect with Rinpoche's legacy and ensure Khaita's infinite future.

*With many Tashi Delegs,
Salima Celeri, Giulia Yangcen
Mimaciren, and Lena Dumcheva*

*Gorshey – གོར་ཤེ་གཞུག་ or “circle dance,” where *gor* means “circle” and *shey* means “song”; similar to *kordro* གོར་ཐོ་ meaning “circle dance” in the Kham dialect. In recent years, Gorshey dances have gained immense popularity among Tibetan communities worldwide, serving as a medium of social interaction and cultural expression, uniting participants in a lively and joyful experience that transcends individual differences.

*We are fortunate
to have the support
and collaboration
of international Tibetan
communities*

AUTHORIZING AND EMPOWERING NEW VAJRA DANCE TEACHERS

WITH great joy and under good auspices on Sunday January 19, 2025, at Dzamling Gar, in the presence of the Sangha of the Dzogchen Community, 13 dancers were authorized to teach the Vajra Dances of the 1st and 2nd level.

by **Adriana Dal Borgo**

Sunday was one of the few favorable days according to Tibetan astrology and it was auspicious that the new teachers of 1st level were 12 just like the dancers in the mandala, like the sounds of the A in the Vajra Dance of the Unborn. The number 12 also represents the completion of a cycle and at the same time



Prima Mai (left) and Adriana

contains the seed of a new beginning. To date, there are about 80 teachers in the world. It has been 30 years since Chögyal Namkhai Norbu officially gave the task of training new Vajra Dance teachers to Prima Mai and me, in a letter in 1994. This year was the first authori-



Newly authorized Vajra Dance Teachers (also shown on Zoom)

zation event without the physical presence of Rinpoche. Aware that nothing can replace the empowerment by the Master, Prima and I reflected on how we could handle the new qualifications and graduation.

Among the various ideas, I found one from one of our candidates particularly interesting: to dance all together, new and senior teachers, to welcome and empower new graduate teachers.

We are used to taking refuge in the Three Jewels: after the Master and the Teaching, the Sangha is the 3rd Jewel and is the living body of the Master, depository of his teachings and infused with his transmission. It therefore seemed a wonderful idea to invite the entire Sangha to attend the event and then to sing and dance together in the state of Guru Yoga.

And so we did, inserting a *thun* of the Vajra Dance immediately after the awarding of diplomas in zoom connection with many mandalas, teachers and practitioners from around the world.

We ended the successful day practicing Khaita, with a deep joy in our hearts and the certainty of the Master's vivid presence at the center of our large mandala.

Sunday's qualification concluded two weeks of intense supervision work with the 7 candidates present at Dzamling Gar. The others had already completed their supervisions with Prima or with me

and were connected online for graduation. As the Master told us many times, we teach with the three aspects of our existence: with the body we instruct in the movements, but we also teach with our energy and mind. When I work with future teachers, I try to raise this awareness, training and discovering together. While obviously keeping the same form in the precision of the movements, each of them will then manifest their own individuality and sensitivity in the way they relate to the students. I find it inspiring and enriching to work in this way. We are learning together.

I would like to share comments from some of the new teachers:

Dear Vajra family, I'm Maarten Schoon from Amsterdam. I feel deeply grateful for the wonderful Vajra Dance that we received from Rinpoche, and I am honored to be allowed to serve the Community as one of the first group of Vajra Dance teachers authorized after Rinpoche's passing. The Vajra Dance is such a wonderful and profound treasure. May we come together and Dance time and time again! Amsterdam has an active, welcoming Mandala. My gratitude goes especially to Stoffelina Verdonk, my first Vajra Dance teacher, and all the amazing teachers and dancers that taught me the little bit I know. Thank you! I'm so glad to be with people who share their knowledge and dance skills! (Olga Plaskina)



Vajra Dance teachers who helped doing the supervision

It's been a magical two weeks. We collaborated together as one family. The certificates we have received are just a symbol. A symbol of trust in us and a symbol of our responsibility for the future of Vajra Dance. (Andrey Chernyakov)

During these 2 weeks spent together, Adriana taught us in a perfect way: sharing every aspect of teaching Vajra Dance with us, alternating between explanations and sharing stories with Rinpoche, between letting us try and explain the steps and giving us all the tools for deepening the movements, as well as our practice. During that time, a bond was created within our group, and I really developed care for the other new teachers. A beautiful collaboration. We were 7 new teachers, very different from one another, and it was truly inspiring to see how each one of us has their own way of teaching, their own strength and beauty. It was like seeing roses open and discovering their color and perfume. This morning, I went to the entrance of the Gar twice, and each time, by chance I ran into one of the teachers from our group, who was leaving the island at that exact moment. It was a beautiful coincidence and also a reminder: "we are connected" on a deeper level now. (Marija Desal)

I had a really wonderful time going through supervision at Dzamling Gar. I had some interesting experiences and came away with a deeper understanding

of this method and even deeper faith in our Master. After working with Adriana during the supervision and teaching (although only partially) two weekend courses, I also have a greater respect for the teachers in our Community. It was also a privilege to have gone through the process with such a dedicated group. Even our occasional frictions served as meaningful lessons on collaboration (Justin Hudgins)

To me, the training, although it lasted only two weeks, felt like months. I remember our first dance on the mandala with the rest of the candidates – we were not yet synchronized. By the end of the course, however, we became a well-coordinated, unified team. During the course, we made a lot of concentrated effort which brought great transformations on many levels. At one point, I experienced our group as a mandala of peaceful, wrathful and joyful manifestations. I could see how every candidate possessed their unique qualities, yet together we complemented one another.

The tasks set before us were often not easy for me. For example, we had to learn how to explain the Dance of Vajra and its steps on the mandala to the students, tailoring our explanations to their individual backgrounds and perspectives, as if entering their dimension. Another challenge was learning to observe three mandalas at the same time, noticing possible mistakes and needs

of all the dancers and being able to approach them individually. These skills, when mastered, can greatly benefit us in our daily lives. They can help us develop holistic and clear perception of our surroundings – lift our gaze from our feet and finally see the people around us. I feel immensely grateful to all the participants in the training and especially to Adriana, who served as the binding link and the heart of our interactions, and to Prima, whose inspiring presence and support were invaluable. (Olga Gomilevskaya)

New Vajra Dance Teachers

First Level

Marija Desal, France
Justin Hudgins, USA
Olga Gomilevskaya, Russia
Andrei Cherniakov, Russia
Elerin Uibu, Estonia, France
Petra Zezulkova, Czech Republic
Olga Plaskina, Latvia
Izabela Jaroszevska, Poland, Italy
Francisca Fuentes Jáuregui, Chile
Maarten Schoon, Netherlands
Natalia Gershevskaya, Russia/Germany
Sarale Lizdas, USA

Second Level

Issa Cox, Peru

YANTRA YOGA FROM A TO Z

THE SECOND ONLINE EDITION STARTS ON MARCH 1



AFTER the success of the first edition, the online course "Yantra Yoga from A to Z" returns for a new adventure, thanks to the combined energy of the Yantra Yoga department of ATIF, led by Laura Evangelisti and Fabio Andrico, organized and coordinated by the tireless work of Nataly Nitsche, and the participation of a significant team of teachers. The course offers a valuable opportunity to explore Yantra Yoga in a comprehensive, progressive, and structured way.

This program is designed to guide practitioners through the open level of Yantra Yoga, with a path that integrates theoretical insights and constant practice. After the positive experience of the first editions in Spanish, Italian, and English, the new Italian version returns improved and enriched by the previous

experience, maintaining the approach that was greatly appreciated by participants, and constituting a unique experience of effective collaboration between the teachers.

Course Structure

The course runs over the course of one year and includes:

- Monthly in-depth workshops, lasting about two and a half hours. Each workshop introduces a new module of the program with theoretical aspects, movements, and breathing practices, under the guidance of 14 experienced teachers.
- Weekly live Zoom classes of an hour and a half to consolidate and progressively integrate the practice of the topics introduced in the workshops, through regular sessions led by a dedicated lead teacher.

Those with a basic knowledge of Yantra Yoga can choose to join the program at any time. Experience has shown that

A Year-long Yantra Yoga program with instructors from around the world

In Yantra Yoga from A to Z you can learn the detailed knowledge and practice of Yantra Yoga with an international team of authorized professionals who together make this a rich and unique opportunity. Each instructor and a Tibetan medicine practitioner will teach one of the 14 special workshops; additionally, a guide instructor will accompany practitioners, facilitating weekly practices and addressing doubts or questions arising from the practice.

as the course progresses, participants become familiar with all the fundamental elements of the practice, eventually performing the preliminaries, the five Yantra series, and the three pranayama techniques with fluidity. This approach allows participants to internalize the practice with awareness and continuity.



Teachers 1st edition



Teachers 2nd edition

A Collaborative and International Experience

The course is led by a team of qualified teachers, each with extensive experience in the practice and teaching of Yantra Yoga:

- Project Manager and Lead Teacher: Fabiana Esca
- Guest teachers, including senior teacher Laura Evangelisti, along with: Piero Abbondati, Riccardo Vrech, Michele Corrado, Letizia Pizzetti, Dina Priymak, Angelica Sidlecki, Marco Baseggio, Alessandra Fornero, Fulvio Grosso, Martina Bigazzi, Natasha Priymak, Alberto Pellizzoni, Alessandra Policreti

We have confirmed that some key strengths of this program are:

- The combination of structured lessons with constant practice
- The synergy and unique contributions of the various teachers, each bringing different perspectives and specific insights into various aspects of the practice
- The support of a community of practitioners, with whom participants connect

All of this creates an ideal environment to learn, deepen, and feel involved in the practice of Yantra Yoga. As some students from the previous edition observed:

"I participated in the online course and was very satisfied. In particular, the guidance was excellent. Fabiana combines her deep knowledge of the subject, her availability, and attention to the needs of each participant, so the sessions are very well-calibrated."

"Last year, I took the online course from A to Z, and it was a wonderful experience of practice. I hope many people choose to gift this to themselves."

The online format has proven to be an effective method for transmitting Yantra Yoga to a large and diverse audience, offering an optimal way to learn this ancient discipline in a modern form. The

success of the first edition confirmed that a clear program and regular meetings facilitate deep understanding and create progressive improvement in practice. Another interesting aspect is that all the participants from the first edition felt a natural desire to approach the Community and our Teacher, Namkhai Yeshe.

The aim of this second edition is to continue making Yantra Yoga accessible to anyone who wishes to learn and deepen their practice, providing constant support to integrate this valuable practice into daily life.

If you would like to participate or want more information, email yantrayoga@atiyogafoundation.org

SANGHA INSIGHTS: COLLABORATION

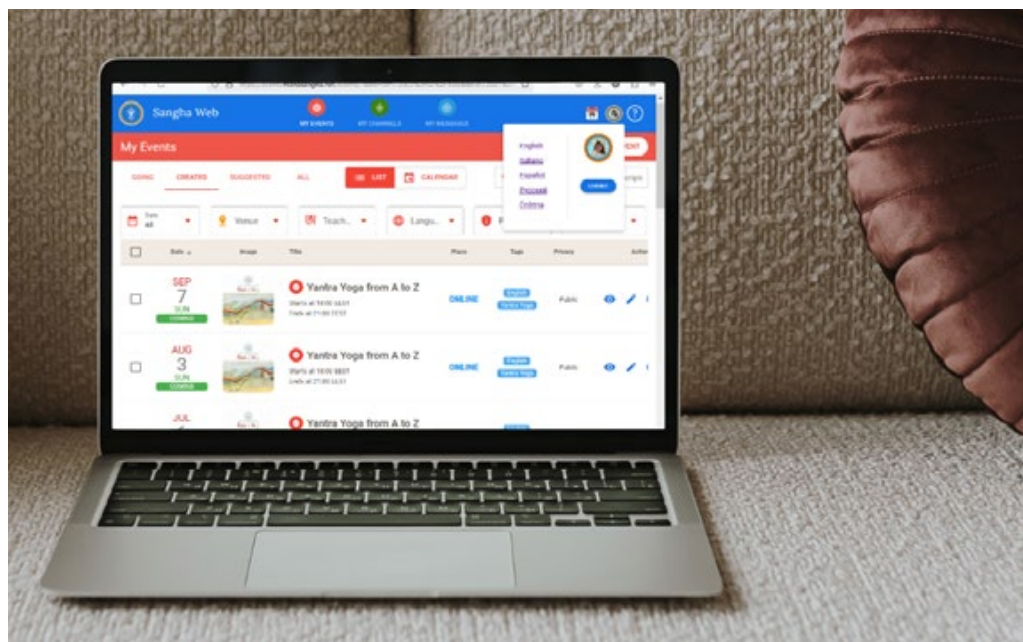
by the Sangha App Team

ISN'T it impressive how much we managed to achieve in the Dzogchen Community thanks to passionate volunteer work?

The main drive has surely been the example of our Teacher, who inexhaustibly dedicated his time to the Dzogchen Teachings. Karma Yoga means carrying out actions for the benefit of all sentient beings, without expecting anything in return. Our large, international community currently needs more involvement from their members to thrive. This is a call to action.¹

Maybe we still live with the stereotype of the real practitioner who isolates him/herself to achieve the liberation of all worldly deeds. But Dzogchen practice can and should permeate even the emotional rollercoaster of group decision-making with limited resources, as it happens with Gakyils. Experiencing that is how we will know we can really keep a cool head and enjoy whatever manifests. As Rinpoche explains, practitioners should collaborate in a way that guarantees their own evolution whereas "if the members do not have relationships between themselves and stay in isolated places without communicating, it will be very difficult to succeed in realising these very important objectives."²

We might be worried that we do not have the right qualities or that we will make mistakes, but our sincere intention is the most important aspect. If we learn to observe it, we can also discover how the ego makes us cling to our ideas, becoming a barrier to an authentic service. It's a great practice!



The Gakyil members [we interviewed](#) are feeling often overwhelmed and exhausted because of the large amount of work needed. As a principle a Gakyil consists of 9 people, but some centers don't reach the bare minimum of 3. Among the online skills needed are web design, fundraising, social media, translation and administration. The in-person skills needed might include cleaning, repairs, gardening or cooking. There is a strong need for people to volunteer, so if you have some of these skills, do not hesitate to offer a little bit of your time, as a volunteer, a Gakyil member or as an assistant.

To support this process, we created the discussion channel "Jobs and Karma Yoga." In Sangha App Gakyils can post their Karma Yoga opportunities, while volunteers can actively offer their collaboration and time. Karma Yoga is not just about work, but about receiving guidance, learning and practicing together with others.

The Gakyil, or "the wheel of joy," represents "on the one hand, the inflow of

the combined energies of all Dzogchen practitioners, and on the other hand, all the benefits that derive from such energies, spreading in all directions, bringing happiness to infinite beings."³

Using Sangha App on your desktop

Many of us like to take our time with technology, sitting at a big screen with a cup of tea and without constant interruptions. Sangha Web offers you the possibility to use some of the main features of our app from the comfort of your desktop. Among the advantages are the possibility to insert recurring events and to upload pictures from your computer to the discussion groups.

1 - In compiling the reflections in this article, we were inspired by the teachings given by Oliver Leick on Jan 26, 2025 on "Karma Yoga and the Gakyil"

2 - Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2006) The Dzogchen Community, Shang Shung Publications.

3 - Chögyal Namkhai Norbu – The Dzogchen Community

In My Events, you can browse and filter through all the events and you can comfortably [add your own events](#). You also have access to the Channels, private messages and the Tibetan calendar.

For those who already registered to Sangha App, accessing it is very simple and does not require a download or an installation. On your usual browser, go to <https://events.mahasangha.net/> and insert your usual email address. You will receive a one-time password by email and... you're in! For those who do not have a smartphone, Sangha Web

can be a solution to stay connected to the community. You can use a friend's smartphone for the initial registration, or ask us for [help](#). Then you can enjoy it your way! [Here](#) you can find more detailed instructions.

New channel: Daily and weekly practices

We are happy to announce the start of the [second part of the program "Meditation training and second-](#)

[ary practices](#)" organized by Merigar East and supported by Sangha App, on Daily and Weekly practices. From March to April, every Monday, practitioners will deepen the Short Thun, Medium Thun, and the Ganapuja. The channel on Sangha App will be the virtual space for sharing information and resources, as well as asking questions to the SMS teachers.

IN-DEPTH

INDIAN AND TIBETAN DOCTRINE OF SOUND

A talk given by Fabian Sanders at Dzamling Gar, Tenerife on February 5, 2025.

This topic about sound and sound doctrines in India and consequently Tibet is the fruit of my personal research. Since I teach Tibetan language, I developed an interest in understanding the roots, the nature, and the doctrines that are aimed at explaining what sound, and consequently language are. In particular also how mantras work and how language can be understood and applied to different levels of practice.

Ancient India dedicated the best part of the last 3000 years to understanding and transmitting sound and its role within the development of the universe. And, I think, the depth, the extent and profundity of the Indian understanding of sound are unmatched in any other tradition in the world.



Understanding the word "universe"

Let's start from the beginning. First, the word universe should be understood correctly. Nowadays, many people speak of parallel universes, multiple universes, multiverses, and so on, but this is a misuse of the word because universe means "everything" which is all inclusive. So we need to keep to the word in order to have the power to understand the concept behind the word. If we misunderstand the word, we do not get the concept anymore.

So, the universe is understood as a kind of pulsating entity. Its principle is outside and above time and space themselves because obviously, if the universe

is contracted, compressed, absorbed into itself, there is no space and no time yet. It's the conscious principle or divine consciousness which is a sum of all possibilities, nothing else. There is no intention, there is no want to manifest anything. It's just pure possibility in that sense.

And then at a certain point, because possibility needs to be realized, there is an explosion, like an explosion of wrath, which is a symbol for movement, for going away from the principle. All of the wrathful depictions of divinity have this idea of movement. And this first moment of explosion can be represented as breath, it is *prāṇa* in Sanskrit or *lung* in Tibetan. *Prāṇa* is, at this stage of cos-

mogony, the origin, the moment in which the manifested universe actually starts to move from subtle states towards degrees of condensation, of diversification. This first movement is instilled with prāṇa or lung. In a way we can say the universe is the breath of the absolute; absolute meaning something that is completely independent, completely free. But however we want to call it, the names that we give are just placeholders. Names belong to a point in the development of the universe where things already exist and because they exist, you can give them a name.

Here it's just breath and breath is the base, the core, the energy that produces sound. That is not only true for the universe as a whole, but it is true for individual people as well. You can speak because you breathe. You use your breath to blow air through the various organs in your mouth and nose, and actually the first movement of manifestation is breathing out. So in a way, the universe is the sounding breath of the absolute. You breathe out and everything manifests. You breathe in, everything goes back to the principle.

The individual is a small-scale version of the whole universe, every individual in particular humans, because they are somehow situated in the middle of the hierarchy of beings. They are microcosms corresponding to the S macrocosms and they do the same thing, for example, they breathe.

Coming back to the principle, to the origin, we have this explosion and prāṇa happens and is the energy putting into motion two things that are the same: sound and light. This is quite complex and is explained by different schools in different ways. It is particularly developed in Shaivism in India. And so sound and light come out as if they were a single thing with the same vibration or movement, *prakāśa* light and *vāc* voice or word. These are not gross light and sound, they are never objects of the perception of any eye or any ear.

Light and Sound

Also very interesting is how sound and light are explained at this stage. The light is white and the first sound is "A". It says, for example, in the Aitareya Aranyaka, a Vedic text: "Truly, the vowel A is the whole Word. The latter becomes manifold and varied when specified by the consonants and the fricatives." White light is the sum, the container of all colors of light. White light is the universal container or principle of all colors.

It is the same with sound. The universe sounds A and we do, too, and to sound A we start with our throats closed, the moment before manifestation, and then we open all our organs, mouth, jaw, tongue, with just the vocal

chords vibrating. This is expressed in the "yige cigmai do", the Sutra of the Single Letter, in which the Buddha explained the whole of the teachings as being "A". In the previous Vedic text I mentioned, when it says that the "A" becomes manifold and varied when specified by the consonants and the fricatives, it means that these initial sounds start to descend into multiplicity. It starts to have obstacles which cause it to fragment and become multiple, the seed syllables.

But very often it is expressed that from the initial sound A various seed syllables start to separate as fractions of this complete sound. For example, the seed syllables of the five elements start to resonate or decimate from this initial sound, and being vibration, being energy, they solidify.

They collect around them the constituents of the element itself. It is like the sound vibrates and by means of this vibration, which has a kind of agglomerating function, it gathers all the potentialities of the five elements initially. This is at the very subtle level. The elements have a color and a sound and these things start to separate, become varied, distinct.

This is particularly the language that we can find in the tantra, both in India and in Tibet. For example, there is a quote from the Guhyagarba tantra,

Fabian Sanders



Fabian Sanders was born in Italy from German parents. With an instinctive attraction to ancient and Oriental traditions, he started traveling and studying Chinese and Sanskrit at the Oriental language department of the Ca' Foscari University in Venezia, Italy where he obtained a Ph.D. with a thesis on the life and lineage of the IX Khalkha Jetsun Dampa Khutukhtu. Separately he studied Tibetan and started to teach it at the same university, a position he held for twelve years. He currently works as a translator and teacher of classical Tibetan under the school for Tibetan Language and Translation of the Atiyoga Foundation founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, his main Master. He has published several essays and articles as well as the first classical Tibetan language grammar in Italian.

which says: "The tathāgatas then expound the inner meaning of the letters, referring to the uncreated syllable A on the level of the buddha body of actual reality Dharmakāya, to the forty-two syllables that emerge in conjunction with it on the level of the buddha body of perfect resource, Sambhogakāya, and to the words and letters they form on the level of the buddha body of emanation or Nirmāṇakāya".

The development of syllables

At this level, we are still in the very beginnings of the universe and see the syllables develop. Most of these seed syllables are made up of a consonant part, a kind of closure of breath; then there is a vowel, which is the actual 'life' of speech. Finally, there is a reabsorption which is represented in these seed mantras, in these bīja mantras, as by the anusvāra (the 'after sound') or the M, which is represented in script by the dot on top of the letter, which represents the pure nasal sound. And this sound is a reabsorption and cessation of the breath and sound. The sound comes back into the inside. And this is exactly the same as what occurs for the whole universe, beings and so forth, birth, life, and death. It is a beginning, expansion, and reabsorption. Everything happens this way, not only in the life of beings, but also breathing, the pulsation of blood, the heart starts expanding, compressing, re-expanding, recompressing. And everything which moves happens in this way. So, to come back to the way manifestation occurs, this energy, this sound, which is still very far from being an object of the ears, differentiates, or some limitation happens.

For example, when talking about speech, and letters or language and grammar, the Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa, another ancient Vedic text, says that the innermost nature of all vowels (*svara*) is associated with Indra, representing the life force of speech because *prāṇa* fully enlivens them. While that of the spirants (*ūṣman*) is associated with Prajāpati, these are continuous sounds produced without closing the mouth. Prajāpati is the father or the origin of all beings. Occlusive consonants (*sparsa*, 'touch') are associated with *mṛtyu* (death), these require blocking *prāṇa*, closing the breath.

This analysis of the vowels, the spirants and the consonants constitutes the whole repertoire of the alphabet by which we can form all the words needed to represent all phenomena.

The inner sound of phenomena

And now a very interesting thing comes to my mind. It is the idea of

things forming around sounds: from seed syllables, we have further articulation, further complexity. And around this complexity of vibratory energy, phenomena aggregate, pulling the various elements towards them to produce a phenomenon. That is the basic idea of the function of sound within the universe - particularly in certain expressions of Indian thought, that a thing is such because it contains a sound that causes it to compose. It is like having a piece of paper with iron filings and a magnet underneath. When you move the magnet, all the iron filings align in relation to that magnet. That is an image that might clarify what is meant when it is said that sound aggregates phenomena.

For that reason, phenomena have an energetic core, a vibrational core that is their inner sound.

This is then used to name them, so in the idea of the Sanskrit language, things are called that way because that is their inner reality,

vibratory reality. For example, fire is called in a certain way because that is the true sound within that phenomenon. In other words, it is not an arbitrary attribution. It is the true name of fire that you are speaking. And in that sense, from this idea, all the practice and theory of mantra comes, because mantra is something that is not directed to a meaning or to some mental process of thought. But rather, mantra is a vibrational element, an energetic element, completely separated from meaning, and is supposed to vibrate harmonically with the world, or more importantly, with the inner world of the practitioner. The practitioner contains within him or herself the whole universe. And by using mantra that is the vibration specific for this myriad of aspects that beings contain, one can control them, can harmonize, can elevate them in terms of mingling one's mind, one's awareness with that higher reality.

And this happens in groups of things. So that is also a very interesting aspect of Sanskrit in my opinion. For example, you have a root sound made up of a particular collection of mostly consonants.

By differentiating this root with vowels and so on, you can capture the particular aspect of a group of phenomena that is related, or that is defined by a specific inherent characteristic. For example, the Sanskrit root M and N is used to refer to many things that are human. You can already see that even in English, **HUMAN**. In India the first human being in our world is called "MANU", "M" and "N". Humans are called *manuṣya* which means those who come from Manu, the first human. But also more interestingly, **MANAS** is the human mind. Humans are those who are characterized and defined by having a predominant use of the mind, mind in this inelegant aspect of being the endless stream of thoughts.

From these various ideas, also descend the concepts of power formulas,

which are a kind of application to a lower level. Now you want something, you have the formula. And Siddhas, for

example, can control vibration in a way that the phenomenal world obeys them. They have power over voice, over words, over things that obey their commands. There are lots of funny stories concerning the Mahasiddhas.

Mantras should be in Sanskrit

In any case, it is easy to understand how mantras must be in Sanskrit because they harmonize themselves to some aspect of reality: that is the sound and it cannot be changed. Many people these days want to translate mantras, but that's completely mistaken in the sense that it's not the point. Mantras do not have a relevance to the understanding mind. They are just vibrations, energy. An etymology of the word "mantra" says that MAN is the mind. TRA means to protect, so mantra protects the mind because it absorbs the mind and prevents it from going here and there and endlessly being attached to or hating things and so on and so forth by that way perpetuating one's *samsara*, one's cycle of rebirth. So let's say that the word

Phenomena have an energetic vibrational core that is their inner sound

used for the mind for communicating is a secondary application of the theory of language. It is a use of that idea for the practical use of communication, of symbolizing things.

So at this point, in the quote from the Guhyagarbha, the Nirmanakaya, this sound becomes letters and words. When the discursive mind that is not aware uses words, they are detached from that primary reality which they represent and they start to be used in the mind for representing meanings and to be the instrument of the discursive mind, the tool by which the thinking mind represents the world to itself. This is very interesting and just the surface of a very deep and profound science that encompasses the whole of the Indo-Tibetan tradition and by which it is clear that also for Tibetans the sacred language always remains Sanskrit, because this quality of being a real or natural language is recognized. For that reason, mantras must always remain in Sanskrit.

Also, interestingly, since we are now in the world of the mind, we are already very far from the first *prāṇa* outburst of the principle. We are in the gross dimension of manifestation and at that point, we have all sorts of phenomena around us. In order to understand the world, we do not only have a need for words. Words are just isolated items by which we try to represent something to ourselves. But these things that are out there, they have relationships, causes

and effects. Verbs or actions are done. Someone does the action. Someone receives the action and so on. All this interaction and movement cannot be represented by words alone, but must be represented by grammar. Grammar is the thing in language that allows us to organize things in time, in space, in relations, causes, effects. So grammar is also one of the sacred sciences in India, and consequently, in Tibet.

Tibetan as a sacred language

Tibetans consider Sanskrit to be their sacred language, and Tibetan to be a reflection of the sacredness of Sanskrit. From a certain point of view, Tibetan as well can be understood to be a sacred language. And for that reason, most Tibetan masters are reluctant to translate practices into other languages. They consider that practice texts need to be in Tibetan, mantras in Sanskrit. Tibetan language has, in my opinion, at least two reasons to call itself a sacred language and to call the study of the language a sacred practice. First of all, when Guru Padmasambhava went to Tibet and was invited to pacify and harmonize the land in the face of all these gods, godlings, spirits, and so forth that were wreaking havoc, one of the things he did was to go step by step

all over the land and subdue these beings. And although he was not Tibetan, he was from Oddiyana, tradition has it that he subdued those beings, made protector deities or guardians out of them and wrote down texts by which they can be ritually controlled. By which their vow of obedience can be renewed, and can be utilized by practitioners to have a good relation with these beings. All the practices of the Guardians and so forth, more or less come from Padmasambhava or some of his followers and they are in Tibetan. The point is that these texts, which are considered to be powerful, are in Tibetan. They are in themselves powerful in terms of the sound, the words that constitute them and they have power on these beings. So for that reason, it is a sacred language.

Tibetan is a reflection of the sacredness of Sanskrit

Another more scholarly reason is the fact that so-called Dharma Tibetan actually was fine

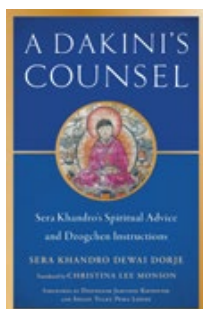
tuned to be able to perfectly represent the Sanskrit Buddhadharma in Tibet. I covered a lot of things but I hope I have introduced some ideas on how sound is actually a pervasive part of reality, both in very apparent and outer ways, but also in inner and profoundly essential ways for beings in general and practitioners in particular.

BOOK REVIEW

by Alexander Studholme

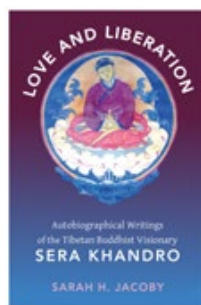
A Dakini's Counsel

Sera Khandro's Spiritual Advice and Dzogchen Instruction, translated by Christina Lee Monson, Snow Lion 2024, pp. 390, ISBN 9781611808841



Love and Liberation,

Autobiographical Writings of the Tibetan Buddhist Visionary Sera Khandro, by Sarah H. Jacoby, Columbia University Press 2014, pp. 422, ISBN 9780231147699



When Sera Khandro first heard the word "Dzogchen" as a little girl, tears flooded her eyes and the hair on her body stood on end, an early sign of her

destiny as a dakini and terton. Other childhood auguries included bearing the physical marks of a dakini (such as white hairs growing from the crown of her head), pulling a phurba part way out of a rock and curing victims of smallpox by the power of mantra. A latter day Yeshe Tsogyal, *A Dakini's Counsel*, translated by Christina Monson, is the first collection of her teachings to be published in the west.

Born to a wealthy family in Lhasa in 1892, Sera Khandro's identification with Guru Padmasambhava's famous consort was explicitly made in her lifetime both by herself and others. Her visionary

communication with this queen of the dakinis was a constant theme of her inner life. As an infant she caught hold of a sunbeam and told her mother she was being taken to the realm of Yeshe Tsogyal's lotus light, an event that left her unconscious for a week. Her autobiography repeatedly echoes the story of her illustrious predecessor. As teenagers, for example, both women escaped the prospect of an arranged marriage to leave home and follow their calling as the dakini partner of a powerful lama.

In Sera Khandro's case, this took her to the badlands of the Eastern Tibetan province of Golok, where things could be very tough indeed for a young woman, far from home, conforming to neither of the two conventional female roles of wife or nun. She describes going cold and hungry, being kicked out of the monastery hall as a beggar and even having dog shit put on her head as she performed ritual prostrations. An old woman tells her: "Hey! Beautiful girl, you may be able to get free from the mouths of dogs, but with that figure it will be difficult for you to free yourself from being underneath men."

The lama she was pursuing was called Drimé Özer, twelve years her senior and the son of the renowned tertön Dudjom Lingpa (1835 – 1903), who was himself reincarnated as the incomparable Dudjom Rinpoche (1904 – 1987). But despite a powerful mutual attraction, Sera Khandro was prevented from living with Drimé Özer by the woman who was already his consort. Instead, she had to settle for an antagonistic relationship with another man, who traded her as a *yab yum* consort amongst other high-ranking lamas – to cure sickness and prolong longevity – and ended up suing her for custody of her son, though he was not actually the boy's real father.

Sera Khandro did eventually enjoy three years together with Drimé Özer, a period of much happiness and spiritual creativity. They called each other "jewel of my heart" (*snying gi norbu*) and catalysed each other's amazing treasure-revealing activity. But when her lama died from the plague aged only 43 – preceded

ed just three days earlier by the death of her five-year-old son – she was immediately expelled from his household and once again faced an uncertain future. Fortunately, someone recognized her outstanding qualities and took her under his wing: a compassionate tulku from Sera Monastery in Eastern Tibet. She spent the remaining sixteen years of her life at Sera – the name by which she is now universally known – and blossomed there to become a tertön, writer and teacher of widespread repute up until her death in 1940.

To get an idea of how unusual Sera Khandro was, it is worth recalling that in Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Tayé's *One Hundred Treasure Revealers*, compiled in the 19th century, only two of the tertöns are women. Sera Khandro herself states that she was the only female tertön in Eastern Tibet at that time. The size of her literary output – which includes her autobiography, four volumes of her revelations and a biography of Drimé Özer – makes her the most prolific female writer in the history of pre-1950s Tibet. Her Tibetan editors pronounce her to be a second Machig Labdron.

The fact that this remarkable yogini is now becoming known in the west is due to that Methuselah of modern Tibetan lamas Chatral Rinpoche (1913 – 2015), who first met her in 1927. Their con-

"These sacred teachings," Monson writes, "... inspire and sustain me as my spiritual lifeblood."

nection was significant – his daughter Saraswati Devi is now recognized as Sera Khandro's reincarnation – and he clearly regarded her as a very important teacher. In the early 1990s, he gave transmission of her written works to two North American women, whose own lives subsequently have been immersed in the opus of Sera Khandro.

Alexander Studholme



Alexander Studholme is an independent scholar and author of **The Origins of Om Manipadme Hum** (SUNY Press 2002). He first heard the name of Namkhai Norbu on a trip to Tibet in 1993 and joined the Dzogchen Community in 1998. He lives in the city of Bristol, UK, a short drive away from Kunselling.

Christina Monson lived in retreat under the direction of Chatral Rinpoche for many years, studying and practicing Sera Khandro's teachings. Her book is an anthology of *shaldam* (*zhal gdams*), instructions given directly from guru to disciple, from dakini visions to advice on how to take illness onto the path.

"These sacred teachings," Monson writes, "... inspire and sustain me as my spiritual lifeblood." They include communication with birds – as Sera Khandro puts it: "Dakini prophecies, delivered through the talk of feathered friends." Monson might herself have been a teacher – Lama Tsultrim Allione invited her to Tara Mandala – but sadly she died in 2023 at the age of 54, when she remained in *tugdam* (*thugs dam*) for three days.

Monson's book follows the publication, over ten years ago, of Sarah Jacoby's *Love and Liberation*, a survey of Sera Khandro's life and a *tour de force* of Tibetan Buddhist studies. Jacoby describes Sera Khandro's many encounters with the dakinis and earth deities who controlled access to her termas, teases out the practicalities of being

a *yab yum* consort and examines the permutations of Tibetan male-female relations to conclude that she and Drimé Özer really were truly in love. Jacoby brilliantly analyses the intricacies of the Tibetan religious world and the many ways Sera Khandro struggled to overcome the trials of having an “inferior female

body” (*skye lus dman pa*).

Self-deprecation was one of her strategies to deflect chauvinistic antipathy. “... I have low intelligence and don’t even understand the meaning of *ah*,” she once avers. In a moment of pathos, she abandons the retrieval of *terma* on a mountainside for the most banal domestic

reasons: to hurry home to avoid being scolded by her peevish man and to look after a crying baby. Jacoby is a deeply sympathetic and insightful guide. Her translation of Sera Khandro’s autobiography, currently in progress, is definitely something to look forward to.

HOW I MET

MY FIRST ‘ENCOUNTERS’ WITH CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

By Giovanni Arca

AT the end of my fourth undergraduate year of Medicine, 1977, I heard a rumor that Tibetan could be studied at the university in Italy, a claim I immediately dismissed as an unrealistic tall tale. But it was true!

At the time, I was immersed in science: I religiously read *Scientific American*, and certain Indo-Buddhist ‘vibes’ were just little more than a curiosity to me. Nevertheless, the following academic year, to my family’s horror, I decided to go and study Tibetan in Naples. After several scattered readings, from Castaneda to Rampa’s fables and Taoism, Vajrayāna Buddhism struck me in fact as the only reliable tradition due to its rare continuity of transmission. For years, moreover, I was intensely praying in my heart to find someone who could show me a genuinely viable path to inner knowledge.

On my ‘first day of school’, I found only six or seven students in the classroom, and one peculiar guy, about whom one thing was crystal clear: he must have

been Tibetan. This young professor was lean and so fit that I remember immediately comparing him to Bruce Lee. He spoke with a sweet yet very lively and distinct cadence, weaving an Italian in a way that would become familiar and dear to me over the decades. His teaching style was also decidedly, and delightfully, unconventional.

One of the things he said in those first days was: “Tibetan...? Easy!” Alas...

At the end of each class, I would get up and leave, puzzling over why the others lingered instead of moving on, while being too introverted and shy to

ask. But then, something strange happened in the following weeks: every night I had very vivid dreams in which this Tibetan told me many profound and fantastic things, which in the dream I

understood, but in an unexpressed and undefined way. It happened night after night, in a way I had never experienced before, and that has never recurred to this day.

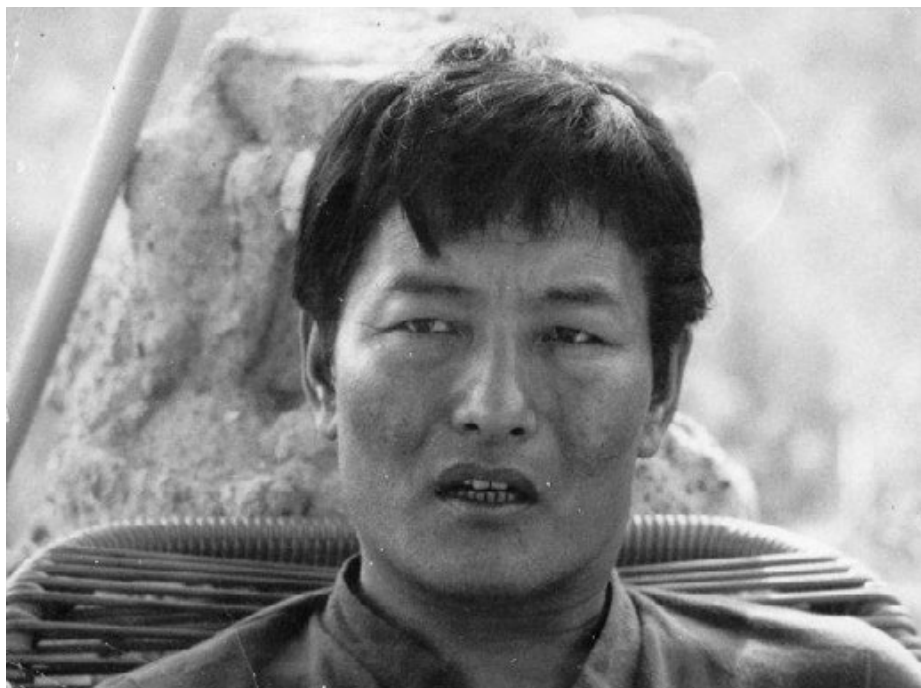
Each morning I

woke up stunned, unfortunately remembering absolutely nothing specific of that avalanche of communications, and in class I spent the entire time staring in bewilderment at this odd professor, obsessively wondering who he truly was.



First days at Merigar with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on the right, center Roberto Curtis and Giovanni Arca on the left

With Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, everything could become Teaching



An early photo of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

I could barely hear his explanations on Tibetan language...

In the hallways, I began hearing whispers that 'Norbu' was a 'Master'. What...? A 'Master'? My thoughts and emotions became tumultuous. Then one day, someone from the group mentioned they met with 'Norbu' in some sort of gym. So in the afternoon I went to this underground basement, accessible by a few steps. When I saw a dozen pairs of shoes outside the door, all my anti-cult and charlatan alarms went off. Had it not been for the insistence of a friend, I would have turned back immediately. But I entered, sat cross-legged in the front row, and the 'professor' began to speak. It's hard to convey what happened next without resorting to traditional phrasing: the 'wheel of Dharma' began spinning powerfully, not as a fantasy, but as a very real, precise, sharp, and majestic experience.

That was the beginning, and then came the many years in Naples, the countless informal yet special moments with the Master, the formalization of the Dzogchen Community, the purchase of Mer-

igar, my long involvement with Shang Shung Publications, experiences in Gakyils, the *Merigar Letter*, *The Mirror* itself, and so on, all the way to these lines I am writing in the Gar of a sun-drenched Tenerife. But my very first 'encounters' with the Master happened simply in his class and in my inexplicable dreams.

Of course, I have many memories of moments and events with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Sometimes, I have shared the less private ones with fellow practitioners,

as anecdotes where memory becomes edifying and inspiring. Writing memories, however, is somewhat different: oral communication is flexible, relying also on tone, body language, context, and is tailored, so to speak, around the listener; the written word is instead unchangeable and fixed for everyone, and the interpretations are often unpredictable. Anecdotes are also often self-referential or even self-congratulatory. I therefore hesitated, but considering the spirit and

I never learned Bagchen, but I had quite a 'direct introduction' to Mig Mang and Mikado

purpose of this column, here are some moments that I can share, hopefully in a lighthearted and perhaps even slightly amusing way. And I will do so precisely as a brief list of small anecdotal stories.

Star Trek and Kung Fu

When I discovered the Master liked my favourite TV shows, *Star Trek* and *Kung Fu* (aired in Italy since the early '80s), I was thrilled! Watching them with him was priceless. He would occasionally comment, engrossed: "You see, you see... This being [an alien] could really be like that," or, "Of course, this is possible in that dimension..." *Kung Fu* was intriguing too, as it centered mainly on psychophysical meditative techniques. Flashbacks showed the protagonist, David Carradine, recalling his old Taoist master dispensing pearls of wisdom. The Master often added enthusiastic, insightful comments, sometimes supported by references to the Teaching. Sometimes it got so late at night that we just collapsed onto the sofas, dead tired. When I woke up, he was already seated at the table who knows for how long, back perfectly straight, writing down his dreams or practices for the Community (back then, he handwrote everything, and we photocopied it). If he made even a small error on the last line of a perfectly calligraphed page, he would glance at me with a pretence of resigned suffering, tear it up, and start anew.

Mig Mang and Mikado

I generally dislike board games and, unlike some of the older practitioners, never learned *Bagchen*, one of the Master's favorites. But I had quite a 'direct introduction' to Mig Mang and Mikado. Playing with the Master wasn't always 'easy', as veteran 'Bagchenists' well know: after all, playing with a 'giant', always demands caution... The way he taught me *Mig Mang*, though, it's almost impossible to play! He wouldn't allow me to think for more than a second or two, but after the first instant he would already show signs of impatience. He kept repeating: "Don't think, just use your



Giovanni Arca and George Quasha in their shared stand at the Frankfurt International Book Fair in November 1993.

eyes, the game's name is 'Many Eyes' for a reason!" For someone like me, chasing his own head like a butterfly hunter, it was an impossible challenge. But I felt so unbearably pushed by his insistence that I eventually ended up playing almost without any thinking. Sometimes I had practically already lost, but he would turn the board around and still manage to crush me. Did I ever win? No chance.

Only once I came really close (what a thrill!), though he still won. With an amused smile, he claimed he had never lost in his life. Mikado was possibly even worse: the rules to touch and lift the sticks sometimes forced me to contort on the floor. His concept of a stick's 'vibration' practically bordered on extrasensory perception! What fun, though... I have fond memories of those moments, especially with him and a still very young Yuchen, who once sent me into total panic about losing at Mig Mang to a little girl. I only won by a whisker: she was already absolutely brilliant! And who knows, maybe she took pity and let me win...

The Gift

Once, we were walking with Yeshe, who was about nine, and we passed by a shop window, possibly a toy store. Clearly already knowing what he wanted, he asked his dad if he could buy it. I don't recall the item, but when the father asked

him for the price, I noticed that it definitely wasn't cheap. The Master stopped, and with a measured, almost theatrically majestic gesture, pulled out his large wallet, took out a hefty bill, and handed it to him. As Yeshe rushed inside, I likely looked rather surprised, or perhaps was just savoring a moment I had never known, as my father died when I was very little. In any case, the Master turned to me and, in his usual expressive way that conveyed much more than words, said: "You see, you must do these things at the right time, or it's too late." In that moment, everything felt right and good.

The Administration Office

Another time I accompanied him to a separate administration office of the University, a run-down, almost squalid place. To me, being with him felt like walking beside a king, truly, and I found it absurd that he should laboriously climb the stairs to go into such a shabby place, and for what? Some trivial issue regarding payments, I think, with a lady who barely acknowledged him, replying curtly and dismissively, without showing him the slightest bit of respect. I nearly wanted to shout: "Do you even know who you're dealing with? Do you know who this person is?" And yet, he remained kind, completely unperturbed. But then, as we headed out, as always somehow sensing my feelings, he gave me a meaningful look and said some-

thing like: "You see? This is how things are... You didn't expect this, did you?" No, I didn't...

On the Train

Any simple, ordinary moment became extraordinary with the Master. Why? Because Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was at the same time the most special and the most simple person of all. Nothing stayed the same in his presence, an effect that at least I, but am sure many others, felt deeply. Traveling with him was a highlight for me. We would take the bus to the station, and then board the train. He would get off at Formia, and I would continue to Rome. I would sometimes attempt small talk, with alternatively hilarious or disastrous results. I don't know how he managed to be so patient and kind with me. Particularly early on, probably in reaction to my strong introversion, I was at times a little bit impertinent. And since I had no pedigree from any kind of 'spiritual' circles, nor was I particularly impressed by grand Vajrayāna titles, I was, let's say, not overly deferential. And so once, when I was dying of boredom on the train, sitting across from him in silence for what felt like an eternity, I started a ridiculously childish game (I was craving some kind of exchange...). I pretended to be an imaginary random traveler and blurted out: "Excuse me, but are you Tibetan?" I remember such moments from those early years very clearly, when I still had the courage, or rather a blind and naïve audacity, to play with the lion. In instances like this, the Master's gaze would settle on me as if descending from unfathomable heights, his face carved in a monumental stillness that could literally terrify. But in an instant, everything would melt into a sweetness that, I now know, was shaped by compassion. Playing along in a ridiculously squeaky tone, he answered: "Yes, I'm actually Tibetan! You are journalist...?" And with that, something in my mind short-circuited so dramatically, that it immediately and deeply taught me that playing with the king of games is no game at all.

Once we had not found seats and were both pressed against a corridor window. Since I had discovered it as

a kid, I sometimes looked out of the window while rapidly moving my eyes in the same direction as the train's motion. Normally, everything passing very close to the train, like poles, bushes, and so on, blurs into an indistinct streak. But when you move your eyes that way, for a very brief instant everything freezes, and you can see all perfectly still in front of you, as if the train were motionless. As I was doing this, to my utter surprise

the Master looked at me and, without saying a word, gave me a very clear, emphatic nod, as if to communicate that yes, this was something that could yield 'interesting' results. I have no idea how he could have noticed that, nor did I ever ask

him about it, but I felt I well understood what meaning he was trying to convey. With Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, everything could become Teaching.

A little scene I always remember, and have often recounted, is one where the Master had gotten off at Formia, and we (there was someone else with me that time) were leaning out the window to watch and wave him goodbye before he disappeared into the underpass. He was walking slowly, turning back and upward smiling and waving at us with his theatrical flair, when suddenly, horror! We saw that right where he was about to place his foot, on the next step below, there was an empty soda can. He couldn't see it because he was looking at us, and we couldn't warn him because it was too late and his foot was almost there. But suddenly, almost magically, a man appeared out of nowhere and, lightning-fast, snatched the can almost from right under his foot, a split second before what would almost certainly have been a disastrous fall. The Master realized what had nearly happened, and as we flailed our arms, making gestures as if to jokingly say "wow, what an over-the-top level of protection you've got?", he shrugged in his classic way, and we saw him bestow upon us his usual and well-known "Che ci posso fare..." ["What can I do about it?"]

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was at the same time the most special and the most simple person of all.

Many more episodes come to mind related to Merigar's challenging early days, convivial amusing moments, 'nighttime stories', his famed Citroën Pallas, and many other glimpses of small-great moments I had the privilege to witness or to share as a student of such an extraordinary person. Then there were other decidedly non-ordinary events, which deserve greater discretion, as well as some that connect to the Master's wide

and profound cultural depth. But for obvious reasons of space, I have to stop here. However, I have one final thought to share. Though these anecdotes may suggest a casual and friendly cama-

raderie with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, it is important to highlight that he was always and unquestionably the Master, whose immense intensity of inner energy was very powerfully present in every moment. Being in a kind of close terms through the years was nothing like being 'friends', because there was not even an instant when he unburdened himself by his role and commitment to be a guide for his students. Although this might seem obvious, I wish to emphasize it as a fundamental aspect of my experience, one that taught me how serious and total the dedication must be for those who are capable, and choose to, transmit the Teaching. It is also a renunciation of one's own freedom and independence, with consequences that clearly extend to family members as well. In short, it is a sacrifice, one that spiritual realization does not make less present in its human and social dimension. Far be it from me to craft narratives of hagiographic mythology, but this is simply my experience, and a small part of what I can gladly share.

Giovanni Arca



Giovanni met the Master in 1978 at the University of Naples "L'Orientale," where he was a professor of Tibetan and Mongolian. Over the years, he participated in the early activities of the Community, first informally, then taking on roles in Gakyils, and notably serving for many years as the director of Shang Shung Edizioni and various related activities. He lives with his family and works as a teacher and university researcher in Melbourne, and has been a member of the Australian Community for nearly twenty years.

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a mountain trail. A wooden plank walkway with metal railings leads up a rocky slope. On either side of the path, numerous colorful Tibetan prayer flags (blue, yellow, red, green, white) are strung along the route. In the distance, misty mountains are visible under a clear sky. Several people are seen walking along the path, including a person in the foreground wearing a white cap and a backpack.

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