

How I Met Chögyal Namkhai Norbu

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Dzamling Gar



I have been living in Dzamling Gar for about eight months now and I like it very much. I have been living in a tent next to the Gar.

I grew up in North Italy, in Torino, 100 km from Milano, and very close to the Alps. My parents

loved sailing, so I sailed a lot during the summers since I was one year old, and I also traveled altogether with my family to some European capitals, like Paris and Athens, we have been to the north of France, and we have sailed a lot together.

I studied at the University in Torino at the university of humanistic sciences. I studied literature and philosophy. I did my last year where you choose the main topics for the thesis and I chose oriental studies, so I studied Indian philosophy and history and I translated the teachings of the Buddha Sakyamuni from Pali into Italian together with the teacher.

Then I did my thesis about the access to meditation through the breath. We studied also Vipassana techniques. After my study I went back to my main passions, which were skate boarding and surfing.

I started surfing with my friends in the summers in Italy when we were 21, 22 years old. I went one year to Portugal and also Indonesia to learn. My friends did surfing only in the summer and I wanted to take it more seriously, so at 25 years old I moved to Lanzarote in the Canary Islands. Then I went back to Italy to finish my studies. I finished my studies when I was 28 years old.

Then I went back to Fuertaventura, which is another Canarian Island next to Lanzarote. I lived there for seven years traveling to different places each winter. To survive I was teaching surfing and I had other types of jobs. I started to get tired of living on the island, already in 2015, so then I started to change my job, worked less and dedicated more time to my other passion, which is writing, and doing yoga.

I learned some yoga when I was younger to use as stretching after a skate boarding session, and then I understood it was connected to the breath, so stretching turns into yoga when you use your breath. I studied formally with one teacher in 2015. He had studied in India and he had a degree and taught hatha yoga. We did yoga seriously twice a week for one year.

After that, at the end of 2016 around New Year's Eve, I was no longer an official surfing instructor, and I was doing three or four different jobs to make enough money to pay the rent. Things were going well, I had everything I wanted, let's say everything I was supposed to be wanting, because I was not completely satisfied so, I had enough surfing, weed and women. I had everything but I was a bit bored, I was empty, and my dream was something else. So then I started to write. Writing is something if done freely helps us to analyze ourselves somehow.

So one day in 2017, in the middle of my writing, at the beginning of December, I was at the table and I was writing and I close my laptop and start to do something else, and this day I was really focused on one thought, "I found everything but I never found a master who was able to teach me the techniques of meditation."

So through the yoga you feel that your body is more relaxed and the mind is more relaxed, but not

completely quiet. I knew because I studied at the university that there are techniques for the mind, which is the hardest part to control.

I was dreaming about and wondering about how to meet someone in a cave somewhere in Mexico. One night I had a dream where I was in a kind of hall and there were many people, in this dream my question to myself was, "Well, I did everything and now I would also like to help the others", and also to be useful, life is not only about ourselves. But I wondered how and especially where and especially who. So in the dream, in the middle of the room in the middle of the crowd, there was one man, not so tall, dark skin, Asian eyes, and dressed in red. So he was showing me with the hand, "Look come with me", and he was not talking but we were talking without movements of the mouth. We communicated mentally, looking in the eyes, and he was saying yes, come with me and I will show you what is a good way to do what you want to do. I was thinking, nice, good to know. There was some light coming from another direction and we went somewhere else. I woke up thinking this is the classic dream of about my Mexican master and I thought that is very nice but where is he. These things should happen if they have to happen and where should I go – to each cave in Mexico?

So I saw that probably Mexico would be my next destination. I felt it was time to leave this apartment in Fuertaventura; it was time to go. So I had this dream, days were passing, I forgot about everything and I was back at the computer. Then at the computer I was writing and I stopped writing because I became tired and I looked at the images of Mexico, the Mexican fishermen, the classical Google images of Mexico, and then I opened Facebook. In Facebook I saw on the right side of panel some suggestions and there was this Ati Yoga Retreat, in Tenerife.

So I thought, what kind of yoga is Ati Yoga because I know all the names of the different systems of yoga around, and no names are Ati. So which kind of yoga is this one...so then I clicked and I saw the photo of Dzamling Gar with the rainbow, and when I clicked on the retreat I saw there was a Tibetan master giving this talk and he really looked like that man in my dream. So I read the details about this retreat. It was in ten days or so, around December 18, 2017, and so there was time enough to get ready and organize the ferry from Fuertaventura to Tenerife, it was fifteen euro. It was supposed to take eight hours but my journey took ten, but it's ok.

So I decided to take the ferry and go see what this was. Of course I told my friends where I was going, they were good friends and I was not ashamed, but of course they were quite skeptical, they didn't practice any yoga and they were not interested in spiritual life so they said, "Look you will see this master is not really Tibetan, it will be a Spanish organization selling vacuum cleaners; a pyramid scheme selling vacuum cleaners for the company. You will see. And the Tibetan will be the classic Catalanian dressed like a Tibetan." So I said to goodbye to my friends, they are really funny and cheeky guys, but anyway I didn't want to spend another New Year's Eve drinking and smoking with them. I had done enough of that.

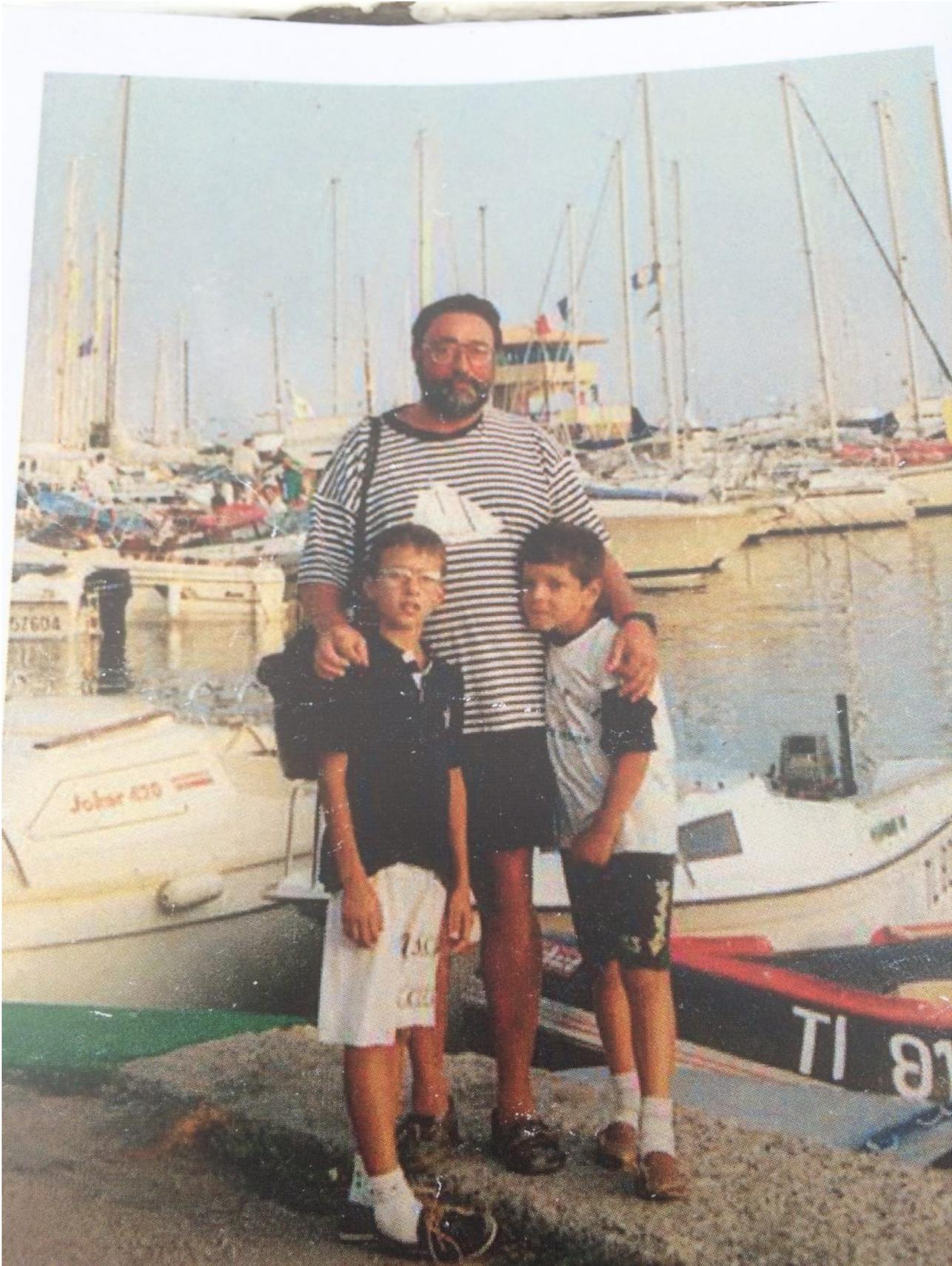
I took the boat to Santa Cruz, I took the bus and came to Los Cristianos and then there were no

more buses because it was already midnight, so I was looking for a taxi and the taxi driver said, "Oh you mean the Buddhist center in Adeje, everybody knows it, now many people are coming." Then I thought it must be something important. So he took me to Dzamling Gar for fifteen euro, the trip with the taxi cost the same as the whole trip with the ferry, and I came here in front of Dzamling Gar at around 3am, December 28, 2017. I expected to find a guardian at the gate like in Asia where there is someone twenty-four hours a day, but this was classic Canarian style, more relaxed, so everyone was asleep, and there was no one. I could not get in. Registration for the retreat was starting at 11am that same day. So I sat down outside by the gate with my sleeping bag on my shoulders and I slept against the wall. The ground was pretty cold and I was just recovering from an illness.

At 7am they opened the gate. I came in, I see this wonderful view, I see these houses and one house on the left side, so I immediately looked to this purple colored house and I thought that is a nice color since purple is the color of the mystics in Christianity and Hinduism. I sit there under the tree by the hammock, taking a rest for a moment and taking the first rays of light of the sun to warm up, and that's when I saw the Master coming out from his room walking on the terrace, because he used to walk on the terrace to the southeast and the southwest. He used to walk like that all the time.

So I recognized him from my dreams, he was very similar, he was wearing that reddish color, he was actually Tibetan. Actually the Tibetans and native people from South America are similar; they have the same eyes.

So then everything was clear. I stepped into the Gönpa. There were about seven hundred people; it was packed. The Master started to talk and I really enjoyed what he said. Actually I understood everything because it was not new to me, it was exactly representing all my studies from twelve years before. And when he was saying that people receive many teachings and don't apply the method, I thought that I really found my Master because I am kind of lazy, so I need a master who is strong but also kind, and he was also sarcastic enough to say take care, don't waste your time, and then your life will be over and you will still be there losing time. I was paying attention because he was not repeating the same phrase even once, and I thought that although he was not young, he was quite awake. He was very aware.



Emanuel on the left with his father and brother on a sailing trip

After the first or second day, sleeping outside with no tent because I came just with my sleeping bag, my health condition got worse again but one guy helped me and I stayed in his house. Day by day the retreat went ahead and on the last day we had the possibility to go close to the Master and ask for a blessing, so for me it was the official moment to shake his hand. After one week of analyzing his words and his behavior, I thought he was pure and trustworthy, so I went to him, I was shaking a bit, and I became emotional and I wanted to cry; it was a very strong feeling. I was very happy. And then I came close to him and I started to talk too fast in Italian and he said, "Eh?", so then I said I will repeat, I calmed down, and I said in Italian, "Master, I would like to go and visit my family" and he said, "Where is your family?" and I said, "In Torino, in North Italy" and then he said, "Ok, what do you want?" and I said, "I would like to visit my family first, then come back here and follow your teachings." I asked, "Am I allowed?" and he said, "Va bene."* And then he gave me his hand. So the formal analysis between Master and student was complete. He accepted me as a student. And I came back the 14th of April.

Now eight months has passed, and I have studied all the disciplines we have here in Dzamling Gar, especially Yantra Yoga. I never missed an early morning session, more or less, and I applied each technique. Each method is useful and the Master provided many different methods for the students to bring the mind in a calm condition and to experience the natural state for a few seconds or a few minutes, according to your situation.

Today before leaving I saw Rabgyi, the gekö of this Gar. I was really thankful and he was hugging me a lot thanking me for all my help. I worked as the lifeguard at our swimming pool in the Gar in the summer, and I worked in the cafeteria and the bar. I thanked Rabgyi also because he was taking such good care of the Master, especially in the period when Rinpoche was sick. I told Rabgyi I would like to integrate these methods into my life, which is the life of a 30 year old guy, and I said I should be working, traveling and doing what I like and he said he was going to do the same.

So that's how I met the Master.

* *Va bene means all right*

