

THE MIRROR

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**EULOGY
ON THE PASSING
OF CHÖJE
NAMKHAI NORBU**

**THE ORIGINS
OF THE GAME CALACO**

**THIRTY YEARS ON
THE VAJRA DANCE
MANDALA**

**YOUNG VOICES,
SHARED SERVICE**

**CHÖGYAL
NAMKHAI
NORBU**

**SONG
OF THE VAJRA,
ESSENCE
OF THE
DZOGCHEN
TEACHING**

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Front cover: The Great Stupa of Enlightenment at Merigar West in Tuscany, Italy. Since 2018 the stupa has contained the bodily remains of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.
Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov 2025.

Back cover: Photos by Gonpo Tsering of the painting of the Merigar East Gönpa ceiling by the Dynamic Space team during the summer.



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COMMEMORATING THE PASSING OF CHÖGYAL NAMKHAÏ NORBU

“Dualism is the real root of our suffering and of all our conflicts. All our concepts and beliefs, no matter how profound they may seem, are like nets which trap us in dualism. When we discover our limits we have to try to overcome them, untying ourselves from whatever type of religious, political, or social conviction may condition us...”

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

On September 27, 2025, many people around the world mark the 7th anniversary of the passing (Parinirvana) of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu—a time of remembrance, gratitude, and recommitment for his students and all who have been touched by his life’s work.

There are several themes that tend to emerge in the Dzogchen Community since Rinpoche’s passing:

Continuity — How to carry forward his teachings, practices, and institutions in ways that are faithful yet alive. Many reflect on what it means to “be the lineage,” not only as recipients but as bearers.

Gratitude — For his life, his example, his teaching, and the preservation of traditions that might otherwise have been lost or diluted. This includes the gratitude for preserving languages, arts, medicinal traditions, and dance.

Reflection on impermanence — His passing reminds practitioners of the Buddhist teachings on impermanence, and invites each to deepen their practice now rather than later.

Gathering and practice — Across the world, communities often hold commemorative practices: Ganapujas, Guru Yoga, Vajra Dance, memorial events, sharing stories and memories. These serve both to remember and to reconnect with Rinpoche’s presence in heart and practice.

The 7th anniversary of His passing is both a solemn and celebratory milestone—a moment, to remember and re-



Photo by Ralf Plüschke

flect, to recommit, and to let his legacy guide the living work of practice, compassion, cultural preservation, and awakening.

On this occasion, The Mirror is honored to present a moving eulogy to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu composed immediately after the Master’s passing by his friend, student and fellow Tibetan, Professor Thubten Phuntsok.

EULOGY ON THE PASSING OF CHÖJE NAMKHAÏ NORBU SEPTEMBER 29, 2018

ཚེས་ཇེ་ནམ་མཁའི་ལོ་རྒྱུ་གཤེགས་པ་ལ་གདུང་དབྱངས།
2018.9.29

1

ཀ་དག་གདོད་མའི་མགོན་པོའི་རང་ཞལ་གྲོང་།
ལྷན་གྲུབ་བདེ་བ་ཆེན་པོའི་རང་རྩལ་ལས།
མ་འགག་ཐུགས་ཇེ་འཕྲིན་ལས་རྩལ་པོའི་གར།
ཚེས་ཇེ་ནམ་མཁའི་ལོ་རྒྱུ་དབྱིངས་ནས་གསོན།

In the expanse that is the very face
of the original Lord of primordial purity,
From the utterly blissful energy of self-perfection,
You are the dance of uninterrupted potentiality in action:
Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, listen from the realm of space!

2

ཐུབ་པའི་རིང་ལུགས་ཐུགས་ཀྱི་གསོས་སུ་སྤྲིན།
ཀྱུ་དབང་པདྨའི་ཉམས་རྟོགས་རང་རྩལ་རྟོགས།
ཞི་བའི་རང་ཞལ་ཐུགས་ལ་མི་ངལ་ཡང་།
དད་ལྷན་གདུང་བས་གཟིང་ནམས་སྤྲན་གྱིས་གཟིགས།

You who revived the tradition of Sākyamuni
And perfected the experiences and knowledge of Padma-
sambhava,
Though you are approaching the peace of nirvāṇa without toil,
Look at us, the faithful, stricken as we are by grief!

3

སྤྱ་ཡི་དཀྱིལ་འཁོར་སྤེ་དགའི་ཡུལ་དུ་བཞད།
གསུང་གི་ཐིན་ལས་གོ་ལའི་ཁྱེན་ཀྱན་བྱབ།
ཐུགས་ཀྱིས་བརྟེ་བས་གངས་ལྗོངས་རིག་གཞུང་བསྐྱངས།
དམ་པ་ཁྱེད་ནི་གངས་རིའི་མགོན་པོ་དངས།

The mandala of your body blossomed in the land of Derge,
The activity of your speech pervaded the entirety of this globe,
With your mind, you cherished and sustained

the culture of the snowy land,
Noble one, you truly are the protector of the snowy mountains.

4

ཉམས་ཐག་བོད་ཀྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ཉམས་པའི་ཚོ།
ལོག་པའི་རྩོག་བཤད་རིགས་ལམ་ཞུགས་ཀྱིས་བསེགས།
བདེན་པའི་དར་ཆེན་འཛམ་གླིང་མཁའ་ལ་བསྐྱེདས།
གདོང་དམར་བོད་ཀྱི་རང་ཞལ་གསལ་བར་བྱས།

When the history of poor Tibet was in decline,
You burned the twisted, misguided narratives
with the fire of reasoning.
You raised the great banner of truth in the sky of the world
And made clear the authentic nature of the red-faced Tibetans.

5

ཆོས་པའི་མིང་ཁྱེད་ཆོས་མིན་འབྲུག་ཅོད་སྟོང་།
རིས་མེད་སྤྱོད་ཞིང་རིག་གཞུང་འཐེན་ཁྱེད་བྱེད།
བདེན་རྒྱུན་དབྱེར་མེད་སྤྱན་པ་འཁྲིགས་པའི་ཚོ།
རྩོགས་པ་ཆེན་པོར་བྱེད་ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་མཛད།

When those holding the name of Dharma
stirred up conflicts contrary to the Dharma,
And while speaking of nonsectarianism tussled over culture,
When darkness thickened, unable to distinguish
truth from falsehood,
You clarified the teaching of Dzogpa Chenpo.

6

འཛམ་གླིང་མི་དམངས་དེད་རབས་ལམ་དུ་ཞུགས།
གདོང་དམར་བོད་རྒྱལ་གདོང་མཁའ་ལ་དུ་གཞིགས།
རང་འཁྲིས་འཕྲིན་ལམ་བར་མ་དོར་པ།
ཚོངས་གཉིད་སྟོང་བའི་དུང་བད་ཁྱེད་ཀྱིས་སྟོན།

When the people of the world entered the path of modernity,
And the red-faced Tibetans slumbered
in their primitive condition,
Not abandoning your responsibility,
You sounded the horn that awoke them from their delusion.

7

རིག་གནས་ལྷ་དང་དེད་རབས་ཆེན་རིག་གཞུང་།
འགལ་མེད་སྤྱོད་བའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྒྲར་ཆེན་རིགས།
ཞང་བོད་རིག་གནས་སྤེལ་བའི་སྐྱེད་ཆོལ་རྒྱལ་པ།
རྒྱ་སྤྱོད་བཞིན་དུ་གོ་ལའི་བྱོན་ཀྱན་མཛེས།

You established gathering places for the Dharma
With no contradictions between
the five traditional sciences and modern science,
And adorned all regions of the world

with the culture of Zhang Zhung and Tibet
Like lotuses growing in gardens.

8

ཡུལ་གྱི་སྤང་ཞེན་གྲུབ་མཐའི་ཕྱོགས་རིས་སོགས།
ཡོངས་སུ་སྤངས་པའི་ཐུགས་སྐྱོང་དྲེལ་ཡངས་པོས།
རྒྱལ་བའི་བསྐྱེད་པ་རྒྱལ་ཁབས་ཡོངས་ལ་སྤེལ།
བོད་ཀྱི་རིག་གཞུང་གོ་ལའི་དོག་ཏུ་བཙུགས།

With a vast mind, utterly free of regional
hatred and attachment,
Sectarian bias, and the like,
You propagated the Victorious One's teachings
throughout all lands,
And planted Tibetan culture as a crown jewel of this globe.

9

ཕ་མེས་བརྒྱུད་པའི་དམངས་སྟོལ་རིག་གནས་རྒྱལ་པ།
ཕ་ཡུལ་ཕྱོགས་སུ་ཉམས་གཏུག་ཕྱོགས་པའི་ཚོ།
ཕ་རོལ་རྒྱ་མཚོའི་གླིང་གི་མི་རྒྱལ་པ།
སྤྱོད་གར་གྱི་རྒྱལ་པས་གཉེར་ཁ་གཏད།

When the ancestral folk traditions and culture
Headed toward decline in our homeland,
You entrusted with songs and dances
The people living on the other side of the ocean.

10

འབྲུང་བྱའི་མིག་ལ་ཉི་འོད་ཇི་བཞིན་དུ།
སྟོན་མནན་རྒྱལ་ཀྱིས་དམིག་དང་སྒྲར་འདྲེབས་ལ།
དབྱིས་པའི་བཞིན་ལ་འཛུམ་པའི་མདངས་ཕྱག་པས།
རྒྱལ་སྤེལ་སྤྱོད་པའི་ཁོ་ལག་ཁྱེད་ལ་རྩོགས།

Like sunlight to the eyes of an owl,
You responded to the curses and accusations
of inferior minds,
With a joyful face and radiant smile,
Perfecting in yourself the conduct of a bodhisattva.

11

བསིལ་ལྗོངས་བསྐྱེད་འགྲོའི་བདེ་སྤྱིད་རྒྱལ་རིར་ཉེ།
མགོན་ཁྱེད་དགོངས་པ་ཞིང་ཁབས་རྒྱ་མཚོ་གཞིགས།
གནས་དེའི་ཆོས་ཀྱི་དགའ་སྟོན་རོལ་བའི་མོད།
སྤྱོད་དུ་གཏུག་བྱའི་དཔལ་དུ་འཆར་བར་མཛོད།

Now that the Dharma in the Cool Realm (Tibet) and the
happiness of all beings are fading like a setting sun,
Although you, Lord, behold the oceanic pure dimensions
And while dwelling there enjoy the feast of Dharma,
May you quickly arise as the glory of those to be tamed.



12

འཛམ་གླིང་ཤེས་བྱའི་ཡང་ཕྱེ་ཚེ་རིག་གཞུང་།
རང་རེའི་སྐད་ཡིག་རྒྱུ་པ་མ་འཆར་པའི།
གདུལ་བྱའི་ལྷག་མ་སྦྱང་པའི་ཕྱིན་ལས་དཔལ།
ཐུགས་བསྐྱེད་དམ་བཅའ་བཙན་པོ་མ་དོར་ཤིག །

As the supreme scientific theories of human culture
Have not yet become part of our language,
Do not abandon your steadfast promise
To continue your unfinished glorious work for your students.

13

མཐའ་འཁོབ་བོད་ཀྱི་སྤྱོད་པོའི་རིགས་ཅན་འགས།
ཁྱེད་ལ་སྦྱོང་པའི་ལོག་ལྷའི་རྒྱུ་སྤྱིན་གྱིས།
མནར་མེད་གནས་སུ་ལྷུང་པའི་སྤྲུག་བསྐྱེད་ལ།
ཐུགས་རྒྱུད་ལྷན་ཡངས་སྤྱོད་ཤིག་ཆོས་ཀྱི་རྩེ།

Lord of Dharma, extend your compassionate hand
To those few ignorant Tibetans from backward regions
Who, due to wrong views and slander against you,
Are about to fall into the hell of no respite.

14

བོད་ཁམས་ཐུགས་རྒྱུད་སྤྱོད་པའི་མཁས་དབང་ཆེ།
བདག་སྤྱོད་རིག་སྒོ་འབྱེད་པའི་བཀའ་རྒྱུ་ཅན།
ཆོས་དབྱིངས་ཞི་བར་གཞི་ལ་ཕྱོགས་པའི་ཆོ།
རྩེ་དྲན་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་པ་དེས་འཕྲལ་དུ་ཐུལ།

Great scholar who protected Tibet with compassion,
Kind one who opened the door of my mind,
At the time when you are directed
toward the peace of the dharmadhātu
This was offered at once in remembrance by this vagabond.

ཞེས་པ་ཆོས་རྩེ་ནམ་མཁའ་ནོར་བུ་དགོངས་པ་ཞི་དབྱིངས་སུ་གཟིམས་པ་ལ་ཐུ་དན་
གྱི་གདུང་དབྱངས་མེ་ཏྲག་ཆུན་པོ་དང་ལྷན་དུ་ཆོས་རྩེ་ཆེན་པོའི་མཛད་ཕྱིན་གྱི་ཆ་ཤས་ཅམ་
དུ་སྦྱོས་པ་འདི་ནི། དམ་བཅའ་གི་ཞལ་སྦྱོར་དུ་བྱུང་པ་ཤིང་བསྐྱེད་པ་ལ་མི་བྱེད་པའི་
དད་པ་ཐོབ་པའི་བོད་ཀྱི་རིགས་ལས་སྤྱོད་པའི་རྒྱལ་ཁམས་པ་ཐུབ་བསྐྱེད་ཕུན་ཚོགས་དེས་
སྤྱི་ལོ་༢༠༡༤ལོའི་ཟླ་བ་དགུ་པའི་ཆོས་འཁོར་ཉིན། རྒྱ་ནག་ཁྲིན་ཏུའི་གོང་གི་ཕྱོད་ལུ་མི་
རིགས་སྦྱོར་གྱི་ཆེན་མོའི་རང་ཤུག་དུ་འཕྲལ་མར་བྱས་མོ།

This song of lament at the time of the Dharma Lord Namkhai Norbu entering the peaceful dharmadhātu, along with a bouquet of flowers, which recounts a small portion of the activities of the great Lord of Dharma, was immediately written on September 29, 2018, in my room at the South-west Minzu University in Chengdu, China, by Thubten Phuntsok, a vagabond Tibetan scholar who is a disciple of that holy being and who has unwavering faith in the teachings of Śākyamuni.

Translated by Adriano Clemente with the help of the author
and edited by Susan Schwarz.



Dr. Thubten Phuntsog

Dr. Thubten Phuntsog was born in 1955 in Dege County in East Tibet. He is currently a professor and doctoral supervisor at Minzu University of China in Beijing and Southwest Minzu University. His main teaching and research areas include Tibetan language and literature, Tibetan history, Tibetan medicine and astrology.

ཆོས་པ་པོའི་འདྲ་པར།

He is the author of various publications in Tibetan including: The Grammar of Tibetan Language, Calculations for the System of the Tibetan Lunar Calendar, History of Tibet, The Six Yogas of Naropa, and numerous articles on Tibetan history, medicine and literature. He has lectured and served as a visiting professor at more than 20 universities in over 15 countries across Europe and North America.

In 1998 he was invited by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu to be the principal lecturer for the three year course on Tibetan Medicine held at Merigar, Italy, and Tsegvalgar, USA, and over the years has continued his close collaboration with Rinpoche and the Dzogchen Community through his lectures and published works on Tibetan medicine and astrology.

THE SONG OF THE VAJRA IS THE ESSENCE OF THE DZOGCHEN TEACHING

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Transcribed from the Song of the Vajra Retreat, Hong Kong 2012, day 3, part 1. This teaching is continued from the last issue of The Mirror, no.168.

First of all, in general we consider the Song of the Vajra to be in the language of Oddiyana, and not only the Song of the Vajra but all important mantras such as the 25 spaces of Samantabhadra. But we cannot affirm that they are exclusively in the language of Oddiyana because many teachings taught by Garab Dorje, which include tantras and *lungs* and upadeshas, originate from other dimensions. Many Dzogchen tantras have been preserved in their entirety, while some *lungs* represent only parts of those tantras. Many other tantras and also the source of all these *lungs* still exist in other dimensions. For instance, in the Dzogchen Upadesha teaching, particularly in the Dra Thalgyur tantra, there is an explanation of thirteen different Nirmanakaya dimensions in which important Dzogchen tantras and teachings exist.

When enlightened beings, that are beyond time and space, introduce methods and teachings in our dimension, they do not always use the same words. For instance, when we learn the Song of the Vajra we can find all the *Thödro*l tantras that explain six different kinds of liberation. We find these kinds of tantras in most Shitro practices, although they may have slightly different versions. Some intellectual people may ask which version is correct and which is not. If we are completely sure that these tantras are only in the Oddiyana language then we can ask that question, however, many teachings have been introduced from different dimensions so we cannot. What is most important is how we have received those mantras from our teacher and their pronunciation. If we apply them in that way, we can have realization so we should not go after things in just an intellectual way.

If we follow different teachers, we might receive the hundred-syllable mantra from all of them, but each one might pronounce it in a different way. Most lamas and teachers don't say "vajra" but "benza", "benza sato samaya manou palaya", they chant it that way. Others don't say *benza* but "bazra" which is a little closer to the Sanskrit pronunciation. However, my



Photo by Cheong Thoong Leong

teacher, Negyab Rinpoche (*gnas rgyab rin po che*), from whom I received Dzogchen Semde, Longde and Upadesha, and his teacher, Katog Situ Rinpoche, closely followed the lineage of the Sanskrit pronunciation and always said "vajra" not "benza". Also, my teacher at college who taught me Sanskrit always pronounced "vajra" when he read any kind of mantra which is why I am using it that way. But you shouldn't worry if you learned "benza" or "bazra". There is no problem and you can use it. I did not invent the way I use "vajra"; it is the way I received it from my teacher.

There is a story in the Sakyapa tradition about Sakya Pandita, a very important teacher. He was in Sakya monastery and one day, when he was walking along a river near the monastery, he heard the sound of Vajrakilaya coming from the river and thought that there must be a good practitioner of Vajrakilaya in the valley where the water came from.

Once he spent the whole day following the valley searching for the person who was doing the practice of Vajrakilaya. Finally he came to a rock and in the rock there was a cave and a yogi doing a personal retreat. When he asked this yogi what practice he was doing he replied “Vajrakilaya”, but he did not pronounce it “*Kilaya*” but “*Chilaya*”. Then Sakya Pandita thought it a little strange that he was not pronouncing it well because Sakya Pandita had a very high level of Sanskrit and was also one of the translators. Then he asked the yogi how he chanted the mantra of Vajrakilaya and the yogi replied, “I chant *OM VAJRA CHILICHILAYA SVAHA*”. Sakya Pandita told him that he was not pronouncing it well, that in Sanskrit it is pronounced *KILIKILAYA* and he should pronounce it that way.

The yogi said he wanted to check, took his *phurba*, put it on a rock and said, “*OM VAJRA KILIKILAYA SVAHA*”, but the *phurba* did not penetrate the rock. Then he said, “*OM VAJRA CHILICHILAYA SVAHA*” and when he struck the rock with the *phurba*, it entered. Then Sakya Pandita was very surprised and understood that one should not go only after pronunciation and that this was a fully realized yogi of Vajrakilaya.

Later he invited this yogi to Sakya monastery where he gave the Vajrakilaya initiation. In the Sakyapa tradition when we do Vajrakilaya practice there is also a specific lineage of this mahasiddha. When we receive the initiation and do this practice we should chant *OM VAJRA CHILICHILAYA SVAHA HUM PHAT*. That is a very good example that shows how important the way we receive transmission is and how we should do the practice that way with confidence in order to have realization.

In ancient times many translators, such as Vairocana, studied and translated most Dzogchen tantras and books from the language of Oddiyana, not Sanskrit. Although there are many words that are very similar in Sanskrit and the language of Oddiyana, the way of using them in teachings and their grammatical systems are not the same. For example, in Sanskrit the adjective is always placed before the noun: Dzogchen is *Mahasanti*. In the Oddiyana language, the adjective comes after the noun, just like the Tibetan language, *Santimaha*. The way of using the adjective is very similar to Tibetan but the language is different. When we say *Santimaha*, *maha* is the adjective and it comes after not before. Most of the Dzogchen tantras are in the language of Oddiyana and we can understand that because the adjective always comes after the noun. This is the difference between the Oddiyana language and Sanskrit.

Longchenpa translated the meaning of the Song of the Vajra, from this Oddiyana language. This version is what is called the non-dual or union of the state of Samantabhadra, *yab* and *yum*. In the Dzogchen tantras and also in many *Thödro*l tantras two kinds of Song of the Vajra are presented: the first is called the state of the *yab*, Samantabhadra, while the second is the state of Samantabhadra *yum*, Samantabhadri. There are always two kinds, however, there is only one union of the *yab* and *yum*, which is the one we are using when we sing. Longchenpa roughly translated its sense.

The real meaning of the Song of the Vajra is the essence of the Dzogchen teaching. But even though it is the essence there is an explanation of which I will give a rough translation.

These are the first four verses.

མ་སྐུམ་པས་ནི་མི་འགག་ཅིང་།
འགྲོ་དང་འོང་མེད་ཀུན་ཏུ་བྱེད།
བདེ་ཆེན་ཆོས་མཆོག་མི་གཡོ་བ།
མཁའ་མཉམ་རྣམ་གྲོལ་དགོས་པ་མེད།

ma skyes pas ni mi 'gag cing
'gro dang 'ong med kun tu khyab
bde chen chos mchog mi g.yo ba
mkha' mnyam rnam grol dgos pa med

EMAKIRIKIRI
MASUTAVALLI
SAMITASURUSURU
KUTALIMASUMASU

མ་སྐུམ་པས་ནི་མི་འགག་ཅིང་།

ma skyes pas ni mi 'gag cing

This means unborn. There is no beginning or birth and no interruption or end.

འགྲོ་དང་འོང་མེད་ཀུན་ཏུ་བྱེད།

'gro dang 'ong med kun tu khyab

There is no going and no coming because it is pervading

བདེ་ཆེན་ཆོས་མཆོག་མི་གཡོ་བ།

bde chen chos mchog mi g.yo ba

Dechen means total bliss, the supreme real condition of the state. In miyowa, the word yowa means movement. When we are integrated with movement there is no consideration of movement.

མཁའ་མཉམ་རྣམ་གྲོལ་དགོས་པ་མེད།

mkha' mnyam rnam grol dgos pa med

Everything is self-liberated, beyond time. There are no defects or problems.

This first group is connected with the Dzogchen Semde series of teaching. Later on I'll explain about the Dzogchen Longde and Upadesha series.

Then there is the second group.

ལྷ་བ་མེད་ཅིང་རྟེན་མེད་ལ།

གནས་མེད་ལེན་མེད་ཆོས་ཆེན་པོ།

ཡི་གྲོལ་ལྷན་མཉམ་ཡངས་པ་ཆེ།

ཁའི་མེད་རྣམ་པར་བཀྲོལ་མེད་པ།

*rtsa ba med cing rten med la
gnas med len med chos chen po
ye grol lhun mnyam yangs pa che
bcing med rnam par bkrol med pa*

**EKARASULIBHATAYE
CIKIRABHULIBHATHAYE
SAMUNTACARYASUGHAYE
BHETASANABHYAKULAYE**

These four verses are connected to the Dzogchen Longde series of teaching.

རྩ་བ་མེད་ཅིང་རྟེན་མེད་ལ།

rtsa ba med cing rten med la

This means that when we search for the root, the origin, we cannot find anything that confirms it. Also there is nothing that is connected with this origin. Even if there is nothing confirming from where it develops, there are no secondary things related with that.

གནས་མེད་ལེན་མེད་ཆོས་ཆེན་པོ།

gnas med len med chos chen po

When we consider ourselves to be in the state of contemplation this is just our mental concept. If we are really in the state

of contemplation, we are beyond even this concept. It is the same when we consider the dimension of the Sambhogakaya.

When we ask ourselves what the Sambhogakaya is we say it is a pure dimension, a manifestation of the Dharmakaya. How does it manifest? In different kinds of forms such as wrathful, peaceful and joyful manifestations. All these things are our mental concepts, which are indispensable to enter this state, but they do not really represent the Sambhogakaya. The Sambhogakaya means that when we are in our real nature and discover our infinite potentiality, in that moment we are totally beyond time and space. This is the real condition of the Sambhogakaya.

Nadmed lenmed chö chenpo: there is nothing we can create or take, it is always total existence, the real condition.

ཡི་གྲོལ་ལྷན་མཉམ་ཡངས་པ་ཆེ།

ye grol lhun mnyam yangs pa che

Ye means how our real condition is from the beginning, the self-liberated state. In general the Tibetan word ye is also in the word for "wisdom," *yeshe*, and in "since the beginning," *yene*.

ཁའི་མེད་རྣམ་པར་བཀྲོལ་མེད་པ།

bcing med rnam par bkrol med pa

There is not some ordinary dualistic vision we can be conditioned by, nor is there something we can liberate. Everything is the relative condition in our mental concepts. These verses are very much related to the principles of the Dzogchen Longde.

Edited by L.Granger

Final editing Susan Schwarz

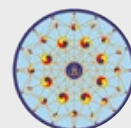
Tibetan & Wylie by Prof. Fabian Sanders

To be continued in the next issue of The Mirror

INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL ANNOUNCEMENTS



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
GAKYIL



Dear Members of the International Dzogchen Community, The International Gakyil has the following three important announcements. We thank you for your kind attention.

Namkhai Yeshe

It is with great joy that we announce that Namkhai Yeshe has formally accepted our request to be the Spiritual Guide of the International Dzogchen Community that was founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. Please join us in thanking Namkhai

Yeshe for his generosity, compassion and guidance, and for sharing his knowledge and experience with us. We are grateful to him for giving us the renewed opportunity to deepen our understanding of the unique essence and for bringing new energy to our Community. We all look forward to supporting Namkhai Yeshe in his worldwide teaching activities to the best of our abilities.



Namkhai Yeshe. Photo by Daniyal Ibragimov

International Supervisory Yantra Yoga Teachers

The International Gakyil is pleased to announce that Oni Mckinstry, Maxim Leshchenko, and Honza Dolensky have been appointed by Fabio Andrico and Laura Evangelisti as International Supervisory Yantra Yoga Teachers. We congratulate Oni, Maxim, and Honza and wish them much success in their dedicated work for the International Dzogchen Community!

The 2026 Yantra Yoga Teacher Training courses are planned as follows:

In April 2026, Maxim Leshchenko and Honza Dolensky will lead a Yantra Yoga Teacher Training Level I course at Dzamling Gar.

In July 2026, Oni McKinstry will lead a Yantra Yoga Teacher Training Level I and II course at Kunsangar North.

Please save the dates, details will follow in due course.

Call for Blue and Yellow International Gakyil Assistants

The IG is looking for interested and dedicated members to join its team as Blue and Yellow assistants with the serious intention of becoming IG members for the next three-year term starting upon the approval of the financial statements at the next Annual General Assembly (AGA) which will take place in the late spring/early summer 2026. Date

and location to be announced.

To apply, please send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae to blue@dzogchen.net and yellow@dzogchen.net by October 1, 2025. Descriptions of the IG Team in office are available at <https://dzogchencommunity.org/about-the-international-gakyil/>

General requirements:

1. IDC membership for the last three consecutive years plus the current year. Members of longer standing are a plus
2. Previous experience working on a Gar or Ling Gakyil, or another IDC management position is a plus
3. Knowledge about IDC community processes
4. Availability to attend weekly meetings, and other occasional meetings during the year
5. Ability to work in a team and online

Blue Gakyil

Main requirements:

1. Understanding the essence of Dzogchen and the ability to use this knowledge to communicate with IDC Instructors, Gakyils, Lings, and Members
2. Having passed the Santi Maha Sangha Base Level exam is a plus
3. Proficient in spoken and written English
4. Strong communication skills
5. Basic computer skills

Main responsibilities:

- a. Liaison to facilitate and promote collaboration among all IDC Gars and Lings, and support their local activities
- b. Communicate with IDC members and Gakyils regarding their questions and concerns
- c. General and teaching-related communications
- d. Collaborate with Santi Maha Sangha, Vajra Dance, Yantra Yoga, and Khaita teachers on matters related to the Teachings
- e. Communicate and collaborate with entities founded by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and other organizations who share similar interests and activities
- f. Create and update the content of IDC web resources (Webcast, dzogchen.net, dzogchencommunity.org).

Yellow Gakyil

Main requirements:

1. Experience in finance, administration, and law (having all three is a plus)
2. In addition to good written and spoken English skills, knowledge of Italian is an advantage

Main responsibilities:

- a. Management of membership and collaborating on the maintenance of Membership Management System
- b. Management of Dzamling Gar IDC House
- c. Work with lawyers to solve legal issues
- d. Communication with accountants and auditor
- e. Budgeting and cost management
- f. Supervision of secretary
- g. Other

Thank you for your interest, and for considering giving a hand to the International Dzogchen Community!

With appreciation and best wishes,
The International Gakyil

ASIA'S SOLIDARITY TRIPS

Over the last two years, ASIA has been working to develop a new activity: solidarity trips.

For a long time, we had been receiving requests from our supporters to organize trips, driven by the wish to **meet the people they sponsor**—children, monks, elderly people—in person and to get to know the Himalayan countries from a different perspective, from those who have been working there for many years and who know the culture and traditions, but also the social and economic problems that affect the daily life of local communities. In April 2020, we were ready to set off on our first solidarity trip to Nepal, when the Covid pandemic threw all our plans into disarray.

In 2023, we were finally able to launch this new project, with the departure of the first group for Nepal, and it was exciting.

"The Manasarovar school, the thrill of seeing little Pema, meeting her mother and the school principal. Then the Tibetan medicine school in the Tritten Norbutse monastery, the Model Farm where they grow coffee and have beehives, and finally a journey through space and time, our stay in the village of Gatlang was an unforgettable experience."

Francesca wrote to us on her return from the trip.

Our solidarity trips aim to **build bridges** between people who live in very distant, different worlds, with totally different lifestyles. They offer **our supporters the opportunity to really shorten the distance and get to know the people they are supporting**, to feel the emotion of looking into each other's eyes and hugging each other. They are also an opportunity to **visit our projects in the field, understand how a cooperation project works, and get in touch with the beneficiary communities**, listen to their stories, and share moments of their daily lives.



Above: Dancing with the children at the Manasarovar school in Nepal.
Below: Meeting eagle hunters in Mongolia.

"I was also very moved by meeting the 'peasant women'. The passion and pride they felt in being an active part of the community was reflected in their eyes, which were full of gratitude and joy."
said Gabriella.

The itineraries also include **cultural, spiritual, and scenic sites** that are part of the country's heritage, allowing us to come into contact with a wealth of cultures, ethnic groups, and traditions that are very different from our own.

These are trips that require a certain spirit of adaptation and openness, and like all true journeys, they make us more aware of ourselves, our way of life, and the interdependence of all living beings.

For us at ASIA, it is a way to share with supporters and friends our knowledge of the countries where we work, to connect donors, beneficiaries, and partners, and to create a human experience that enriches everyone: those who know and those who make themselves known. Being listened to and sharing one's way of

life makes people feel recognized and valued. Solidarity and transparency are also central values of our trips, which also aim to support local cooperation projects, encourage virtuous local economic circuits, and show people what is being achieved with their donations, as Stefano testified:

"As a long-time (in every sense) supporter of ASIA, I am delighted to say that I have noticed sincere gratitude on the part of all those who benefit from the aid for what has been done and is being done for them. I was already sure of this, but now I can say that I have seen it with my own eyes. THANK YOU."

To date, ASIA's solidarity trips have been to **Nepal and Mongolia**, and we hope that circumstances will allow us to add other countries soon.

For information, please contact Linda Fidanzia: l.fidanzia@asia-ngo.org - +390644340034

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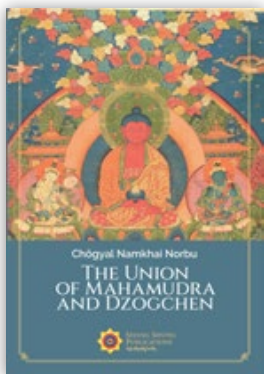
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Latest Releases

Books in English

The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen

This book contains teachings given by the master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, commenting on a text written by the master Karma Chagmed Raga Asya (Araga) entitled Avalokiteshvara's Direct Instructions on the Concise Essence of the Practice of the Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen.
<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/e-book-the-union-of-mahamudra-and-dzogchen>



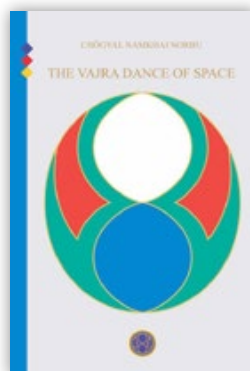
Longsal Kalachakra Atiyoga

The practice of Kalachakra (meaning the wheel of time, from kala, meaning time, and chakra, meaning wheel) was transmitted by Dzogchen Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu during two retreats: the first held at Tashigar North on Margarita Island, Venezuela, in 2004, and the second held at Dzamling Gar, in Tenerife, Spain, in 2013–2014.

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/e-book-longsal-kalachakra-atiyoga>

The Vajra Dance of Space

"The manifestation of wisdom is just like space. It pervades all without any consideration of subject and object, and thus through the presence of wisdom one can integrate everything".



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Vajra Dance of Space of the Unborn and The Vajra Dance of Space of the Song of the Vajra on the Khalong Mandala

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/e-book-the-vajra-dance-of-space>

Libri in Italiano

La chiarezza luminosa dell'universo

Il libro è stato tradotto e pubblicato anche grazie al generoso sostegno di Merigar e del Ling di Milano (Dribselling)

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Libros en Español

Yantra Yoga

El Yantra Yoga, equivalente en el Budismo tibetano al Hatha Yoga de la tradición Hindú, es un sistema de práctica que comprende movimientos físicos, ejercicios de respiración y visualizaciones.
<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/e-book-yantra-yoga-espanol-pdf>

Los seis versos del Vajra

El Rigpai Khujug o Los seis versos del Vajra es una síntesis de la totalidad de la enseñanza Dzogchen. Estos versos contienen pocas palabras, las cuales se acompañan de instrucciones para la práctica.
<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/books-in-other-languages/product/e-book-los-seis-versos-del-vajra-epub>

Shine y Lhagthong en la Enseñanza Dzogchen

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Longsal Commentaries Volume Seven

The Mirror

Revised and expanded edition

Reintegration Beyond Time

Teachings on Korde Rushen

Italiano

Lo specchio

Edizione rivista e ampliata

Illuminating the Gateway to the Teaching

(versione italiana)

Español

El canto del vajra

Colección de enseñanzas Upadesha sobre Rushen del cuerpo, de la voz, y de la mente

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Oral Commentary of the Root Upadesha on the Vajra Bridge of Longde

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Reason: Donation for the SSP institutional activities.

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For more information and further details on the editorial program, please write to info@shangshungpublications.com

SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS
TEAM

THE ORIGINS OF THE GAME CALACÒ

In September 1995, Rinpoche, together with his wife Rosa and his niece Phuntsog Wangmo, honored us with a visit to Sardinia to spend ten days on vacation by the sea, after recovering from a long serious illness.

We found them a villa in a place called "Cala Corallina" (the name comes from the fact that there are numerous small pieces of coral on the beach). A 200-me-



ter walk through a beautiful garden led from the house to the beach, so Rinpoche could easily reach the beach and enjoy long swims.

One afternoon, Rinpoche was resting on the sofa when he suddenly woke up and asked us if we could find him some sheets of white cardboard, a pair of scis-



Rinpoche and Rosa Namkhai with friends during their stay in Cala Corallina.

sors, and some colored markers: blue, yellow, and red.

We immediately went to get everything, and ten minutes later Rinpoche was sitting on the sofa and began cutting out the cardboard. We watched silently and curiously as he worked. With great patience and precision, Rinpoche cut out 42 pieces of cardboard, all the same size, about the size of a playing card. Then, using the markers, he began to write on the pieces of cardboard: on nine pieces he wrote the numbers 1 to 9 in blue, on another nine in yellow, and on the last nine in red. There were still 15 pieces of cardboard left.

On the first three, he wrote three blue zeros, then three yellow zeros, three red zeros, and finally three zeros of three colors: blue, yellow, and red. On the last three, he drew three jokers.

After checking everything meticulously, he asked us what we thought. Our answer, even though we clearly didn't understand anything, could only be: "Very interesting, what is it?"

And so Rinpoche began to explain what he had done and how it worked. He told us that he really liked games and that while he was resting, this new game had come to mind. The three colors corresponded to three levels: yellow is the highest level and wins over blue and red, blue is the middle level and wins over red, which is the lowest level of all.

He told us that the Zeros were used to free you, and the Jokers freed you from negative situations and doubled the positive ones. It was all becoming very appealing!!!

Rinpoche stood up and asked us all to sit around the table and try to play, and here are the rules he explained to us.

There are two types of cards: the "Main" cards, which are all the numbered cards of the three colors, and the zero and joker cards, which are called "Luck" cards.

Each player is given a number from 1 to 9, as are the numbers on the cards. If there are fewer than nine players, someone will have two numbers. One player acts as the dealer and deals the cards until the deck is exhausted, then passes to the next player in a clockwise direction, and the numbers given to the players also rotate, with number one being the player to the left of the dealer.

After arranging us around the table in this way, he told us that we now had to decide what a "point" was worth and how to choose the player who would start as the dealer.

A point is given the value we want and must be decided with everyone's consent. Everyone chooses a card from the "main" deck, and the highest point acts as dealer, but we must always keep in mind the value of the colors: any "yellow" point beats all "blue" and "red" points,

and any "blue" point beats all "red" points. If the colors are the same, the highest number wins.

So he got us to start playing, even though we still didn't know how!

Rinpoche held the deck and began to deal one card to each of us, starting with the person on his left (clockwise). Once the cards had been dealt, he told us to turn them over on the table. So we found ourselves with yellow, blue, red, or zero cards. Now how does it work?

Then he told us that the yellow cards win: if the dealer has a yellow card, all players must pay him the points on the card (which can range from one to nine); if the dealer has a red card, he loses and must pay all players the points on the card; if the dealer has a blue card, he pays the points on the card to the player with the same number.

But be careful, because now the zeros and jokers come into play. The zero cancels any winnings or payments, so if, for example, the dealer has a yellow card, everyone pays except those who have a yellow zero or a three-color zero or the joker. The same applies to payments: the dealer with a red card pays everyone except those who have a red zero or a three-color zero or the joker. The same applies to the blue color.

After adjusting the dealer's position, we move on to see what each player has and how it relates to the others.



Rinpoche and Giampiero Dessole in Cala Corallina 2001

If a player has, for example, a yellow four, they win four points from the player in position number four, but always with the rule of zeros and jokers. Similarly, if the cards are red or blue (if the player has a blue card, they pay the value to the dealer, always keeping in mind zero and jokers).

Now there was a problem: what if the player in position number four has a yellow four? He cannot win from himself, so Rinpoche decided that in these cases (winnings and payments) you are paid by the player on your left and you pay the player on your right, not forgetting the zeros and jokers.

If a player or the dealer has a joker, they never pay, and if they are to receive, they receive double.

We were all caught up in the game, which Rinpoche made go very quickly, but we made a lot of mistakes and he laughed with pleasure.

After a couple of days of practice, the game was refined: a player could play the gamble, double or triple, and so the winnings or losses also became double or triple, but only for those who had accepted the same gamble. Those who do not want to gamble cannot be influenced by those who do.

We also realized that to play well, you need two main decks and one lucky deck.

You can imagine that at night when we went to sleep, our vision was full of

yellow, red, blue numbers and colored zeros. Rinpoche was very happy that the game worked and that it was very enjoyable. It was very entertaining to see how the zeros could reverse wins and losses; you were never sure.

What to call it?

Rinpoche decided that since we were in Cala Corallina, the game would be called CALACÒ.

Before leaving, he asked us to write down the rules, and we asked him if it would be useful to have the decks of cards printed so that everyone could buy them and play. He said yes, and so it was done.

This is the brief story of the birth of a game that sprang entirely from Rinpoche's mind.

With these cards, you can play many other games, from solitaire to a game similar to poker.

Those interested in 'reading the cards' with these will have plenty to fuel their imagination. Just think about the meaning of the three colors, the function of the zero, and the luck of the joker, and then... you need some clarity.

We hope that these few lines will encourage many of you to try this fantastic game.

Thank you, Rinpoche.



This story was written by the group of practitioners from Sardinia (Riccardo, Giampiero, Bianca, and many others) who, with great affection and devotion, have always supported the Master, his family, and the Dzogchen Community from the beginning, inviting him and organizing the short vacations in Sardinia that the Master enjoyed in those years.

The CALACÒ cards, created thanks to their commitment and the support of Merigar, can be found in the Shang Shung Publications webshop.

The package includes game instructions in English, Italian, German, Spanish, and French. The translation of the instructions will also be available in Chinese.

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/calaco-cards-game>

Shang Shung Publications Teamv

SUPPORT THE KA-TER TRANSLATION PROJECT!

“If we don't take an interest in translations, there cannot be a continuation of the Teaching”

In January 1981, during a retreat in Semriach, Austria, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted for the first time the Dzogchen Longde teachings.

At that retreat – which I had the honor of organizing – Rinpoche already emphasized the importance of translating authentic books of wisdom from Tibetan into English.

“First of all, regarding the Teaching, we must understand that there are hundreds of authentic Dzogchen texts in Tibet, and not a single one has yet been translated. When I explain the practice of Longde, I can give you a brief summary, but that is not enough. The original text is called the Longde Tantra of Dzogchen. Without access to it, you cannot study or develop a deeper understanding. This is not because it is a secret text, but simply because of the obstacle of language. These texts need to be translated, and that is not an easy task.

Translating biographies is simple, but these root texts require much more—knowledge not only of language but also of the profound topics they contain. If we do not take an interest in this, if we do not take responsibility, there can be no continuation of the Teaching. Many people are studying Tibetan today. Among them, some will have the qualifications to translate texts, and others may learn Tibetan because it is directly connected to the Teaching.”

- Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, 1981

These words planted a seed in me that has guided my work ever since. Twenty-one years later, in 2002, Rinpoche entrusted me with the KA-TER TRANSLATION PROJECT, establishing it as a fundraising initiative to support translators so they could dedicate themselves fully to their work.

Now, twenty-three years later, we continue with this responsibility, as Rinpoche asked us: to translate and publish

books for the benefit of present and future generations.

In recent years, we have not only published new books but also organized book presentations and public talks on the importance of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's work.

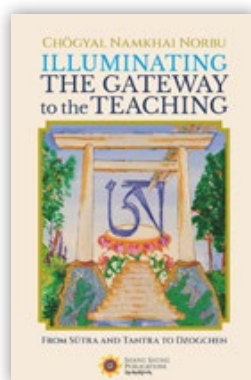
Recent Publications

(Available from the online shop of [Shang Shung Publications](#))

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu **Illuminating the Gateway to the Teaching**

From Sutra and Tantra to Dzogchen

This book provides an in-depth overview of the Buddhist teachings in their entirety. It clearly explains the essential aspects of the Sūtrayāna and Vajrayāna and how practitioners can integrate them on the path to Buddhahood



Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

The Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen

This volume presents Rinpoche's teachings on a text by the master Karma Chagmed Raga Asya (Araga), entitled Avalokiteshvara's Direct Instructions on the Concise Essence of the Practice of the Union of Mahamudra and Dzogchen. Araga was a master in both the Karma Kagyü and Palyul Nyingma lineages.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Longsal Kalachakra Atiyoga

Essential Instructions

This precious compilation of Atiyoga teachings will interest all students of

the Dzogchen Community.

It includes detailed accounts of the Longsal dreams in which Rinpoche received the Kalachakra Atiyoga terma, information on the origin of the Kalachakra teachings in our dimension, and profound instructions on integration and clarity, derived from Yeshe Sangthal's teachings and direct introduction.

If you would like to ensure that qualified translations continue to be available in the future, and if you wish to share in this responsibility for preserving the Teaching, we kindly ask for your support.

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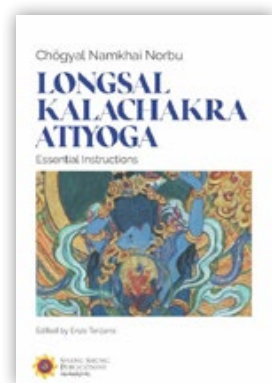
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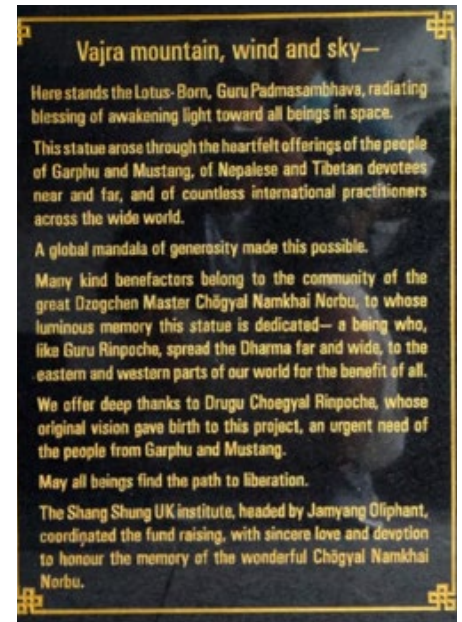
With warm regards,
Oliver Leick and Jamyang Oliphant
August 2025



A HEARTFELT OFFERING

A Guru Padmasambhava Statue in Honor of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

We are deeply happy to share that our nine meter tall statue of Guru Padmasambhava, created in honor of our beloved Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, has now been completed. The statue stands in the breathtaking landscape of Upper Mustang, Nepal—high in the mountains, close to the Tibetan border—an area steeped in Vajrayana tradition. There, countless practitioners of Guru Rinpoche will gather, pray, and find inspiration in their faith.



This project has truly been a collective act of devotion. Friends and practitioners from all over the world came together to make it possible. Many offered donations, some offered their artistic creations for fundraising, and others shared their skills by giving courses—all with the single wish of seeing this vision come alive. Thanks to everyone's generosity, kindness, and effort, the statue now stands as a lasting tribute to our Master.

We especially wish to thank Drugu Choegyal Rinpoche, a lifelong friend and admirer of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who reminded us that in the Himalayan tradition, the most fitting way to honor a great master is through a commemorative statue or stupa—something that will



endure in a sacred setting, carrying the name and blessings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu far into the future.

The result is truly beautiful, and it belongs to all of us. May it continue to inspire practice, devotion, and remembrance for generations to come.

To see pictures and learn how this

project developed please visit www.shangshunguk.org.

<https://www.instagram.com/reel/DOF29ywDT6V/?igsh=MWpub-WV5Y2xsdXE3>

A LIFE OF KNOWLEDGE

Exploring the Cultural, Historical, and Spiritual Works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was not only a great Dzogchen master but also a renowned scholar whose work illuminated many dimensions of Tibetan culture. Through decades of teaching, writing, and presenting at international conferences and universities, he emphasized the richness, depth, and importance of Tibetan heritage with unmatched passion and clarity.

To honor and share this vast legacy, the Shang Shung Institute UK and the Ka-Ter Translation Project have united in vision to create a vibrant year-long program of cultural and educational events. This initiative is dedicated to spreading awareness of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's extraordinary contributions and ensuring that his life's work continues to inspire generations to come.

A Year of Cultural Engagement

At the heart of the program is a series of book presentations dedicated to the works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, most often published by Shang Shung Publications. These events will be hosted in Italy, the UK, Nepal, and Spain, with global participation made possible through live Zoom broadcasts and recordings available on the Shang Shung Institute UK YouTube channel.

Each presentation is designed to be interactive and engaging, with expert dialogues, Q&A sessions, group readings, and discussions depending on the nature of the text. Events will take place in bookshops, public venues, universities, and International Dzogchen Community centers.

The first event in the series was held on July 7, 2025, at the historic Castle of Arcidosso in Tuscany. The program included:

- A photographic presentation by **Gino**



Vitiello, sharing rare images from his 1988 pilgrimage to Mount Kailash with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

- An interview with **Professor Fabian Sanders**, offering insights into *Total Perfection*, an important Dzogchen text recently published through the Ka-Ter Translation Project.

Upcoming Events and Highlights

The program continues with a variety of themes drawn from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's wide-ranging works:

- November 8, 2025 – Oxford, UK

A talk by **Professor Charles Ramble** on *Drung, Deu and Bön*, one of Rinpoche's most significant contributions to the study of Tibetan history and culture. The event will take place during the 25th anniversary of Tibetan Studies at the University of Oxford, in the presence of many distinguished researchers and Tibetologists.

- 2026

Two talks by **Dr. Vincent Bellezza**, an expert in ancient Tibetan history, exploring Rinpoche's scholarly impact and referencing works such as *The Necklace of Gzi*, *Drung, Deu and Bön*, *Ti se'i 'od*, and *Light of Kailash*.

Each event will close with a convivial gathering, offering refreshments and space for connection, reflection, and community exchange.

Culminating Event – August 2026

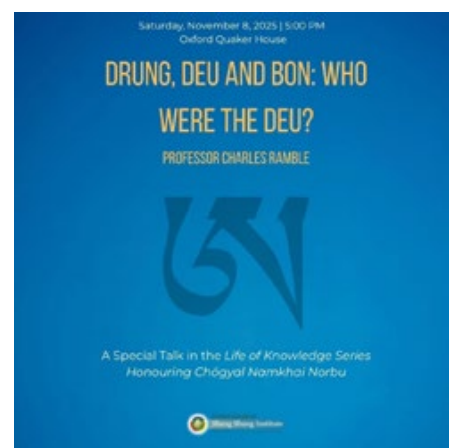
The initiative will conclude at the **International Association for Tibetan Studies (IATS) Conference** in Kathmandu. A roundtable discussion will explore Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's profound scholarly

contributions, bringing together many of the world's leading Tibetologists. This will be a powerful moment to honor his legacy in the academic world and beyond.

Join and Support

We warmly invite everyone to join these events—whether in person or online—and to take part in this shared journey of cultural discovery and remembrance. Please note that the program receives no external funding. If you feel inspired to help make these events possible, you can offer your support by making a donation at www.shangshunguk.org.

Together, as a community, we can keep alive and share the immense cultural, historical, and spiritual wealth that Chögyal Namkhai Norbu dedicated his life to preserving.



The next event will be in Oxford, UK, on November 8. Professor Charles Ramble will base his talk on *Drung, Deu and Bön* by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, a seminal work that explores ancient Tibetan narratives, symbolic languages, and spiritual traditions. This event offers a unique opportunity to engage with these profound themes under the guidance of one of today's leading Tibetologists.

Info [HERE](#)

BETWEEN SCREEN AND GÖNPA: LIVING THE PRACTICE



There are several hundreds of practice and study sessions published monthly on Sangha App by single practitioners or by gars and lings.

Out of these, 94% are recurrent online practices. Retreats spanning several days average 22 every month. Very few are taking place only in person.

Following the example of Rinpoche, whose retreats were always webcast, our community started organizing more online events, in the context of the travel limitations of the pandemic. How does it work for them?

What do practitioners say?

Among the benefits of online courses, practitioners say, are the reduced time and costs, being more relaxed and focused, and integrating the teachings into daily life.

According to a Yantra Yoga practitioner from Ukraine, it is very useful to connect online with a teacher who can see you and make sure you are practicing correctly. He also considers that Rinpoche is present with us, even in online practice.

A volunteer translator of online courses estimates that the online option brings three to ten times more participants than the in-person option. She participated in 30 courses over two years, covering multiple areas of interest.

Another volunteer translator explains that when he is attending an online retreat, he sets up his schedule according to that of the retreat. Luckily, he has a flexible job, so he can avoid overlapping. He is able to fully listen, not to work, cook or clean the house at the same time.



He believes that the benefit of the courses actually depends on one's own relationship to the Dharma. For some people it is like learning a foreign language 5 minutes a day with Duolingo: fun, but not not committed. Not all practitioners apply the practices autonomously, but still, they enjoy listening to the teachings, sometimes over and over again.

Many other practitioners expressed that they simply don't manage to focus and feel that online education is not for them. They participate one or a couple of times a year, in-person. These occasions allow practitioners to relate more deeply than with online interaction. They also support the physical existence of the Gars and Lings that we would like to imagine as lively, inhabited places.

What do the teachers say?

Elias Capriles, SMS teacher, considers that online courses have a positive impact from an ecological point of view, reducing the impact of travels. In that sense, it is better if the teachers travel

to meet local practitioners, rather than the other way around. Otherwise: "from the point of view of practice, there is no comparison. Practice is definitely more effective in person because there is the empathic aspect. That is a very important aspect of teaching. And that is lost."

While teachers are supportive of online options for their courses, they also agree on the importance of meeting and practicing together in person.

Russian teacher Evgheni Shamrov notices how the financial burden of participating in face-to-face events courses is

unequal, given the income difference between those living in big cities and those from rural areas. From his experience, only few people have such a high capacity that it doesn't make a difference if they are online or offline. He believes that the effort put into traveling and stepping out of the comfort zone, multiplied by interest in Dharma, produces a better result – at the level of the assimilation of knowledge in the flow of mind.

SMS teacher Arnaud Coquillard says that he would prefer to hold face-to-face courses, to create a first live contact, then follow up in online sessions. At the same time, he employs state-of-the-art software to strengthen communities of practitioners through a more constant communication.

At a meeting in 2015 in the U.S., Chögyal Namkhai Norbu indicated that he had authorized instructors from all over the world so that they could meet the students, noting that all in-person practice should not be replaced with online teaching.

Our Teacher, Namkhai Yeshe, also underlined the importance of face-to-face practice, making it a necessary part of the transmission of the mantras of secondary practices. In the last 6 months, since we received this indication, important retreats took place in this formula (recordings of Rinpoche, in-person explanation and practice).

A few suggestions for good online retreats

Students:

- Block time and do not do something else in the meantime.
- Keep your camera on.
- Don't keep it exclusive; go physically to Dzogchen community places as much as possible.

Teachers:

- Leave space for questions and create a dialogue.

- Have good lighting and an expressive way of speaking, imagine speaking to the actual persons, not to a screen.
- Keep in contact with your students through online platforms and think of it as a long-term relationship.

Sangha App offering help

Sangha App is a great tool for remaining in contact with people with transmission, and with course participants. One way to do it is by creating practice and discussion groups: <https://www.mahasangha.net/together/private-practice-or-leisure-groups/>

We also offer a global tool to access events in the Dzogchen Community. Here is how you can easily filter online and in-person retreats:

<https://streamable.com/oh8ryq>

PERFORMANCE AND WORKSHOPS AT THE MIRIADY MIROV FESTIVAL

Republished from the Khaita newsletter.



Miriady Mirov is a summer festival of yoga and awareness, organized yearly in Kunsangar North (Moscow region, Russia).

This year Khaita dancers contributed to the festival with a beautiful performance followed by learning sessions during all three days of the festival.

Under the guidance of Khaita teachers participants tried several simple dances, got acquainted with three Khaita principles, found out how to apply awareness and achieve harmony through Khaita dances and received information on available learning resources.

The performance took place near the Stupa of Perfect Victory, which in Tibetan culture is considered to be a very auspicious action, beneficial for the place, event and all the participants. After that our dancers were invited to perform a dance offering during the empowerment of another, new Stupa, which has just been constructed, in Yakhroma (Moscow region).

Offering Khaita on the empowerment of a new Stupa in Yakhroma

The empowerment of the new Stupa, the Stupa of Perfect Victory over Death was performed by the Buddhist teacher Dzatrul Rinpoche. Our dancers prepared



and performed several dances as an offering to the Stupa and to the Teacher. Dzatrul Rinpoche was pleased with their



practice, gave some explanations about the benefits of Khaita and expressed a wish that this unique method could bring benefits to more people.

After the event our dancers were invited to perform Khaita for the Teacher Namkha Drime, who will visit Moscow in September. "It seems that Khaita is a unique

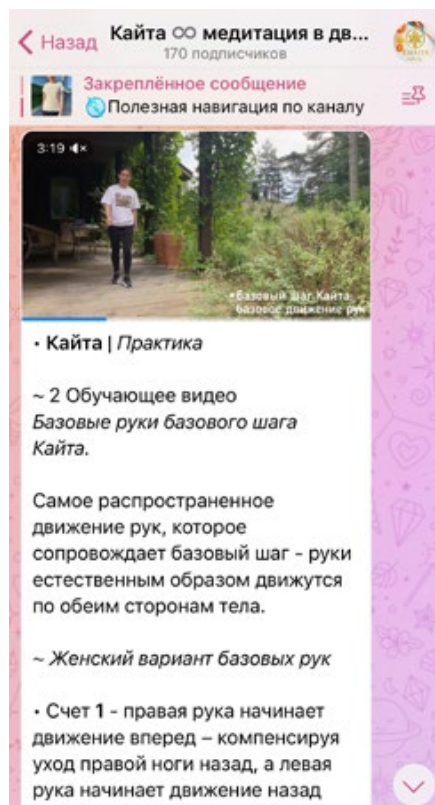
method, bringing joy and relaxation to practise, which we can share with other Buddhist communities and respectfully offer to Teachers", says Anastasia Sedler, who organized this event.

Dancing with Jungian Psychologists

Another interesting activity in Russia are dancing sessions of Khaita organized as a supportive practice during courses on Jungian Psychology, held at Kunsangar North. Khaita dances became an everyday part of the program, helping participants to relax and bringing a joyful aspect to their study.

New Khaita Telegram Channel

Participants and spectators of the festival and courses have a wonderful possibility to continue learning about Khaita with the help of the recently started informational-educational Telegram channel.



The channel is in Russian. Its content provides readers both with theoretical knowledge, connected to method (Rinpoche's explanations, quotations from Khaita-related books and educational sources), and practical guidance for performing simple Khaita dances.

The link to the new Khaita Telegram Channel is - <https://t.me/khaitameditation>

This article has been reprinted from our recent newsletter, published every two weeks with news about Khaita's recent and upcoming activities. It also includes quotes and comments from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, suggestions for songs to sing together, quizzes, dance tutorial videos, and more.

How can you receive it?

It's easy. On the Khaita page - khaita.org - scroll down to the bottom of the page, click on **SUBSCRIBE NOW** and enter your details.

DZAMLING GAR - TENERIFE

REMEMBERING IGOR PUSHKAREV

February 24, 1973 – July 19, 2025

In preparing this memorial article about Igor Pushkarev, we collected far more material than could fit within the pages of Mirror magazine.

The memories shared by his friends and vajra relatives paint a rich and multifaceted portrait of a truly remarkable human being. What you will read here represents only a portion of the touching stories, insights, and recollections that people generously shared with us. If you would like to read the complete interviews and full memories about Igor, they are available at the following links.



Igor and Luna

Complete Interviews:

- Pavel Mironov - [\[link\]](#)
- Luda Kislichenko - [\[link\]](#)
- Alix De Fermor - [\[link\]](#)
- Carlos García - [\[link\]](#)
- Carles Jañez Brucet - [\[link\]](#)
- Gloriana "Titi" Bernes - [\[link\]](#)
- Priska - [\[link\]](#)
- Olga Shlykova - [\[link\]](#)

Each interview reveals different facets of Igor's character and his impact on the lives of those around him. We encourage you to explore these fuller accounts to gain an even deeper understanding of this extraordinary person who touched so many lives.

Origins: Tomsk Roots

"Igor was like an exposed nerve — he felt everything more sharply than others, especially other people's pain, injustice, falseness," recalls Pavel Mironov, a friend from university days. Their friendship began at Tomsk State University in the mid-90s, in the atmosphere of intellectual ferment of the post-Soviet era. "The special environment in Tomsk played a role: a student campus where philosophers, journalists, and historians all studied in the same building. There was constant exchange of opinions, everyone was reading, arguing, discussing — no one was mediocre."

Even then, the qualities that would become defining in Igor's character were already evident: "He always reacted sharply to injustice, always noticed it and never passed by indifferently. He was very strict about friendship matters, and under his influence I myself had to reconsider my views more than once."

Pavel still remembers a defining moment of their friendship: "Once we were sitting in spring on the bank of the Tom River, and Igor suddenly said: 'Pasha, it's so good to be silent with you.' That was some kind of real recognition."

Moscow Years: The Art of Service

In Moscow, where Igor moved in 2004, his amazing talent was revealed — the ability to serve people. Working as a waiter in expensive restaurants, he transformed ordinary work into art. "He was a waiter sent from God: he could feel people, understand their desires without words, always guessed what they needed and when," Pavel recounts. "At work he was a completely different person—strict, quiet, attentive to every detail, able to communicate with guests almost telepathically."

But even more important was his role in his friends' family: "From the very first days he became practically a family member: he was a nanny for my children, a babysitter, an older friend, a mentor. He knew how to get along with children, understood them literally from

half a word, was generous with emotions, love, and support."

Tenerife: King of the Barranco

In 2015, Igor moved to Tenerife, where he found his true calling in serving the Dzogchen community. Here he became a legendary figure — the "King of the Barranco," as local practitioners called him.



"The Barranco is inseparable from Igor. He was the pioneer there, opening his place like his house," recalls Carlos García. "He was absolutely generous, without limitations. He always offered, even to people he didn't know, the possibility to live with him. He was like a king—but not because he wanted an exalted position, but because he took care of others, organized and supported without any self-interest."

The scale of his hospitality was astounding: "I once counted — and during one retreat there were over 150 practitioners in the Barranco. If someone needed something, he would say what he had: tents, sleeping bags, things that people had left after retreats. When someone new came without a sleeping bag or tent, Igor would simply say: 'Here, I have one.'"

A Worker from the Heart

In the Dzamling Gar garden, Igor proved himself as a unique worker. Alix

de Fermor, who supervised the garden work, was amazed by his approach: "He was a rare type of person who had no problem doing hard manual labor under the direction of a woman. He was so gentle, so humble, and always wanted to make everything so that you would be pleased. For me, he was the best worker I have ever worked with."

"Igor lived in the barranco, but always came to the Gar early, sometimes when it was still dark, even though he had vision problems. He worked until his health finally prevented him. Later he could no longer do heavy work, but still continued to help — cleaning leaves and garbage almost until the very end."

Creative Soul

Igor was not only a worker, but also a creative personality. "He was very creative," Alix continues. "For my birthdays I always asked people to come in costumes. At the first celebration he came as a prehistoric man and brought a stone — it was very funny because in the garden he mainly worked with stones! The next year the theme was 'alien,' and again he was incredible! Igor always came up with something playful, creative, totally in the spirit of the theme."

Igor and Luna: A Special Bond

An integral part of Igor's image was his dog Luna. Carlos Jañez Brucet tells their story: "Luna appeared as a puppy in front of the Gar, and eventually became the 'Gar dog.' But when I needed to leave, Igor began taking care of her. Luna became more and more attached to Igor, and although it was hard for me to let her go, I understood that such a dog really needs one owner. Igor truly cared for her."

Luna was the only dog allowed to enter the Gönpa. "She would sit quietly, never touch the food offerings at Ganapuja, just listened. She even had her own pillow labeled 'Luna.'"

Priska was particularly touched by how Igor cared for Luna during his illness: "It was very touching for me to see how lovingly he cared for Luna. Even though he was almost blind, he

always tried to make sure Luna had a clean place to sleep. He even washed her blue blanket every day..."

Service to the Community

Even in illness, Igor continued to serve. Gloriana "Titi" Bernes recalls: "Even while undergoing chemotherapy and facing so many difficulties, he would secretly do various small tasks. Sometimes you'd hear he wasn't doing well, but then you'd suddenly see him with a garbage bag — he was always doing karma yoga, helping the community in small, quiet ways."

"Rinpoche, I'm Coming..."

Luda Kislichenko witnessed a touching moment: "On his last day at the Gar, when he was supposed to be taken to the hospital, he still came to practice in the morning, danced the Song of the Vajra, then stood up, turned towards Rinpoche's portrait and with both hands opened himself to him. It was very much like the Guru Yoga with the 'A' from the Vajra Dance. And he said: 'Rinpoche, I'm coming to you.'"

In the hospital he maintained his presence of mind: "He was very calm, with humor, accepting everything that was

happening — like a true practitioner. Even from the hospital he would send us audio messages — always with a smile, with irony."

Final Moments

Luda was there in the final minutes: "We were with him — myself, Gisela, and Federico. He already had an oxygen mask, but the nurses said he could still hear us. We decided to sing the Song of the Vajra, and when we did Guru Yoga with the 'A,' he stopped breathing, as if he left together with that sound. We continued to sing the Song of the Vajra and accompanied him."

Legacy

Igor Pushkarev left behind not material valuables, but something much more important—an example of how one can live by giving oneself to others. Carlos García wrote in his farewell post: "We shared even what we didn't have — somehow he multiplied the loaves and fishes. In spite of everything, he always smiled, even in the hardest times. Although he helped everyone, he never charged for favors, never asked for anything in return."

Pavel Mironov, reflecting on the essence of his friend, said: "If I had to choose the main word to describe Igor — it's humanity. That was the most important and genuine thing in him."

Igor taught everyone who knew him that true wealth lies in the ability to give, that strength lies in gentleness, and greatness lies in serving others. He showed that one can live life in such a way that after it, the world becomes a little kinder and brighter.

"May that same white 'A' guide you, my brother, through the ravines of the bar-do and lead you safely to the pure land, where I'm sure our Teacher awaits you with open arms. We, the barranqueros, pay you homage!" — this is how Igor's friends from the community said goodbye to him.

And these words are the best testimony to what kind of person he was and how he will remain in the memory of all who were fortunate enough to know him.

YOGA KIDS SUMMER CAMP 2025: YOGA & ART OUR GARDEN

By Cristina Conticelli
and Nataly Nitsche

From late June through August, Dzamling Gar for the second time vibrated with the joyful energy of children for the second annual Yoga Kids Camp.

This year, under the theme "Yoga & Art," the camp offered a magical sum-



Kumar Kumari with Nataly

mer experience for 21 children aged 4 to 10 years old, including 8 community members and 13 non-community members, with 18 newcomers joining the fun.

Our days were a perfect mix of rhythm and play, expansion and contraction, in-

hale and exhale. We started each morning with a warm welcome and some free time on the playground, which helped everyone feel at ease. Then we moved into our Kumar Kumari classes, held in the ESPACIO Yoga Studio. Sometimes



Making art together

we worked in two separate groups, and other times we joined together. It was so nice to see how quickly they learned the movements; every week we could add more to our practice. Our most rewarding indicators, though, were how much more the children could relax after class and how much they truly enjoyed it!

Kumar Kumari is a truly comprehensive method, and it was clear how it made them more aware of their bodies, breathing, and minds, strongly training their coordination, memory, and concentration.

The camp was designed to be a bilingual experience, with activities in both Spanish and English, but it actually invited even more languages to join, mainly Italian and Russian!

The beautiful gardens of Dzamling Gar became our extended classroom. As we moved from one space to another, we'd sometimes ask them, "How many different types of flowers can we count until we arrive?" The answers were -surprisingly- sometimes more than 20! In the gardens, we played collaborative games and enjoyed our snacks in the nice shade, which protected and nurtured us from the summer heat.

Yoga and art: two worlds that may seem far apart, yet in reality share so much. Both are tools to connect with ourselves, to listen, to create. Both open channels where little boats filled with nutrients travel, carrying ideas, emotions, and discoveries. It's a circular exchange, both internal and external, where our



Samantha and the purba



Cristina Conticelli (left) and Nataly Nitsche

world transforms, reorganizes, and expands.

Making a movement, producing a sound, finding a color or creating a shape requires presence. And when all this happens in a relaxed environment, well-being is born... and so is joy.

This can happen anywhere, but there are special places that nurture this magic—places full of inspiration, beauty, and stories to tell. Such are Merigar and Dzamling Gar.

In 2021, with the Kumar Kumari team, we began many artistic activities to accompany Yantra Yoga for children. Nature and storytelling became an endless source of inspiration. Just to name a few experiences: The Magical Herbarium of Merigar or the print-making of the story *The Four Friends*. Dzamling Gar is immersed in a wild, powerful nature, where ocean and desert meet to create a truly magical dimension. The Calima—with its warm light and suspended air—became, in every sense, our third teacher. Alongside Na-

taly and Cristina, there was also Señora Calima. She wasn't there in person, but you could definitely feel her presence!

The Garden of Dzamling Gar was an endless source of inspiration for our creative workshops. We played and created with the flowers, fruits, and seeds of this little paradise. A few examples: the black tulip tree (found in Rinpoche's garden) produces boat-shaped fruits that became a whole fleet of colorful vessels, each carrying precious cargo; from the orchid tree, we crafted shiny "doubloons"; from the fruits of the flamboyant tree (typical of Tenerife), we made bright and playful maracas.

What made everything even more special was the wonderful space we had at our disposal: the Casita Amarilla. This cozy refuge for children was well-equipped, welcoming, filled with games, and stocked with every kind of material for painting, building, and... dreaming.

It was right there that we began to shape our garden: an inner garden made of colors, forms, movements, and stories.

A place where yoga and art met naturally—like old friends reuniting.

The Yoga Kids Camp 2025 at Dzamling Gar truly offered a summer to remember, where creativity bloomed, bodies moved with intention, and young minds found calm amidst the magic of art and nature. We cultivated not just art and yoga skills, but also presence and joy. Watching the kids increase their attention and find their own quiet moments of relaxation and creation was a true gift.

Our hope is that they carry the sense of lightness and peace they found at camp with them, knowing that their well-being begins with a single breath. We are so grateful for this experience and hope it can be repeated many more times, not only in Dzamling Gar but in other beautiful Gars and Lings of our precious community.

September, 2025

THE WELLBEING RETREAT PROJECT AT DZAMLING GAR

Interview with Urara Taoka

We started planning this project back in 2020, during the COVID lockdown. At that time, we were looking for ways to open up DDzamlung Gar and also find sustainable ways to finance it.

There was a lot of brainstorming involved, and we also received some valuable advice from consultants. Their insights were quite relevant to our situation here in Tenerife.

We're lucky to have many talented instructors in the community, so we began shaping this project around that strength. Although it took some time to get the marketing off the ground, since last year things have really started to bloom.

Programs and Practices

Guests can choose from a range of programs based on the open practices of the Dzogchen Community, such as **Yantra Yoga**, **Respira**, **Vajra Dance**, **meditation**, and even **joyful dance** sessions.

Among these, **Yantra Yoga**, **Respira**, and **meditation** are especially popular. However, many guests are also very drawn to **Vajra Dance** because it's so unique—something they've never encountered before. Once they try it, they really enjoy it. Yantra Yoga is a bit more well-known, so people are more familiar with it and eager to try it here.

In Tenerife, it's not easy to find places that offer **authentic meditation**. That's why many people are actively looking for retreats like ours.

For Newcomers and Experienced Practitioners Alike

Originally, the retreat was designed for



Urara Taoka

newcomers. But we've found that even community members with experience are coming to refresh and deepen their practice.

We offer **customized retreats**, which include many **private sessions** with instructors. If a guest has a physical issue—like knee problems—or needs an adaptation in Yantra Yoga, they can benefit greatly from these tailored sessions.

Feedback from Guests

We've received a lot of positive feedback. Guests are often surprised by how beautiful **Dzamlung Gar** is—the gardens, the natural surroundings, and the people. They feel very welcomed and comfort-

able, especially because the programs aren't overcrowded. We intentionally create **space** for relaxation and for guests to really absorb the experience—and to enjoy the **Tenerife nature**. This allows them to truly **unwind** and **reconnect with themselves**.

Booking and Accessibility

We started using the platform **BookRetreats.com**, which has worked well for us. It's a trusted platform and makes the booking process simple for guests. It's helped us reach newcomers—many of whom had never heard of the Dzogchen Community before. Some of these guests, after booking through BookRetreats, even came to Dzamlung Gar and later received **transmission** from **Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's successor**. So, it's been a wonderful way to build meaningful connections.

Personalized Experience

When someone books a retreat, they first fill out a registration form where they let us know what programs they're interested in. Once we receive this form, I personally create and suggest a **personalized one-week program** for them.

For example, if someone chooses **Yantra Yoga** and **meditation**, we assess their level—are they beginners or do they have prior experience?—and then I assign the right instructor for them. We also always include **massage therapy** options—guests can choose between **Ayurvedic massage** and **Thai oil massage**. Often, we begin the retreat with a massage on the day they arrive, helping them relax and feel grounded.

The next day typically starts with a **private Yantra Yoga session**, giving guests a solid introduction. After a few private sessions, they can join the **group sessions (Espacio Program)** and feel more confident merging into the community environment. Some guests prefer more

free time—maybe they want to go sightseeing or relax at the beach—so we adapt the schedule to suit their needs.

About Me

I'm originally from Japan and moved to Tenerife. I worked as a **massage therapist** for over 20 years, and also worked extensively in **wellness** and **volunteer outreach**. I co-founded an organization that provided **various therapies** to different communities. For example, we traveled to **disaster-stricken areas** in Japan and offered massage therapy, and even went to **Cambodia** to support **HIV-positive communities**.

Our approach was always **collabo-**

rative—we combined different healing methods, not just one kind of therapy. I coordinated these efforts and also consulted for hotel wellness programs.

So, stepping into the **Wellness Being Project** here at Dzamling Gar came very naturally to me. I really enjoy it—it's meaningful work that brings harmony and healing, and I feel grateful to be a part of it.

https://www.wellbeing-dDzamling-gar.org/?_gl=1*i35ynr*_ga*OTU1M-TAxMTgxLjE3NTc3NzI5NjM.*_ga_VES9TX7PDW*c3E3NTc3NzI5NjIkb-zEkZzAkdDE3NTc3NzI5NzEkajUxJGw-wJGgw

MERIGAR WEST - ITALY

SONG OF THE VAJRA RETREAT WITH NAMKHAH YESHI

Merigar West,
July 2nd to 8th, 2025

The retreat with Namkhah Yeshe presented another novel chapter in the ongoing evolution of the Dzogchen Community, challenging and rewarding the more than one thousand participants and leaving us in wonder.

No doubt those participating by Zoom (a daily average of about fifteen hundred) and the thousands viewing by webcast were also moved.

Yeshe taught in a seemingly non-traditional way that covered all key components of traditional Dharma, from the sacred principles of Refuge, Bodhicitta, and Dedication of Merit, to the Four Awarenesses and Seven Mind Trainings, proceeding to preliminary Dzogchen practice of Khorde Rushen and ultimately to Direct Introduction to the State of Ati. Instructions on integration of the



teachings in daily life and behavior were also given, succinctly and effectively.

Approaching the subject matter first from a scientific perspective brought home the reality of the teachings without reliance on faith. The titled theme of the retreat was 'The Song of the Vajra' and its effective singing was emphasized along with its meaning. The importance of sound for practitioners was highlighted throughout the retreat, and Yeshe's original musical compositions, including a concert on his birthday in collaboration with Alessandro Di Maio aided in developing awareness through sound.

To someone like me the presentation was sometimes challenging to my atro-

phied scientific and musical capacities, which were limited to begin with. But it somehow succeeded in deepening the understanding of teachings studied for many years.

Rushen of the Voice was given a particular focus, revisiting teachings that Chögyal Namkhah Norbu had given in the 1990's. In this case Yeshe led us in group practice, as we sounded row by row to empower our personal practice.

Near the end of the retreat Yeshe received a draft translation of the Dra Thalgyur Tantra, the foundational Tantra of Dzogchen Upadesha, the title of which has many English translations, all related to sound, such as All-Penetrating Sound, Sound Consequence, and Sound



Namkhai Yeshi and the many karma yogis who assisted with the organization of the retreat

Becoming Dimensions, to name a few. He subsequently read and interpreted it for us, introducing another sublime dimension to the already profound retreat.

A correspondence of inner and outer experience was on display throughout the days of the program, with dramatic heat, storms, and eventually heavenly weather in the beautiful Merigar West

surroundings. Meeting scores of old friends among the onsite participants, after a bit of sensory overload, began a blissful week-long gathering of the Sangha. Celebratory occasions during the retreat reminded me of an observation Yeshi had made years ago – that Dharma practitioners sometimes seem to overlook some obvious facts, such

as that the opposite of samsara is joy. That didn't seem to be a problem in this retreat. Though the lens of the teachings also sometimes makes personal issues feel magnified, being within the mandala of the Community made them a little 'easier' to observe and perhaps provided better odds for their Self-Liberation.

Much gratitude is due to the one hundred and fifty staff and volunteers of all kinds - administrative, parking, technical teams and many others - whose collaboration was inspiring as well as impressive. And of course, tremendous appreciation goes to Namkhai Yeshi for the incredible teachings. As a friend put it, to have Yeshi as a teacher after having Chögyal Namkhai Norbu as teacher, feels like winning the lottery, not once, but twice.

Will Shea

ENCOUNTER ON COEXISTENCE AND RECONCILIATION WITH YESHI NAMKHAH IN ARCIDOSO

Piazza della Riconciliazione in Arcidosso, Tuscany, Italy, was the site of a short public talk given by Yeshi Namkhai as a member of a panel presentation on the evening of Friday, August 29, 2025.

This Encounter on Coexistence and Reconciliation was the first annual such gathering, and part of a week-long festival in Arcidosso, a town of 4,350 people and the home of Merigar West.

The event was attended by roughly two hundred people, a great many of whom were Dzogchen practitioners. The piazza is a beautiful outdoor space at the base of the old town, with dramatic natural rock giving way to multiple stories of stone houses rising up behind the speaker's platform. Recently-renovated, the piazza was inaugurated in 2024 by the Cardinal Augusto Paolo Lojudice, Archbishop of Siena-Colle di Val d'Elsa-Montalcino, who at that time



Namkhai Yeshi (second from left) with presenters. Photo by Caroline Hotaling

named the piazza and asked that the municipality to host an annual gathering on the theme of reconciliation. During the presentation it was noted that the piazza may be the only one in Italy with the name Reconciliation.

The encounter was introduced by Mayor Jacopo Marini, who graciously welcomed the panel and recognized Rosa Namkhai, who was in the audience, as well as lauding Merigar and MACO.

The mayor said that 20% of Arcidosso's residents are foreigners, which he noted has helped the small mountain community continue despite the aging of its own local population. In addition to the foreign-born residents who are Dzogchen Community members, a large percentage of the foreign-born residents in Arcidosso are Muslim men from Bangladesh who work on farms in the area. It was noted that the unassuming little town of Arcidosso is in fact an import-

ant laboratory of sorts for cultural encounter.

The speakers, from left to right, were:

- Cardinal Augusto Paolo Lojudice, Archbishop of Siena-Colle di Val d'Elisa-Montalcino;
- Yeshe Namkhai, Spiritual Leader of the Dzogchen Community of Merigar West;
- Moderator: Renato Rossi, Deacon of the Archdiocese of Siena and Diocesan Director for Ecumenism and Interreligious Dialogue;
- Izzedin Elzir, Imam of Florence; and
- Anna Scattigno, a professor and the President of the David Lazzaretti Study Center, a center dedicated to the study of the 19th-century charismatic preacher and visionary who created a community of devoted followers near Arcidosso.



Photos above and below by Domenico Fasciano

Each speaker addressed the theme of coexistence and reconciliation, providing guidance on how to encounter one another directly, thereby “countering the violence that divides with the strength of their testimony,” as one regional news source put it. (source: *Il Giunco* <https://www.ilgiunco.net/evento/testimoni-anze-di-pace-ad-arcidosso-un-confronto-pubblico-tra-religioni-e-cultura/>). Several speakers lifted up the power of specific words to divide or to connect us. At the end of the event Merigar presented the panelists with gifts of



appreciation on behalf of the Dzogchen Community.

September 1, 2025
by A. Caroline Hotaling

NEWS FROM THE MERIGAR LIBRARY, ACTIVITIES, DONATIONS, AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The Merigar Library continues to be an increasingly vibrant and dynamic cultural hub. In 2025, our community was enriched by extraordinary initiatives, valuable donations, and future projects that promise to make this space even more welcoming and functional.



Library Talks: Eight Years!

Merigar's “Library Talks” reached its eighth edition in 2025, confirming itself as an unmissable event for lovers of culture and knowledge. Once again this year, the edition embraces different disciplines and offers the public a fascinating journey through music, spirituality, science, and Oriental art. These meetings, included in Merigar's already rich calendar, represent a valuable bridge between ancient and contemporary knowledge, offering short but intense journeys into different worlds. The 2025 edition stands out for the variety and depth of the topics covered, pre-



A walk at Merigar to listen and identify the voices of the birds.



Some of the books gifted recently to the library.



senting nine events spread throughout the year, ranging from traditional medicine to ornithology, archaeology to musicology, Buddhist spirituality to Japanese aesthetics. The diverse audience, made up of many people from our community and the surrounding area, but also visitors who came from afar to listen to specific talks, warmly welcomed all the initiatives, participating in large numbers in the various events.

Spring and Summer Meetings

The cycle opened on April 18, during the Easter holidays, with "Returning

to the World: Conception, Gestation, and Birth According to Tibetan Medicine" with Gino Vitiello, a meeting organized in collaboration with Shang Shung UK. It was a fascinating exploration of the traditional Tibetan view of fundamental life processes. On May 24, the meeting on the theme "Maturity: An Identity to be Discovered" with Maria Berica Tortorani created a space for deep reflection to explore new possibilities and enhance the resources of a phase of life, old age, often defined only as a time of loss and difficulty. With the arrival of summer, we organized the meeting "The voices of birds"

(June 28) with Marco Dragonetti of GOM (Gruppo Ornitologico Maremmano), an association with which we have been collaborating for some time. The expert talked to us about how over 10,000 species of birds around the world use their voices not only to "sing," but also to survive, communicate vital messages, and interact in surprisingly sophisticated ways. As with other meetings with this association, this was followed by a walk to listen to the voices of birds together, followed by a short second listening session at night.

On July 26, Emanuele Mariotti, director of the excavation at the sanctuary of San Casciano dei Bagni, presented the recent discoveries in one of Italy's most significant archaeological projects. Under his guidance, San Casciano dei Bagni has revealed extraordinary treasures: the famous Bronzes of San Casciano (2022), the two-meter marble statue of Apollo (2023), and continuous discoveries of bronze snakes, gold, and unique artifacts. The site represents an ancient thermal sanctuary that probably served as an ante-litteram hospital, where Etruscans and Romans went to be healed by the sacred waters, often leaving votive offerings as a sign of gratitude for graces received. Dr. Mariotti shared with us the story of this extraordinary archaeological adventure that continues to rewrite the history of the



Some of the documentation about Merigar gifted by Mr. Bargagli.

Etruscan-Roman world, at a site located just one hour's drive from Merigar!

The Rich Program of August

August saw three events of great interest. In the first, on August 16, Giovanna Natalini explored the theme of musical transmission through the centuries. "How we communicate music. A journey through Western tradition on how music is handed down: oral tradition, writing, and recordings" was a fascinating excursus that analyzed the evolution of methods of preserving and disseminating Western musical heritage. The second event, "Beyond Words: Deep Meanings of Sanskrit and Tibetan Yogic Terminology," held on August 21, saw Fabian Sanders guide us through the world of spiritual semantics. This meeting, part of the Yoga Holidays organized at Merigar, helped us understand how the sacred languages of the East embody complex philosophical and spiritual concepts that are often untranslatable into Western languages. The last meeting in August, "Why mathematics is important and why (often) we don't realize it," with mathematician Roberto Natalini, was a particularly entertaining and engaging event. With an innovative approach, the expert managed to bring the audience closer to a discipline often perceived as abstract and inaccessible, if not useless, demon-

strating how mathematics permeates many aspects of our daily lives and intriguing even the most skeptical.

Upcoming Events

More talks await us! On September 26, "The Twenty-One Faces of Compassion: a journey through the iconography of the 21 Taras" with Giorgio Dallorto is scheduled, while on October 4, we will have "Dialogue with Nature: crossing Japan through ikebana, bonsai, and gardens" with Paola Peruzzi and Jun Nakazawa. There is also a special addition in the works: a travel story in Tibet with Adriano Clemente... we will keep you updated!

Training for Translators

In addition to the Talks, this year the library once again hosted the Training for Translators from Tibetan led by Fabian Sanders, now in its 23rd edition. Although there were more participants online than in person, the work done together was intense and productive, characterized by great enthusiasm and a spirit of collaboration.

Donations, Developments, and Future Projects

Speaking of the library, we cannot fail to mention books! New donations have arrived, including a very large

one recently due to the generosity of Martha Boyden, who already donated many books a few years ago, and this year donated even more, many of them related to Dzogchen. We now need new shelving to accommodate them properly. Fortunately, with the switch to a new heating system throughout the building, the pellet stove has been moved, freeing up a new section of wall, perfect for the new shelves we plan to order shortly. Another noteworthy gift has arrived from the local Arcidosso community: valuable documentation concerning Merigar and its history, carefully curated over the years by the late Mr. Achille Bargagli.

We have several projects planned for next year: we would like to install a fixed audio system for the Talks, mount a larger screen for projections, and equip ourselves with a cooling system for hot summer days. We will continue, when possible, to make the Talks accessible outside the library as well.

Heartfelt thanks go to all the speakers who made our "Library Talks" possible: Gino Vitiello, Maria Berica Tortorani, Marco Dragonetti, Emanuele Mariotti, Giovanna Natalini, Fabian Sanders, and Roberto Natalini. Their generosity in sharing their knowledge and experiences has enriched our community, making each meeting a precious moment of growth and discovery.

Special thanks go to Tiziana Gottardi for her constant support in organizing and running the events, and to all those who participated enthusiastically in the meetings.

Finally, our gratitude extends to all the library's donors, with special recognition to Martha Boyden for her exceptionally generous contributions.

For information and visits to the library, please write to biblioteca@merigar.it. See you soon for new cultural adventures together!

CHILDREN'S DAY AT MERIGAR: GAMES, DANCES, AND HOOPOES IN FLIGHT.

Merigar's Children's Day, held on the last day of August, was blessed with beautiful weather --cool air, clear skies, a gentle breeze all through the day.

What we thought would be a small group, 10 or so, soon doubled in front of our eyes. There were 9 younger children, from under 2 years to 5 years old, and 10 children in the older group happy and keen to move on down to the Gonpa and start their activities.

The younger children on the veranda outside were greeted with butterflies, bees and a dragonfly. The morning passed quickly as they played (parents too, at times) on the terrace and green grass in front of the yellow house.

Building with kapla blocks, playing with home made pongo, dancing to music, painting, sitting immersed in a picture book, and laying out an enormous train track filled the day.

The older children began their activities in the Gönpa with exercises inspired by oriental disciplines, then followed by a session of Kumar Kumari Yantra Yoga. After a break for lunch, the fun transformed into dance: Khaita Joyful Dance engaging everyone, filling the air with happiness.

In the afternoon, along the road to the Yellow House, the children collected leaves, petals, seeds and berries to use in an art workshop dedicated to decorating a paper cutout of an upupa (hoopoe) bird. Just like the upape, at the end of Summer, migrate to warmer lands, bringing with them the promise of future returns, so these light cutouts, were turned into dream bearers. On the back of each bird was written by each child, a wish, abandoned to the wind and sky. Hanging from the branches of a tree, the hoopoes came to life like little messengers, dancing lightly in the air.



The day concluded in a festive atmosphere, with fruit, sweets and ice-cream.

Letizia Pizzeti & Constance Soehnlen

MERIGAR EAST - ROMANIA

MERIGAR EAST THIS SUMMER: RETREATS, RENOVATION, AND COLLABORATION

This summer, Merigar East hosted a series of events: the *Purification of the Six Lokas* and the Vajra Dance with Zoli Cser.

Participants from the Sangha communities of Hungary, Croatia, Romania, Czechia, and Bulgaria joined on site. The mornings were dedicated to Yantra Yoga, followed by practice sessions that combined with the Dance of the Vajra. This created an intensive and meaningful program. After the retreat, some practitioners continued the *Purification of the Six Lokas* practice at home. For two more weeks we stayed connected through the Sangha App, in the channel “*Daily Rushen*”, where everyone could practice at their own convenient time and supporting each other in practice.

Following a short pause, the next major project began: **Gönpa Renovation – Part Two**. Migmar and the team of artists from *Dynamic Space of the Elements* transformed the Gönpa into a space of openness and clarity. The ceiling was painted in different shades of blue, like the vastness of the sky, following Rinpoche’s vision. On the beams, the colors of the five elements appear in the same order used in the practice of purification of the elements, uniting form and practice.

At the center, the White A represents our true nature, surrounded by the Vajra Song—a reminder of living practice and connection. Some may notice that the A looks inverted; this is intentional. In Guruyoga, the White A is visualized in the heart, facing outward. From inside, it appears reversed, but from outside it is correct. This careful arrangement supports visualization and practice.

Karma-yogis from Italy, China, Austria, Malaysia, Venezuela, Romania, Tibet, and Czechia contributed to the project, and we warmly thank them and all who supported from afar. Progress, photos,



and interviews with some of the artists are available on the Sangha App, in the channel “*Merigar East Gönpa Renovation*”.

Here is an interview to watch on YouTube link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEntzJc4oco&list=PLDP-PCi1nM4Q0YBBsknGO_Xx0mjH80I-bwE&index=4

Immediately after the Gönpa renovation, we held a retreat on *Rushen from the Dra Thalgyur Tantra*. The program included listening to Rinpoche’s recordings, accompanied by comments and practice sessions led by Elias Capriles. This retreat was organized in collaboration with Namdagling (Warsaw DC), with its second part taking place at Merigar East, where the practice and explanations continued.

After a short break, with Elias Capriles still at Merigar East, we began another retreat focused on the essential teachings of *Trekchod*. Once again, the sessions were based on Rinpoche’s recordings, complemented by explanations and practices with SMS teacher Elias Capriles, continuing until September 12.

Reflections on the Summer

It is important to remember that whether we practice online or onsite, as Gakyils, members, or individual practitioners, we share the same path. Listening to Rinpoche’s recordings helps us to renew this understanding. Collaboration also remains as essential as Rinpoche often emphasized.

From Merigar East, we send our greetings and welcome you—whether to practice together, to find a supportive environment for your personal retreat, or to take part in the collaboration that is so important for Merigar East.

GÖNPA RENOVATION 2025– PAINTING THE CEILING

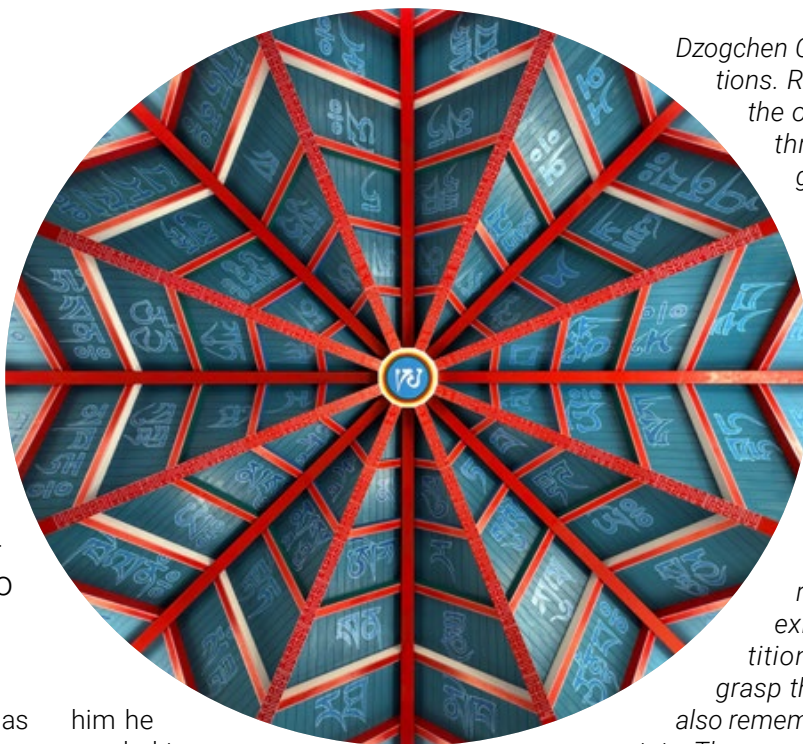
As the summer heat slowly slipped away and the slow autumn days crept in, I couldn't help but find myself reminiscing about the days when the Gönpa renovation was in full swing, with volunteers from all over the world putting their heart and soul into painting the ceiling.

The project, which began in 2022, has now been completed.

We are immensely grateful to the Dynamic Space of the Elements and all the volunteers who made this possible, and indescribably grateful to Migmar Tsering for envisioning and guiding this project to life.

The final stretch of the project took place between July 25 and August 15. Working in the summer heat was not always easy, especially when working on scaffolding that was over six meters high. Yet these amazing volunteers braved the challenges, putting in an enormous effort day after day. It was a joy to watch them carefully paint each brushstroke, giving us all a true lesson in collaboration, teamwork, and community spirit. Despite the hard work, they also had fun listening to music, playing word games, and sharing riddles as they worked together. Proving how, with the right motivation, even hard work can be transformed into joy, everything just depends on your perception.

Migmar generously offered a full explanation about the decoration we now have in the Gönpa of Merigar East, starting with a memory back in 2012, when Rinpoche first told



him he needed to come and paint here. After finishing his work in Crimea, he came back to Romania, and at that time, they painted the walls inside and outside for the first time. Rinpoche arrived soon after the painting was finished, and he was very happy with how it turned out. Rosa was also present at that moment, and this memory is very important because it was in 2012 that they first had the idea for the ceiling to be "like space," even though at that time they had no time to complete this work. The idea was to paint the ceiling according to Rinpoche's teachings, to how he transmits teaching. So this is how the ceiling became different shades of blue, symbolizing space.



Furthermore, Migmar says: "In constructing the Gönpa, we are sending a message. When we paint a Gönpa, it's not like painting a normal house with ornaments or flowers. There are many reasons, many messages we want to communicate. You also see on the walls some thigle inside, the White A, and some thigle with Gakyil symbols. This shows how our

Dzogchen Community functions. Rinpoche divided the organization into three kinds of organs: the Gakyil.

Our practice is Guruyoga, and we have the White A. This carries a message. We also have Om Ah Hum, in the thigle with Gakyil symbols, which represents our existence. A practitioner will quickly grasp the meaning and also remember their natural state. There are three colors like in the Gakyil symbol: yellow, blue, and red. That is the same as OM AH HUM, corresponding to the three kayas: body, speech, and mind.

The Gönpa is a symbol of our body, containing many teachings, a symbol of our knowledge. Everything comes from the White A inside, which is why we are building something like our body."

Before the project began in 2022, the Gönpa had already been painted years earlier, but over time the colors had faded. In 2022, the outer walls were renovated, and the group of volunteers began painting the ceiling. Until then, the ceiling had never been painted, it had remained just an idea, kept in memory over all those years. The project was supposed to continue sooner, but it was only now, in 2025, that it could be completed.

Now, one of the main elements of the ceiling and the subject of much discussion within the community is the Tibetan letter A, placed in the very center of the ceiling, set in a five-colored thigle: a white A that appears inverted, like a mirror image. The reason for this is simple. It was never a mistake; it was always intended to be painted this way. According to the explanation Rinpoche gave many times, when we do Guruyoga, we visualize the white A in a five-colored thigle in the center of our body, at the center of our dimension, and it is supposed to be facing outward.



Migmar explains as following:
"Some people notice that the central A appears mirrored. If someone really understands Rinpoche's teachings, they immediately understand what it represents. If not, it may look strange.

Usually, the seed syllable is not treated like a letter; it comes from within our inner dimension. This Gönpa represents

our dimension, like space, our natural state, and our knowledge shining from within. The White A is like a mirror, representing our inner dimension, shining from within.

Around this, we have the color blue and the Song of the Vajra. The Song of the Vajra represents sound, while the blue space represents light. Then we have the five colors, representing the five elements and the five wisdoms.

This is the communication we are creating through the Gönpa. We had this idea and executed it together with the group."

As a continuation from 2022, certain details had already been established earlier. We contacted the same compa-

ny for scaffolding and used the same type of paint. Fundraising started in early 2025 and continued throughout the project with the support of the Dynamic Space of the Elements. This creative and vibrant team helped in many ways: they handed out flyers during the July retreat at Merigar West, held a presentation highlighting the importance of the project, and during the painting period provided video interviews about continuation, community, and collaboration.

I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation and say how immensely grateful we are for all the support and every donation that made this work possible, as well as for all the tireless volunteers who traveled here from countries like Italy, America, Venezuela, China, Austria, Tibet, Malaysia, Czech Republic, and Romania to help realize this special project.

The Gönpa at Merigar East is more than just a building.

It's where people encounter Dzogchen Teachings.

It's where some of us met Dzogchen Teachings for the first time.

It's where silence, laughter, and practice come together.

And thanks to all of you, it was possible to make it even more extraordinary.

Krisztina Balla

KUNSANGAR NORTH - RUSSIA

SUMMER AT KUNSANGAR NORTH "MYRIAD WORLDS"

The main event of the summer at Kunsangar North was the "Myriad Worlds" festival (August 7-10).

It opened with Namkhay Yeshe's online teaching "Mentally Sound with Less or No Effort," specially prepared for Kunsangar. To ensure everyone could join,



we obtained a Zoom license for 3,000 participants.

The festival program included practices and creativity: Yantra Yoga, Vajra

Dance, Khaita Joyful Dances, dream yoga, tsetar ritual, lectures on Tibetan medicine, art workshops, and evening concerts.

The festival concluded with a truly symbolic finale: the double rainbow once again displayed over the gar, a beautiful tradition and a familiar symbol of harmony.

Oni McKinstry's Retreat

An equally significant event was the first visit to Russia by Oni McKinstry, a third-level Yantra Yoga teacher. Her retreat (June 12–18) at Kunsangar North, as well as classes in Moscow and St. Petersburg, were a true gift for Russian-speaking practitioners. Participants had the opportunity to experience profound pranayama and Yantra under her guidance.

Other Events

- Enzo Terzano's Retreat on Chöd and Gomadevi practices (Online)
- Tsetar Ritual on the Klyazma River
- Lecture by Nikolai Dudko on Thangkas
- Vesak and Saga Dawa Holidays
- Regular *Khaita Forever* Practices

A New Breath in the Life of the Gar

The new gekö, Yuri Dorogan, deserves special mention. His energy, cheer-



fulness and openness have infused Kunsangar with new life and given the community a confident impetus for development.

Important Steps Forward

This summer, the Gar successfully completed a fire inspection, meeting all requirements.

The restoration of the stupa, led by Igor Zimarkov, is in full swing. This is an important contribution to the preservation and renewal of Kunsangar's sacred place.



Thus the summer of 2025 at Kunsangar North was a time of learning, creativity, unity, and special signs, as well as special activities - from holidays and the obligatory care for safety to the restoration of the stupa.

Gakyil of Kunsangar North

TSEGYALGAR EAST - USA

DANCE DANCE DANCE 2025

at Khandroling, Tseg্যালgar East, August 30 - September 14

Ayumi Kurono

The first time I stood upon the mandala of Khandroling by the pond was in 2013.

In 1995, I happened to pick up a Japanese translation of Chögyal Namkhai



Khalong Dorje Khar September 2025

Norbu's book "Wisdom of Dzogchen" and thought I wanted to meet him in my lifetime. Seventeen years later, in 2012, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu came to Japan

amidst the lingering effects of the 2011 Fukushima Nuclear Disaster, stating precisely because of this situation, he held a retreat in Tokyo (Shiba Park).



Ayumi 2013 at Khandroling by the pond

Through a connection of fate, I learned of this event. Participating in the retreat allowed me to directly experience Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's energy for the first time. I was utterly captivated by him and by the Earth Mandala and Vajra Dance. I immediately asked the organizer for the contact information about the instructor, Kyu. At that point, I had already decided to go to Khandroling, the sacred land of the Dakini, and the birthplace of the Vajra Dance. I made that journey the following year, 2013, participating with two friends. At that time, we learned the Vajra Dance on the mandala of the School House, Tsegylgar East. By then, the universal mandala in the Vajra Hall was steadily nearing completion, and I felt a strong, strange sense of having "made it just in time."

Thousands of years ago, the descriptions of Vajra Dance might have appeared in Dzogchen texts, but it was only brought down to earth through Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's dreams a mere thirty-odd years ago. Many people may have encountered the teachings of Dzogchen before their short human lifespans come to an end. But whenever I think of how many people were born in the same era as our Rinpoche, blessed with the chance to dance the Vajra Dance upon the mandala, how long we must have waited for this opportunity, choosing to be born on Earth at the right time, I get goosebumps.

I cannot help but feel a profound sense of kinship with those standing



Vajra Dancers September 2025

upon the mandala.

In Japan, opportunities to step onto the mandala are limited as the Japanese sangha does not have its own place. Those interested in Vajra Dance often have to wait for months or a year for the course. That's precisely why, when given the chance to dance intensively on the mandala at the sacred site of Khandroling, I want to dance as many times as possible, to imprint it on my body.

Even after returning to Japan with the Earth Mandala in 2019, I rarely had the chance to open it. Then, right in the middle of the pandemic, it felt like Dakini was pushing me from behind, saying, "If not now, when will you step onto the mandala?" So I invited Kyu to Kyushu, Japan, and opened the mandala.

Later, I learned that this land was the site of the very first girls' school established in Kyushu. This closely mirrored the Khandroling episode, leaving me astonished and convinced once more that I was being guided by the Dakinis.

Until 2019, I had visited Khandroling about once every three years. Since 2023, after the global pandemic, I've been coming every year. This is because I can't help but wish, while I'm still alive, for as many people as possible to experience the wisdom of Dzogchen through Vajra Dance. I understand this is my own practice, but to develop my own approach - including how it will be passed on to the next generation - I first wanted to firmly imprint the steps of the

cosmic dance designed by the Dakini into my body.

For the first time, I was able to glimpse the grand vision of the large Khalong Dorje Kar in color, which was a big gain. Each time I come, I am deeply moved and filled with gratitude for the miracle and wonder of being able to visit the sacred place of Khandroling, and for the warmth and magnificence of the Vajra family I share it with.

My deepest respect and gratitude go to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, who brought the dance to earth, and to all the masters connected to the lineage. And heartfelt gratitude to every teacher who transmits the dance, to everyone standing on the same mandala. And to the Dakini who always watches over us, love and appreciation. Lastly, to all the fortunate causes and conditions that brought me to Dzogchen teaching and Vajra Dance.

Wishing to continue dancing with you all on the mandala!

For information about the yearly Dance, Dance, Dance course and practice retreat at Khandroling, Massachusetts, USA please contact: secretary@tsegylgar.org



TASHIGAR NORTH - VENEZUELA

AN INVITATION TO ENJOY AND TO JOIN TASHIGAR NORTE!

Are you a practitioner, digital nomad or retired, and need a break from your usual routine?

Would you like to spend some months in an environment of practice, sun, sea with the possibility to work on-line or dedicate your time to a retreat?

We invite you to the tropical island of Margarita, home of Tashigar Norte, the

Gar of Venezuela, where Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu transmitted many important Teachings: a special place where conditions for practice meet the possibility to work remotely and enjoy the slow paced life of the Caribbean.

Those who practice the Vajra Dance will find a Solar and a Khalong mandala available 24 hours a day, just a few meters from the houses: a precious opportunity to deepen the practice in this special place.

You are warmly invited to come and, if you like, to collaborate with us in the maintenance and development of this sacred land. We have different developing projects in the Gar including a common vegetable garden, the restoration of the mango and lemon trees grove, energy sustainability and more.

We also have an open Geko position and we welcome people that are willing to come in residence at special conditions for longer periods, helping build a thriving community and environment for practitioners.

If this resonates with you, please, contact us for further details: tashigar.norte01@gmail.com

Check out our [PROGRAM](#) for this fall, have a look at our [ACCOMODATION](#) to rent a place and, if you are interested to become a permanent villager, follow this link [HOUSES FOR SALE](#).

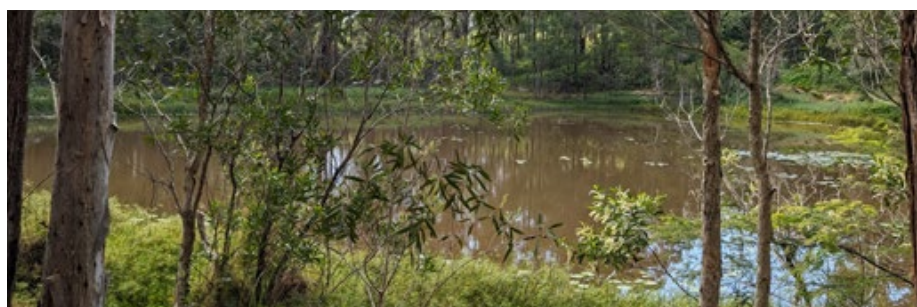
You are welcome!
With love,
TN Gakyil Team
Homage to the Masters

NAMGYALGAR - AUSTRALIA

REGENERATING THE LAND OF NAMGYALGAR

Lynne Geary

A story of the who and the what: many helping hands, weeds and trees and wallabies and bats, snakes and birds and a beautiful green tree frog which lives in a toilet.



Evolution Point

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, first and foremost. Rinpoche was very familiar with the area, having visited for many years to be in the warmth of Queensland, and having bought a house in the coastal town of Caloundra. In 2009 Rinpoche gave a retreat at nearby Ewen Maddock

Dam. Namkhai Yeshe was present also. In the time leading up to the retreat he and Rinpoche investigated some properties in the area. During the retreat Yeshe gave the Gakyil a list of three contenders. 206 Glass House Woodford Rd was number one on the list.



Sunrise at Namgyalgar

People at the retreat visited, noticed the substantial house and huge sheds, and stood in awe of the glorious view of the nearby mountains - Tibrogargan, Beerwah and Coonowran. The area of the Glass House Mountains is a spiritually significant landscape, central to creation stories and cultural practices of First Nations people, in particular the Gubbi Gubbi and Jinibarra people.

The property was purchased in October 2010. There were 28.56 acres, most of which was open paddock with some patches of remnant bush, and a sizeable dam.

The work of transforming the sheds into a Gonpa and dining area began almost at once – but that is another story.

For this one I thank Sarita Thomason. While she and Ian Drummond were Gekös, from December 2021 to January 2024, Sarita involved herself in the care and regeneration of the land. She continues that involvement – talking with her, plus her extensive report on progress and what needs to be done at the Gar, and her commitment to the project, formed the basis and substance of this story.

From the beginning there were members of the Community who paid attention to the land. It needed a lot of attention and care.

In addition to the small areas of bush, there were several invasive species of weeds, and many many pine trees – self-sown from nearby pine planta-

tions. Fences had been removed, and the house gardens were a mess. There was a lot to do, over the years a lot has been done.

Trees and weeds. Julian planted trees down a slope which was marked by erosion.

Joritt and Sally planted trees, weeded, weeded, weeded, and started removing the invading pine trees. George donated a lot of tree seedlings and planted them along the creek at the bottom of the slope from the house. He and Emily removed weed trees from the house gardens.

Rick registered the Gar with Land For Wildlife. This is a program facilitated by the local council. An officer from LFW assesses the land, and advises about weed eradication, tree species, and local flora and fauna. An LFW assessment of the Gar reported that, 'your property is providing habitat for a range of native flora and fauna and contains significant conservation values. The habitat forms part of a continuous wildlife corridor, with a number of surrounding properties, comprised of vegetation patches in a fragmented landscape. The remnant vegetation contains threatened flora and fauna species. The dam provides, and has the potential to provide, good habitat for native fauna.'

An LFW officer has visited every year, to assess progress and advise. LFW reports provide both guides for future planning, and a record of progress. LFW

also provides incentives in the form of small grants. Sarita applied successfully for a number of these over several years, resulting in grants of several hundred tree seedlings.

Which were planted by Nicki, Henri, Sarita, Henri, Nicki, Remco, Karin, Ian, James, Sunny, Jess and on 'Planting Days'.

And there were Karma Yoga weekends, which looked like this: Nicki, Sally,

Rosemary, Sarita, Ian, Elizabeth, Damien, Jorrit, Karin, Remco, Sarita. 'Manual removal of corky passion fruit vine, tree popped smaller umbrella trees, cut pine trees. Hand pulled lantana along creek bank. Removed all pine trees on Evolution point, by the dam.' Sarita said, when describing the progress made towards regenerating the land. 'The program is working only because people are doing the work.'

While it will take many years before the targets are met, the results of work done so far are evident. Trees are maturing, weed control targets are being met, the Gar is beautiful. Results are evident also in the good relationships between Namgyalgar and the local community; the Council, LFW, local nurseries and other businesses.

To care for the land, to collaborate in helping to restore habitat for native flora and fauna, is to nurture that which supports and nurtures us, as Namgyalgar supports and nurtures us in our practice.

THIRTY YEARS ON THE VAJRA DANCE MANDALA

Photo: Gala Bobrovskaya

Last year marked a special anniversary for our practitioners from the Baltic countries—thirty years on the Vajra Dance Mandala.

That's how long it's been since Gala from Latvia, Aušra from Lithuania, and Tarmo from Estonia first discovered the Vajra Dance. To this day, they continue to dance regularly on the mandala. We talked to one of the practitioners, Gala, to hear her inspiring story.

Mirror: Gala, you first encountered the Vajra Dance more than thirty years ago. What was that like?

Gala: In May 1992, Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche held a retreat in Jūrmala, a seaside town on the Gulf of Riga in Latvia. That's when I first saw the Dance of the Song of Vajra performed by the Master himself. Since it was our very first meeting with the Teaching, we didn't yet have a mandala. But the retreat venue had an open-air circular dance floor with a tree growing right in the middle. The people attending the retreat drew a mandala there with colored chalk.

Watching the Master dance, I felt a strong desire to learn it myself. But I had to wait more than two years. It wasn't until December 1994 in Vilnius (Lithuania) that Adriana Dal Borgo held a course to teach the Vajra Dance. In the mid-90s, Eastern Europe was struggling with serious economic difficulties. I myself had problems with money, with work, even with family. Somehow, by a stroke of luck, those problems eased, and together with two Vajra sisters from the Latvian Dzogchen Community — Iri-



Retreat in Jūrmala, 1992

na Pustovit and Valentina Smirnova — I was able to attend that retreat.

Mirror: What was that very first Vajra Dance retreat like for you?

Gala: We stayed in a beautiful apartment in Vilnius belonging to two practitioners, Džugas and Aurelija. It was on the top floor, and we ended up staying in their guest room together with Tarmo Lass from Estonia and Emīls Melderis who was passing through from France on his way to Latvia.

The sessions took place in a nursing home, on a mandala prepared by Aušra and Ernestas Lapinskas. The

mandala had been painted on fabric, and by the time the retreat started, the paint hadn't fully dried yet, so it had to be covered with plastic sheeting. Our classes were held in the gymnasium, with sports mats lined up along the walls. After long hours of practice, we'd collapse on those mats between *pamo* and *pawo* sessions, completely exhausted, because we had to learn so many difficult movements in a short amount of time. It was at this retreat that I first met Valdas Kirsa and Algis Lukševičius who later became the very first Vajra Dance instructor in the Baltic countries.

To be honest, when I mentioned the

30th anniversary of that Vilnius retreat last year, during a practice retreat in Ievlejas (a retreat center in Latvia where the Baltic Dzogchen Communities gather), I realized that I was the only one for whom that retreat was of such a great importance. I was older than the other participants, most of them were still young at that time, with love, family, and children all ahead of them. But it was the start of a new chapter for us. And what a chapter it turned out to be!

Mirror: I imagine others also had to make quite an effort to get to that retreat?

Gala: Absolutely! Before Vilnius, Adriana had led a course in Tallinn (Estonia). It drew a large group, including people who hadn't yet received transmission from Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche. One of them was Tarmo Lass.

When the retreat ended and Adriana boarded a train to Vilnius, Tarmo decided to follow her—hitchhiking, since he had no money. His first stop was the city of Tartu. He somehow managed to get a ride, but along the way the car was pulled over by police for a document check. Tarmo was astonished to see the officers wearing bulletproof vests and carrying Kalashnikovs. Later, it became known that not long before, during one of these document checks, a firefright had broken out and two policemen were killed. The case was never solved.

It was December, bitterly cold, and often drivers refused to pick Tarmo up; sometimes there were no cars at all. At





Retreat in Jūrmala, 1992

one point he got so frozen that he went deeper into the forest, spread out his mat, and wrapped himself in plastic sheeting to keep warm. It worked. Along the way, strangers shared food with him. When he finally reached Vilnius, he stayed with Aurelija and Džugas. Every day he would take a shower in a freezing bathroom and then crouch down to carefully darn his wool socks. That's how I remember him. He hitchhiked back home the same way, sometimes walking on foot. Tarmo told me that when he crossed the border, exhausted and sleep-deprived, he drifted in and out of consciousness, half-dreaming as if he were walking across a carpet of flowers. That's how our friendship began.

Mirror: After that retreat, how did you manage to keep your knowledge alive? How did you practice?

Gala: After returning from Vilnius, I repeated the movements whenever I could, at bus stops, at home, anywhere there was space. At that time, we didn't have a mandala in Riga, but our community gathered for collective practices in a huge abandoned building that once was a computer center housing a giant mainframe. On its empty floor, together with my Vajra sisters Valya and Ira who had also participated in the Vilnius re-

treat, I drew half of a mandala. That's where I kept practicing the dance. When I went to St Petersburg in 1996 for a retreat with Adriana, it turned out I'd been making just one mistake. That retreat was also when I first met Pille and Mart Viirés from the Estonian community.

By then, the whole Latvian community of Padmaling wanted to dance. They not only invited Adriana but also bought a semi-finished mandala made of Tyvek in the US. The outline was already printed, we only had to paint the sectors. I wasn't part of that effort. If that mandala still exists, it should now be in Merigar East, where we brought it for the first retreat held there.

Padmaling wanted Adriana to teach the Dance of the Song of Vajra, but experience had shown this dance was too difficult to learn in one go. So they decided to start with the Dance of Three Vajras and the Dance that Benefits Beings. But we were persistent. Instead of a single retreat, we organized several. In the end, we learned the Dance of the Song of Vajra, too. Adriana gave a real boost to our practice—by the late 1990s, almost the entire Padmaling community would stand together on the mandala. We even joined forces with the Lithuanian community, visiting each other and practicing together.

Unfortunately, that joy didn't last forever. Times changed. At one point, I found myself dancing alone on the mandala in Riga. It was Algis who supported my practice then; on weekends he would bring practitioners from Lithuania. Later, Liga Zariņa joined our community. With great determination, she learned all the dances by repeating the movements after me. Then a group in Daugavpils, three hours from Riga, began to dance, and I would travel there to join them.

Mirror: Where else have you had the chance to dance? Any unusual mandalas? Tell us about the ones you created yourself.

Gala: In 2004, I had the chance to live in a countryside home owned by my friends. They had moved to the city, and someone had to look after the place. Out there, I built a rope mandala directly on the ground. Dancing on it wasn't easy at all. On bare earth, every turn takes more effort. I tried laying plastic sheeting under the ropes, but by then summer had already ended, and in the mornings the mandala would freeze over and turn into an ice rink.

There I realized I wanted to dance in the city, together with the community. I'm not really a countryside person! When I returned home, I started working

on a new mandala. At the school where we used to dance, we managed to rent a hall for a weekend so we could have a mandala there. We had just two days and three nights to complete it. I bought Tyvek and all the necessary materials, and asked my Vajra brother Yura Egorov from the Riga Community to help me. I was so focused on finishing everything on time that I completely forgot about the basics. For two days straight we cut and glued the material, drew the mandala's layout, and painted it with total dedication, forgetting completely about food. Luckily, Yura's wife Vera came to the rescue and kept us fed during those two days. Without her, we would have collapsed. Another Vajra brother, Alexey Nikitin, also joined us to help with the painting.

Interestingly, in Tallinn they've always danced in the same school, and in Vilnius it's much the same. But in Riga, our destiny is that of nomads. We danced in different schools and even an art gallery inside a shopping center. One summer, I spotted a small paved open-air square next to a big furniture store. It was perfect for dancing. Well, almost. The shop staff thought we were performing some sort of magic ritual and tried to chase us off. Now and then a drunk would wander out of the bushes, but they didn't bother us much. In the end, things with the store staff smoothed over, thanks to the calm attitude of the male owner. Dancing outdoors is wonderful in warm, dry weather — but around here, that's never guaranteed.

Later, we were lucky to establish cooperation with a Wushu school, which turned out to be the best venue we'd had in years. But as life usually goes, everything changes. After some time, the school had to relocate, and we moved along with it. Our neighbours also had changes: Vilnius now got a second instructor, Jurga Miškinytė, while Algis first went to work in England and then to Tenerife.

At one of the Vajra Dance retreats in Jūrmala, a practitioner from Tallinn named Alar Kukkk showed up. He made rapid progress and, before long, became a Vajra Dance instructor himself. Soon we were dancing not only in Riga and Vilnius, but in Tallinn as well.



Tarmo Lass, Arvid Norkalkas (practitioner from Latvia) and Gala Bobrovskaya

Mirror: You once mentioned that, for the sake of the Vajra Dance, you had to break the law. Tell us more about it.

Gala: Yes, that was back in 2002. We were going to attend Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche's first retreat in Crimea and had handed in our passports to get transit visas through Belarus. Around the same time, Algis Lukševičius from Lithuania invited us to come dance in the city of Šiauliai, not far from the Latvian border. Back then, border checks were still in place between the countries, and my passport was at the Belarusian consulate. How could I cross? I had an idea: I'd borrow my daughter's passport. Not because I thought the guards wouldn't notice the age difference, but Šiauliai was so close, and I figured I could just slip there and back quickly.

Well, as the bus pulled up to the border and the guards began checking documents, it suddenly hit me that these were border officers trained since Soviet times to spot criminals. You can guess what happened next. I was arrested and put in a cell. Not exactly a pleasant experience. Guruyoga came to my rescue while they tried to figure out who I was and whether I posed any threat.

I don't remember how long my "imprisonment" lasted, but eventually they released me and decided to escort me

to the nearest Latvian town, Jelgava. That worked out nicely, since my daughter and her family happened to live there at the time. I think the entire border staff came out to watch and laugh at the "crazy woman."

It would all have been much simpler if I'd just sorted things out on the spot, instead of setting off to Crimea for the retreat. Because of that, the case went to court, and I was fined 300 lats, about a good month's salary back then. I even tried to appeal the ruling, which only gave the appellate court another laugh at my expense. Later I learned that if I had actually managed to cross and then been caught on my return, the punishment could have been far worse.

Mirror: These days there are no borders between the Baltic states. Practitioners from all three countries gather at the levlejas retreat center. How did that place come about?

Gala: Originally, the center was designed and built by a Hindu community, and at first we would bring our mandala there. Later, we painted a mandala directly on the floor in the practice hall. Eventually, Ziedonis Rengitis, a co-owner of the retreat center, together with Alar Kukkk, bought it from the previous owners, and now it belongs to the Dzogchen community.

When it came to drawing the mandala, we couldn't have managed without Ruslan Kim's help. He really made it possible. He was assisted by Olya Plyaskina who had just moved from Daugavpils to Riga at that time. Today, Olya is a dance instructor herself. Other practitioners, like Emīls Melderis and Katerina Martynova, also joined in painting the mandala. Now, we regularly gather and dance together—practitioners from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

We are incredibly fortunate in this life to have the Teacher, the Teaching, and the Community. There's no way to fully express our gratitude to the Master for the priceless knowledge he gave us. Truly, we are the happiest people in the world.



Regular Vajra Dance practice on the mandala in Ievlejas

BRIDGING HEALING, BREATHING AND MOVEMENT

Upcoming Courses from the Tibetan Medicine School Europe and Yantra Yoga Series

As the autumn season opens a new cycle of study and deepening practice, we are happy to announce a series of upcoming courses from both the Tibetan Medicine School and the Yantra Yoga Department.

These offerings reflect our shared intention to cultivate a living experience of Tibetan Medicine and yantra yoga within the Dzogchen Community.

A Common Ground: Tsadul – Opening and Harmonizing Energy Pathways

This season marks a special collaboration between Yantra Yoga and Tibetan Medicine with a joint **course on Tsadul**.

Tsadul (tsa dul, literally "taming the channels") is a preliminary series of Yantra Yoga: exercises that open the



subtle channels for energy to flow. Working with movement, breath, and awareness by combining five dynamic movements and one pranayama or breathing exercise, tsadul harmonizes the *rlung* or wind energy that flows in the subtle channels, allowing to balance our inner condition

This shared course will offer participants an experiential understanding of:

- A step-by-step in depth approach to the Tsadul practice.
- The medical foundations of Tsadul from the perspective of Tibetan Medicine
- The particular health benefits of Tsadul both from Tibetan & Western medicine perspective.
- Variations for practicing on a chair,

making it accessible to everyone.

This program combines 100% online pre-recorded content with interactive live sessions guided by our experienced teachers: **Dr Puntsog Wangmo, Fabio Andrico, Nataly Nitsche and Stella Rungen.**

It is open to everyone, regardless of previous experience with the method. Live sessions will be held **every Saturday at 4 PM CET from October 18th to November 29th**. The course is taught in English. Special discounts will be offered to Yantra Yoga teachers, long term students of Tibetan Medicine School. To secure your spot register [here](#).

Upcoming Courses from the Tibetan Medicine School Europe

The Tibetan Medicine School continues its mission to preserve and transmit the rich heritage of Traditional Tibetan Medicine, with the strong motivation to help people to achieve a healthier and more balanced lifestyle.

During 2025 we will start a new cycle of both our **Academic Trainings in Diet& Lifestyle, and Kunye Massage & external therapies**

Both These programs offer three levels of study providing a structured academic curriculum.

Starting on specific dates, these programs guide students through both theory and practical skills offering a deeper and comprehensive understanding, leading to certification.

- Our 3 levels **online** educational program in **Diet according to Tibetan Medicine will start October 16th 2025**. For more info and registration click [here](#)
- Our 3 levels **on spot** educational program on **Tibetan Healing Arts: Kunye massage and External Therapies** will start with the first 7 days intensive course held in **Dzamling Gar, Tenerife 4-10 October 2025**. For more info and registration click [here](#)

To know more about our programs

contact Tibetan Medicine School: tibetanmedicine@atiyogafoundation.org

All are welcome, whether you are beginning your study of Tibetan medicine or continuing an existing path.

Upcoming Courses from the Yantra Yoga Department

Courses on Demand

We are happy to offer two on-demand courses from preliminaries of Yantra Yoga, both courses provide a perfect foundation for daily practice.

We offer:

Pre-recorded video lessons

One live practice session each month

Unlimited access to all materials

• **Train the Body with the Tsigjong.**

More info here.

• **Purify the Prana with the Lungsang,**

More info here.

October Workshops

• **October 4, 2025** – *The Vajra Wave: A Series to Conclude a Yantra Yoga Session* with Riccardo Vrech.

• **October 5, 2025** – *The Fifth Series of Yantras* with Maxim Leschenko.

Stay connected with us for registration updates and details on how to participate.

Weekly Classes

To keep your practice alive we are offering our **weekly online classes in Spanish** led by **Nataly Nitsche**. More info [here](#).

Ongoing & Upcoming Programs

Yantra Yoga dalla A alla Z (Part 2, in Italian) – Our year-long program has now entered its second part, dedicated to the Five **Series of Yantras**. If you are considering learning or deepening your practice this is the perfect time to join in. More info [here](#).

Yantra Yoga de la A a la Z (in Spanish)

– A new edition is coming soon! Dates to be announced.

Ilaria Faccioli

Executive Manager

Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine Tenerife - International Atiyoga Foundation

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YOUNG VOICES, SHARED SERVICE

The Next Generation at the Dynamic Space of the Elements

High in the Tuscan hills, within the serene grounds of the Dynamic Space of the Elements, an international group of young volunteers is helping preserve tradition while shaping the future.

They come from different countries, speak different languages, and carry



Group photo from Merigar East with Fortunata from Shanghai (3rd from left) and Krisztina Balla from Transylvania (second from right)

different skills. Yet together, they form a living tapestry of service, learning, and cultural exchange.

Three of these voices—**Fortunata from Shanghai, Krisztina Balla from Transylvania, and Sonam Namkhai**



Sonam Namkhai Ottaviani painting in the Gönpa at Merigar East

Ottaviani from Italy and the United States—illustrate the diversity and unity that define the project. Their paths highlight not only the practical work of painting gönpas and preparing sacred objects, but also the deeper lessons of community and shared humanity.

Fortunata: Finding Family Through Service

For Fortunata, a graduate in Art History and Archaeology, volunteering began with helping paint the gompa in Arcidosso. Since then, she has contributed wherever needed—whether designing PowerPoints, assisting in the kitchen, or managing the shop during retreats. “They never tell me, ‘You must do this,’” she reflects. “Instead, I feel I want to help. It’s fulfilling.”

What she treasures most is the sense of belonging. “The team is like a family,” she says. “Love is beyond language—you only need to experience it.”

Interview to Fortunata [here](#)

Krisztina: Weaving Languages and Sacred Work

Krisztina Balla’s story begins in Romania, where she grew up speaking Hungarian and later added Romanian, English, and Italian. Her involvement with the Dynamic Space deepened in 2021, when she helped fill a stupa. Since

then, she has painted gönpas, prepared hundreds of tsa-tsas, and supported the filling of the 108 stupas of Chantong Dorje.

Living with volunteers from many cultures has been a lesson in itself. “At first, it was hard—each of us is used to our own space,” she admits. “But you learn to share space respectfully. That’s very important.” For Krisztina, the reward is clear: “It feels like being part of a family. Quiet support, always there.”

Interview to Krisztina [here](#)

Sonam: Building Bridges Across Cultures

For Sonam Namkhai Ottaviani, volunteering at the Dynamic Space is both a homecoming and a service. Born in Italy and raised in the United States, he is now studying Natural Resource Conservation and Italian at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Each summer, he returns to contribute—painting, translating, and helping with the 108 Stupas project.

For him, the experience is as much about cultural exchange as it is about sacred work. “Sometimes I feel like the minority language group,” he says. “It gives me empathy for people who move to a new country. You learn cultural sensitivity just by living together.”

Interview to Sonam [here](#)

A Shared Path

Though their journeys differ, Fortunata, Krisztina, and Sonam all echo the same themes: service, family, learning, and cultural exchange. They are part of a new generation keeping alive the vision of the Dynamic Space of the Elements, not only through the sacred projects but also through their own personal growth.

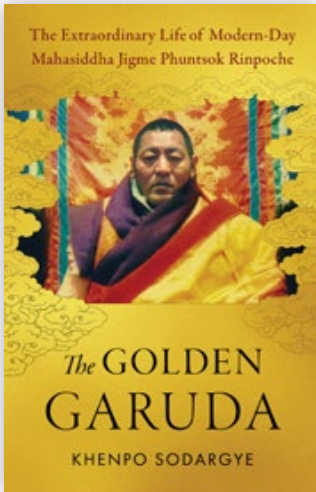
Their advice to others is simple: **come and experience it**. As Krisztina says, “It feels like being part of a family.” Fortunata adds, “Love is beyond language.” And Sonam emphasizes, “You learn skills, but more importantly, you learn about people.”

Together, these young volunteers remind us that the heart of the Dynamic Space is not only in its stupas or gönpas—it is in the living connections that grow between those who serve.

View videos here: <https://melong.com/three-video-interviews-with-summer-students-from-dynamic-space-of-the-elements/>

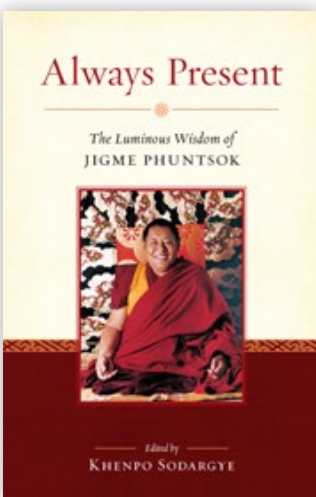
BOOK REVIEW

by Alexander Studholme



The Golden Garuda
The Extraordinary Life
of Modern Day Mahasiddha
Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche

By Khenpo Sodargye,
 Shambhala Publications 2025 pp. 245
 ISBN 9781645473190



Always Present
The Luminous Wisdom
of Jigme Phuntsok

Edited by
 Khenpo Sodargye
 Shambhala Publication 2015 pp. 130
 ISBN 9781559394505

The lives of many of the great lamas who followed the Dalai Lama into exile in 1959 are well documented. Much less is known about those who stayed behind in Chinese-occupied Tibet: information has tended to come in fragments and has often been desperately sad. Within this context, then, *The Golden Garuda*, the biography of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsog (1933 – 2004) stands out. It is a monument to spiritual success, a detailed account of an amazing Buddhist master who, despite the hardships of his time and place, was able to achieve incredible things. At their meeting in Dharamsala in 1990, the Dalai Lama called him simply, “the protector of the Dharma in the Land of Snows”.

Khenpo Jigme was most famous for establishing Larung Gar, a religious encampment set in a remote valley in Eastern Tibet, which by the 1990s had grown into literally the largest Buddhist institution in the world, home to thousands of practitioners and the training ground of a new generation of Buddhist teachers. Exactly how this was possible goes largely unexplained: this is essentially a pious hagiography, written by a close disciple, into which politics rarely intrude. There are early chapters on the horrors of the Cultural Revolution, from which Khenpo Jigme – continuing to wear his monastic robe, albeit under his outerwear - emerges miraculously unscathed. But thereafter the Chinese authorities are noticeable only by their absence.

He was truly a renaissance man, a man of many different aspects and parts. In the early photos - thick set, with strong features and swathed in sheepskin-lined robes - Khenpo Jigme looks more like a heavyweight boxer than a spiritual teacher. Later, he can look gentle, almost motherly. An accomplished scholar of the early Indian texts, he could defeat Gelugpa *geshes* in debate, whilst he was also, we read, one of the few lamas left in Tibet who could authentically teach Dzogchen. He was a prolific *terton*: the pages of the biography are replete with descriptions of the wondrous discovery of stones, statues and treasure chests. *Sariras*, supernatural

pearls, “often fell from the sky” during his teachings.

Within a rich visionary life, he identified as the son of a minister of King Gesar, the mythical Tibetan Dharma warrior. One of the most colourful passages of the book recounts a dream in which he enters the court of King Gesar - “a palace built of precious jewels” - where he meets a lovely Khampa girl, who sings him a beautiful vajra song. Another chapter describes how he gathers a large crowd to open a “terma gateway” through which the faithful may enter directly into a pure realm. Moreover, he hopes to enable “scientific researchers to witness this substantial Buddhist mystery with their own eyes.” When he is unable to achieve this extraordinary ambition, he weeps.

Certain recurring themes emerge: numerous encounters with Guru Padmasambhava and Mipham, one of the central figures of the non-sectarian *rimed* movement of early 20th century Tibet; devotion to Manjushri, the Bodhisattva of Wisdom, and to Yamantaka, Manjushri’s wrathful form; an emphasis on the Mahayana aspiration prayer of Samantabhadra and, finally, on the Vajrayana practice of Vajrakilaya, the yidam deity of Terton Lerab Lingpa, the lama said to be Khenpo Jigme’s previous incarnation.

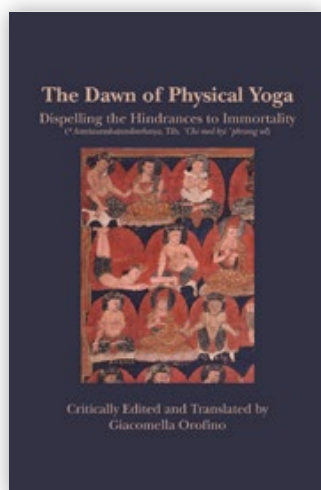
Strikingly, throughout all this *mahasiddha*-type activity, Khenpo Jigme remained a monk. He ordained at fourteen and was enthroned as a qualified lama at the age of twenty-four. At this crucial juncture, he might have returned to householder life. A woman appeared - “breathtakingly beautiful” - who announced that she was a *dakini* with strong karmic connections to him and that, by taking her as his consort, he would greatly enhance his spiritual powers. To the dismay of some of his lama colleagues, who argued that a consort was indeed beneficial for the life of a *terton*, Khenpo Jigme turned her down. He insisted that it was more important for him to uphold the image of a pure monk in an era, as he put it, when too many mediocre individuals “conduct their so-called *consort yoga* for their self-serving desire and lust.”

This stress on maintaining the purity of the *sangha* did not make Khenpo Jigme any more popular. In 1985, in a sign of his authority, he circulated an open letter to monasteries throughout Eastern Tibet, stating that all monks should maintain their vows in a pure way. “After the rectification,” he publicly remarked, “many people hated me to the bone and slandered me for no reason... [but] if no intervention had been introduced, Buddhism would have been doomed if left as it was.” His thoughts on this issue are also to be found in *Always Present*, a short volume of his teachings. There, he warns at some length of the dangers of deluded, corrupt and avaricious monks and of fake tulkus, adding modestly that he never once thought himself to be the true reincarnation of Lerab Lingpa.

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok did not merely revive, maintain and police Buddhist tradition, he was also creative and forward thinking. He introduced nuns to his community in unprecedented numbers for Eastern Tibet, awarding a select few the highest degree of *khenmo*, thus allowing them to be teachers in their own right. And perhaps most significantly, in 1986 he began to encourage Chinese men and women to come to Larung Gar to practice the Dharma.

In order to connect with a Chinese audience, Khenpo Jigme led several parties of thousands of devotees to some of the major Chinese sites of Buddhist pilgrimage, such as Mount Emei and Mount Wutei, where he commissioned many statues of Guru Padmasambhava. Then, towards the end of his life, Khenpo

Jigme earnestly propagated the practice of reciting the name of the Buddha Amitabha whilst cultivating the intention to be reborn in his Pure Land: a form of Mahayana Buddhism that, while an established element of the Tibetan system, is also, of course, very popular in China.



The Dawn of Physical Yoga

Dispelling the Hindrances to Immortality

(**Amṛtasakāṭanibarhaa*, Tib. *'Chi med kyi 'phrang sel*)

Critically Edited and Translated
by Giacomella Orofino
Unior Press
ISBN 978-88-6719-314-1

Dispelling the Hindrances to Immortality, the text examined in this study, is among the earliest known manuals on physical yoga. It belongs to a remarkable corpus of ancillary texts preserved

within the Tibetan canon, related to the *Amṛtasiddhi*, a Vajrayāna Sanskrit treatise on yoga. While the colophon, along with those of other texts in this corpus, consistently traces this tradition back to Virūpa (Tib. Bir ba pa), its compilation is attributed to the *mahasiddhas* Yogeśvara Amoghavajra, an enigmatic Buddhist yogin from eastern India who was active in Tibet during the 11th century. The text presents 108 dynamic physical yoga movements designed to remove obstacles to the practice of the *Amṛtasiddhi*. Through a comprehensive analysis of this manual, this study offers fresh insights into the origins and evolution of physical yoga, illuminating the fluid and interwoven exchange of yogic practices between India and Tibet during the medieval period.

Giacomella Orofino is Professor of Tibetan Language and Civilization in the Department of Asian, African, and Mediterranean Studies at the University of Naples L'Orientale. She directs the university's Centre for Buddhist Studies, which promotes interdisciplinary research on Buddhist philosophy, literature, art, and culture. She also serves as President of the Italian Association of Tibetan, Himalayan, and Mongolian Studies (AISTHiM). Her research focuses on Tibetan religious history, particularly on Buddhist and Bon tantric literature.

Cover image: Detail of *Vajradhara with Eighty-Five Great Adepts (Mahasiddhas)*, 15th Century, Western Tibet. Pigments on cloth, Rubin Museum of Art, Gift of the Shelley & Donald Rubin Foundation F1998.17.3.

The book is available at:

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/other-publishing-houses/product/the-dawn-of-physical-yoga>

Or <http://www.scienzelettere.it/book/50463.html>

UNCERTAINTY IN TIMES OF CHANGE

Costantino Albini

This talk, on August 17, 2025, was the first in a monthly series of cultural gatherings entitled DZG Talks in which music, culture, and philosophy meet. The talk was broadcast live on the DZG Talks YouTube channel. It has been edited for brevity.

Good morning everybody. I am very happy to be here. A long time ago, in a distant country, a baby boy was born - that was me. I was born exactly nine years after the end of the Second World War in Milano, in Italy, and spent many years of my childhood there.

The world around me was very different from the world that we have now. In Italy there was a strong feeling of coming back to life after the war and reconstruction and industrialization was going on and people were working very hard. A neighborhood in my city had been bombed and they were already reconstructing the whole city after these terrible years of the war.

When I was a child, I was accompanied to school and picked up by somebody in my family but when I was a bit bigger, I just went by myself, by tram or bus. It was quite safe. Back then there were no cell phones and the only media was television and radio. When people wanted to know the news, they would gather in cafes where there was a television, and they would get all the news.

In those days technology was very simple. If I had an emergency and couldn't come back early from school, I had to look for a token to use the public telephone to call my mom and let her know otherwise she would get worried and be very angry with me when I came home.



When I was born, the population of the planet was 2,685 billion. Now, in 2025, the population is 8 billion, 231 million, almost quadrupling. In the lifespan of a man, the population of the planet is four times more which is quite dramatic.

Now when we look around us at what is happening there are so many wars, so much aggression, so much dissatisfaction. People are very strongly turning against each other. And then at the social level there is more and more difference between the very poor and the extremely rich. From the point of view of nature scientists say that there are thousands of species of animals and plants that have become extinct in this century for many different reasons. Also for us at this moment, there is a kind of veil of mystery about what we are eating, what we are drinking, what we are breathing. We don't know how much microplastic is in our tissues, in our brains, how much poison from pesticides in our food and how many chemicals are coming into our system through all the objects that we use every day.

Life is not so easy at the moment. We receive information but we don't know if it's true or fake. We don't know how many falsehoods, fabrications and deceit are given to our minds through the media. How can we know from the news that something happening in another country is true or not? It's very difficult for us because we are bombarded with information all the time. So on the men-

tal level, there is a strong pollution.

And we ourselves have been changing through all the decades that we've been exposed to this. For instance, the rate of infertility has been growing especially in more developed countries, scientists say in a large part caused by the different types of pollution that we inhale, eat and drink through the years.

We are also changing because our body is trying to adapt in order to survive in the poisonous environment in which we are living, that we have built around ourselves. We are sometimes at a loss to find the meaning of all this which can bring some mental problems and disturbances to us.

Since the pandemic, I have been studying Western astrology and learned some amazing things. For example, we are presently living in a phase that, from an astrological viewpoint, there is a monumental change going on. Some planets, particularly the so-called transpersonal planets, are now in relationship to one another in the sky in ways that have never happened before in the memory of humans. It's something unique.

Until 1781, the planets were considered to be seven. Astrology also considers the sun and the moon to be planets and there are also Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. Saturn was considered to be the final planet in our solar system. Many meanings were given to these planets over the years, through

experience, analysis, and events, and energies were attributed to them. The transpersonal planets were discovered more recently, the first one, Uranus, in 1781, and then after 100 years, Neptune. Pluto was discovered in 1930 and, in 1977, another planet, Chiron, was discovered.

Because they are farther away from the sun, they [appear to] move more slowly so when they are aligned to each other or to the other planets, their effect is felt much more strongly because it lasts a long time. Uranus, for example, was discovered around the time of the American civil war, and a little after the discovery, there was the French revolution. Because of that, many astrologers found that the energy of Uranus has to do with rebellion, revolution and also strong sudden changes. That is just an example. So these transpersonal planets generally have an effect more on the historical level, on the social level, on the totality of humankind, more than on personal lives because they seem to move so slowly.

For instance, when I was born I had Uranus in a certain position in my birth chart because of the date and the hour I was born. But Uranus remained there for such a long time that many other people on the planet have Uranus in that position. It's called a generational effect.

The point is that the transpersonal planets for around the last decade have been creating aspects or geometrical angles to each other which are unusual, that haven't happened very often in history. And lately, they are beginning to have aspects that are even more unusual, so unusual that in human history they have never been recorded. In this moment, they are all connected to each other, they are all interacting with each other and the energy felt by humans is a strong energy of change.

Many astrologers say that this is a pivotal moment, a critical moment, a right of passage for humanity. Some of them say that humanity is now in the birth canal; it's the end of humanity's childhood and the beginning of humanity's adulthood, meaning that there is a very

strong critical consciousness shift. Humanity, as a total, has to grow up in this period. And this period has been going on already for a few years and it will go on until the end of 2027 or the first half of 2028. Some astrologers call this the end of Kali Yuga, an Indian system of counting time in which every Kalpa is divided into four ages. The first is like a golden era, but the last one in which we are, is the heaviest one in which there is no clarity, few blessings in the world, and everything is more difficult and heavy.

If you think about it, if it's true, this is also a sense that we are in a big turmoil because it's the end of a long period but a new period is going to begin in the years to come so it is important that we understand that we have to work with ourselves to grow up, because the world will never be the same.

Things are changing at a very accelerated pace in all aspects - politically, socially, naturally - so it's important that we understand this, be aware of what's going on, open our eyes and ears to be more responsive and ready to not only adapt, but even, so to speak, to surf on the waves that are changing. It is like a tsunami is coming and if you're just standing in front of it, it will destroy you. But if you can surf, then you can plunge into the water, surf on top of the tsunami and give direction to your life. The idea is to survive.

So in order to make a change in our life, we have to make a change in our inner life. Since we were born, we have been constructing our worldview. As newborn babies we were just taking everything in and trying to make a sense of it. We had a few important things, which were surviving, eating, being loved, feeling protected. But when we grew up a bit, we started learning from our families, from life, from the world that our need to be protected, to be loved, to be surrounded by certainty is continuously changing and we had to adapt to the change and change ourselves in order to survive. We always looked for stability, for reliability, dependability. We needed a world that we could trust, in which we felt like, "I live in this world, I do this, and I will survive, and I will be well".

On the other hand we are continuously seeing that things are changing and in a way that we cannot predict, and it is not easy for us to adapt or to find a way. We have done a particular job with our mind since we were children - we have been looking around and through our five senses we have selected a few things that were more important for our survival, for our well-being - but doing so, our mind has learned to cut away many other things.

Our eyes see many things, but we don't see them. We see only what we want to see because we are looking for something. But we don't even know what we are looking for. We are looking for survival, to be well, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to have a roof over our head, to be loved, to find a good situation in which we can thrive but we find confusion and so we cut away many things. Because of this, some parts of the world around us become totally invisible and also some parts of our mind that we don't like. We just put them in a dark room because they are not socially acceptable.

Anger, for example, is considered to be bad, even though at times it is justified. We grow up with this conditioning and try to hide our anger and, in the end, after some time, we are not even aware of getting angry because our anger is being put away in a dark room in our head, or in our mind, in our heart, somewhere in our consciousness because it is not socially acceptable. But it's not that it disappears. All this accumulates in us.

So something that starts to be important is to take care of ourselves, to look into ourselves and to accept what is going on. Psychotherapy can help, but there is also a very interesting thing that we can do alone, which is entering into a state of meditation. Practicing a state of meditation gives us the clarity to see because if we just look normally, there are many things we don't see. However, if we meditate without focusing on anything in particular, we just look into the inner space of our mind, then we start seeing things that are there, that have been there all the time. This is just an example, but it also works with our emotions, with our states of being, with

our feelings, with our body. The moment in which we learn how to relax and be open, then we begin to have more understanding. We begin to see what is there. So we need to observe ourselves, to be present to ourselves as much as we can.

We are generally anxious because we want to live in a predictable, reliable environment. If the environment becomes unreliable, unpredictable, we immediately get scared. Everything that is changing scares, menaces, threatens us because we want to be in a world that doesn't change. This, however, is impossible because change is continuous.

And then in this world, we may feel disconnected. For example, using social media, we completely give away our privacy in order to get as many connections as possible and have many friends, even though they're not really friends because we have never met them. In the social media world, we just look at a screen, get a lot of likes, and we measure our life on that. We have given away our privacy, all that is precious to us and find ourselves alone in a room in front of a computer or with a phone.

What we need to do is look at each other's faces, look into each other's eyes and connect with people. We can do that better if we first reconnect with ourselves, with the part of ourselves that we don't usually deal with, the part that is considered the "bad boy". The important moment in psychotherapy is when you discover that all the terrible things that you don't want to admit that you think or that you would like to do, are all coming from you and are part of you. And as long as it is part of you and it is not acted into some evil actions, that is acceptable and you have to make friends with it. The point is to make friends with yourself again because one of the reasons why we sometimes feel disconnected is because we are not connecting with ourselves, with our core.

But if we connect with ourselves, observe ourselves and we are present and compassionate with ourselves, then we are also able to be present with others, to be compassionate with others, and to connect heart to heart, eye to eye, soul to soul. So reconnecting is the first point

and acting in everyday life through this and also recognizing others as humans that are worthy of compassion, of love, of respect.

These times are leading to a global transformation and we should get ready. The direction we want to give to our life depends on us. In the moment in which we see who we are, what we want from life, how we want to live, the changes should not overwhelm us. They should just wake us up. The best way to deal with unpredictability is by becoming unpredictable ourselves.

Václav Havel, the former president of the Czech Republic, wrote a beautiful book in which he said, the heart of freedom is unpredictability. Unpredictability doesn't mean to be the "bad boy" and do things that nobody expects. Follow instead what your heart tells you and be sincere with yourself.

Another quality is to be authentic. Before we speak, do I really mean what I'm about to say? Are my words powerful because they come from my heart or are they just empty sounds? And then we should gain some sovereignty over our lives, become masters of our lives. This is the way to be free inside.

The great American poet, Maya Angelou, wrote, "Aging is biological, but growth is by choice." We can go on the rest of our lives without choosing anything, being swept around like dry leaves in the wind, or we can choose, and that means to stop being like little children, limiting our brain, our knowledge and capacity.

Now is the time to open up our knowledge, our capacity, to gain more freedom in the world. To do that, we have to meet uncertainty. We are afraid of what is going to happen, what is behind the next corner. But instead we have to understand that uncertainty is also part of us, that our so-called subconscious and unconscious are parts of us that we don't know. We don't really know what is in our mind, in the depth of our mind. So unless we go in and learn how to work with our inner feelings, the deepest ways of manifestation of ourselves, then we don't know.

Costantino Albini



Costantino Albini is one of the first students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, a master of Dzogchen, an ancient knowledge aimed at recognizing our naturally perfected state. From a young age, Costantino embarked on mystical and musical studies, exploring the connection between spiritual practice and musical creativity. Over the years, he developed expertise in Indian rāgas, music, astrology, and esotericism. He is now dedicated to the study of Western astrology, continuing to build bridges between his research on sound and Dzogchen.

Henry David Thoreau, the writer, said, "Not until we are lost, do we begin to understand ourselves", so lose yourself, and open up to everything that you never knew, because truth is there for everybody. If we construct our own truth, then we are in that box. Instead, we should lose the self that we have constructed then we will start to know something.

There is another verse from Peter Gabriel, the singer: "It's only in uncertainty that we are naked and alive". That means that uncertainty is actually a saving moment in which we stop being afraid, we stop being rigid and grasping at something and we flow. We go with the flow and we open up to whatever may be; I am the master of my life and I decide what direction to go. This means to be naked of the old self, to go through this birth canal and leave behind who we were and become who we are meant to be, to be complete human beings. To do this, we have to do as Frank Zappa, a great musician, said: "The mind is like a parachute. It doesn't work if it isn't open".

INTERVIEW WITH STEVEN LANDSBERG

The Mirror: Good morning, Steven. We are interviewing Steven Landsberg today in Tenerife South at Dzamling Gar and this is the first in a series of 'podcast' interviews of the various Santi Maha Sangha teachers about their experience with Santi Maha Sangha, what inspired them to begin this adventure, how long they have been doing it, what their experience is and how they might see the future of this training. Could you tell us a little about your past, and how you arrived to this point?

Steven Landsberg: Good morning. I met Rinpoche in 1982 at the Oz retreat in California. I can't remember exactly how many people we were, maybe around 70; not so crowded. Rinpoche gave us a full outline of the whole system of practice, including Vajrayana and Dzogchen. He taught in a very precise way, and it had a profound effect on most of the people who were present.

I became immediately convinced of that authenticity and decided to pursue it. Previous to that, I had had exposure in India as I had spent a good part of the 60s and 70s in India. At this time I had a chance to meet some of the last of a generation of Lamas who were quite old and had come recently from Tibet. That also had a kind of profound effect upon me. And naturally, many people were attracted at that time towards Tibetan Buddhism.

TM: Do you think that experience with all those different lamas gave you a base for Dzogchen?

SL: In terms of a certain kind of connection, definitely yes, but I don't think as far as actual knowledge is concerned. I was too young, too immature, but as far as a powerful connection, a kind of magnetism that I felt through that contact, especially in that surrounding, in Darjeeling and Bodh Gayā and some of these other renowned sacred places, it had a profound effect upon me, sure.

TM: You were in your 20's?

SL: I was even younger when I first met Kalu Rinpoche and Kanjyur Rinpoche? I was maybe 19 or 20. I hadn't even finished college at that time. I was in the third year of college when I got to India, but I didn't go back to college. I did something else.

In 1968 I met the previous Karmapa for the first time in Sarnath. That was my first contact with a really powerful teacher. And then I met Kalu Rinpoche and Kanjyur Rinpoche and many others in Darjeeling.

TM: So you became a student of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu from 1982 and when did you start studying Santi Maha Sangha?

SL: I was at a retreat in 1994 in Tsegylagar East. Rinpoche gave a base level course on Santi Maha Sangha at that time. I was present there and then Rinpoche told everybody, "I'm going to be coming back in a year and I will give this examination".

At first, I wasn't so attracted by all of that; my interest happened a little bit later after Rinpoche made that initial examination. A bit later I was in Peru and at a certain point I made this commitment that I was going to do this study and I immediately started studying, ten pages of the Precious Vase every day and ten questions of the published questions. I went in a very systematic way trying to understand ten questions every day.

I kept reviewing until the exam. And by the time the exam came, instead of being more relaxed, I was more nervous. I finally took the exam in Tsegylagar East and it went fine. That was in 1994.

At that point Rinpoche was not well and he himself couldn't do the examination because he had to go to the hospi-



tal in New York City. So Jim Valby and Tsultrim Allione gave the exams. Then Rinpoche did the first level training and gave us another set of practices to do.

It took me about four or five years to get through all that material. Then I went to Australia and I did the second examination there in March of 2000. That I exam I did with Rinpoche. I continued on and then a few years later many of us came to Dzamling Gar and we did the second level and third level exams of Santi Maha Sangha.

Then finally some of us reached the fourth level of Santi Maha Sangha. Up until this time, I hadn't really committed myself to becoming a teacher. I didn't have that kind of confidence.

TM: What changed?

SL: What changed was that some people tried to encourage me to do that. I'd studied a little bit more. I became more fluent with the vocabulary. It was not that I really genuinely had confidence as a practitioner. But in any case, I became fluent with vocabulary and study. And at that time, I was still a little bit naive about the distinction between a kind of



Santi Maha Sangha course on 7th Lojong led by Steven Landsberg May 2018 in Karma Dechen Choling dharma center in Warsaw, Poland.
Photo by Tymo Wojciechowski

theoretical understanding and an experiential understanding of something. That line was not so clear to me at that time.

So theoretical understanding appeared to be to me in some way real understanding. It was only later that I discovered a very big distinction between those two aspects. It's a process. It's an on going process and it is still on going. But now I see just how far words will take you and what the distinction is between putting words or pasting words together and actually having that genuine understanding and feeling through confidence in your own understanding.

In 2010 I took the exam to become a instructor of Santi Maha Sangha in Merigar West. I practiced to do that examination which required a certain ability to talk, communicate and explain things. And certainly, Rinpoche was present in those examinations, and he was analyzing each and every candidate as to their genuineness. I think what he was looking for at that time was people who who were fluent and could communicate and also had a strong commitment to the Community and to him.

At that exam in Merigar [West] there were about eight or ten of us who did that examination. I was a little bit experienced, but of course I was a little

nervous. Once I got up there and started talking, I felt a kind of ease. I felt this kind of push from Rinpoche, who was sitting just behind me and I felt this wave of encouragement. I feel it was somehow associated with his presence. So it made the whole experience quite genuine and fulfilling.

TM: Do you remember your questions?

SL: At that time, there were three questions. One was related very specifically to Santi Maha Sangha and the two other questions were related to something to do with the Community, something like that. and we had a clock, and each question should go for about 20 minutes, and we were supposed to finish in one hour at that time. So we were watching that clock, that was part of the procedure, because Rinpoche was very specific about timing and keeping time. So I tried to do that. And then the question was something about the distinction between Hinayana Sutra and Mahayana Sutra. I had prepared several different possibilities. I'm not sure if that was one of them, but it went okay and I answered in my own way.

I really enjoyed the experience. The first candidate in that exam was Namkhay Yeshe. I remember his question too. I don't remember the other questions,

but I do remember the question that he received. It was something about the distinction between Anuyoga and Dzogchen. It was nice.

TM: So now we are in 2025 and you have been teaching Santi Maha Sangha for many years now and can you talk a little bit about the progression for you if there has been or the change in how you first approached teaching and how you approach it now.

SL: In the first seven or eight years of my teaching experience I was very much consulting the book on Santi Maha Sangha, as well as other sources, to get some deeper background on those particular topics. Somehow I ended up pursuing the teaching of chöd and also jnana dakini, etc. I don't know how that happened exactly, but one reason was because I had had a lot of exposure to practitioners of chöd, not just Rinpoche, but other other teachers and I had many transmissions in regard to chod. Maybe that was somehow related to how I became interested.

I can't say that I had much experience of the actual practice of chöd. I was teaching it in a very theoretical way and approaching it very much from a kind of intellectual approach, I would say. And then at a certain point, I kind I lost

interest in doing things just theoretically. And I became much more interested in how practice became a genuine experience. And that's been my focus since the last years.

That's mainly my focus now. Let's say that I personally approach having some kind of genuine experience of Dharma, and then trying to relate that also to the theoretical aspect and I put those things together.

TM: And how has the reception been from the Community people, the students?

SL: Some of them say very good, that they learned something, they felt something, they experienced something. I can't say for sure, but that's my intention is that they actually get some kind of indication of experience that goes beyond just having some intellectual idea about the instruction. And I feel happy about that.

TM: It seems some Santi Maha Sangha teachers and generally people in the Community are not sure about how the Santi Maha Sangha program will go ahead. And can you talk a little bit about your experience of that and about how you foresee things continuing?

SL: Yes, I'm also not really sure if Santi Maha Sangha is going to continue in the way Rinpoche approached it because that involves so many things that required Rinpoche's presence, especially giving those particular transmissions.

I also don't know how that particular aspect of Santi Maha Sangha, how it's going to go continue. But as far as the knowledge that is indicated through the study of Santi Maha Sangha, I think there's a way for those instructors or teachers of the Santi Maha Sangha to communicate that theoretically and practically according to their own experience.

I personally don't believe in this whole subject any longer about levels of understanding in regards to instructors. And I think it becomes really fundamentally necessary for instructors be able to take

their own experience and use that as a fundamental guide for the way they proceed in teaching. That's very, very important. It's not very useful to just be teaching out of a book.

Of course, the book can give guidelines and also give some kind of theoretical context for explaining things. But we have to find a way to relate that those texts and that vocabulary that's used in those texts, we have to discover what its genuine meaning is within oneself, and then automatically it will come out in its own way. We will find our own examples for how to instruct and make it meaningful to students. But unless we have that kind of experience, then it will be difficult for us to arrive at a conclusion about our own vocabulary.

But if you observe the renowned teachers of today, let's say, each of them has their own particular approach and their own particular vocabulary and the way they express their realization and their knowledge and I think that's fantastic. But if we really look carefully, we can see that they are not really saying anything differently.

Fundamentally, they're not saying anything differently and I give example. You know the way Chögyam Trungpa spoke about the Dharma and how his approach was really unique because he knew his audience and how he had to do that. And then you look at somebody like the Kalu Rinpoche previously and how he explained the teaching. He came from a totally different background with a totally different audience and their approach was very, very different.

I'm not making this up because I heard Trungpa Rinpoche say it one time, he said you can see that on the pages of the book it looks like we're saying something different, but I know for sure that we're not. So even though he was just using the language that he used in order to communicate meaningfully to his audience, that is important.

Trungpa had this kind of particular audience of some of the first Western students. He communicated in a way to reach his audience. So that's very nice.

TM: Can we talk just a little about how you see the Community, the changes since Rinpoche has passed away and Namkhai Yeshe is taking the helm. And do you feel that that has an impact on Santi Maha Sangha?

SL: Definitely it has an impact and I'm sure this is going to change and evolve in some way. I know that Namkhai Yeshe has his own vision for how this may go and that's fine. And, as you know, some Santi Maha Sangha teachers are active, and some are not. But the ones who are active, I think they'll take an interest in what Yeshe has to communicate. And perhaps they will, you know, with their understanding of what he is talking about, mature and integrate that into the way they approach Santi Maha Sangha. So that's all very good.

TM: Thank you very much Steven for your time and knowledge.



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