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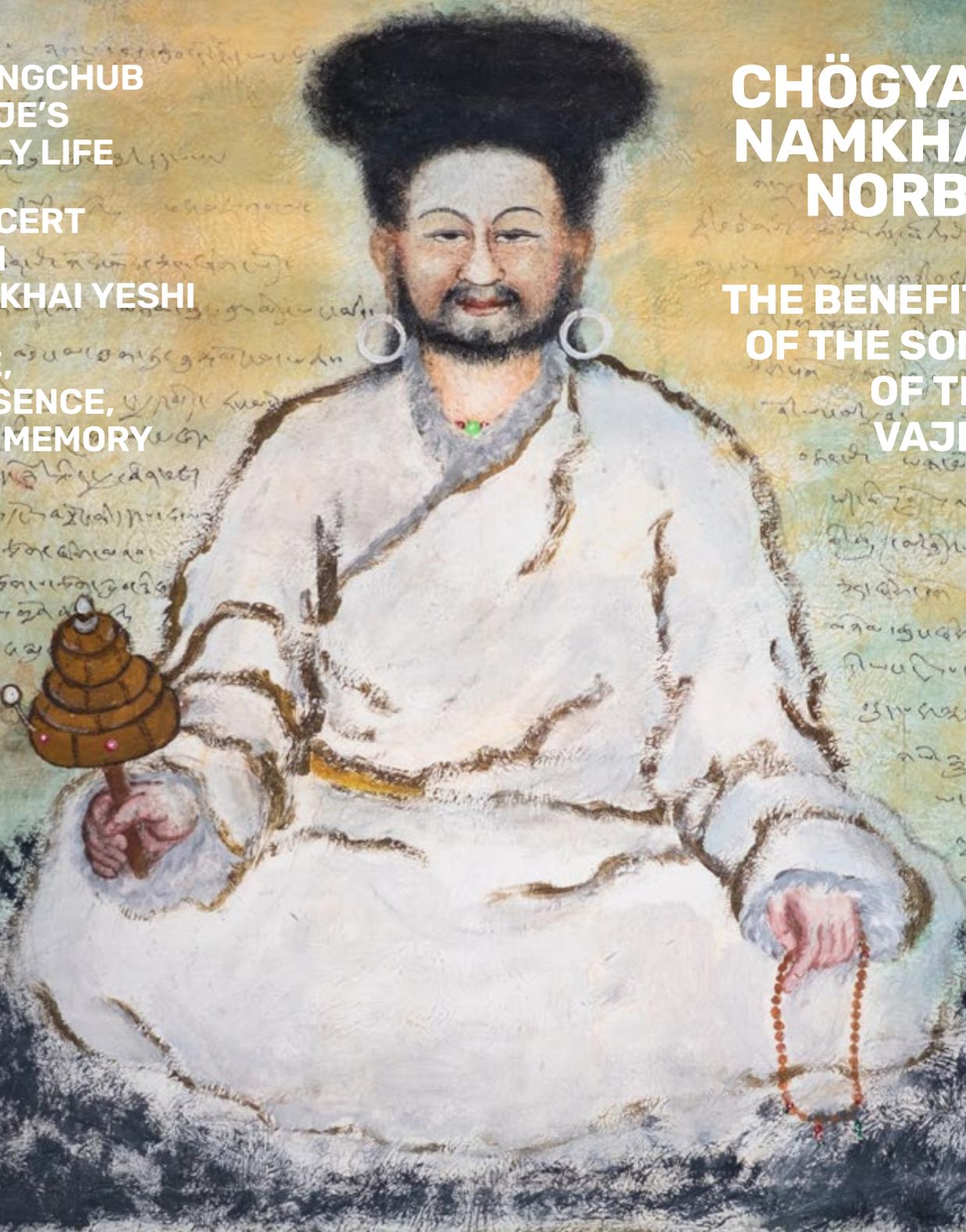
**CHANGCHUB
DORJE'S
EARLY LIFE**

**CONCERT
WITH
NAMKHAİ YESHI**

**TIME,
PRESENCE,
AND MEMORY**

**CHÖGYAL
NAMKHAİ
NORBU**

**THE BENEFITS
OF THE SONG
OF THE
VAJRA**



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Front cover: A painting of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje by Drugu Choegyel commissioned by Mark Farrington who presented it to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu on his birthday in 2017.

Back cover: A painting by Dynamic Space of the Elements portraying a nagini, Ma Pham Yutso, giving instructions to the Great Geomancers of Tibet.



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Year of the Fire Horse 2153/2026

Horse I'd ride and who rides me.
 Is this the breath I breathe
 or breath that's breathing me?
 Fire Horse, Wind horse, horse
 whose mane is like a flame
 blowing through my open channels:
 illumination where I'm not
 anybody else, nor any self
 that I can find. Where does this light burn?
 In the Year of the Fire Horse,
 may I be purified of delusions.

Peter Fortunato

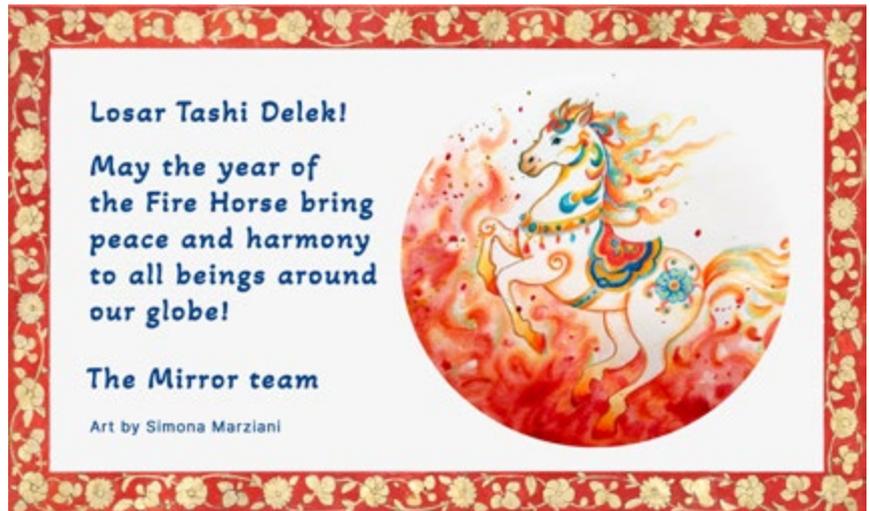


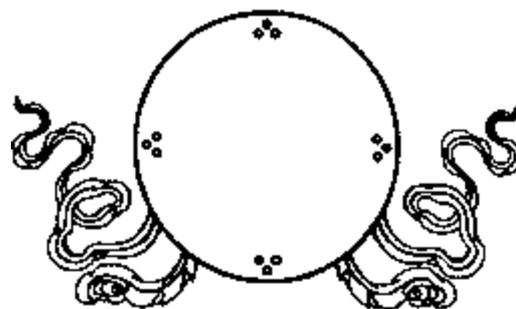
Photo by Domenico Fasciano



Dear Friends,

We would like to warmly thank those of you who responded to our fundraising campaign with a donation to The Mirror. Thank you very much! Grazie mille! Большое спасибо!

Your generosity means a lot to us and has helped us to move our vast archive of material, particularly in Russian, to our new website melong.online. With your constant support we have been able to bring you talks and messages from



our Masters, news and updates from Gars and Lings around the globe as well as inspiring personal stories from our worldwide Vajra family. In addition to keeping you informed about events and developments in our Community we've

tried to uphold Rinpoche's vision of us all as a global family, beyond diverse cultures and languages. This year, more than ever, we are facing a challenging financial situation and really need your support. Please consider making an online donation now: [DONATE](#)

Many drops make an ocean.
 Thank you, once again!
 The Mirror Team

THE BENEFITS OF THE SONG OF THE VAJRA

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

An excerpt from the Song of the Vajra Retreat, Hong Kong, 2012. May 19, day 4. Continued from issue 170 of The Mirror.

<https://melong.online/chogyal-nam-khai-norbu-experiences-of-the-practices/>

The Song of the Vajra is the most important practice in the Dzogchen teaching, and not only have I explained it but we have also practiced it together. Now I'd like to talk about how the benefits of the Song of the Vajra are explained in the *Nyida Khajor* tantra so that you can understand a little more because this is the origin of the Upadesha tantra, the Song of the Vajra. This tantra explains how, through singing and dancing the Song of the Vajra, we integrate our existence in the state of contemplation.

The tantra gives some specific explanations.

དེ་ཡང་རྣམ་འབྱོར་ཐབས་ཀྱི་གཙོ།

གྲགས་པ་མེད་པ་རྫོ་རྗེའི་སྒྲུ།

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་གྱི་ཡིད་ཀྱང་ཚིམ།

རྣམ་འབྱོར་པ་ཡི་ཉམས་ཀྱི་གྲོགས།

That means that for people who are doing practice, who have knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching, the method for having realization becomes most important.



Photo by Lesya Cherenkova

གྲགས་པ་མེད་པ་རྫོ་རྗེའི་སྒྲུ།

When we sing the Song of the Vajra we produce it with our breathing, which means that we connect our breathing with our vital energy. This is how we do it. But at the same time we are connecting with its real nature. Nature is how sambhogakaya manifests from the real condition of the dharmakaya, from the primordial Buddha. That is called natural sound and we do not produce it with our breathing. But we are living in our dualistic vision and, in this case, in order to integrate in that state, it is important that we connect with our breathing and our prana energy. That is the reason why we sing the Song of the Vajra.

སངས་རྒྱས་ཀུན་གྱི་ཡིད་ཀྱང་ཚིམ།

The real nature of all enlightened beings is manifesting in this state.

རྣམ་འབྱོར་པ་ཡི་ཉམས་ཀྱི་གྲོགས།

That means this is how practitioners' experiences of the practice manifest.

མཁའ་འགོ་མ་ཡི་ཡིད་རྣམས་འཕྲོགས།

རིགས་དྲུག་འཁོར་བའི་ཞེན་པ་བསྐྱོག།

སྐལ་དང་ལྷན་པ་དང་འདྲའི་གནས།

སེམས་ཀྱི་རྒྱུད་ཀུན་རང་དབང་ཐོབ།

As I already explained, the *Nyida Khar* tantra contains many details. When we are producing the sounds of the Song of the Vajra, at that moment millions of dakas and dakinis are always present in our condition. That is the potentiality of the Song of the Vajra.

རིགས་དྲུག་འཁོར་བའི་ཞེན་པ་བསྐྱོད་པ།

The root of our Six Lokas is our attachment to different kinds of emotions which produce a particular samsaric situation. How can we liberate ourselves from that condition? Singing the Song of the Vajra is supremely powerful and beneficial. As a means of liberation from samsara, it is a supreme method.

སྐལ་དང་ལྷན་པ་དང་འདྲའི་གནས།

This means that we who have a connection with the Dzogchen teaching and transmission are fortunate because we are able to follow teachings, receive transmissions and use the method of the Dzogchen teaching. When the teacher gives introduction we can use many different methods. Even though we may not immediately discover our primordial state, or we remain in doubt, when the teacher introduces us using different experiences we remember and repeat them until we reach something concrete and discover our real nature.

Even though we may exert a lot of effort, sometimes we are not satisfied and do not discover it. In this case what should we do? We can do Guruyoga and sing the Song of the Vajra just as we did today. The tantra explains that if we do that, the potentiality of the Song of the Vajra increases our clarity and it becomes easier for us to discover our real nature.

སེམས་ཀྱི་རྒྱ་རྒྱུད་ཀྱི་རང་དབང་ཐོབ་པ།

We are conditioned by our mind even though we know that we should be beyond mind. For instance, we practice Guruyoga, and for a few seconds, a few minutes, we succeed in remaining in that state, but after a little while we have

to face our dualistic vision. When we deal with our mental condition it is very easy for us to get distracted. This verse means that when we have discovered and integrated the sound of the Song of the Vajra, even though we are not always in the state of Guruyoga it makes it easy for us to be aware of this kind of knowledge. This is the reason why we say to practitioners: if we are not always in instant presence at least we should be in ordinary presence. Instant presence means beyond time and space, completely beyond mind. But when we are not distracted with our attention, we are still in our mind. There is a big difference between instant presence and ordinary presence.

When we become Dzogchen practitioners, the most important thing is to be in the state of Guruyoga and to govern everything with the state of Guruyoga as much as possible. The second most important thing is being present, in ordinary presence. How can we learn to be in ordinary presence? Although a lot of people ask about how to be in ordinary presence there is no particular technique. What is important is knowing what it means to be present. Being present means that if we are doing something, at that moment we know that we are doing it. In general when we think about something, we are totally distracted with that thought, then another thought comes and another. This is not presence and for this reason we should learn [about it].

When we become Dzogchen practitioners, the most important thing is to be in the state of Guruyoga

If you have some free time you may feel like dedicating yourself to learning how to be present for some hours. Even though you may have twelve hours or so of free time it is not easy to train for all that time, however you can make a commitment to apply yourself to being present for, say, three hours.

You decide that from this moment you want to be present for three hours. If you have decided that you are pres-

ent at that moment another thought may arise, such as: "I should go to the shop to buy something because I am free today." But you recognize that you have that thought and you are not distracted by it. You already know that you were thinking of going to the shop but it doesn't mean you need to renounce that idea. You can apply everything. "Now I'm going to the shop." You walk a little and you are aware that you are walking to go to the shop. After a little while you remember that you didn't take enough money and should go back to take more money. But you shouldn't get distracted by that. You think, "I am thinking that and I am going to get more money." So you do everything while continually being present.

It is not very easy at the beginning when you are learning. Not only learning how to be present but anything we learn is not so easy at the beginning. However, when we become a little familiar with it then it becomes easier. You may remember how it was when we started to learn how to drive. We took driving lessons, first of all learning the theory, but when we started to drive it wasn't easy at all. Day after day we learned and then finally we could manage the car. I remember when I began to drive the car was always lurching. But after a little while we became familiar with driving and we could drive everywhere.

When we are driving a car we are present. Sometimes it seems we are not present when we're talking with our friends or looking outside but this is because we have become familiar with driving and for that reason we have space for looking and talking. But in the real sense we are present because if we are not we could have an accident. So this is a good example of presence.

But this is only the presence of driving a car. Our life is not only driving a car. There are many things related to our body, speech and mind. We can learn [how to be present] doing physical ac-

tivities, talking with people, thinking and judging, everything that is related with our body, speech and mind. We can learn one thing at a time and in the end we don't need any effort. When we become more familiar with being present we can talk with people and think and so on for hours and hours without being distracted.

Even when we are walking, doing some activities that are more samsaric if we are present and not distracted everything becomes so much easier. First of all we discover that tensions develop because we are distracted with things and think that things are important or should be in a certain way. When things are not the way we want them to be then we get angry and struggle with that and tensions develop. But if we are really present, we do not have these kinds of tensions, and even if there are tensions, immediately we discover that. If we discover there are tensions, why should we hold on to them? It is much better if we free ourselves. So you see in that case being present everything becomes concrete.

When we follow Sutra and Tantra teachings in general, at the beginning teachers talk about the four mindfulnesses that are considered to be very important. Then we have the eighteen qualifications for a perfect human life: eight freedoms from negative states and ten favorable conditions, divided into two categories, one related to the individual, the other related to our dimension. We study all of this day after day in an intellectual way and give a lot of importance to these topics.

Although it is very beneficial to do something like that, it is not the main point. We concentrate on these topics but we really need to have a presence of ourselves as human beings. The perfect human condition is precious because it

allows us to learn teaching, to apply it and to have total realization in our lifetime. Our condition and our capacity is much better than that of dogs and cats, for instance. But there is no need to particularly learn about the eighteen qualifications in an intellectual way. We can simply understand how the qualities of a human being are. If we are present about that we know at this moment we have this precious condition, although nobody knows how long we will have it.

Even when we are walking, doing some activities that are more samsaric if we are present and not distracted everything becomes so much easier.

Then we have the second mindfulness, impermanence, of which there are many examples and many things we can learn. However, concretely we know that we are living in time, that

time is going ahead. We just need to look at a watch for example - tick tock, tick tock - going ahead and never going backwards. Our lives are related to time and going ahead day after day we get nearer and nearer to the end of them.

Sometimes young people think that they have all their lives [ahead of them], but they should consider what "all their lives" means. A life can simply be one day or one week, nobody knows. Some people think that old people will pass away soon but, since they themselves are younger, they will remain in this world. However, many young people pass away before the old. Of course we understand that old people cannot live much longer in time. For instance, when a person is seventy years old they know how life is and that it cannot last much longer. People say that living to be eighty and ninety is a very long life. If someone lives to be one hundred, oh, fantastic! But in an ordinary way it is not so easy. We may live a little longer but our body does not collaborate with us. Our function of the senses does not collaborate with us. So this is our real condition - we all have only a short life. We know that

we have a precious condition but we exist in time and nobody knows when our precious time will finish.

But while we are living in this moment, what are we doing? Most of the time we are distracted, we are going after emotions, we are producing a lot of negative karma instead of overcoming problems. This is the third mindfulness. Time is related to our activities and when we create negativities we should be present and do our best in the circumstances, that way we do not produce negativities. It is very important that we also understand that if we produce negativities we have infinite samsara. Knowing that we should try to do our best. This is the fourth mindfulness.

All four mindfulnesses need presence because even though we may learn about them one by one in great detail, if we do not have presence they do not work. So you see, presence is very important.

Many people who are dedicated to the teachings think it is better to chant mantras, like Tibetans who go around holding a prayer wheel in one hand and a mala in the other always chanting *OM MANI PADME HUM, OM MANI PADME HUM, OM MANI PADME HUM*, thinking that it is a very important practice. Of course it is also a good practice, particularly if they have a good intention, but that does not become the path of total realization.

We may accumulate good merits with that and gradually diminish some obstacles and increase our clarity just a little. It also helps us slowly discover which is the main path for realization. But when we have the possibility it is much better to work more concretely so when we compare chanting mantras or something similar with being present, being present is much more important.

In most traditions and teachings, they do not give much importance to being present and do not consider it to be a kind of practice whereas in Dzogchen teaching it is a very important practice. This verse makes us understand that.

རང་རིག་བདེ་བའི་གསལ་རྒྱལ་འདེགས།

ཤེས་པ་གཞིག་པའི་ཡལ་ཡང་བྱེད།

We discover our real nature and how to have that kind of knowledge which is always connected to different kinds of experiences. One of the most important experiences is the sensation of bliss while another is the experience of clarity. When we use the Song of the Vajra it gives us a concrete experience of clarity and bliss combined in our real nature. This is the function of the Vajra Dance, for example. With the Vajra Dance we have a mandala. You can find out more about the mandala when you learn the [Dance] of the Vajra.

When we sing the Song of the Vajra we are always in instant presence, integrating with the sounds we are singing, one by one, of the Song of the Vajra. Then we are moving to specific places on the mandala which means we are integrating with our energy of movement which is related with all our experiences of bliss, sensation and clarity. We maintain that kind of experience and through it we increase being in the state of instant presence.

In a simple way we can say that the Song of the Vajra and the Dance of the Vajra are very important methods for integrating our body, speech and mind in the state of contemplation. Of course

when we are learning at the beginning we have to use our minds thinking about which direction we should go and where we should put our feet when we are singing. All of this is related to our minds. But when we become a little familiar we don't always need to think about where we should go. That means we are becoming familiar with the Dance of the Vajra and we can integrate totally being in instant presence and combining it with the sound of the Song of the Vajra. Then we can understand how important it is to integrate.

*Edited by L.Granger
Final editing Susan Schwarz
Tibetan by Prof. Fabian Sanders*

THE SYMBOLS ON THE LUNGTA

In areas populated by Tibetans, Lungta or prayer flags can be found strung in high places such as the tops of temples, monasteries and houses and along mountain ridges and peaks, and it is believed that the blessings of the prayers and mantras printed on them are blown by the wind to spread benefit to all.

Traditionally the lungta are in sets of five colours, green, red, yellow, white, blue, representing the elements, and they can show a 'wind horse', various mantras and prayers, and images or names of four powerful animals in each corner. At the Gars of the Dzogchen Community we prepare strings of coloured lungta before the Tibetan New Year, or Losar, that are then authenticated and hung up around the Gar on the morning of the third day after Losar, according to tradition. The old prayer flags are removed and burnt. If, for example, a person approaches a year that is considered negative for them according to Tibetan



elemental astrology, it may be beneficial for them to prepare and put up a string of lungta corresponding in number to their age.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu gave a brief explanation about the symbols on the Lungta at Merigar West in 1991.

Lungta, which means 'Wind horse', refers to the protective force of the individual. There are many types of force linked to the individual but this vital force is the most important. In ancient times in Tibet it was symbolized by a horse surmounted by a wish-fulfilling jewel. This vital force is linked to fulfilling wishes and bringing about good fortune, benefits and prosperity. If the fundamental vital

force is perfect, everything will go well. Why is this force symbolized by a horse adorned with jewels rather than another animal? In ancient times the horse represented impetus, speed. For example, today if we had to have a symbol for speed we would use the image of a missile. But long ago missiles did not exist and on earth speed has always been symbolized by the horse. Moreover, the horse has always been an animal closely linked to man. For these reasons the horse was chosen. 'Lung' means air. Some scholars such as Mipham said that lung comes from the Chinese, but this is an interpretation. The truth is that lung is linked to prana because our force is linked to prana. So when we say 'wind horse', by wind (or air)



Rinpoche and lungtas at Merigar 1984. Photo by Gino Vitiello

we mean our prana, our vital energy. This symbol is represented in the prayer flags which are also called lungta. At the centre of the flag is the horse, and in the four corners there are the figures of the tiger, the lion, the eagle and the dragon. These four animals, which can be seen on both Buddhist and Bönpo prayer flags, represent the elements according to an ancient system. Nowadays, the Bönpo do not explain these things thoroughly but when we study ancient Bön we can understand that the Bönpo used precisely these animals to represent the elements. In the Bön tradition, the eagle is the most important figure and represents the fire element. When the Bönpo want to get into contact with the local guardians they do a sang ritual in which they use fire. In Tibetan temples, butter lamps are always used: there are hundreds and thousands of them everywhere. Even if there is electricity, Tibetans still use butter lamps. If it was simply a matter of having light, electricity would be enough, but in this case, we do not only need the light, we also require the presence of fire. When a butter lamp is lit, there is a continual presence of fire. This is also true in the ancient Bön tradition in which fire and energy, represented by the eagle or Garuda, are very important. In Bön the Garuda is considered to be the source of all divine manifestations and of the local

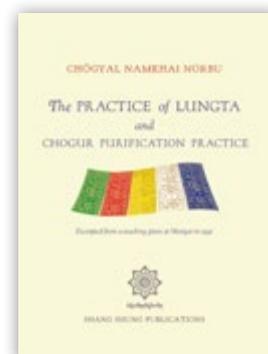
guardians and even today the most important practice in Tibetan medicine to heal illness is that of Garuda. In Tibetan medicine there are hundreds of healing mantra, a large number of which are linked to the mantra of Garuda. Therefore the eagle or Garuda is a very important figure for protection in general. The dragon is considered to be an aquatic animal. Sometimes it is said that the dragon flies in the sky but his origin, however, is considered to be water and therefore he represents the water element. The lion is the symbol of the earth element. Why? In Tibet people always talk about the snow lion. We don't know if the snow lion actually existed, but on the Tibetan national flag there is a snow lion that is completely white. Where is the snow found? On the highest mountains which are the symbol or the most concentrated essence of the earth element. The tiger is an animal that lives in the jungle and the forests. A forest is made up of trees and in astrology the air element is represented by wood which in this case is not dry wood but that of living trees. Since trees never stop growing and spreading out, in astrology they represent the air element. The ancient Bön tradition used animals as symbols of the elements rather than portray them directly. Why? Because animals are alive and live in a partic-

ular dimension which is the dimension of the respective element. So to explain that the elements have energy and are alive the Bönpo used the symbols of animals. This was their typical way of representing the elements. On the prayer flags there are many mantra to reinforce and help energy and to develop the lungta. One can use all sorts of mantra – of Kalachakra, of Tara, of Padmasambhava etc. – but the principle mantra is always accompanied by particular words in order to develop the lungta. What is important is to receive transmission of them because then, when

they are applied, they can have an effect. Therefore when one does the rite of the lungta, authenticates with these mantra and then hangs up the flags somewhere, this can strengthen the person's vital force.

Excerpted from Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's 'The Practice of Lungta' published by Shang Shung Publications 1995

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/>



THE EARLY LIFE OF RIGDZIN CHANGCHUB DORJE

A “Dzamling Gar Talk”
by Adriano Clemente

The text presented here is drawn from a talk by Adriano Clemente, the principal translator of the Dzogchen Community, who has devoted many years to preserving and elucidating the teachings transmitted by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

In this lecture Adriano introduces key aspects of the life of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje, the root master of Rinpoche, while also sharing the challenges and significance of translating this extraordi-



Photo by Claudio Galeota.

nary biography. The work is currently in progress and is supported by Ka-Ter, the Community's translation organization.

For more information about the ongoing translation of Rinpoche's writings, or to support these publications, please visit ka-ter.org.

Changchub Dorje mostly became famous in the West because he was the root master of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu; however, for many years we did not know much about his life except for the occasional stories that Rinpoche had heard during his life.

Then some twenty years ago, Chang-



Painting of Changchub Dorje
by Wilvin Pedersen

chub Dorje's grandson, Karwang Dorje, wrote a biography of his grandfather. Our translator, Elio Guarisco, began to work on the translation but unfortunately could not finish it because he passed away due to COVID in 2020, so then I took on the responsibility to complete it. I'm still working on it as it is very complicated and contains many local expressions in dialect. Some parts are not easy even for Tibetans to understand. In any case, I think that in one year it will be finished.

This translation work is under the auspices of the Ka-Ter organization, the Dzogchen Community organization for translations, so I would like to thank Oliver Leick and Jamyang Oliphant for doing such a great job gathering the funds for Ka-Ter, which allows me to continue my work. There are still many works of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu that we need to complete.

Rigdzin Changchub Dorje was one of the great *tertöns* of the 19th and 20th century in Tibet. He was originally from the Nyarong area and for that reason he was also known as Nyala Changchub Dorje meaning “Lama from Nyarong.” His main biography was written by his grandson Karwang Dorje; however, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu also wrote a biography. I think his original idea was to write a complete biography but then he

stopped around the 20th year of Changchub Dorje's life. Sometimes the stories in Rinpoche's biography are the same as those by Karwang Dorje; at times they are a little different. Anyway I will explain according to Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's text.

There is also another biography of Rigdzin Changchub Dorje in his collection of *termas*. During his lifetime, at Khamdogar, his place of residence, they prepared wood blocks for printing many volumes of his *termas*. When Chögyal Namkhai Norbu returned to east Tibet in 1988 for the first time, he brought many of these texts back to Italy, which was the first time they had arrived in the West. Then, about 10 years ago, one of the relatives of Changchub Dorje, Rinchen Samdrup, printed 56 or 57 volumes of his collection of *terma* teachings in Lhasa. Together with these volumes there is also a biography written by Rinchen Samdrup which is more concise.

Changchub Dorje was very important for Chögyal Namkhai Norbu because even though Chögyal Namkhai Norbu was a Drugpa, had a connection with the Dzogchen teaching from an early age, and had received many teachings and empowerments—for instance, his uncle Togden Ugyen Tendzin, who achieved the rainbow body, was one of the main students of Adzom Drugpa, and Rinpoche received many Dzogchen and Vajrayana teachings from him and other important masters—it was only when he met Changchub Dorje that his knowledge reawakened. This means that the connection with the lama from former lives is the most important point for discovering and developing one's knowledge. It is what we call “root master” and is not something that one chooses, because even if it is a great master, if one does not have that connection, it does not work.

It all began when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had a dream in which he met a yogin dressed like a normal *Khampa*, and in that dream Rinpoche received a kind of blessing. Later he tried to discover who this master was but nobody could identify him, until almost one year later when a relative of Chago Tobden, an im-

portant political figure in Kham, Tibet, in the first half of the 20th century, visited Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's family and talked about a very special medical doctor. That relative had traveled without stopping for two days to take the urine [of a sick person] to this doctor to check, but as soon as he arrived, the doctor had said that it was no longer necessary to check it as that person had already passed away and instead gave some *tadrol* and relics to place on the body. When he described the surroundings, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu understood that it was the place and the lama he had dreamed about.

Finally, with his father he went to Konjo in Kham, on the west side of the Yangtze River—now in the Tibetan Autonomous Region—and when he arrived there he recognized the same place and the same master he had dreamt about and he understood that this was an important teacher for him.

Until that moment Chögyal Namkhai Norbu had spent five years of his life in the Sakyapa Derge Gönchen monastery, then in the *shedra* or school of philosophy for many years, studying, receiving teachings and empowerments, and in the meantime he had received many important initiations so that each time he went to a teacher, he would expect the teacher to give initiations and empowerments.

When he arrived at Khamdogar, Changchub Dorje was living as a yogi with his family, spending each day sitting outside his house to receive people. Of course, that does not mean he had spent all of his life that way, because in his biography it says that he gave empowerment and transmission many times. However, when Chögyal Namkhai Norbu met him, he was already around 92. Rinpoche had been expecting Changchub Dorje to give teaching and finally he asked him to give an empowerment, and Changchub Dorje agreed in order to satisfy his wishes. He gave an empowerment of the Shitro that lasted the whole day, and at the end of this empowerment—as was his habit with other teachers—Chögyal Namkhai Norbu thanked him and prepared to leave, when Changchub Dorje said, “Stop, we haven’t done anything. Now there is something we have to do.” And



Painting of Changchub Dorje by Drugu Choegyal

then Chögyal Namkhai Norbu received the *rigpai tsalwang*, which went directly to the introduction to knowledge of the real state of the individual, of Dzogchen. Then Chögyal Namkhai Norbu saw all the knowledge that he had constructed until that point collapse completely and the real state of Dzogchen arose spontaneously. This completely changed his view of the teaching and how to help students.

The connection between Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Changchub Dorje is also the reason why we now have the Dzogchen Community in this way, and how Rinpoche's view was influenced by Changchub Dorje's understanding of the teaching.

Now I'll read some explanations from Rinpoche's text. It says:

With my three gates of Body, Voice, and Mind, I bow to the incomparably kind root master Vajradhara - meaning the state of Dharmakaya, source of all teachings - and Rigdzin Changchub Dorje - *rigdzin* is a realized master through the path of Vajrayana, and particularly Dzogchen. The biography of Changchub Dorje is like a vast ocean, but in the dimension of my mind, only a few drops could enter. Now I will explain these few drops of his vast life and knowledge.

The connection between Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and Changchub Dorje is also the reason why we now have the Dzogchen Community in this way

Most of his life story was written down by his grandson, Karwang Dorje, and that is very important, and also what I heard directly from my Teacher I will write down. First of all, in his terma teachings it is repeatedly explained that he was a nirmanakaya manifestation of King Mutig Tsenpo who had chosen to take rebirth as Changchub Dorje for helping beings. Mutig Tsenpo was one of four sons of King Trisong Deutsen. In the Nyingmapa tradition, King Trisong Deutsen was the eighth century king who first invited Shantarakshita and then Padmasambhava to establish Buddhism in Tibet. Mutig Tsenpo was the last of his sons to reign and also father to Ralpachen, the last of the Buddhist kings before Langdarma. There are many quotations in the terma that explain how he was born as a reincarnation of Mutig Tsenpo.

He was born in the region of Nyarong in Kham, an area where several great teachers were born in the 19th and 20th centuries, such as Nyagla Pema Düdul, who achieved the rainbow body, and the extraordinary tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa. Nyarong is also renowned for its bandits, because with its shallow gorges and high mountains they can easily find ways to stop travelers and rob them. Nyarong is particularly famous for its 19th century chieftain, Gonpo Namgyal, who unified the area and conquered vast territory in Kham.

Changchub Dorje was born in a small village in the Nyarong area, however, at the time Rinpoche wrote this biography it was not clear which village it was. In Karwang Dorje's biography, he mentions “Beru Gonpa,” a Gelugpa monastery in the Ganze area, but finally, with help from some Tibetologists, we understood that it was a mistake in the spelling of “Palri.”

He was born in Palri village near Palri Nyingma monastery in Upper Nyarong on the 10th day of the 7th Tibetan month, August 24, 1863. His father was a *ngag-*

pa, a Tantric style of practitioner, and a seventh generation descendant of an important tertön called Chögyal Lingpa, who had lived in that area. His mother was the daughter of a nun from the Derge area. When the nun broke her vows, became pregnant, and could no longer stay in Derge, she traveled on foot to the Nyarong area where she gave birth to a girl who became Changchub Dorje's mother. His mother grew up in that area, living with her mother in poor, difficult conditions. When she met this yogin and became pregnant she was already a practitioner very devoted to a Drugpa siddha called Trom Druptob Gyalwa Changchub, who told her that she would give birth to an important being.

From the time that Changchub Dorje was born, there was a strong presence of the guardian Ekajati, who was always near this small baby. At times she would appear as a female, in the nighttime as a peacock feather or sometimes like a light from the fire. Then after some months, Changchub Dorje's mother took him to the siddha Gyalwa Changchub, for a purification ritual and to receive his name. Here he received the name Kalsang Tenzin and became known as "Akal," because in Kham they take the first syllable of the name and put an "a" before it.

Ever since he was small, he would remember episodes from his previous lives. As they were very poor, with very little to eat, and living a miserable life, Changchub Dorje sometimes explained that in previous lives he had been a king many times and had tortured people, and it was for that reason he now had to suffer this miserable condition of poverty. At the time his mother was working mostly as a servant in wealthy people's homes, so Changchub Dorje would remain alone until his mother returned with some food.

When he was around six years of age, he started to work as a herder for sheep and cows for people of the area, so at that time their condition improved a little, and at the end of each day they would have some tsampa and butter to eat. But he also encountered a few problems since at that time he had a

strong link to the guardian Rahula who is connected to the Za class of beings, and at times causes a reaction related to the nerves similar to epilepsy or paralysis. From time to time there would be something similar to sparks emanating from his body at night, or somebody in the same room might get an electric shock or muscle spasms if they touched him, and for this reason people considered him to be a bad spirit.

He very much wanted to learn how to read and write, but local people would discourage him, saying that it would be better to learn how to herd cows well in order to make a good living. Sometimes he would visit places where there were tsa tsa or votive images, where people



Rigdzin Changchub Dorje as depicted in the Gönpa at Merigar

would leave some pages written in Tibetan, and he would take them and try to read them. Some kind people would help him to read while others would treat him badly saying, "You are a beggar's son, what do you need with these sacred texts?" However, gradually he began to be able to read.

When he was about eight years old, while he was herding cows, one day he met the rishi Transong Rigpai Yeshe, an old man with white hair who expounded the teaching of medicine in the four tantras which are the basis of Tibetan medicine. He spent five days continuously with Changchub Dorje transmitting all his knowledge of medicine, of the four

tantras and how to recognize herbs and minerals. But this was not only Changchub Dorje's vision because his fellow herders also saw this white haired man and asked if he would be coming each day. After these five days Changchub Dorje had complete knowledge of Tibetan medicine.

Then he prepared 13 small bags containing herbal medicines or minerals according to the instructions he had received, and started to give these medicines to the people of the village. Not only that, but he also knew how to check the pulse and urine and do divination if there was a provocation of energy or some astrological situation. He had supreme clarity for discovering the cause of illness and how to remedy it. However, his mother was worried and one day she said to Changchub Dorje, "You are giving people these medicines, but they have no foundation, no authenticity. It's dangerous, you might kill somebody," and she tried to stop him. But he said to her, "They are not medicine that I invented. I received empowerment from this great rishi so all these medicines have that power." From that time on he also had visions of Orgyen Menla, a form of Padmasambava's manifestation as the Medicine Buddha, as well as other medical doctors from ancient times like Yuthogpa and many others and from them he received explanations of the four tantras of medicine and so on.

When he was nine years old he started to receive symbols from the dakinis for discovering terma, although mostly that is related to his meeting with Nyagla Pema Düdul. It is a little difficult to understand when he actually met this master because Nyagla Pema Düdul died in 1872 when Changchub Dorje was around nine years old so probably he met him when he was eight or nine. In any case, Changchub Dorje's mother took him to Nyagla Pema Düdul, who was at Samten Gonpa—a Nyimapa gonpa in Nyarong—to consecrate that temple.

When Changchub Dorje arrived with his mother, the monks tried to block mother and son from entering the gönpa because they were like beggars. Nyagla

Pema Dūdul was about to give the empowerment of the Khachab Rangdrol, a very important terma of his. When they had been chased out, Changchub Dorje started to shout and knock on the door of the temple. When Nyagla Pema Dūdul heard, he told his attendants to let the child and mother come inside to receive the teachings. This was the first time that Changchub Dorje had received a Dzogchen empowerment and Nyagla Pema Dūdul made a prediction that he would receive the secret treasury of the Dakinis termas. He also gave the *rigpai tsalwang*, direct introduction. Here Chögyal Namkhai Norbu says that he heard this last piece of information from the Lama himself the day they received the shintro empowerment and at the end he stated that it was his first connection with knowledge of the Dzogchen teaching.

Nyagla Pema Dūdul also predicted that Changchub Dorje's teacher would be Nyala Rangrig, who was an important master and tertön and one of the main students of Nyagla Pema Dūdul. Then, according to the prediction of Nyagla Pema Dūdul, he received a *drombu* or symbolic container from the dakinis and began to continuously receive terma symbols, which he decoded and wrote down as texts. This was still happening when Rinpoche was there in 1955 when he wrote down a section of Changchub Dorje's gongter Kadu Chokyi Gyatso.

Continuing with the account of Changchub Dorje's early years, at that time he also completed 100 million recitations of the OM MANI PADME HUM mantra, had visions of Avalokiteshvara, received teachings, and so on.

He was still working as a herder when one day he saw that a leopard had just killed a cow. He was among the rocks, with his goats, when all of a sudden, he saw the goats running everywhere. He went to see what was happening on the rocks below and saw a leopard that had just killed a cow. Then he became very angry at the leopard and seeing a large stone nearby, managed to put his foot under it and rolled it down so that it fell on the leopard breaking some of his bones and the leopard could no longer

walk. Then he felt strong compassion for this animal and started to collect food which he would bring for it every day, and they became close friends. Since the animal was crippled, people called him "Akal," the crippled leopard of Akala.

When he was around 11 years old, he met Rangrig Dorje who he considered to be his root master, his *Tsawai Lama*. Nyagla Pema Dūdul had three or four important students including Sonam Taye, Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa and Yeshe Dorje who wrote a biography of Nyagla Pema Dūdul. But the most important is considered to be Rangrig Dorje because when Nyagla Pema Dūdul attained the rainbow body he appeared to Rangrig Dorje and told him that he was destined to be the owner of his teaching and terma. Rangrig Dorje also achieved a kind of rainbow body when his body shrunk to about 10 centimeters. It is still contained in a *kudung* reliquary, which can be seen in the Lumorab Gönpa in Nyarong.

Rangrig Dorje is also important because when the family lineage of Mingling Trichen at Mindrolling monastery in central Tibet did not have male heirs to continue that line, they thought to ask Nyala Rangrig Dorje, because he was considered to be an emanation or reincarnation of Gyurme Dorje, to give one of his sons or grandsons to a female of the Mindrolling lineage so that it could continue, and this actually took place.

Changchub Dorje received the Lama Yangtig initiation, instructions and important teachings from Rangrig Dorje. Also here it says that when first he went to receive empowerment from him, again these attendants did not allow him to enter so he shouted. In any case, Rangrig gave him an important *rigpai tsalwang* and the name, Changchub Dorje.

During the time that he was still working as a herder he had some visions including one of Vimalamitra and some signs manifested at the place where he was working. One night the milk spontaneously became butter, which they used for the butter lamps that lasted for days and days. He also had a vision of Guru Padmasambhava as well as some in-

dications for discovering a Hayagriva terma and so on.

When he was around 12 years of age, he finally stopped working as a herder and became a monk at Palri monastery near the place where he was born. In that period he received from Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa all the teachings of Chögyal Lingpa, the tertön from whom his father was descended, and he started to do intensive practice of Hayagriva from Chögyal Lingpa's terma.

While he was at the monastery he mostly remained in his room doing practice. However, the other monks were not happy about this and told him that he should learn how to play ritual instruments. When he showed little interest, they suggested that he learn to be *umdzé* or chant leader. He knew how to sing; however, he was a little concerned about the tone of his voice. One night with this worry in his mind, he fell asleep. There was a full moon that evening and during the night he saw a white conch shell coming from the moon and being absorbed in his throat. When he woke up he cleared his throat loudly and all the dust in his room started to rise everywhere. Then he understood that he had received the siddhi of Brahma's voice. The next day, when he started to lead a ritual as *umdzé*, he sounded HUM and the dust rose up from all around so that everybody was amazed and understood that he was not normal.

Then the monks started to joke and tease him and suggested that he should play the *tungchen*, the long ritual trumpet, but he replied that it would be better if he didn't because he might break it. However, they insisted and said that since the trumpet was made of copper it was not easy to break, however, when he sounded one note, it did break, but of course they couldn't say anything because he had already warned them.

Then at a certain point at Palri gönpa, when they were doing practice of Hayagriva from Chögyal Lingpa's terma, some people belonging to that monastery started to criticize saying that the termas were not pure, not authentic, and that they should stop doing this practice.

Following this everyone at the monastery got a serious skin illness including Changchub Dorje. Then he had a vision of Ekajati asking Kharchen Palgyi Wangchuk, one of 25 students of Guru Padmasambhava and of whom Chögyal Lingpa was his reincarnation, "What should we do with these people? They are behaving badly and are not respecting your terma. We should send some provocations," to which Palgyi Wangchuk replied, "Yes, but if they resume doing that practice, then they should all be healed and restored to health." Finally they resumed that practice with Changchub Dorje reciting 100 million mantras and they were all healed.

When he was 13 years of age he had a vision of Guru Padmasambhava and some termas and understood how to decode symbols. He also became famous because he could stop hail. In Tibet the *ngagpas* or tantric practitioners were very important because they could stop hail storms by means of guardian practice and mantras. Hail would destroy the crops and there would be little food for one year so people relied very much on these tantric practitioners to prevent it. However, when they asked Changchub Dorje to stop the hail, he would simply remain in the state of contemplation to stop it and he became famous for that.

When he was 14 years old, he spent more than a year at Kathok monastery, an important Nyingma monastery. It was founded by Kathok Tampa Deshek, and the Mahayoga, Anuyoga and Atiyoga traditions were maintained there and especially the three series of Dzogchen: Semde, Longde and Upadesa. Later in the 16th century, the monastery also became important due to the presence of two extraordinary tertöns, Düddul Dorje and Longsal Nyingpo, who established that tradition at Kathok. Changchub Dorje lived there as a monk and received all the kama teaching, all three series of inner yogas including all the termas of Düddul Dorje and Longsal Nyingpo.

When he was 15 years of age, for the first time he received symbols for the termas of Kadu Choki Gyatso, an important series of termas meaning "Ocean of Dharma that unifies all teachings," and although he did not put it into writing

he started practicing this series. At one point Rangrig Dorje had to go to central Tibet because of events at Mindrolling, so he said to Nyala Yeshe Dorje, who was also a student of Nyagla Pema Dündul, "I give you this son of mine. Treat him as if he was your own son." Hence Yeshe Dorje became Changchub Dorje's second important master after Rangrig Dorje. He received many teachings from him, he practiced and Yeshe Dorje was very satisfied. Changchub Dorje spent a year or so with him near Kalsang Gönpa in Kham.

When he was 16 years old, he set out on a pilgrimage that lasted two or three years. First of all he went to China to Wutaishan, which is linked to Manjushri, where he had a vision of five forms of Manjushri. He also received a terma of Manjushri, in both peaceful and a wrathful aspects. Then going south through Tibet he visited many places like Pemakö and Kongpo until he reached Lhasa, where he met Shakya Shri, the famous siddha, and received teaching from him.

When he reached Lhasa, he went to visit the Jokhang. While he was in front of the Jowo Shakyamuni statue—the most important image in the Jokhang—as he stepped back, he saw a kind of hole and he entered the dimension of Ganachakra with King Songtsen Gampo and many dakinis. He received some Ganachakra substances or food and took it back with him. In the meantime, his fellow practitioners who had accompanied him on the pilgrimage asked him where he had been. When he told them the story he also gave them some substances from the Ganachakra so they would not doubt him.

When Changchub Dorje went to visit Trandruk temple, founded by Songtsen Gampo, with his companions, they found the temple door closed and they could not enter. When he heard somebody walking in the temple, he knocked on the door, and a 16-year-old girl opened it and invited him in. Then he had a vision of a jnanadakini in blue with blue light and seven chakras opened, like seven mandalas. That vision was related to his termas for the future.

He also traveled to India and Nepal, did practice and received termas. When he went back to his teacher, Yeshe Dorje asked him where he had been and what he had done all those years. Changchub Dorje told him that he had been to many important places and received some amazing signs and also many important termas. He went on to say that he would like to go to other power places to improve his capacity and asked his teacher what he thought about that. Then Yeshe Dorje said, "Instead of making holes in 100 shoes going on pilgrimage it would be better to make one hole on a sitting place. One year of doing practice is better than 100 years of pilgrimage to all the sacred places. You have just been wasting your time." In this way, Yeshe Dorje shattered Changchub Dorje's pride and his idea that he was a good tertön, a good practitioner. At that moment, he understood that he should follow this advice from his teacher.

Accordingly he went on retreat alone for seven years in a place called Baya Tragkar and mostly fed on chulen, herbs, and minerals and practiced the termas he had received. That was when he was in his thirties. Then for 10 years he met other teachers such as Shardza Tashi Gyaltzen, a Bonpo practitioner who achieved the rainbow body. When he was around 55—after having received for some years indications that he should go to the Konjo area—he moved there and established Khamdogar, which still exists today. At that time he started to have a lot of students and became well-known, both as a doctor, and as a tertön and teacher, so that many lamas would go to him to receive teaching.

There are so many stories about his life that you will be able to read about in the biography. So this is the end of my talk. I hope it was useful to know about this incredible being.

December 2, 2025, Dzamling Gar

CONCERT WITH NAMKHAH YESHI

November 26th, 2025
in Bologna, Italy

AngelicA – Music Research Center/San Leonardo Theater- Wednesday, November 26, 2025 -

Article by Tatiana Gambetta

The concert by Namkhah Yeshi and Alessandro Di Maio at the Teatro San Leonardo in Bologna is the result of a network of relationships, listening experiences, and affinities that have developed spontaneously, almost inevitably, over time.

My first encounter with Yeshi's teaching took place in Merigar West, during retreats in recent years. His essential, direct language, deeply rooted in the present, made Dzogchen immediately alive and accessible, not only for those who already participated in the Community, but also for people dear to me, coming from creative and artistic fields, with no previous experience in Buddhism or meditation.

After those retreats, it was natural to continue sharing this experience outside the strictly spiritual context, bringing it to the worlds of contemporary art and research.

This journey led to my meeting Massimo Golfieri, a photographer and long-time friend who has been curating the visual identity of the AngelicA Festival, an international contemporary music festival, for over thirty years. AngelicA was founded in Bologna in 1991 as a space dedicated to the most experimental expressions of contemporary music. It is not just a festival, but a veritable listening laboratory: concerts, meetings, workshops, cinema, and record productions coexist in an idea of music understood as exploration, as experience, going beyond established listening patterns. Since 2011, the Teatro San Leonardo has become its home, transforming itself into a Music Research Center, a lively place frequented by different audiences.



Photo by Massimo Golfieri

It is precisely in this context, so akin to Yeshi's research, that the dialogue began to take shape. Through shared listening, informal conversations, and a common focus on the quality of the experience, a deep resonance between Yeshi's musical work and the spirit of AngelicA clearly emerged. Some compositions shared on SoundCloud deeply impressed Massimo Simonini, the festi-

atergoers, and fans of experimental and contemporary music. It was a shared but deeply individual listening experience, as often happens when sound becomes a living experience.

The compositions, EMDS6, Assonaggio, Union of Sun and Moon, and Turing Complete, constructed true inner landscapes. Sounds that evoked primordial images, linked to the elements:

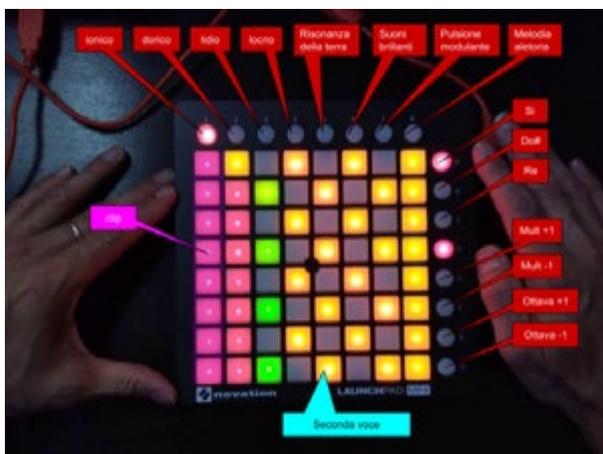
water, wind, movement in space. Vibrations capable of physically acting on the body, transforming it from within. Not a guided narrative, but a journey.

By relaxing, allowing oneself to be touched without trying to control the experience, the sound seemed to reach intimate and often unknown places. Places where, despite starting from different perceptions, many recognized

something essential and common. A silent, non-conceptual recognition that does not need to be described or compared.

And it is precisely here that Yeshi's words find their full realization:

"The ultimate goal of my musical research is spiritual in nature: I want the audience, in the moment of listening, which I consider the moment of true artistic interpretation, not only to be transported into an imaginary world, but to develop a living presence and be led



Computer keyboard. Photo by Massimo Golfieri

val's artistic director, who recognized in Yeshi's music not only sophisticated formal research, but also the use of sound as a vehicle for knowledge and direct experience. This led to an invitation to present Musica del tempo presente (Music of the Present Time), a concert that featured Yeshi on the computer and Alessandro Di Maio on live electronics, in an intense and calibrated dialogue.

The evening brought together a diverse audience, including many members of the Dzogchen Community, regular the-

to reflect on themselves.”

During the concert, this intention did not remain a theoretical statement, but manifested itself as a concrete experience. It was not a question of “understanding” the music, nor of interpreting it according to aesthetic or cultural categories, but of “being there,” fully present, while the sound acted. Each listening experience was different, as different as the inner conditions of each person, and precisely for this reason authentic.

Yeshi’s acousmatic music, decontextualized and devoid of traditional instrumental references, combined with the spatialization and live intervention of Alessandro Di Maio, made it clear how sound can become a direct means of knowledge. Not something to grasp, but something that passes through us, opening up spaces of awareness.

In this sense, the concert at the Teatro San Leonardo was a clear example of how ancient knowledge can be expressed through contemporary languages, speaking directly to the listener’s experience. A successful encounter, in which music, presence, and community found a natural unity, leaving many with the desire to continue listening, not only with their ears, but with everything we are.

Addendum by Namkhai Yeshi

The concert took place within the context of the ANGELICA Festival, now in its 35th year and widely recognized for its long-standing commitment to musical research. The festival has been a significant platform for electroacoustic music: notably, Karlheinz Stockhausen performed there shortly before his passing, and the festival commissioned two works from him.

- <https://aaa-angelica.com/aaa/ee-extra-eventi/stockhausen-dissonanze>
- <https://aaa-angelica.com/aaa/festival/edizione-festival-2015/stockhausen-secondo-giorno>
- <https://aaa-angelica.com/aaa/ricer->

**Namkhai Yeshi
MUSIC OF THE PRESENT TIME**

EMDS6 (2024, 8’42”); various synthesis techniques, quadraphonic

Assonaggio (2023, 8’11”); synthesized and real-world sounds, extended stereo

Union of Sun and Moon (2025, 30’39”); synthesized and real-world sounds, live electronics, quadraphonic

Turing Complete (2021, 6’09”); orchestral sounds arranged in imaginary space, stereo

Namkhai Yeshi computer
Alessandro Di Maio live electronics
music by Namkhai Yeshi
curated by Massimo Golfieri

<https://aaa-angelica.com>

<https://soundcloud.com/yeshisilva-nonamkhai>

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/it/prodotti/product/atimonlam-italiano>

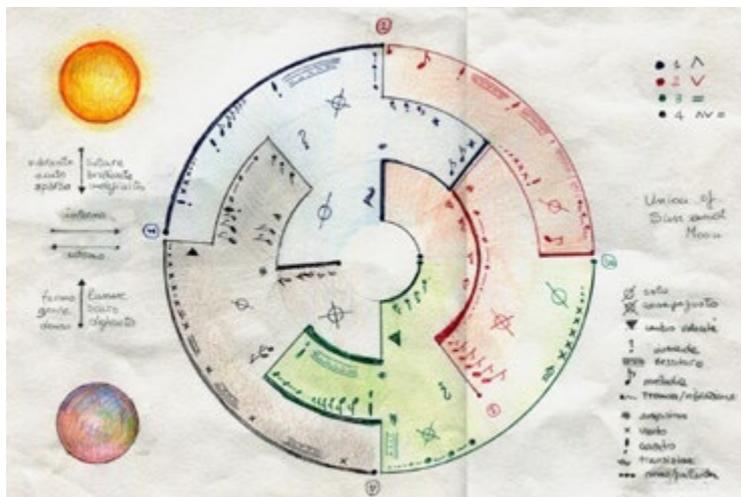
Namkhai Yeshi and
Alessandro Di Maio
at the Teatro San Leonardo,
Bologna

[caerinasascimento/2025-2026-dodicesimo-anno/prima-parte/namkhai-yeshi-musica-del-tempo-presente](#)

All pieces were adapted for a quadraphonic setup (four speakers) with the support of two skilled sound engi-

neers, Lorenzo and Lilli, and were played from my device. Both Alessandro and I worked using Ableton Live with Push 3. The fixed-media pieces—that is, works not performed live but previously mixed and spatialized specifically for quadraphonic diffusion—were output from my Push 3 via four separate audio channels and routed directly to the hall’s mixing desk.

performed live together with Alessandro, who was also using a laptop connected to a Push 3. We agreed in advance on a set of formal constraints and created several audio clips designed to function coherently together; however, in accordance with the score, we did not listen to each other’s output during the performance.



The actual score of Union of Sun and Moon by Namkhai Yeshi

When I composed this piece a few years ago, I had not yet determined a concrete method for performing it. In this sense, the process resembles modal jazz improvisation: one commits an entire life experience to a limited set of sounds, trusting that something meaningful will emerge, even if its final form is unknown. The structure we followed is inspired by the image attached (see above image), which is the actual score.

It is intended for four musicians of any background or instrument, who alternate roles in a circular manner, similar to a mandala.

Finally, we also incorporated two analog instruments—the Chromaplanes—to test a compositional concept that will form the basis of an upcoming installation for MACO, scheduled to be inaugurated on its anniversary.

The piece *Union of Sun and Moon* was

DR. PHUNTSOG'S OX PREDICTION FOR THE FIRE HORSE YEAR

There are many ways to consider how the characteristics of the year of the Fire Horse or the year of any one of the 12 animals will be, and the positive or negative aspects that they are going to bring.

However, I have chosen the *glang rDzi* prediction in which everything that is going to happen is explained through the image of the ox. When I was young, at the end of the year we would get the new calendar and my aunt, Rinpoche's

the outer nature and their relationship can be explained in different ways.

This year, the head of the ox is red in color. This indicates that agricultural production may not be the best and it is more likely that the weather will be dry which may increase some contagious diseases. In particular, the three months of the spring, the middle months of the summer and the autumn will be more dry. The abdomen of the ox is blue-greenish which indicates that in the second or middle month of the spring and the autumn there will be more wind.

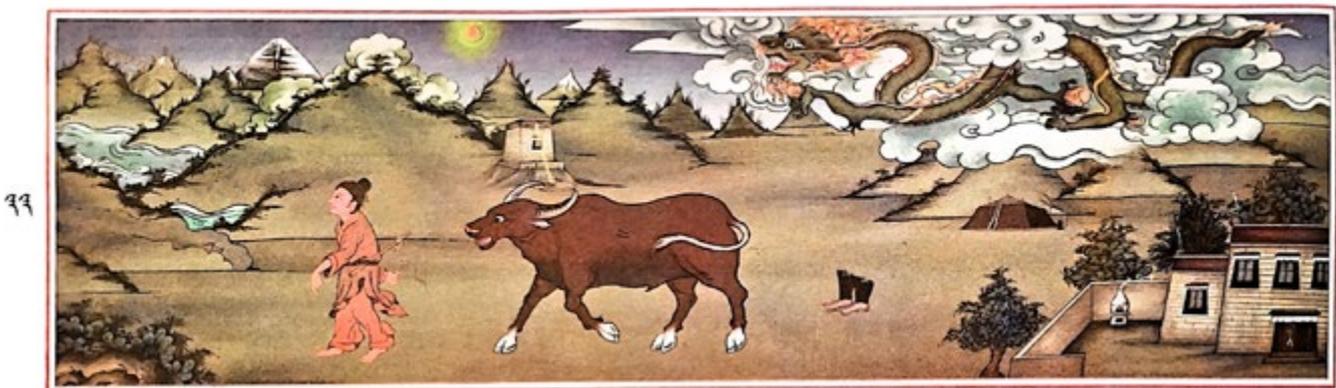
The horns, ears, and the tail of the ox are yellow in color. This means that in general, people may become more involved in spiritual things and there will be less violence. The four legs of the ox are white in color which signifies that in the vast valley regions and the desert or arid areas the crops will not be very fruitful. In the late spring this may be caused by

is blue which means that there may be some attacks from enemies but on a local level, not a global one.

The oxherd's hair is gathered together on the top of his head meaning that in general the year may be a little better for general produce. The oxherd is not wearing his boots which he has left behind him which indicates two things. On the positive side people may be less busy this year, while on the other hand being less busy means that nothing is happening and people's fortunes will not be very successful.

The oxherd is carrying a whip made of cotton which makes it a little softer. He is not holding it in his hand ready to strike the ox but it is tucked into his belt suggesting that the population has power acting together as a group.

The oxherd appears to be in a hurry, striding ahead of the ox signifying that



older sister, would always look at the *glang rDzi*, the ox prediction, and would tell us what was going to happen and suggest that we do this or that. So consulting the ox prediction has become a habit that I got from my aunt, something that remains from her.

In the diagram the head, stomach, mouth, horns, limbs and tail of the ox are described in different colors and positions. Ahead of the ox there is the cowherd. These two figures symbolize the two main types of beings living on this planet: human beings and other sentient beings of which there are many. The cowherd also represents the inner nature of beings while the ox represents

cold or freezing weather affecting the planting of crops.

The mouth of the ox is open and the tail is moving to the left which indicates that this year will be more dangerous, more challenging for humans, while for animals it will be a little better. The general financial and economic situation including animal products will be average.

The oxherd is young adult suggesting that the year may be better for middle aged people but less so for younger children and for seniors. He is red in color indicating that this year the economic situation will be average, not the best. The color of the belt that he is wearing

the life or health of animals in general is relatively fine. It also means that spring will come a little earlier than usual.

At the level of the earth there are four animals, not a vast number, suggesting that this year all production and the economy will not be the best, so if a person opens a business or already runs a business it may not be very successful although it will not run at a loss.

In the sky there is one dragon linked to water. This year the rain will be of medium intensity, balanced, possibly a little less than usual. Today, the first day of Tibetan Losar, the animal of the day is the Dog which does not make the best

animal combination - Dog and Horse - for humans and animals. So these are the indications for the year based on the prediction of the ox and the oxherd.

Regarding the elements for the year, this year the Fire element is more dominant. The positive qualities of the Fire element are dignity, a sharp mind, determination, intelligence and readiness, while the more negative qualities are that it tends to be rather egoistic, arrogant. Regarding health this year there may be a tendency towards problems linked to the Fire element such as lymphatic problems, contagious diseases, gallbladder or liver problems, skin problems. Through the excess of the Fire element, there may be an internal depletion or deficiency of the qualities of peacefulness, gentleness and kindness.

Externally the weather may be more dry, hence the soil will be dry and agricultural production may not be good. If there is no rain, the soil is dry, and the crops are affected so the rain is important for the soil which is important for the crops. Then everything that we eat, that we wear, that we use comes from the earth. All the things that we eat come from the earth, the animals, the fruit, the vegetables and so on. This tells us how important the nature of the motherland is and how important it is to care for the motherland.

Then the rain is considered to be like nectar. In Tibetan we say that the rain is *dutsi*, nectar, because in nature water helps to keep everything growing and holds them together cohesively. Without water things cannot be held together. As individuals, it is water that keeps us physically together. So there are two principles: individually our bodies are kept alive because they contain fluid and the five elements are balanced and then we are able to stay together because we love one another, because we respect one another.

If my mind, my body and energy were predominantly controlled by the Fire element, it would make me very angry. That does not mean I am purposely being angry but it is because of the violence [of the Fire element to my system]. Instead when the Water element is present in

our system, it has the qualities of peace, calmness, gentleness that are able to produce compassion and other positive qualities within us.

On the last day of the recent retreat here at Dzamling Gar, Namkhai Yeshe's final advice was to be happy, to be kind, to be respectful. He didn't say to go home and do a particular practice because through kindness, gentleness and compassion, loving each other, is the only way we can survive and go ahead, not simply surviving but also happily, peacefully.

In this Fire Horse year, those born in the year of the Horse should be a little careful. For them, the year of the Horse return takes place when they are 13 years old, 25 years old, 37 years and so on, every 12 years. The Fire Horse is a little complicated because it's a double Fire sign - the element of Metal is also doubled - and the Fire attacks the Fire resulting eventually in burnout and collapse. So the Fire Horse should be careful.

The animal in the seventh house from [in opposition to] the Horse is the Mouse. The Mouse and the Horse are in the *mdun zur* position, which is conflict. Two other animals, the Rabbit and the Bird, are in the fourth and tenth corners, respectively, to the Horse. Those born under these two signs should also be careful because these positions, the fourth and tenth corners, are more prone to receive negativities. In Tibetan we use the word *gshed* meaning to attack. The other animals are fairly okay.

Since this year the color red is more predominant, if you're looking at practice, it would be good to do practices of compassion, like the Buddha of compassion, chanting the mantra of compassion, Medicine Buddha, Tara and Mandarava. If your birth animal is in the 7th house in relation to the Horse, or the

4th and 10th corners, you should try to wear the clothes of the opposite element which is Fire. If you are a Fire element animal, try to wear clothes that are green which represents the Wood element, the mother and protector of Fire. Yellow is also a good color to wear. Yellow is in

the Son relationship, so they are in agreement. White is also fine because it is in a Friend relationship with Fire and is a support. The only color that may not be good to wear is blue which represents the Water element, the enemy of Fire.

Even though you may not like to wear green you should try to wear something very small like a bracelet or necklace, socks or even underwear, something that touches the body, in green or yellow. During the first month of every

season it is better to wear green. In the second month of every season, white. And the third month of every season, yellow.

Whether a year is good or bad, we need to move ahead, there's no option, no alternative. Shantideva said that if something can be fixed, there is no point in worrying about it. We should just go and fix it. If there's nothing that can be fixed, why should we worry because there is nothing we can do. So we should just relax.

Our master, Rinpoche, advised us to work with circumstances and so we should try to follow his advice. Another key point is not to lose loving kindness. We may have many things, but even if we don't have them, we can survive. In order to survive, or be in society, some things are optional. But there are other things that we need to have in order to survive such as loving kindness. Whatever birth animal we may be, whatever birth animal our family members, friends, or neighbors are, we should love them and try to respect them. Thank you.



Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo is the International Director of the Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine with programs across the United States, Russia, and Europe.

URGENT APPEAL FROM THE INTERNATIONAL GAKYIL

Dear Members of the International Dzogchen Community, Greetings!

The IG needs your help. We ask that you consider applying to be Yellow IG Assistants because the International Yellow Gakyil is in great need of assistance.

General requirements

- Voting member of the IDC (membership for three consecutive years plus the current one: 2023, 2024, 2025, and 2026)
- Proficiency in spoken and written English
- International mindset and openness to different cultures
- Excellent communication and empathy skills
- Strong skills in using spreadsheets and basic computer skills
- Team spirit and ability to work well in multicultural and dynamic environments

Yellow Area Profile:

We are looking for a person who will mainly take care of building and maintaining good relationships with Gars and Lings around the world, working closely with the **International Membership Coordinator**.

The role includes managing **membership shares** and **membership policies**, coordinating communication, listening to the needs and issues of local communities.

IG Assistants require an optimal training period before they can be selected by the IG and voted onto the International Gakyil by the IDC members at the Annual General Assembly (AGA) which takes place in the early summer.

Please reflect and determine whether you have the qualities that make you a good fit to be a Yellow IG Assistant, or if you know a Vajra brother or sister who does. Our team is built on collaboration

and respect, and we need you. We warmly invite you to join us! Please send your application by March 31, 2026, to yellow@dzogchen.net. We are available for any questions you may have. We look forward to hearing from you!

2026 IDC MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Dear Global Vajra Family, We warmly invite you to renew your 2026 International Dzogchen Community (IDC) membership at this time.

Membership in the Dzogchen Community is one of the fundamental ways we help sustain the precious Teachings of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and ensure that they remain accessible for all practitioners. It also helps support the Teachings of Namkhai Yeshe, to whom we are immensely grateful for being our Spiritual Guide. Namkhai Yeshe's guidance and dedication inspires us to deepen our practice and maintain the continuity of our Community.

The Gars and Lings rely on all our memberships to cover their operating costs while providing us with retreats, programs, and webcasts that allow us to practice and grow together, as well as other benefits in collaboration with the International Dzogchen Community.

Please join our collective community effort by renewing your 2026 IDC membership today. By reaffirming this annual commitment to our Masters, the Teachings, and our Sangha, we make the development of our practice a continued reality while ensuring the continued health of the Dzogchen Community.

Renewing this year's membership, and also by paying previous years - specifically 2023, 2024, and 2025, as needed - is easy. Visit dzogchen.net to

view and choose the payment methods for the Gar or Ling closest to your geographical area of residence. Many of them offer the opportunity to renew membership directly online through your personal profile at <http://dzogchen.net/profile/membership>. Alternatively, you can contact the Gakyil and/or the Membership Coordinator of your local Gar or Ling directly for assistance.

UPCOMING TEACHER TRAINING COURSES

Dear members of the International Dzogchen Community,

The International Gakyil is pleased to announce the next Teacher Training courses for Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance:

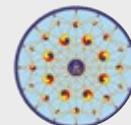
- Yantra Yoga First Level Teacher Training from March 30th to April 8th 2026, with Maxim Leshchenko and Jan Dolensky in Dzamling Gar;
- Yantra Yoga First Level Teacher Training from 13th to 22nd of July 2026, with Oni McKinstry in Kunsangar North;
- Yantra Yoga Second Level Teacher Training from July 24th to August 1st 2026, with Oni McKinstry in Kunsangar North;
- Vajra Dance First Level Teacher Training from 4th to 10th of June 2026, with Adriana Dal Borgo and Prima Mai in Merigar West.

Please save the dates. For further details please refer to the relevant announcements of the Yantra Yoga and Vajra Dance Teacher Training teams.

Warm regards,
The International Gakyil



INTERNATIONAL
DZOGCHEN COMMUNITY
GAKYIL



HEALTH FOR ALL. HEALTH FOREVER.

A year of integrated community health in the district of Jajarkot, Nepal

Project funded by the Italian Buddhist Union's 8xmille

Nestled in the mountains of western Nepal, the district of Jajarkot is a place of extraordinary beauty and profound fragility. Even before the earthquake of November 2023 devastated its communities, this area faced social, cultural, and educational challenges that made access to healthcare a privilege, not a right.

After the earthquake, those fragilities became more acute, more urgent, more visible. It is in this context that, thanks to funds from the Italian Buddhist Union's 8xmille program, ASIA, in collaboration with Phase Nepal, launched the Integrated Community Health project with the aim of building - together with the communities of the rural municipalities of Barekot and Kushe - a system of knowledge, practices, and relationships capable of lasting over time.

Not an intervention imposed from above, but a shared journey: pregnant women, students, teachers, health workers, traditional healers, and the elderly. An idea of health that embraces the body, the mind, the community, and the environment. A project that took the complexity of real life seriously.

Maternity and care: accompanying life from the beginning

Giving birth safely, attending prenatal visits, receiving postnatal care: in the district of Jajarkot, these are not certainties. They are achievements. Deep-rooted traditional beliefs - such as avoiding fruit and vegetables during pregnancy, preferring home births, or avoiding certain foods for up to a month after giving birth - continue to influence families' choices,



Palliative care in Bhailokhan

especially in more isolated areas such as Barekot.

The project responded with 81 training and guidance sessions for pregnant women, family members, and healthcare workers. These were not simple lectures, but spaces for listening, dialogue, and reflection, using participatory methods: group discussions, role-playing, and sharing experiences. The focus was on antenatal and postnatal care, nutrition, warning signs, breastfeeding, family planning, and infant immunization.

One of the most appreciated moments? The practical demonstration on how to make reusable cloth diapers. "I had never learned anything like this before," said one participant. "It's something I can do right away for my baby."

The results are tangible: the number of women attending their eighth-month prenatal visit has increased; access to ultrasound services and blood typing is growing. The women of Kushe are becoming increasingly aware of the benefits of institutional childbirth. The change is slow, but real.

• 842 pregnant women involved

- 81 sessions held
- 1,541 total participants (women, family members, operators)

Hygiene, water, and prevention: caring for the environment to care for people

Contaminated water, food handled without precautions, waste disposed of improperly: concrete causes of illness, every day, for children and the elderly. In many rural communities in western Nepal, the prevention of waterborne and vector-borne diseases is not an abstract issue: it is a matter of survival.

In 67 awareness-raising sessions on hygiene and good health practices, the project reached 1,775 people - almost three times the target. Through practical demonstrations of proper hand washing and discussions on drinking water and waste management, communities reflected on the deep connection between their environment and their health.

Women - 1,576 out of 1,775 participants - were the absolute protagonists. Many expressed awareness of a change already underway: "Now I understand

why my daughter was often sick. It was the water." Prevention is not an individual act. It is a gesture of collective care that transforms the way a community inhabits its territory.

- 67 hygiene and prevention sessions
- 1,775 participants (296% above target)
- 1,576 women participants

Menstrual and reproductive health: breaking the silence

In Nepal, talking about menstruation, sexuality, and reproductive health is still a huge challenge for many girls and boys. Silence has concrete consequences: girls who do not go to school during their period, young people who grow up without accurate information about their bodies, taboos that are passed down from generation to generation.

The project chose to tackle this challenge head-on, in schools, with students from sixth to ninth grade. In 67 meetings, 2,445 girls and boys participated in open sessions on puberty, menstrual hygiene, sexual and reproductive health. But above all, the girls learned something practical and transformative: how to make reusable cloth sanitary pads.

The effect was immediate: more girls are going to school even during their periods, with greater confidence and dignity. Teachers confirm this: "The students now talk more, ask questions, and show more self-esteem." The boys - actively involved - have shown curiosity and respect. A concrete step toward gender equality.

- 2,445 students reached
- 1,643 girls involved
- 67 meetings in schools

Campaigns and celebrations: the community takes center stage

Health is also built through celebration, festivities, and collective participation. For World Breastfeeding Week (August 1–7, 2025), the project organized six events in the municipalities of Barekot and Kushe, with 272 participants. It was an opportunity for mothers, health workers, and local representatives to



Hygiene education training

come together and reaffirm the value of breastfeeding during the delicate first 1,000 days of life.

On December 8, 2025, the six working communities celebrated International Menstrual Hygiene Day. It was a lively and well-attended day: 329 adolescents - 184 girls and 145 boys - took part in gatherings, quizzes, discussions, and practical activities on menstrual health, hygiene, and gender equality. Parades with banners and slogans brought the message to the streets, squares, and hearts.

The enthusiastic participation of the boys was one of the most significant moments: equality is built together, when we learn that menstruation is a normal and natural part of life, and that supporting girls is everyone's responsibility.

- 272 participants in Breastfeeding Week
- 329 teenagers at Dignified Menstruation Day

Traditional healers and mental health: a necessary dialogue

Those who fall ill in rural communities in Nepal often turn first to traditional healers. Ignoring this reality would mean ignoring how health is experienced, understood, and managed by thousands of people.

The project chose a different approach: involving these actors as interlocutors, building bridges between ancient knowledge and new awareness.

In 11 orientation sessions, 306 traditional healers (192 men and 114 women) from Barekot and Kushe were involved in discussions on maternal and child health, psychological well-being, and recognizing the signs of mental distress. The goal was not to replace traditional medicine, but to build connections: to train those who already enjoy the trust of the community so that they can recognize situations of risk and refer people to appropriate services.

In a holistic view of health, psychological and physical well-being are inseparable. And true, deep-rooted care comes through the relationships of trust that already exist within communities.

- 306 traditional healers trained
- 11 sessions held

Palliative care: dignity until the end

What does it mean to care for someone when healing is no longer possible? How do you accompany a terminally ill person while respecting their dignity? How do you support a family on this journey?

These questions, often avoided, became the focus of a two-day training course on palliative care for 28 health-care workers in Kushe and Barekot. For most of them, it was their first encounter with this concept: pain management, empathetic communication with patients and families, emotional and psychosocial support, and care for people with disabilities.



End of the training session on health and good hygiene practices

The results of the pre- and post-training assessments were remarkable: the average score rose from 6.64 to 9.45. But the most significant finding was qualitative: the participants - curious, enthusiastic, often moved - shared personal experiences of care and suffering, recognizing a need that their communities experience every day.

After the training, 32 home visits reached 200 people with chronic diseases - hypertension, obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes. Families expressed concrete needs: wheelchairs, crutches, canes, pharmacological support. Caring for those who suffer, even when they cannot be cured, is a profound form of respect for life.

- 28 healthcare workers trained in palliative care
- 200 people reached through home visits
- 9.45 average post-test score (out of 10)

Mental health: training those who care for others

A teacher who does not know how to respond to a student in crisis. A healthcare worker who does not recognize the signs of psychological distress. These gaps - in knowledge, language, and tools - have real consequences every day. The project addressed them with two dedicated training courses.

In December 2025, a four-day training course involved 32 healthcare workers from Kushe and Barekot on the topic of psychosocial support: recognizing

conditions of mental distress, offering listening and basic support, and activating referral systems. Participants left the training with something valuable: not only knowledge, but confidence in their ability to do good. Many expressed the desire for this training to be extended to all families. A two-day training course was then held for 30 teachers from Barekot and Kushe: understanding the psychosocial needs of students, responding empathetically, managing crisis situations in the classroom - including seizures, an issue that many teachers had experienced with fear and confusion. "Before, I didn't know what to do. Now I feel prepared," said one teacher. "And I feel that I can really help my students."

Mental health is health. Caring for those who care for others is one of the most profound investments a community can make.

- 32 health workers trained in mental health
- 30 teachers trained

Protection of children and vulnerable adults: care is everyone's responsibility

After an earthquake, vulnerabilities multiply. Children and adults in fragile situations risk remaining invisible, or worse, being exposed to abuse, neglect, and exclusion. The project addressed this risk with a training course on the protection of children and vulnerable adults, involving project staff, teachers, and students.

In 14 events, 475 people - 146 teachers and 329 students - explored topics such as children's rights, different types of abuse, reporting mechanisms, and the principles of shared protection. Through role-playing, discussions, and the "Balloon Game" - a participatory tool that helps participants understand how protection is everyone's responsibility - teachers and students developed greater awareness, empathy, and the ability to recognize risky situations.

Protection is not just a legal obligation. It is a cultural and everyday choice: deciding that no one should face their vulnerability alone.

- 475 teachers and students involved
- 14 events held

Conclusions: health as a political and caring act

At the end of this first year, looking at the numbers - thousands of participants, hundreds of sessions, dozens of trained operators - it is easy to get lost in the data. But behind every number there is a person. A woman who now knows the warning signs during pregnancy. A girl who goes to school even during her period. A healthcare worker who knows how to accompany those who are suffering with dignity. A teacher who is no longer afraid when a student has a crisis.

The Integrated Community Health project has chosen to work with a broad and courageous vision of health: not as the absence of disease, but as physical, mental, social, and environmental well-being. It has chosen to start with communities, to listen to their needs, to respect their knowledge - and to build, with patience and humility, something that could last.

This is the health we believe is possible. And it is only the beginning.

"Health concerns everyone: the environment and the community, the present and the future of individuals' bodies and nature."

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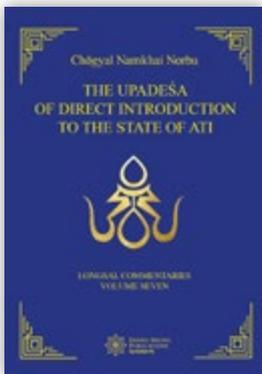
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Books in English

The Upadeśa of Direct Introduction to the State of Ati - Longsal Commentaries VII

The Upadeśa of Introduction to the State of Ati is an extraordinary teaching of the eighth-century Lotsāva Vairocana that presents essential instructions on the four contemplations of Dzogchen Semde and on the fundamental aspects of primordial purity and self-perfection. In particular, it contains rare explanations on the nature of the base (*gzhi*) and its manifestation (*gzhi snang*) as the source of both samsāra and nirvāna. This teaching is then elucidated by the author's *A Luminous Mirror: Concise Commentary on the Special Longsal Upadeśa of Introduction to the State of Ati*.



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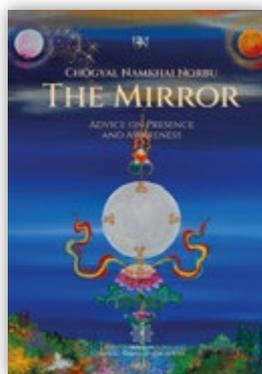
The Mirror - New Revised and Expanded Edition

THE MIRROR - Advice on Presence and Awareness - was written during a retreat of the Dzogchen Community held at Lu Cumitoni, Sardinia, Italy, during the Christmas holidays of 1977. The Mirror was expressly written to elucidate the principle of awareness and continuous presence in place of all the rules and lim-

itations inherent to the various religious traditions.

In this new edition, the original translation has been completely revised. The oral commentary, previously abbreviated and summarized in various passages, is here presented anew in its original, more colloquial form.

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/new/product/e-book-the-mirror-revised-and-expanded-edition-pdf>



Tibetan Calendar for the Year of the Fire Horse Year 2153

This pocket agenda contains concise indications of the practices recommended by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu for special days, astrological aspects from the Tibetan lunar calendar, individual influences affecting those born between 1926 and 2025, and positive and negative days for Naga practice. It is indispensable for identifying favorable and unfavorable days for daily activities and remembering special practice days.

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/new/product/e-book-tibetan-calendar-calendar-tibetano-2026-2027-pdf>

To better understand the information contained in our Tibetan calendar, refer to [Key for consulting the Tibetan Calendar](#), also published by Shang Shung Publications and available in our web store.



Special Practice Calendar 2026-2027

The Special Practice Calendar was first compiled by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu many years ago and contains his indications for each special day in the lunar year. In addition to describing specific practices for Padmasambhava Day, Dakini Day, and full and new moon, this calendar covers anniversaries of many masters from the Buddhist and Bön traditions in Tibet who are also connected with the Dzogchen transmission.

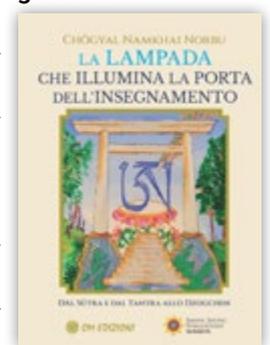
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Libri in Italiano

La lampada che illumina la porta dell'insegnamento

Attraverso una visione profonda della natura e delle caratteristiche di tutto il corpus degli insegnamenti buddhisti, questo libro spiega gli aspetti fondamentali del Sūtrayāna e del Vajrayāna che i praticanti dovranno affrontare e integrare in sé stessi nel loro cammino verso lo stato di Buddha. Questo testo ci guiderà dai primi passi del rifugio e del bodhicitta fino al risveglio della nostra condizione reale secondo lo Dzogpa Chenpo, cima di tutti gli yāna ed essenza della profonda conoscenza trasmessa da Buddha Śākyamuni. *La lampada che illumina la porta dell'insegnamento* è imperniato



sulle spiegazioni essenziali dei vari veicoli che conducono alla realizzazione secondo il celebrato upadeśa La collana dei modi di vedere, uno dei testi più antichi e autorevoli della tradizione Nyingma, attribuito al maestro Padmasambhava, vissuto nell'ottavo secolo. L'upadeśa è spiegato attraverso citazioni provenienti principalmente dagli scritti di Rongzom Chökyi Zangpo (1012–1088).

<https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/explore/new/product/e-book-la-lampada-che-illumina-la-porta-dell-insegnamento>

Calendario Tibetano 2026-2027 Anno Fuoco Cavallo 2153

Questa agenda tascabile contiene in maniera concisa le indicazioni delle pratiche consigliate da Chögyal Namkhai Norbu per i giorni speciali, i giorni positivi



e negativi per la pratica dei Naga, i dati astrologici del calendario tibetano e gli aspetti individuali per i nati tra il 1926 e il 2025. È uno strumento indispensabile per conoscere i giorni favorevoli o sfavorevoli alle varie attività quotidiane e per ricordare i giorni speciali di pratica. Il calendario è arricchito dalla tabella dei giorni in cui non è consigliato subire un intervento chirurgico in determinate parti del corpo. Infine è stato aggiunto un elenco con la data esatta del capodanno tibetano dal 1915 in poi secondo il sistema Phugpa, in modo che i nati in gennaio, febbraio e marzo possano accertare il proprio anno e il proprio animale di nascita secondo il calendario lunare tibetano.

Per una maggiore comprensione delle informazioni contenute nel calendario vedi: "[Chiave per consultare il calendario tibetano](#)", Shang Shung Edizioni 1999, disponibile sul nostro sito.

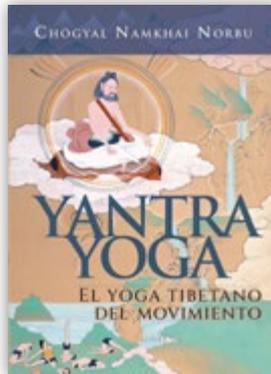
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Yantra Yoga

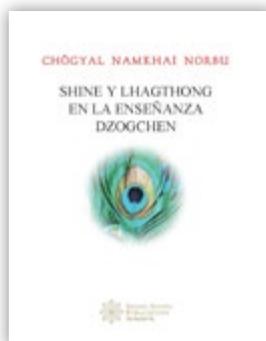
El Yantra Yoga, equivalente en el Budismo tibetano al Hatha Yoga de la tradición Hindú, es un sistema de práctica que comprende movimientos físicos, ejercicios de respiración y visualizaciones.



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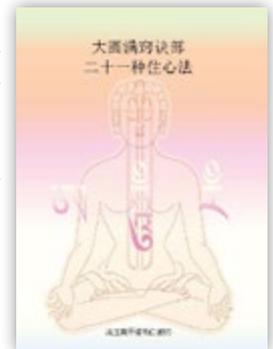
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Best wishes

SHANG SHUNG PUBLICATIONS TEAM

Please note that some books are restricted texts: those texts are reserved for those who have received the Dzogchen introduction from ChNN or Namkhai Yeshe. The Dzogchen Introduction from Namkhai Yeshe can be received by participating in a Dzogchen Retreat. The next retreat will be from June 19th to 22nd 2026 at Merigar West.

THE CUSP IN TIBETAN ASTROLOGY: ONE YEAR, THREE SIGNS



This year, Losar celebrations fall on February 18, 2026. The dates in the Sangha App Calendar are based on the printed version of the “Merigar” calendar, which is prepared and published annually by Shang Shung Publications.

There are several systems of calculating Losar, for example: the Phugpa system (the official standard in Tibet), the Jungtsi system (the astrology of the elements), or the Tsurphu system (used in the Karma Kagyu lineage).

According to the Phugpa system, the year begins on the 1st day of the month of the DRAGON, marked as the FIRST month in the calendar, so the Year of the Fire Horse begins on February 18, 2026. But according to the Jungtsi system, the year begins on the 1st day of the month of the TIGER, so the Year of the Fire Horse began last year on December 20, 2025. According to the Tsurphu system, which often coincides with the Chinese New Year, the celebration of the Year of the Fire Horse falls on February 17, 2026.

Since the overlap between these systems’ calculations of the beginning of the year covers the months of December-January-February, people born during this period may have two different signs, and sometimes even different elements. This can be confusing.

The “Merigar” calendar is compiled based on information from the Men-Tsee-Khang Almanac of Dharamsala, where the calculation of the beginning of Losar is primarily governed by the Phugpa system. It is calculated based on the Kalachakra tantra. The beginnings of Losar according to the Phugpa system are listed in the table at the end of the printed version of the calendar. The information in the “Merigar” calendar is additionally coordinated and integrated according to the instructions of Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.

According to the Jungtsi system, the year begins on the 1st day of the month of the Tiger, marked in the calendar as the ELEVENTH month. This beginning of the year is considered the astrological start of the year (the winter solstice, the month of the tiger, the beginning of spring).

According to the Tsurphu system, the beginning of the year is also considered to be the first day of the month of the Tiger, but it is referred to as the FIRST month. The table of the beginnings of the year according to Tsurphu can be found in Key for Consulting Tibetan Calendar (pages 44-47).

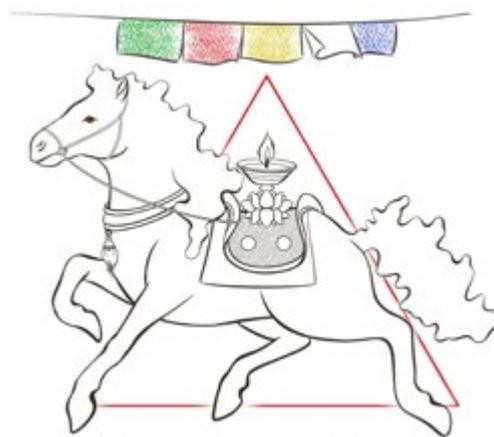
Let’s take the example of people born in 1973.

Losar according to the Phugpa system was March 5, 1973, when the Year of the Water Ox began. Losar according to the Jungtsi system was December 22, 1973, when the Year of the Wood Tiger began. According to the Tsurphu system, Losar began the Year of the Water Ox on February 3, 1973.

Date	Phugpa	Jungtsi	Tsurphu
Jan. 1 – Feb. 2, 1973	Water Mouse	Water Ox	Water Mouse
Feb. 3 – Mar. 4, 1973	Water Mouse	Water Ox	Water Ox
Mar. 5 – Dec. 21, 1973	Water Ox	Water Ox	Water Ox
Dec. 22 – Dec. 31, 1973	Water Ox	Wooden Tiger	Water Ox

One Western year, three astrological systems, and three signs.
Am I a Water Mouse or a Water Ox?
Am I a Water Ox or a Wooden Tiger?

These people may have doubts about which system to use to make their namkha. Or which protective mantras from the book “The Four Methods of Development” they should wear.



Happy Losar and Tashi Deleg!

In a personal communication from 2011, Rinpoche indicated that we should wind namkha and wear protective mantras in accordance with the Tsurphu system, from the book Key for Consulting Tibetan Calendar (pages 44-47).

In the new Namkha book (2021, page 39-41), Rinpoche changed this indication to the Phugpa system, thus reducing the variations due to the different calendars.

In conclusion, we should follow Rinpoche’s most recent recommendations and use the Phugpa system for winding namkha, the same that is featured in Sangha App Alendar.

Happy Losar and Tashi Deleg!

Note

A previous version of this article indicated the Tsurphu system as a source for namkha weaving, citing private

communication and publications up to 2021. However, upon consulting with Adriano Clemente and Migmar Tsering, we updated the information according

to the more recent source, published in 2021. The latter indicates that namkha should be prepared following the Phugpa system. We apologize for any inconvenience that might have stemmed from the earlier version of this article.

Support Sangha App

Sangha App is a project run by a non-profit organization, at the service of the Teachings and the Community. Our main current activities include the app maintenance and fixing bugs, developing new features according to practitioners' needs and circulating information and knowledge within the community.

If you find it useful, you can support us! We accept donations [here](#).

- You can also get involved by:
- Helping us compile the monthly schedule of courses
- Keeping a discussion channel alive by stimulating conversation or sharing materials
- Volunteering with your local Gakyil – inserting local activities in Sangha App

Get in touch with us by [writing us an email](#).

The aim is to keep the app free of charge and continue its development as a reliable tool which we all can benefit from and contribute to.

Sources:

Compiled by M. Rita Leti on the basis of the teachings by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2014) [Key for Consulting the Tibetan Calendar](#).

Shang Shung Publications.

[Tibetan Calendar 2026-2027 2153 Year of the Fire Horse](#).

Shang Shung Publications.

Chögyal Namkhai Norbu (2011) [The Four Methods of Development](#).

Shang Shung Publications.

LATEST NEWS FROM DYNAMIC SPACE OF THE ELEMENTS!

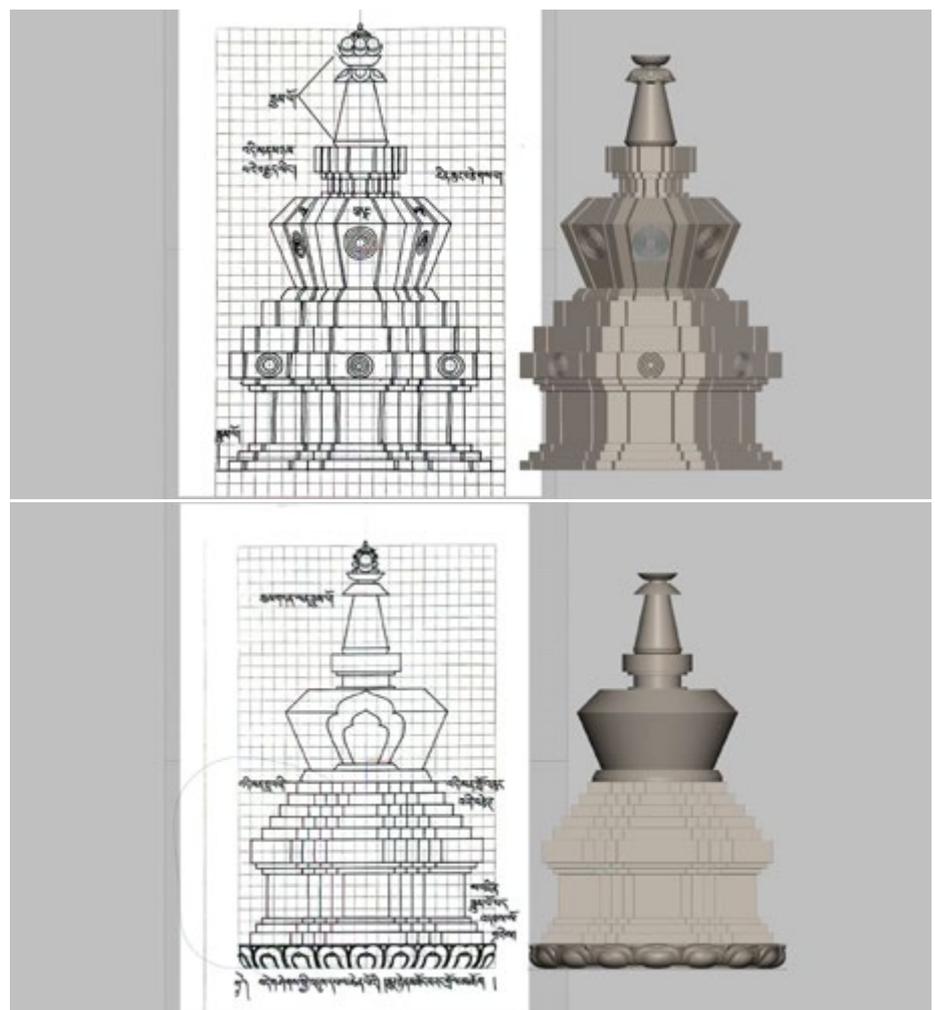
Dynamic Space of the Elements is a network without borders open to everyone where people can bring their ideas, interests, talents and energy to a myriad of projects linked to culture, tourism, diversity and environmental care.

With its base in Bagnore, close to Merigar West, Dynamic Space was founded and is guided by Migmar Tsering and has been involved in artistic and cultural projects in the Dzogchen Community around the world.

The Mirror recently interviewed Migmar about the initiatives that Dynamic Space of the Elements are currently working on.

The Mirror: Migmar, we understand that you have been working on a new book. Could you give us a little information about it?

Migmar: I've just finished working on a book on the first level of *sached* or Tibetan geomancy. There is a great deal



Drawings of two of the Stupas from the terma of Changchub Dorje.

of material as well as many illustrations on *sached* but to put it all in a single volume would have made an enormous

book. For this reason, the current book is on the first level. In the future we will be publishing books on the second and

third level. The second level book will describe how to make objects to overcome obstacles with rituals and various objects while the third level will contain more practices.

The Mirror: Looking through the first level book I see that there are many beautiful illustrations with houses so this book deals mainly with aspects of *sached* that are related to the house.

Migmar: Yes, this first volume describes the three ways we can make an analysis of the general situation: the first is related to the form, the second is personal astrological elements while the third is related to the shape of objects surrounding the house, such as mountains, hills, trees, and how their shape may be similar to an object, such as a vajra or a bell or similar to a living being such as a dog or a mouse and so on. The book describes 360 ways to make this analysis (of the *sached* of the house).

For instance, if a person is considering building a new house, he or she should check the land. If one already has a house, one should check the objects surrounding the house. If an element is found that may be negative for the house, one needs to find a solution for overcoming this. On the other hand if one finds positive elements in the *sached*, it is important to take advantage of them and receive some benefit.

For example, if the shape of the land or the objects surrounding the house are considered negative, when a person's energy is low this may have a harmful effect and for this reason, in ancient times, people gave a lot of importance to *sached*.

In fact we are putting together a course on *sached*, Tibetan geomancy, so that whoever is interested can follow the course, take the exam and become a geomancer (*sa khyen*). We plan to start these courses next year and to become a professional geomancer a person will need to pass three levels.

The Mirror: Another project of the Dynamic Space of the Elements that we have been following is the creation and placement of the 108 Stupas from the

terma of Changchub Dorje. Could you update us on this important project?

Migmar: Up to now we have been able to create, fill with relics and precious substances, authenticate and set up 16 of these stupas in different places. In June 2026, another 16 stupas will arrive at our headquarters, four of which already have homes waiting for them in Australia, Argentina and so on. We hope to be able to place one in Russia and another in Crimea.

In Changchub Dorje's *terma*, <https://melong.online/108-stupas-changchub-dorje-project/> each stupa is different and many of the forms that he envisioned exist in no place on earth. When we started this project, we sent designs of the most simple stupas to the workshop in Chengdu so that they could study and learn how to make them. Now that the workshop has become more skilled in the work, the designs that we send are those of more intricate and detailed stupas, such as the Garuda Stupa, the Vajrakilaya Stupa and the Dorje Drolo Stupa.

The most difficult and time-consuming work for us is filling them. <https://melong.online/update-changchub-dorje-stupa-project/> Although the stupas are small, inside there are a great number of mantra rolls which take us a lot of time to do. Then we have to prepare an enormous quantity of pills containing relics including cypress or earth that Rinpoche collected from many sacred places when he visited them. We are also preparing many *sogshin* (tree of life) or central axis for the stupas as well as lotuses to place at their base and all of this takes us time.

I will be visiting Maratika in Nepal shortly and taking a stupa with me to possibly place in a monastery close to the sacred caves. It will be filled and authenticated here in Italy before we travel.

The Mirror: The Dynamic Space team is always very busy. Are there any other



The new larger namkha.

projects that you are working on at the moment?

Migmar: This year I started working on a new book related to the course on the five elements in which there are a lot of practices related to the five elements, the significance of the elements, the relationship between them and also all the various systems around the world that deal with the elements. It's something that I've already been working on for three or four years. Some of the

material is based on the Drathalgyur and Nyida Khajor tantras, and then the comments according to Tibetan medicine and Chinese medicine.

Then fairly recently we did an online course to show how to calculate and make a larger and longer namkha consisting of four namkhas in decreasing size, one above the other - the lower larger one representing the year, the slightly smaller one directly above it representing the month, then the namkha of the day and finally, at the top, the hour. The one we have here is particularly big but a more manageable size would be a total height of 108 cm. In the Master's book of the namkha all the elements are listed for the month, day and hour so we took our calculations from there. Some people have already asked us to prepare these larger namkhas and we have sent out several.

In the future we would like to make namkhas for couples, uniting in a particular way the two *sogshin* connecting the capacity and fortune elements.

The Mirror: This namkha is quite amazing! Thank you, Migmar, for sharing all the latest activities with our readers. We wish you and your team all the best in the new year!



To complement the soon to be published book on sached or Tibetan geomancy, Dynamic Space of the Elements artists have created several beautiful images to be included in the book. One of them is of the Nagini, the origin of sached.

The story from which the painting of the nagini was inspired

"According to Tibetan tradition, the origins of geomancy (*sa pyad*) are traced to the Four Great Geomancers of Tibet: Khyung G6d Namkha Ling, Ma Chig Palgyi Dorje, Sidpa Trulgyi Mi'u Thung, and Chongro Mi Zhar. It is said that these masters received their knowledge from a nāginī, Ma Pham Yutso, at the shores of a sacred lake.

Following her instructions, the geomancers brought sand according to their capacity. The nāginī gathered and arranged it into symbolic formations, revealing the principles for reading the land. From this transmission came the system of 360 geomantic formations, which form the foundation of Tibetan geomantic knowledge, later preserved in texts such as the *Precious Garland of Geomancy*.

These teachings describe how to observe the landscape through three aspects: the physical substance and qualities of the earth, the symbolic forms that land shapes may resemble—such as ritual objects, animals, or divine figures—and the energetic and elemental relationships between land formations and living beings. Together, they express the Tibetan understanding of landscape as a living field of form, symbol, and energy."

DZAMLING GAR - TENERIFE

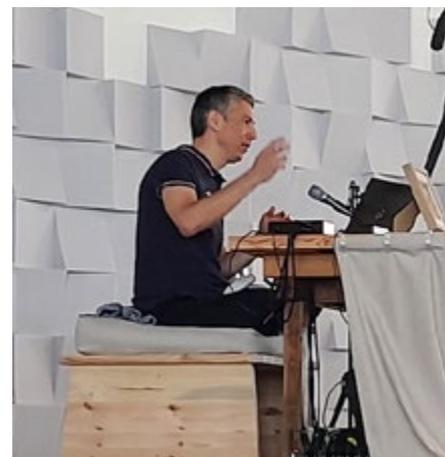
'RESONATING WITH YOU', RETREAT WITH NAMKHAI YESHI

by Nicky Glegg and Peter White

We arrived from the UK at Dzamling Gar with the usual minor travel obstacles, the perfect time and place to see Namkhai Yeshi teaching Dzogchen.

Entering the gate of Dzamling Gar.. Excitement and curiosity – the teachings will be wonderful, but how will so many people fit in a single hall? Can a place in a town really be as beautiful as they say? What will there be for lunch? The gate of the Gar opened on a fairyland of trees and shade; so many different hibiscus, towering arches of succulent spikes, trailing cactus and drifts of flowers in shades of purple here, red and yellow there, cooling the meandering paths up the hillside. Did you see that amazing tree with thorns like rhinoceros' horns on every branch?

Although there must have been a huge amount of pre-planning and organization, everything ran so smoothly. Volunteers used their initiative to get things done. The place always



Namkhai Yeshi teaching. Photo: Daniyal Ibragimov

seemed spacious, and clean, the toilets worked and the queues were short. Dzamling Gar embodies effortless

and spaciousness. Supported invisibly by the hard work and harmonious collaboration of so many volunteers.

After the effortless experience of registration a thousand people mingled in the beautiful hall, each space lovingly laid out with cushions and chairs and refreshed daily. I heard every sound with ease, I was never too hot or too cold.

Before the teaching, and after, the terraces rippled with dancers – Vajra Dance, Khalong of the Song of Vajra and 12A, Khaita; fiercely bright in the hot afternoons, glowing richly in the early morning. Awesome sea sunsets from the Gönpa steps. From the joyful greetings on the way into teachings, to the laughter in the lunch queue, every person echoed our Masters' teachings of self-reliance, co-operation, and love.

The view in the Gönpa was devoid of extraneous frills; it indicated a clarity of purpose. The space had been painstakingly prepared with sound absorbent walls and baffles to create an optimal environment for the ambient quadrasonic sound demonstrations. In front Namkhai Yeshe sitting simply with a picture of the Master Chögyal Namkhai Norbu and a glorious white 'A' above.

We commenced every session with Guru Yoga and the Song of the Vajra, with Namkhai Yeshe patiently guiding us to improve our resonance and coherence of the song.

Namkhai Yeshe covered the path to Trekchod integration, referring to the book 'The Luminous Clarity of the Universe' and the 21 Semdzin practices contained therein. He indicated that with these essential practices our wisdom can accumulate, which is something very subtle and not based on 'ground' consciousness (as he explained later). We need to develop that capacity which is analogous to a third eye, an intuitive and subtle perception, something that goes with us through the intermediate states.

Namkhai Yeshe covered ideas new to many; through words such as 'affordance' – bringing individuals into group appreciation through our relationship with our environment and its



Participants – Photo: Daniyal Ibragimov

significance; the Dzamling Gar Gönpa being an affordance to our receiving the dharma blessing of merit and wisdom! Going further, he also indicated the importance of going beyond words; the mind's ability to make infinite visions for any word. The sea was his example, also the root syllable of a deity.

As the retreat progressed Namkhai Yeshe talked in detail about sound and light, their nature and specifically how we perceive them. How sound can be a more simple and direct means in the

At the end of several sessions I sat and watched as a seemingly endless line of groups went to try the games with Yeshe. It was a joyful affair and the Gönpa listened to the sounds as people interacted and Yeshe explained then re-explained patiently and attentively how the interface worked. I felt a great sense of space and presence in those moments. It felt very much like Yeshe was giving us empowerment to find our own language of knowledge, to feel total confidence in our individual nature and wisdom.



Playing games with Namkhai Yeshe
Photo: Daniyal Ibragimov

Teaching and practice; he referred to the Dral Thal Gyur tantra – and how different sounds can affect us according to their characteristics. He used specific demonstrations and 'sound paradox's' in the quadrasonic space to allow us to experience these phenomena directly. He had also developed interactive sound games on an 8x8 tablet to allow us to experiment with presence and open perception in a non-predictive space.

When, between the teaching sessions, I talked to other students it became apparent that we were receiving different understandings appropriate to our different perspectives. We, 'older' practitioners were often somewhat shaken and disoriented by some of the teachings, causing us to reassess our unquestioned habits and assumptions.

Somehow Namkhai Yeshe seemed to be able to communicate personally to us all!

Namkhai Yeshe addressed the deep subject of consciousness and wisdom. He indicated that sunrise and sunset are powerful times for the practitioner because our 'substrate' consciousness naturally diminishes, and so in these brief moments there is an opportunity for natural wisdom to arise. It is often the time when our best ideas come! He also showed very clearly how the em-



piricism of the Dzogchen practitioner is a truly 1st person experience, we can quietly discover and, unlike science, we have no need to objectivize our experiences or proselytize the teachings.

During the retreat I often had the

sense of eternity in the moment: time dilation was an unavoidable reality! The inevitable last day of the retreat arrived too soon. Namkhai Yeshe kindly gave us some simple, sound advice: relax, enjoy, try to avoid extreme feelings and behav-

iors that promote these feelings. Don't be conditioned by technology. Keep a list of the good things you did, reflect, how did you succeed in those good things? Never forget the importance of Guru Yoga; Guru Yoga polarises our merit and wisdom to ensure it continues to help us on the path to wisdom and liberation.

At the very end of the retreat Thinley Koblensky (Gakyil Director) from the Dzamling Gar Gakyil offered his heartfelt gratitude, on all our behalf, to Namkhai Yeshe for his being here to teach us. As Namkhai Yeshe had mentioned the power of love more than once and it was Saturday 14th February, Valentine's Day, Thinley declared Dzamling Gar to be the Gar of Love, which seemed very appropriate to the powerful moment we all shared.

MANDARAVA RETREAT

**Dzamling Gar
February - March 2026
by Paula Barry**

We came from all over this troubled globe to Tenerife Island with the deliberate purpose of immersing ourselves for two weeks in retreat to practice the Mandarava long life practice.

In the center of Tenerife is the high volcanic peak of Teide, which has been having some rumblings of late. Its ancient lava crags and plateaus lead down to the Atlantic Ocean where black beaches invite the brave to immerse themselves in the crashing waves or the more timid to find a comfortable seat on the rocks and listen to the sounds of the ocean and smell her fresh scent and watch the sun slowly descend nightly below the horizon.

Dzamling Gar, the global Gar, envisioned by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, to be the nexus of the worldwide Dzogchen Community where practitioners from all over the world can have a place to connect and reconnect to the teachings and practices our Master. The Gar itself is a beautiful oasis where practitioners can come and stay for a period of time in order to newly acquaint themselves with the teachings and practices, or recharge and newly experience practices that have long been a part of their lives.



The retreat began the day following Losar, the Tibetan New Year, having left

behind the year of the Wood Snake and entered the year of the Fire Horse. It started off with Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo

interpreting the ancient Tibetan symbolism of the depiction of this year's drawing of the ox and the oxherd [see page } in a fascinating depiction the symbolic colors of the ox's legs, horns, stomach ears and tail, as well as the symbolism represented by the oxherd who is guiding the ox: his age,

the colors of his belt and clothing, if he is wearing shoes and the whip he is carrying. It seems that this coming year holds some portent of contagious diseases, and periods of drought, as well as difficulties with agricultural productions,



Naomi Zeitz, umdze, Dr Phuntsog Wangmo, Fabio Andrico, Sebastien Remy umdze. Photo by Will Shea

there could be less depression, and the population of the Earth will have more power of self determination. In conclusion, we must move ahead, we have no choice. If we are able to be relaxed, kind and loving, this is most positive.

Our Mandarava Practice retreat was guided by Fabio Andrico. Sadly, Elio Guarisco and Nina Robinson, the other students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

authorized to guide Mandarava retreats have passed, though their knowledge and devotion to the practice remains with us. Assisting Fabio with guiding the three practices we did each day were the melodious and precise voices of Sebastian Remy and Naomi Zeitz. We began each morning at 7:15 with the very short practice consisting of the essential transformation into the Dakini Mandarava, the recitation of her two mantras that call to us the attain-

ments of a long and fruitful life, as well as the Sogthig breathing practice used to integrate the Karmic breathing within the central channel of wisdom so as to truly experience our authentic condition synonymous with immortal life.

Fabio painstakingly instructed and guided our breathing and visualizations through the myriad Tsa Lung practices of Mandarava, helping us to have real experiences of heat and pleasure gov-

erned by the experience of discovering our primordial condition of emptiness. He made sure that we were able to fine tune our inhalation, holding, and exhalation of the breath so as to enable a precise experience of each of the Tsa lungs.

We all felt the determined and devoted work of the Karma Yogis who, like a strong backbone, helped this retreat to run smoothly. We experienced the kindness and loving attention to each detail, from the cleaning of the facilities, to the immaculately kept fragrant gardens of flowers and native plants, to the preparation of simple, yet scrumptious, meals.

It was a surprising pleasure to awaken each morning to lovely birdsongs and walk through the semidarkness to the Gönpa of Dzamling Gar to begin another day of the Long Life practice of Mandarava, and to feel the presence of our Rinpoche, who 42 years ago in the cave of Mandarava in Nepal miraculously received this terma practice of Mandarava in a series of dreams.

We are so grateful for all the possibilities and good fortune this practice provides.

Thank you Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, from the bottom of our hearts.

MEDICINE BUDDHA RETREAT WITH DR PHUNTSOG WANGMO

March 20-22, 2026

Shang Shung School of Tibetan Medicine and Dzamling Gar are very happy to share the fruit of their collaboration: from **March 20-22, 2026**, we will gather for a **Medicine Buddha Retreat**, offered both online and onsite at **Dzamling Gar** (in Tenerife Island).



This is a meaningful opportunity to deepen our understanding of this traditional method and to practice together. It may also be helpful to consider that, in this New Year of the Fire Horse—when qualities such as anger, impatience, or heightened reactivity may arise more easily, both individually and collectively—the Medicine Buddha practice may help to ease and harmonize these aspects.

As a practice oriented toward supporting health for oneself and for others, Medicine Buddha is also a method for cultivating inner stability and compassion. Through it, we gradually strengthen these qualities within ourselves.

The retreat will include selected recorded teachings on Medicine Buddha by **Chögyal Namkhai Norbu**, together



with the guidance and experience of Dr. Phuntsog Wangmo.

The retreat is offered completely based on the principle of generosity.

Dates: **March 20–22**

Format: Online & Onsite

Location (onsite): **Dzamling Gar, Tenerife**

Languages: English (Spanish, Italian and Russian translation available)

Please note that prior registration is required.

To take part, it is necessary to have previously received transmission from **Chögyal Namkhai Norbu** or **Ye-shi Namkhai**.

PASSAGES

IN MEMORY OF PAOLINO, "THE NEPALESE"

Paolino Perrella was a historical figure of our Community.

Among the first students of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, he arrived at the Subiaco retreat in 1976, actively participating in the birth of the Dzogchen Community. Over the years, he had the fortune of receiving the transmission of all the Master's precious Teachings, including the Rigpai Zal Wang of the Jetsun Nyin-thig.

His spiritual journey began back in the 1970s, when the call of the East led him to Nepal. In Swayambhu, he had the privilege of meeting the 16th Karmapa, from whom he received the Ngöndro practices according to the Karma Kagyü tradition. Paolino dedicated himself with profound devotion to the practice of Vajrasattva, completing the recitation of the one hundred thousand mantras. It was the 16th Karmapa himself who pointed the way back, telling him that in Italy he would finally meet his true Master.

Shortly after his return, Paolino heard of a Tibetan Lama who was to give teachings at a private villa in Subiaco: it was the beginning of an unbreakable bond. From that moment on, he followed Chögyal Namkhai Norbu's Teachings



Group photo from the Subiaco retreat. Paolino is 4th from the left in his traditional Nepalese shirt.



without interruption, applying them in an essential, no-frills style. A man of humble soul and straightforward character—at times short-tempered, but always authentic—he lived with extreme simplicity, embodying a natural detachment from material possessions and concerns for his own body.

His life was a tapestry of crafts and passions. A refined guitarist, in his youth he had learned the art of lutherie, specializing in the construction of classical guitars. But the mountains were his true element, a love born during a long stay in Langtang, a remote area of Nepal on the border with Tibet, among nomadic shepherds and yaks. From that period he carried with him the language, which he spoke fluently, and the traditional Nepalese dress in which he appeared at Subiaco, earning him forever the nickname "Paolino the Nepalese".

His solitary and resilient soul led him to live for many years in a cabin he built himself in Bardonecchia. There, he raised goats, producing cheese and milk which, in winter, he would carry on foot with snowshoes down to the village to exchange for the essentials needed to live in isolation among the peaks.



In recent years, immediately after the purchase of Dzamling Gar, Paolino moved to Tenerife. He first worked at the Gar as a laborer and later for the municipality of Adeje. As his health declined, he retired to a tiny house in Las Galletas, halfway between the Gar and the airport, where he lived with dignity and simplicity until his passing in January 2026.

Paolino leaves behind the memory of an “old-school” practitioner, whose devotion lay not in words, but in the consistency of a life lived on the fringes of worldly concerns and at the heart of the Teaching.

Paolino passed away on January 11th at 2:20 AM, Tenerife time. As those who had helped him during these difficult

days left the Santa Cruz hospital, they were greeted in the courtyard by a vivid double rainbow. We like to imagine our dear Paolino greeting us this way, singing the praises of his Sacred Master whom he always called, with immense devotion: “The Very Best”.

Andrea Dell’Angelo

MERIGAR WEST - ITALY

CONTRIBUTING TO THE NATURAL BEAUTY OF MERIGAR

On a stormy Wednesday afternoon in early February, Norden Tamang, Merigar’s new landscaper and gardener, sat down with Kirian Regan, Red Gakyil of Merigar West, over a coffee in the sitting room of the Yellow House.

Kirian: I don’t know about you but I for one am ready for the year of the Wood Snake to come to a close. Bring on the Fire Horse energy!

How was this past year for you considering you’re an Earth Snake? Was it as challenging as it’s typically said to be



when it’s your sign’s year?

Norden: Actually, not really, it’s been a great year for me. We moved down from Como, Italy in May of 2025 and bought our home in Arcidosso. I started gardening as a karmayoghi for Merigar at the

end of June in preparation for the retreat of Namkhai Yeshi. People appreciated my work and I was asked if I would be interested in becoming a regular part of the team. I didn’t originally have the intention of coming to Amiata to work for Merigar though, this was unexpected.

Kirian: Oh alright, that’s great. And when you say ‘we moved’ who is ‘we’ and what brought you to Merigar in the

first place?

Norden: Well, I moved here with my mother Nima Doma. My younger sister, Lhamo, still lives and works in the north of Italy. My father, Elio Guarisco, was a longtime student of Namkhai Norbu

and an instructor of Santi Maha Sangha. When he passed away in 2020 in Como we brought his ashes to be placed in the cinerario of Merigar. My mother wanted to visit him there every month so when the long and frequent traveling from Como became too much we decided to relocate to be closer to him.

Kirian: Ok, I see and I'm truly sorry for your loss. How nice that she can come here easily to visit now.

I only met your father in person once in Tenerife, but of course I knew him as being a truly foundational figure of the Dzogchen community. His passing was a great loss for the Sangha as well.

May I ask where your father and mother met originally? I know that you were born in Darjeeling. Is that where they first met? And when did your family relocate to Italy?

Norden: So, my father met my mother in Sonada in India, not far from Darjeeling, while he was working as a translator for Kalu Rinpoche for 20 years. My mother is originally Nepalese but our last name, Tamang, means 'many horses' in Tibetan so our ancestors were originally from Tibet. In 2011, we all moved to Como.

Kirian: I'm doing the math: you were 22 when you came to Italy then. How was that transition for you?

Norden: Well, I started an Italian course and then driving school for 6 months. Once I got my driver's license I began working as a healthcare worker in a hospital and then a nursing home for 3 years. My father also trained me in massage therapy so for 5 years I was training with him and different experts.

Kirian: Ah! I get it now! That's why you were such an expert physical therapist when you were caring for that poor lame chicken, you're a pro!

So then, what made you change your vocation and become a gardener instead of staying in health and wellness?

Norden: Unfortunately Covid happened. I lost my job in the senior care center because of the pandemic and



eventually began an apprenticeship with a master gardener. Once I finished my training, I worked for two years as a gardener for a large private property in Como. And now I'm here in Merigar.

Kirian: Well, I think I can speak for everyone here that knows you and the effort and dedication that you put into your work, when I say that we are lucky to have you.

Do you have any specific vision for the gardens and surroundings of the Gar? What would you like to help realize here in the future?

Norden: I'm someone who really appreciates order. I like to keep things neat and clean. So I'm working right now to

manage the thick overgrowth that has developed under the Gönpa, in this way, not only does it look good and maintained but it reduces the risk of fire and helps prevent insect infestations during the summer months. I love the natural beauty of Merigar, but we need to care for it properly and keep the area safe for everyone who comes here to enjoy.

I would also like to contribute to making more consistent and mindful landscaping decisions throughout the property. Not all plants and trees are compatible with this environment and climate, so making sustainable choices is important.

Kirian: I definitely agree with you. And with this Fire Horse year coming up, I'd say it's very important we do all we can to protect the Gar from unintended fires, so your efforts are much appreciated!

All jokes aside Norden, thank you for all your hard work for the Gar and I look forward to continuing to work together to maintain the natural beauty and splendor of this precious place.

Norden: Thank you Kirian. I plan on living in Arcidosso for the rest of my life so I hope to work for the good of Merigar for a long time to come.

Kirian: Cheers to that!

February 4, 2026
Merigar West

LOSAR, TIBETAN NEW YEAR, AT MERIGAR WEST

Photos by Domenico Fasciano



PASSAGES

MARIACHIARA ROSSELLO

On January 19, 2026, at 8:35 p.m., Mariachiara Rossello, our sister of Vajra, peacefully left this world at the age of 89.

A devoted disciple of our beloved Master Namkai Norbu since the 1980s, she dedicated her life to spiritual quest, walk-



ing with dedication, silence, and deep faith on the path of Dharma.

With great generosity, she gave Turin a precious place, a living space for practice and meeting, where Dzogchen has been able to flourish and will continue to flourish.

Her example, her presence, and her service will remain forever in our hearts. We are deeply and infinitely grateful to her.

Tobdenling, Turin, Italy

Mariachiara enjoyed writing poetry, and we have chosen one of her poems to share with you.

Life has a story for each of us
that dissolves shadows and sharpens the contours.
Beyond the mystery, in a clear blue sky
the journey is completed like a sweet return.
Death covers us with grass and dust
and speaks with the sound of falling rain
then a vapor rises that the earth does not absorb
a light cloud that rises toward the sun.
Silence has fallen among the flowering bushes
and the carved name already has a distant sound
the wanderer heard it, almost at the border
with a sad smile, he turned to look back.

MERIGAR EAST - ROMANIA



MERIGAR EAST 20 YEARS. AND THE TRUTH IN BETWEEN

This year, Merigar East turns 20. Twenty years of teachings, practice, meetings, friendships, and transformation.

Twenty years of living legacy left by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu — not only in books, but in real places, real people, and

real continuity. But twenty years also mean something else.

Twenty years of questions. Twenty years of doubts about how to continue.

Twenty years of building and learning — sometimes the hard way — what it really means to maintain a Gar. Perhaps because this is an anniversary year, it feels important to speak plainly.

Taking care of a Gar is not romantic. Keeping a Gar open is not poetic.

Making sure the teachings can continue — online and in person — requires continuous effort, responsibility, and often difficult decisions.

A Gar does not survive because it exists. It survives because people decide that it should.

The Inner Challenges

There are outer difficulties. But sometimes the inner ones are more subtle – and more demanding.

Our challenges are the same ones many communities face:

How do we collaborate?

How do we communicate?

How do we unite our efforts for something that is bigger than personal views or individual preferences?

A Gar is not just a place.

It is also a mirror of our collective maturity. When the team is small, fatigue becomes real.

When responsibilities are many and people are few, the process requires patience and presence. And yes – sometimes the process tests our capacity to work together. And perhaps, it also tests the depth of our own practice.

The Outer Challenges

There are also very concrete realities. A roof that needs repair. Stairs that require fixing. Walls affected by weather.

Electricity that needs stabilization. Water systems that require a complete rethink. A Gar is not sustained by our spiritual intention alone. It requires work, time, skills, and resources.

Alongside the long-term shortage of dedicated people – Gakyil members, gekos, assistants, and long-stay volunteers – we now also face significant maintenance needs that can no longer be postponed.

These are not dramatic issues. But they are real ones.

A Transformative Year In Reality

This year was originally meant to culminate in a retreat with Yeshi Namkhai and a larger gathering celebrating the 20th anniversary of Merigar East.

However, after careful consideration, the retreat with Yeshi has been postponed – we felt it was wiser to wait for a more favorable moment. We hope to return with good news and new dates when the conditions allow it.

This also gives us the opportunity to focus on something more fundamental: strengthening the foundations of the Gar

– both outwardly and inwardly.

Repairing what needs repair. Rethinking what needs to be rethought. Rebuilding collaboration and clarifying direction.

And creating more stable conditions for the teachings to continue here. If the Gar reflects our collective practice, then caring for it is also practice.

A Gift for 20 Years

If you feel a connection with Merigar East – whether you have been here physically, joined online teachings, served in Gakyil, visited for personal retreat, or simply carry an inner wish to come one day – this is a moment when you can support this place in a very concrete way.

A birthday gift for its 20 years.

Not symbolic – but practical.

A contribution that helps maintain continuity, stability, and openness for future teachings.

The road of transformation ahead is long, and the Gar will need the support of the community more than ever.

You can read more about the current



needs and offer your support here:

Donation link: <https://dzogchen.ro/supporting-the-place-of-retreat-and-teachings/>

What Is Alive Now at Merigar East

First Steps on the Path

One of the ongoing courses at Merigar East is **First Steps on the Path**, orga-

nized in collaboration with Sangha App.

Every Monday, this weekly course brings together several SMS teachers and practitioners from across continents.

Participants join from Hungary, Finland, Poland, the United States, France, Romania, Germany, Lithuania, Italy, Great Britain, Austria, Singapore, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Argentina, Russia, Brazil, Slovakia, Spain, Bulgaria, Latvia – and more.

Together we go step by step through essential practices of the community. We practice together, and through the Sangha App platform we also share reflections and experiences – not as theory, but as lived practice.

On **March 22**, we will continue with the second module of the course.

You can check the program and register here: <https://dzogchen.ro/events/first-steps-on-the-path/>

Karma Yoga Week – April 10-23

In April, we are preparing a **Karma Yoga Week**, together with practitioners from Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, and other neighboring countries.

Yes, it coincides with Easter – a holiday period for many, both Catholic and Orthodox. And yet, we are choosing to dedicate these days to the Gar.

The plan is concrete and practical, with a clear list of maintenance tasks. This is not symbolic volunteering – it is focused, structured work to support the physical continuity of the place.

If you feel moved to participate and support this initiative, you can do so in two ways:

Join onsite and contribute with your hands: <https://forms.gle/dCZnvc5W-FypoLGHb7>

Or support online with a financial contribution that helps cover the costs for the karma yogis: <https://dzogchen.ro/product/karma-yoga-support-april-2026/>

Sometimes practicing together means sitting in the Gonpa.

Sometimes it means repairing a roof.

Both matter

Merigar East 2026 and Beyond A Community Survey

Another important step for us this year is a **community survey about Merigar East 2026 and beyond**. If this Gar is to continue in a meaningful way, we need clarity. What practices are truly needed? What kind of retreats are people ready to attend? What form of continuity makes sense now – not ten years ago, not in theory, but today?

This survey is not a formality. It will directly influence how we prioritize activities, teachers, and projects in the coming years.

Please help us prioritize wisely.
Survey link: <https://us15.list-manage.com/survey?u=036cf26d0f2d4f-f8237eef30d&id=71de2a4967&attribution=false>

An Open Place for Practice

Merigar East remains an open place. Open for practice. Open for retreat. Open for collaboration – and for anyone who wishes to help, physically, administratively, or simply by being present.

Whether you come for personal re-

treat, to join collective practice, to participate in Gakyil, or to offer support in any way – you are welcome.

This Gar exists because people care. And it will continue only if we continue to care – together.

TSEGYALGAR EAST - USA

VISIT KHANDROLING LAND OF THE DAKINIS

Khandroling is the sacred retreat land of Tsegyalgar East in Buckland, Massachusetts, USA.

It is the place where Choegyal Namkhai Norbu made the first Vajra Dance mandala, after dreaming of the Dance while camping there during a personal retreat. The seat of Goma Devi, it is a place of pilgrimage, where the benefits of practice are multiplied many times.

The Vajra Hall, home of the only Universal Mandala for the Vajra Dances, sits atop Victorious Peak at Khandroling, with the Victorious Stupa nearby. It is the site of several retreats each summer. Three retreat cabins on the land are available for accommodation during programs as well as for personal retreats.

For more information visit www.tsegyalgar.org

2026 Summer Programs

Green Tara Practice Retreat

- July (10 days, dates to be decided) • Led by Dr Phuntsog Wangmo, this re-

treat offers participants a precious opportunity to deepen their understanding and realize the benefits of this timely practice. Daily sessions of Yantra Yoga will also be available, and instruction in the first part of the **Vajra Dance of the Song of the Vajra** for beginners will be offered by Carisa O'Kelly.

Dance Dance Dance

- August 29 through September 13 • This is a marvelous opportunity to learn or deepen your practice of all of the Vajra Dances, under the guidance of a dedicated and experienced team of local instructors. You may attend all or part of the retreat.

Karma Yoga Retreat

- June through September • Stay on the land and accrue merits while participating in the indispensable practice of karma yoga at beautiful Khandroling. You could help prepare for, facilitate, and clean up after one of our scheduled retreats, or visit between programs and help with ongoing projects. Your service may entitle you to free accommodation and/or a free retreat of your choice.

Questions?

Email gakyil@tsegyalgar.org



TASHIGAR SOUTH - ARGENTINA

TASHIGAR SOUTH UPDATE

This summer in the Southern Hemisphere, Tashigar Sur hosted a series of retreats and courses.

We were honored to welcome Fabio Andrico and Adriana Dal Borgo, whose presence guided a program that brought together practitioners from Chile, Uruguay, Peru, and beyond.

The season began with the **Respira Evolution course and Teacher Training** led by Fabio, which included a special Masterclass on the method. The program included a dedicated **Longde practice retreat**, the **Teacher Training for the First Level of Vajra Dance**, and a **deepening course on the Dance of the Song of the Vajra**. We also held a **Khaita Joyful Dances course** led by Adriana, which was open to new participants. There was also a **study and practice group on Chód** led by Daniel Simonelli. Together, we followed the transmission of the retreat given by Yeshi Namkhai from Dzamling Gar, and concluded the summer by celebrating Losar with our Vajra Family. It was a full summer of practice and integration, enriched by the presence of everyone who traveled to join us at the Gar.

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Respira Evolution Course and Teacher Training



Fabio sharing something of interest with students



Adriana Dal Borgo cooking



Playing bagchen

THE MYRIAD WORLDS FESTIVAL: NEW FACETS OF CREATIVITY

On November 29, 2025, the "Gallery 2/17" space in St. Petersburg, Russia, which brings together exhibitions of contemporary artists, lectures and discussions on art and culture, and concerts of classical and experimental music, hosted the creative evening "Portraits" organized by the Association of Contemporary Music (ACM).

Olga Ilyina, a composer and performer from St. Petersburg, and Lev Sedov, a Moscow artist, who participated in the Myriad Worlds Festival*, presented there an experimental project that combined painting and music.

You can watch and listen to the recording of the performance here (amateur recording) <https://youtu.be/Kiir-u9gu1l>

** The Myriad Worlds Festival is an open yoga and mindfulness festival, conceived by the Russian Dzogchen Community. Held at Kunsangar North since 2023, the festival, themed "Knowledge. Evolution. Happiness," brought together about 300 people (including the presenters) interested in self-knowledge and self-development at Kunsangar North last year.*

Olga, please tell us how the idea for this project came about.

O: I participate in projects with the Association of Contemporary Music and had been thinking about a piece for the latest concert. The concert's theme was "Portraits."

Recently, at the "Myriad Worlds" festival, Lev Sedov and I got to talking about music and painting, shared our work, and while preparing for the project with the ACM, I remembered Lev's paintings and suggested creating a performance.



Painting from the series *Rescribere*, 2025. 200x140 cm, oil on canvas.

This is how the opportunity arose to create something artistic with people from the Community, and I found the meaning Lev imbues in his works interesting.

Does the musical piece have a title? Or is the title the same as Lev's paintings?

O: We decided to take Lev's existing paintings from his "Transcriptions" series and together changed the title to "Rescribere", which means "to rewrite" or "to write in response" in Latin.

Was the performance an improvisation or was the music previously created based on the impressions of the painting?

O: The musical fabric of the piece consists of several patterns, each repeated a certain number of times. The music emerged after viewing the paintings; I tried to convey the graphics. Yes, during the performance itself, I allow for a moment of improvisation if I feel it is necessary.

Lev, it's difficult to overestimate the importance of painting as a means of depicting the three times and a way to evoke an emotional reaction in the viewer in response to the artist's presentation of the subjective perception of the world. Could you say a few words about your "Rescribere" series?

L: I create these works as semantic constructs, where the simplest ele-



Lev Sedov with participants en plein air at the "Myriad Worlds" festival, August 2025

ments are formed into groups. Lines and spaces imitate text, but without a literary narrative. We are humans, and it's important for us to create and convey stories. When we see or hear any structured information, whether visual or auditory, we understand that it's a story, and we love stories and try to understand and interpret them.

The spontaneously emerging nuances of color and tone, their complex vibrations, make this construction fluid, elusively polysemantic. A paradox arises between the determined and the spontaneous, construction and deconstruction. And in this field of possibilities and uncertainties, I try to find a balance.



Olga Ilyina with musicians Petr Fedkov and Alexander Kudryavtsev, participants in a concert at the Myriad Worlds festival, August 2025

...and about Olga's music...

L: I was interested in Olga's music because it is simultaneously constructive and fluid. Construction is always linked to clear expression, creating a paradox between affirmation and uncertainty.

Olga Ilyina is a pianist and composer. She was born in 1983 in Novomoskovsk. In 2007, she graduated from the Moscow State Musical and Pedagogical Institute named after M.M. Ippolitov-Ivanov in piano, where she also studied composition. She completed an internship at the Saratov State Conservatory named after L.V. Sobinov. She lives in St. Petersburg. As a composer and performer, she participates in various creative projects, including those organized by the Association of Contemporary Music and other concerts, festivals, and performances. Her compositional work includes symphonic,

chamber, choral, and vocal works, as well as music for children. Her works are performed in Russia and abroad.

Learn more about Olga's work and listen to her music on the Olga Ilyina (Subbotina) website <https://olga-subbotina.ru/>

on the VK community page <https://vk.ru/club127231956>

on the Telegram channel <https://t.me/ol9ailina>

Lev Sedov

I live and work in Moscow. In 1995, I graduated from the Moscow Academic Art School in Memory of 1905. I am interested in creating new things.

You can view Lev's paintings here: <https://disk.yandex.ru/d/mwosmj0WRvWZw>

KHAITA JOYFUL DANCES, PRESENCE IN MOVEMENT



The Life of Knowledge is a lecture series organized by Shang Shung UK and the Ka-Ter Project of Shang Shung Institute Austria dedicated to the vast legacy that Professor Namkhai Norbu left, including many literary works, as well as associations and organizations.

On Sunday, 21 February 2026, Adriana Dal Borgo, a longtime student of Professor Namkhai Norbu who has been working with dance and movement for many decades and Eva Leick, dancer, professional choreographer and academic spoke about some of their experiences of *Khaita Joyful Dances*, a project that was very dear to Rinpoche in the last years of his life.

Jamyang Oliphant from SSUK: Dzamling Gar was one of the last major projects of Chögyal Namkhai Norbu.



Eva Leick preparing for the Khaita performance at Oxford University

He composed the Dzamling Gar song and also created a dance for it. Could you talk a little bit about that? And also, would you consider the Song to be part of Khaita?

Adriana: Yes and no. The Song is

part of Khaita because he manifested it at that moment and because it deals with dancing, with singing, in this sense it's part of Khaita. However, it's different because it is a complete teaching. Rinpoche wrote the text and created



Adriana Dal Borgo

the music and also part of the dance. For the dance he suggested that the movements represent the meaning of the Song. "It's a complete teaching", Rinpoche said, "I could write three volumes on this, because it has a very deep meaning". There is a booklet from Shang Shung Publications with the transcription of Rinpoche's teachings.

ITA: https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/product_734

EN: https://www.shangshungpublications.com/en/products/product/product_733

An example of this is the importance Rinpoche gave to collaboration in the words of the Song. In the relative sense collaboration is doing something together which is one of the main aspects of Khaita. In the second part of the Dzamling Gar song it says, "Come to Dzamling Gar, unifying our strength and capacity". This means we do things together but, in the inner sense, collaboration is integration. And this is the main point for us as practitioners. This is also the message of Khaita, collaboration and, innerly, integration.

And I would like to add something else regarding Rinpoche. He always had a really broad vision and often we don't understand that. More than once he said, "In the Dzogchen Community we have three methods related to movement: Yantra Yoga, the Vajra Dance and the Joyful Dances. All these three are Khai-



Eva Leick

ta". This sentence is something I continue to reflect on and try to understand.

Of course these three methods are very different in some aspects, but they all work with movement and they all work with rhythm and with sound - external sound in the case of the Vajra Dance and the Joyful Dances, with the breathing in Yantra Yoga. This phrase of Rinpoche's is very important for me personally. It gives direction to my practice and when I'm teaching I try to convey the meaning of it.

Then we cannot say that one practice is better than another. Each practice, each method is perfect and can be used when we need it, according to the moment. What is important is that we try to have a broader view.

For me, Khaita is the bridge from formal practice to applying practice in our daily lives because the rhythm, the sound and the music are very different in each song. Some songs are slow, some are faster, some are extremely fast and in a single song the rhythm may change. This is the perfect training in being present and dealing with circumstances that change continuously in our lives. And in particular, Rinpoche said when we work with time, with rhythm, we understand how to deal with circumstances.

This is why for me, Khaita is the bridge for understanding how to apply presence in our daily lives.

Jamyang: Eva, you did your PhD about

Khaita with a very nice thesis which was published fairly recently, sponsored by Ka-ter. Were there any challenges to your study of Khaita? Is it considered to be Tibetan studies and were there any challenges for you in the academic world? Was it hard to be accepted by the Tibetologist crowd?

Eva: Well, yes, it was and this remains a challenge until this day, because I don't consider myself a Tibetologist. So, I'm dealing with something that is connected to Tibetan culture, of course, because the songs come from there, and also some of the movement is based on it and inspired by it, but then it really goes beyond that.

So let me start first with something that works, and then I'll go back to the challenges.

Two years ago, one of the milestones in this academic path so far has been the conference for young Tibetologists at Oxford University, where thanks to you, I also got the opportunity to present Khaita and explain a little bit about my research. This was really something nice because it arrived in this world of Tibetology, which I think is something that Rinpoche definitely would have supported and would have wanted because he was working as a Tibetologist himself at university.

[Khaita demonstration at Oxford University: <https://melong.online/shang-shung-uk-khaita-oxford-university/>]

But then again, because Khaita is so many things and there's no limitations it also works in disciplines of ethnomusicology, for example. It works in dance studies, it works in the context of spirituality. And this is a challenge academically because you have to be very fluid, very flexible somehow, but also it's a benefit because you're not limited in any way. Just like Khaita can be many things and many perspectives, it's very rich in that aspect.

But for sure, one of the challenges to this day is to translate something that is based on experience into mostly words,



Khaita in Warsaw Poland. Photo by Małgorzata Lewińska

because the academic world is built on written words and also spoken words, so how do you translate a movement experience into words? For instance, I sometimes have to think of this sentence by choreographer and dancer Isadora Duncan who said, "If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no need in dancing it." And so, very often I'm reminded that dance is a complete language in itself, and it is nonverbal.

And this aspect of collaboration that Adriana also emphasized, I think partly works because we don't have to speak. We are speaking with our bodies, but we are not restricted by language in that sense. Even if we are very international groups of dancers usually, we all speak the language of dance that is beyond words.

And so of course the challenge for me was and is to translate something into words that then can be read without having that experience. And I tried to find as precise terms as possible and also transcribe the movement in words, but of course it's not the same. It always remains something on the paper in the end.

Jamyang: To round up, I would like to ask you both: In which ways would you say that Khaita is a Dzogchen practice for you personally?

Eva: I think one of the reasons is that it makes life easier. It has many different forms, but actually no form at all so it's something that you take with you in your daily life. For example, one of the things that I learned from working with a lot of different bodies in space is to find an aspect of harmony. Of course, if you have music and a kind of choreography to follow, this sense of harmony is established more easily. But you can also take this to your daily life experiences, for example, at the airport or at the train station where there are a lot of people. I really notice that I manage to relax more because I can somehow tune into the rhythm of people and understand it like a song. The rhythm always changes but maybe there are some patterns, so I can understand them and relax.

Then there is this aspect of collectivity, collaboration and working in groups, which is also key to the Dzogchen Teachings of Rinpoche. I think this is very concrete in Khaita. There's no way around working together if you have to form a circle or do certain couple choreographies. You have to work together. There's no way around it.

Adriana: I would like to add one thing here. If we have a circle, we all need to be responsible. If even one person is not aware, then we are not a circle anymore.

In a circle, we are all equal and we also learn to respect each other's space.

There's another aspect: because Khaita is such an unconventional method that Rinpoche created, we also face our own limitations. It works fantastically for this. I remember at the beginning, especially older practitioners would say: "But why is the Master doing this instead of working on his dreams or on some of his texts? Why is He dedicating so much of his time to these songs?" A musician told me: "For me, at the beginning, it was really a challenge, as a musician I didn't like this music. Then I realized that this was a judgement, I like - I don't like. And I overcame it". So Khaita as a method manifested in this unconventional way and gives us the possibility to discover our own limitations and to overcome them.

In addition, we may be afraid to show ourselves dancing because when we dance, we are naked. But it doesn't matter in Khaita whether we are good or not. Only if we have to do a performance, then we try to check the movement but otherwise this is absolutely not the point. So it doesn't matter. But in general we are afraid to show ourselves, how we dance, or if we are good or not, so Khaita is a mirror. It's really a perfect mirror.

At the end of 2025, Eva Leick's recent scholarly article, "Dzamling Gar Song and Dance: A Khaita Manifesto," was published in the Tibetan studies journal Yeshe. In this article, she examines and analyzes the song's three sections, with particular attention to their meaning and corresponding movements. She also emphasizes the song's significance as a key example of the whole Khaita method. It is available in open access: <https://yeshe.org/regular-issue-vol-5-no-2/>

Direct link to article: https://yeshe.org/wp-content/uploads/regular-issue_5_2_2025/Dzamling_Gar.pdf

YANTRA YOGA FROM A TO Z: LAUNCHING THE 3RD SPANISH EDITION



BREATH · RHYTHM · MOVEMENT

De la A a la Z



With great joy and gratitude, we announce the start of **the third edition** of our annual program, "**Yantra Yoga de la A a la Z**" (Yantra Yoga from A to Z).

This project was born from a deep aspiration to provide consistent, guided access to these precious teachings, helping the practice of Yantra Yoga truly integrate into our daily lives.

A Program that Evolves with the Practitioner

Following the success of the first two editions—where **86 people** have already experienced the benefits of this journey—we begin this new cycle.

The program is designed to allow the practice to evolve organically. As students from previous editions have shared: "*Yantra Yoga has opened a subtler dimension of physical practice for me. It has taught me to breathe deeply and bring joy to gentle movement*" and "I

was able to incorporate the preliminary and main series into my personal practice, savoring the kind effect of Yantra Yoga on my body, mind, and energy."

A Dedicated International Team

Under the guidance of **Carolina Mingolla** (Argentina), a second level Yantra Yoga teacher and the program's lead, we are supported by a qualified team of teachers who provide constant guidance and a multicultural perspective on the practice:

Carolina Mingolla, Argentina
Sara Pinet, Mexico
Ilaria Faccioli, Italia
Malena Quevedo, Argentina
Carmen Torres, Chile
Alejandra Krasnogor, Argentina
Cristina Cornudella, España
Pablo Flores Guerra, Peru
Dannae Ruiz, Mexico
Olaya Martinez, España
Raquel Diaz, España
Nataly Nitsche, Venezuela
Leticia Recepter, Argentina

Dates and Enrollment

The program formally begins on **March 14, 2026**, and will conclude on **April 14, 2027**.

• **For Newcomers:** Those discovering Yantra Yoga for the first time can join the program until **May 2026**.

It is an ideal space to connect with the method from the ground up, with a structure that allows for deep immersion without strain.

• **For Experienced Practitioners:**

Those who already have a foundation in the practice can join at **any time** during the year to add structure and rhythm to their personal discipline.

An Open Invitation

"Yantra Yoga from A to Z" is an open program. We warmly invite the entire community to share this opportunity with friends, family, or anyone who might benefit from this ancestral method of balancing body and mind.

We are truly happy to see how this

ongoing program allows practitioners—both newcomers and not—to find a structure where their practice can evolve and become a vital part of their lives.

We look forward to seeing you on the mat!

More information: <https://tenerifeonline.tibetanmedicineschool.org/courses/yantra-yoga-de-la-a-a-la-z-2026>

yantrayoga@atiyogafoundation.org

The Yantra Yoga Team



Carolina Mingolla

HOW I MET

HOW I MET CHÖGYAL NAMKHAI NORBU

by **Alessandra Burali**

I met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu in the early '90's, something between 1992-1994, I don't remember well.

There is a period of your life when you might get to the conclusion that you need a kind of "Spiritual Master" or someone who could give you some hints on how to deal with your inner mess. During the beginning of the '90's my father worked at the Italian Embassy in New Delhi, so, what is easier than to call my father and ask him if he could find the telephone number of the Dalai Lama. Thought – done!!! He gave me the number and in the following days I dialed that number given but, fortunately nobody answered, honestly, I didn't know what to say if someone answered, hahahahah...

Stubbornly, I again called my father telling him that nobody answered, so he suspiciously asked me why I was searching for the Dalai Lama. I then told him that I was searching for some clarifications for my inner chaos.

He started laughing asking me: "But why do you search so far if you have a Tibetan Master nearby you?" (I lived in



Rome) He gave me the number of the Merigar office, telling me that I must tell them that I am calling on his behalf, they would know who he is. They have been in contact with him as he was the person who managed the entire visa issues for the visit of the Dalai Lama and his delegation to the inauguration of the Gönpa in Merigar. I couldn't believe my ears!!!! What luck and coincidence! By the way, an anecdote, my father's passion was drawing, painting and writing poems etc, thus the Ambassador of the Italian Embassy in New Delhi asked my father if he was willing to give one of his paintings to the Dalai Lama. My father heartily agreed, what a honor to give a painting to the Dalai Lama!

I immediately called and Donatella Rossi answered the phone. We had a very pleasant talk, and she so kindly organized an appointment with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu, even inviting my son

and myself to stay at her place in Arcidosso. The day we arrived in Arcidosso rain was pouring so much, all three of us got completely wet. She was so hospitable and the stay with her was really relaxing and beautiful (otherwise I wouldn't remember after such a long time).

I don't remember who gave us a lift up to Merigar, Donatella, the only person I knew, was always nearby making us feel like at home. When we got out of the car in front of the yellow house I felt a very strong energy, the ground under my feet was like trembling and there were all the "old practitioners". It was a magical moment (at least for me). We then went up to the first floor and Namkhai Norbu was sitting at the end of the long table, drawing with colors on a white sheet of paper.

Donatella introduced me to him, he quickly looked up then went on drawing, offering me to take a seat. I was quite embarrassed and didn't know what to say, while my son (between 7 and 9) was not so inhibited as me and had a quick conversation with Chögyal Namkhai Norbu. After was my turn, Chögyal Namkhai Norbu asked me some questions, we talked a bit and he told Donatella to provide me with the books "Lo Specchio (The Mirror)" and "16 (or is it 18?) questions on Dzogchen". All this while he continued drawing without almost looking up. I thought that this is so strange as when I talk with people I always look into their eyes, but he didn't give me that opportunity at that time. He a kind of put me in front of my naked "I" and that was the first lesson I learned from him and many others followed.

TIME, PRESENCE, AND MEMORY

John Shane

At work & play with Norbu Rinpoche at his family home in Formia, back in the day .

Time is fascinating.

Where is the past? It's gone. The past is just an interpretation happening now.

The present moment has zero duration.

And I can't really say that there is a future.

I have never encountered anything other than the actual immediacy of the present moment

I can't even pin down what 'now' actually is.

From that point of view, what we call 'time' is actually just the intrinsic dynamism of reality morphing and evolving as a spontaneously appearing spectrum of energy.

What are you going through right now..? I hope everything is going well for you.

I am in my 80th year, and despite being fortunate enough to be in generally good health compared to many of my friends who were born in the same year as me, my doctors have decided that I need to have a series of surgical procedures in the coming weeks that will each require a full anaesthetic.

When one is facing adverse circumstances, it can be helpful to remind oneself of positive factors in one's life, so to keep myself busy as I wait for the first operation next Tuesday, I have been reorganising my archive of photos and videos of my life and travels with Norbu Rinpoche.

And despite my not initially intending that it should do so, going through the photos in my archive has taken on some aspects of the kind of 'life review' that elderly people are advised to undertake as they enter the later stages of their lives.

When I was asked by the editors of 'The Mirror' if I would like to contribute an article to the next edition of the magazine, I decided that I would share a few of the photos in my archive with the magazine's readers, explaining very briefly what they mean to me in the hope that my sharing the photos in this way might be of interest to others who have their own history of a relationship with Norbu Rinpoche and his teachings. We are, after all, each of us, embedded in the same mystery of connection not only through our common humanity, but also - more particularly - through Norbu Rinpoche's transmission.

The first photo that I would like to share is one that I took of Norbu Rinpoche inside the huge cave at Maratika in the mountains of Nepal when a group of his students went on a long trek with him so that we could do a retreat there. It was



Norbu Rinpoche in the cave at Maratika in Nepal. Photo by John Shane

during the time of this visit to Maratika that Rinpoche had a vision of the terma text of the Long Life sadhana of Mandarava that the Dzogchen Community now practices.

In the photo you can see Rinpoche putting on his boots after he had given a teaching in the cave at Maratika.

This is particularly significant to me, because, when I reviewed the photo after I had taken it, I was reminded of the famous story of the Hasidic rabbi who - when he was asked why he had traveled so far to see his teacher - replied that he had made the journey of a thousand miles just because he wanted to watch his teacher tie his boot laces - which, he said, was much more important to him than reading or receiving from the teacher explanations of the doctrines of the Torah.

His teacher, the rabbi went on to say, embodied his teachings to such an extent that whatever action the Rebbe carried out - no matter how trivial and worldly that action might seem to be - was an example of the deepest meaning of the teachings.

And that is exactly what I felt then and still feel about my relationship with Norbu Rinpoche, a relationship that led me - over so many years - to make so many thousand mile journeys around the world to work with him closely, firstly as his translator and then, later, as his editor - but always as his student.

In this second photo, which is a screen shot made from video footage I took in Hawaii, you can see Rinpoche holding in his hands an inflatable globe that he was given as a gift at a retreat there. I feel that the photo captures Rinpoche's care for the whole world, that I have sought to emulate.

When I was invited by Norbu Rinpoche - after a retreat he gave at



Norbu Rinpoche with inflatable globe of the world. Photo by John Shane



Living Room of the Namkhai family apartment in Formia, Italy.
Photo by John Shane



View from the balcony of the Namkhai family apartment in Formia, Italy.
Photo by John Shane

Monte Faito, in the mountains near Naples - to visit for the weekend, the Namkhai family's private apartment in Formia, halfway between Naples and Rome, I had no idea that I would end up staying there for six months and that, during that time, Rinpoche and I would begin work on the book that would become 'The Crystal And The Way Of Light: Sutra, Tantra, And Dzogchen', that has now been translated into more than 30 languages.

In the photo above, you can see the living room of the Namkhai family apartment, the dining table at which Rinpoche and I worked, and the sofa on which I slept during all those months.

This photo was taken, of course, long before Merigar, the first center of the Dzogchen Community, was founded.

The next photo is the view from the balcony of the Namkhai family apartment in Formia, that looked out, over the Mediterranean Sea towards the town of Gaeta. Rinpoche, at the time, was still working as Professor of Tibetan and Mongolian culture, language, and literature at the Oriental Institute of the University of Naples, and Formia was conveniently located more or less half way between Naples and Rome, with the result that Rinpoche could easily travel by train or car to each of those two major cities when necessary, which he often later did to take flights to other countries.

On the next page you can see a photo of the balcony outside the windows of the living room of the Namkhai family apartment, where I often used to sit with Rinpoche to practice, to write, or just to talk, during the months I stayed with the family.

Finally, there I am - sitting on the sofa in the living room on which I slept during those months, in a photo that Norbu Rinpoche himself took with my camera after he had personally - with much laughter - dressed me up in his Nagpa robes and posed me for the shot.

I am holding items Rinpoche had chosen for the photo: a lotus in my right hand, and a conch shell in my left hand. He also arranged the Tibetan necklace that you can see hanging around my neck.

Given how much Rinpoche and his family were laughing while Rinpoche dressed and posed me, it took a lot of effort to follow Rinpoche's instructions as he called out, while he focused the camera on me, 'Stop laughing, John...!! Look seri-

ous...!! Don't you dare even smile...!! That's right, John...gaze into space...!! There you are, it's all done...!! Now, you can relax...!!'

Norbu Rinpoche had an extraordinarily strong work ethic: he always worked very hard. While I was sleeping on that sofa in the living room of his family apartment, I would often wake up very early in the morning to find that - while I still slept - he had for several hours already been sitting writing at the dining table.

On such days, when I finally woke up, Rinpoche would often read me what he had written down about the lucid dreams that he had had the night before.

But, although he always worked very hard, he also liked to play. And those who worked with him, as well as working hard, always had a lot of fun. His sense of humour was as strong as his work ethic, and he loved to joke around with his students.

By the time of the Monte Faito retreat, which was by no means my first retreat with Rinpoche, I'd already experienced at first hand how much fun he would have - as a lama born and raised in what Westerners often back then thought of as a fabled 'Tibet of magic and mystery' - playing with the tendency of his students to indulge in spiritual fantasies, not only in relation to the Buddhism of Tibet, but also in relation to him.

In this spirit of fun, he was very good at keeping an absolute 'poker face' while getting people to agree to wildly improbable propositions he would make, after which he would then pull the rug out from under them by telling them he'd been testing them all along to see how gullible they were, or that he had wanted to find out how much nonsense they were prepared to agree with just because it was him - a Tibetan lama born in Tibet - saying it.

When Rinpoche first took me to his family's apartment in Formia, for example, I found that - just inside the front door - there was a large and very heavy stone pestle and mortar standing on the floor of the lobby. I couldn't help noticing this pestle and mortar, because the first time I entered the apartment, I banged my foot hard against the mortar as I walked in, and Rinpoche immediately asked me why I thought it was there.

Rinpoche's face was so expectant of an answer that I didn't have much time to reply, so I said that I thought he probably kept the pestle and mortar there as an 'awareness trap' to see



Balcony of the Namkhai family apartment, Formia. Photo by John Shane

if - as they were coming into his family home - people were distracted or of if they were resting in present awareness, as he had taught them. Rinpoche nodded enthusiastically, encouraging me to go on and expand on the idea of the 'awareness trap', which I did.

Every time I stopped talking, Rinpoche asked me to go on and say more, as he nodded in seeming agreement with me, reacting as if I'd grasped

the reason that the pestle and mortar was in the hallway - a secret that no one else had ever grasped.

Rinpoche's whole family, who were gathered to greet me as I arrived at their home, watched this exchange, and they also nodded and smiled so encouragingly that I felt proud that I must have hit the nail on the head with my exotic explanation.

It wasn't until about a month later that Rinpoche's wife, Rosa, finally let me in on the joke that the reason the pestle and mortar were really there was that the patterned ceramic floor tiles in the lobby had come unstuck, and the pestle and mortar were the only things the family had found to hand that were heavy enough to keep the tiles in place while the glue that they had used to fix them down had time to harden and set.

So much for my intuitive mystical insight...!!

Everything I have written above is, of course, no more than an approximation: I've done my best to describe these places and past events in words and images, but the reality of what happened is something else again.

The mind has an incredibly powerful interpretive faculty that connects flashes of thought occurring instantaneously into a vortex of virtual interpretation, constructing an elaborate, heroic and tragic story about a person (in this case, a certain 'John') who supposedly exists through time. But the entire 'world' is, in fact, already 'gone' every instant.

What we call 'memory' is actually just thought energy, a specific patterning that is popping up in consciousness right here and right now.

Just as in a dream in which the dreamer might dream a detailed backstory that never actually happened, this 'history' of 'John' that I am sharing with you here is, in reality, actually just a current flavor of katag and lhundrub - voidness and self-arising manifestation - dancing co-emergently with each other in the present moment. I hope that you have enjoyed



Photo taken by Chögyal Namkhai Norbu of John Shane sitting on the living room sofa dressed up by Norbu Rinpoche in Rinpoche's Nagpa robes. Photo copyright John Shane

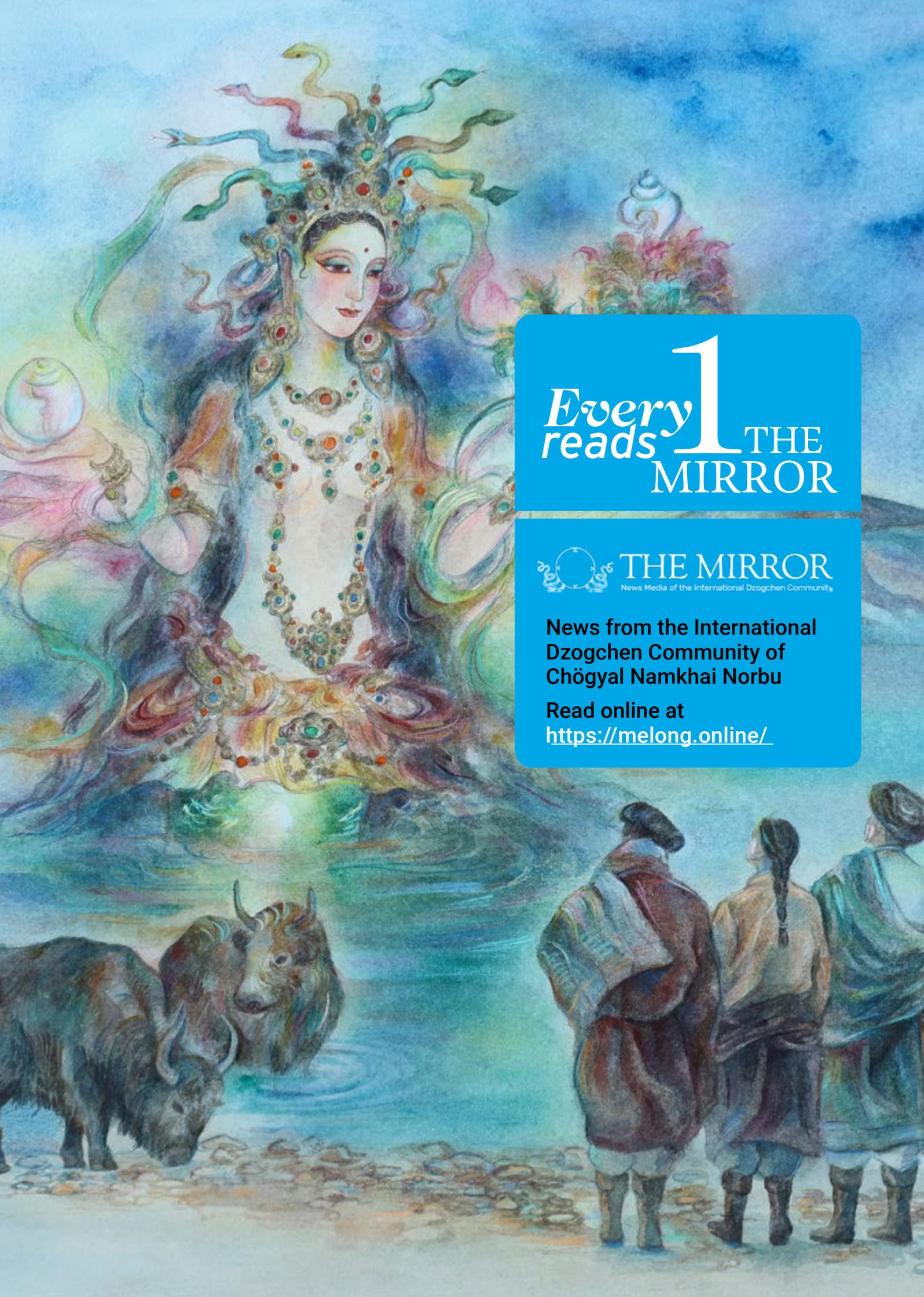
the play of the energy of these words and images as they appeared in your awareness as you read them and looked at the photos, which I have offered here in the spirit of playfulness with which Norbu Rinpoche - the first time I set foot in his family apartment in Formia - engaged with me, using the riddle of the purpose of the strange placement of the heavy pestle and mortar in the hallway of his home, to tease me out of my habitual thought processes and towards resting in the reality of 'what is - however 'good' or 'bad', 'positive' or negative', 'what is' might seem to be.

In the same way, in every moment that I spent with him, Rinpoche encouraged me to go beyond the deluded mind that - entering into conceptual judgment - divides the seamless web of 'what is' into 'this' and 'that', 'good' and 'bad' and 'self' and 'other' - falling into the habitual misperception through which the experience of the natural state of the display of spontaneously self-liberating awareness comes to be mistakenly experienced as the dualism of samsara, with all the suffering that implies.

Be well, and live long...

If you would like to write to me, please do so through my Substack publication, where you can also read and listen to more of my work:

<https://johnshaneywayofthepoet.substack.com>.



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