The Daily Chants: Then and Now

This fall we are delighted to publish a new edition of the Daily Chant Book. It will contain all the previous chants as well as nine additional liturgies that Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche selected as options for the evening chant of our practice. The Daily Chant Book is a collection of liturgies, known as a chöchö (Tib. chos spyod; “dharma practice”), and traditional compilations of this type can exceed a hundred pages. Of course not all of these are used on a daily basis. The term chöchö also refers to ten spiritual activities, including making offerings, understanding the teachings, reading the teachings, and reciting scriptures.

Chanting in the morning and evening helps to provide an experience of twenty-four-hour practice. The events of the day and night are sandwiched between periods of practice. In the morning, the chants provide the first spark of connection to the lineage, the teachings, and to our discipline. In the evening, they help to sum up and recall the entire day in the context of dharma activity. Chanting is a practice in itself. Ideally we can cultivate an awareness where the words and the sense come together as an expression of realization. Chanting is a proclamation of the teachings. Hearing, contemplating, and meditating occur naturally.

The time of day and the order in which certain chants and practices are done depends on many factors. The natural hierarchy of the three roots—guru, yidam, protector—is a main organizing principle. The order of protector chants is also based on a traditional ordering of dharmapalas (transcendent) and then lokapalas (worldly). The Vidyadhara and Lama Ugyen Shenpen clarified the order for all the chants and practices.

Not long after the Vidyadhara’s passing, we began to include the “Seven-Line Supplication” to Padmasambhava for the first time in the morning chants. Larry Mermelstein discussed the order for this with Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche in 1988 in Nepal. When Khentse Rinpoche said that the “Seven-Line Supplication” should come right before the Kyögy lineage supplication, Larry inquired about the “political correctness” of this, concerned that some might be offended. Khentse Rinpoche burst into laughter. He told a story about how he and Gyubwarg Karmapa XVI had been performing a ceremony together with the Dalai Lama some years before. Afterwards, the Karmapa remarked to Khentse Rinpoche: “We should have begun with the ‘Seven-Line Supplication.’”

The Daily Chant Book developed in a piecemeal fashion. The “Supplication to the Takpo Kagyö,” “Vetali,” and the “Heart Sutra” were the earliest components to be used widely. The Kyögy lineage chant was definitely in use by 1971, which is also the year the Vidyadhara wrote “Vetali” in English. Francesca Fremantle translated the “Heart Sutra,” and it was published in Garuda III in 1973. Other protector chants were composed by the Vidyadhara in Tibet during the mid–70s. Ekajati for Tulé of the Tiger (aka Karma Choling). Vajraadishu for Karma Drong in Boulder, Four-Armed Mahakala for the Dharmaadhatus (Shambhala Centers), and Magyal Pomra for RDNC (Shambhala Mountain Center). Throughout the 1970s, all these were mimeographed and translated at the Shambhala Mountain Center laboratory and translation factory, beginning in 1976 with the arrival of Lama Ugyen Shenpen, an attendant and secretary of Dilgo Khentse Rinpoche. During that early period, the Doriy Loppon Lodro Dorje, head of the Office of Three Tara Studies, and Shrubd Chodzin, editor-in-chief of Vajradhātu Publications, were the first coordinators of the Translation Committee’s activities—and so we benefited from their intellectual expertise and editorial acumen. It was during the 1979 Seminar that we began revising the daily chants—reviewing the Tibetan originals with the Vidyadhara for the first time.

Since the Vajradhātu Seminar was where we worked most closely with the Vidyadhara, it was also where new chants were usually introduced. Because this was an international gathering of students, it was one of the rare occasions when we practiced all of the protector chants and related liturgies each evening.

Larry remembers having to introduce and explain several new liturgies at the 1982 Seminar in Bedford Springs, PA, the last of which was “Fulfilling the Aspirations of Gyubwarg Karmapa.” When he came before the assembly to give his talk on this, an audible groan was heard, no doubt indicating the lack of enthusiasm for having to recite yet another chant, and this one was longer than most. After the talk, Larry reported to the Vidyadhara that “they don’t like seeing me anymore,” and explained what had happened. “How long does it take now?” the Vidyadhara asked. Larry replied, “Don’t you remember? You sit there every evening throughout the whole liturgy.” The Vidyadhara seemed to have no idea of the time involved. When Larry reminded him, “It now takes about thirty minutes,” the Vidyadhara perked up and stated, “We’re about halfway there!”

Reviewing the daily chants continued at the 1980 Seminar, and sometime after that we issued our first and only revision of the existing liturgies. “The Sutra of the Recollection of the Noble Three Jewels,” “Exorcism Chant,” and “Concluding Request to the Protectors.” Probably only the last of these will be immediately obvious. We changed “lighship” on the fourth line to “power,” which is a more literal rendering and avoids the gender bias. A few other chants contain very minor spelling or punctuation modifications. All changes will be summarized in the Errata and Addenda section of the Publications pages on our website.

We discussed all our concerns with the Sakyong several years ago. He too felt strongly that it was important to correct any mistakes we can, especially for the sake of future generations, but he was also very sensitive about not wanting to disturb well-established conventions. We worked hard together to fashion the most acceptable readings with a minimum of changes.

The New Chants

In consultation with Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, the following chants will be added to our Daily Chant Book, most of which will be options for our practice.

Morning Chants:

Great Clouds of Blessings: Supplication Magnetizing the Phenomenal World

With this supplication, composed by Jü Mipham (1846–1910), we call upon the infinite hosts of magnetizing deities of the pantheon family. We ask these wisdom beings of the three kayas and three roots to bestow their blessings and grant us the supreme and ordinary siddhis—primordial awareness and relative
worldly accomplishments—as well as the Siddha that unobstructedly magnetizes whatever we desire.

The Verses of the Eight Auspicious Noble Ones
This was composed by Ju Mipham in 1896, based on a sutra of Shakyamuni Buddha. It may be recited at any time, though Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche has particularly encouraged us to chant it at the start of a new undertaking, as is traditional. These verses of auspiciousness invoke the power of goodness in the form of eight buddhas, eight male bodhisattvas, eight female bodhisattvas (manifesting as offering goddesses), and eight protectors so that any obstacles may be overcome and our projects and endeavors, both dharmic and secular, may meet with success.

Nyinrola Lineage Supplications
This liturgy is a collection of verses to Nyinrola lineage holders, compiled from a variety of authors. This particular compilation is used at Namdroling Monastery in South India, usually chanted by khenpos before presenting teachings at the shedra. It was first recited to the sangha at the first Mipham Academy at Karmê Choling.

Light of Blessings: Supplication to the Eleventh Trungupa Chokyi Gyatso
This guru supplication, composed by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche after the parinirvana of the Vidyadhara in 1987 at the request of Lady Konchok Palzom, is not a rebirth supplication. Rather, it supplicates the guru, whose woeeds, compassion, and power are always present for the student.

EVENING CHANTS
Condensed Offering to Ekajati, Rahula, & Vajrasadhu
Written by the Vidyadhara in Tibet and originally translated for use in the feast offering for his Avalokiteshvara terma, this is a brief torana offering to the three main protectors of the Longchen Nyingrig ("Heart Essence of the Great Expanse") of the Nyinrola lineage.

Protectors of the Three Courts
To highlight the importance of the home as a place of practice and realization, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche composed this chant, which invokes all the protectors of Shambhala.

Supplication for the Longevity of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche
This supplication for the Sakyong's longevity was composed in 2007 by Namdul Drimed Rinpoche at the request of the Sakyong Wangmo, and it was introduced to the sangha that summer.

The Melody That Accomplishes Deathlessness: A Longevity Supplication
Composed by Ju Mipham in 1888, this is a general supplication for the longevity of all teachers.

Oral Instructions That Delight the Dharma Kings: An Aspiration for the Teachings of the Early Translation Lineage to Flourish
This aspiration poetically chronicles the history and development of the dharma from India to its establishment through the Nyinrola lineage in Tibet, the main vehicle for the ati teachings. It focuses specifically on the teachings of the Nyinrola, which its author, Ju Mipham, investigated through his prolific teaching and writings.

Notes that introduce each chant and explain various terms (names, mantras, and so on) have been available previously in the Vajradhātu Practice Manual. They can now be found on our website at: www.nalandatranslation.org/offers/notson-the-daily-chants.

OM AH HUM HRH
Within the magnetizing palace of blazing great bliss
Are the kayas of discriminating-awareness wisdom, bliss-emptiness,
Each on a kūṭa, its nature bliss beyond attachment,
And on a vajra sun, the splendor of great appearance
Dharmakaya Amitabha, Vajradhāma, Lokeshvara, the embodiment of compassionate care, Padmaraja, master of samsara and nirvana,
Great powerful heruka, subjugator of the phenomenal world,
Secret Wisdom, Vajravarahi,
King of Desire, supreme bliss, treasury of great bliss,
And Kurukulla, captivating the minds of all beings without exception.
These sovereigns of the supreme and ordinary mudras are the dance of bliss-emptiness,
The assembly of magnetizing vajra virus and dakinis.

Within the great equality of appearance-emptiness,
Swirling the three worlds with the dance of vajra body,
Summoning the three realms with the laughter of unceasing speech,
Within a mind of great vajra passion,
You bestow the two siddhis, the supreme of all that we desire.
With great vajra iron hocks and laosos,
You bind the phenomenal world into great bliss.

Within the great equality of appearance-emptiness,
Swirling the three worlds with the dance of vajra body,
Summoning the three realms with the laughter of unceasing speech,
Presence for the student.
Within a mind of great vajra passion,
You bestow the two siddhis, the supreme of all that we desire.
With great vajra iron hocks and laosos,
You bind the phenomenal world into great bliss.

Some of our revisions may go unnoticed by most people. For example, in the “Innovation for Raising Windhorse” we plan to hyphenate the Kalachakra mantra: OM HA-KSHA-MA-LA-VK-RA-YAM. We hope that this will encourage people to pronounce this as if it were two words, OM and HAKSHAMALAVARDAM, rather than sounding each of the syllables separately, as many do. These very special seed syllables are often written as a monogram, known as the “all-powerful ten,” and they are meant to be read as a unit; these components being H-K-SH-M-L-VA-RE-VM and the A vowel, added to each syllable.

For specific identification of these deities, see our website.

GREAT CLOUDS OF BLESSINGS
Supplication for Magnetizing the Phenomenal World

OM AH HUM HRH
Within the magnetizing palace of blazing great bliss
Are the kayas of discriminating-awareness wisdom, bliss-emptiness,
Each on a kūṭa, its nature bliss beyond attachment,
And on a vajra sun, the splendor of great appearance
Dharmakaya Amitabha, Vajradhāma, Lokeshvara, the embodiment of compassionate care, Padmaraja, master of samsara and nirvana,
Great powerful heruka, subjugator of the phenomenal world,
Secret Wisdom, Vajravarahi,
King of Desire, supreme bliss, treasury of great bliss,
And Kurukulla, captivating the minds of all beings without exception.
These sovereigns of the supreme and ordinary mudras are the dance of bliss-emptiness,
The assembly of magnetizing vajra virus and dakinis.

Within the great equality of appearance-emptiness,
Swirling the three worlds with the dance of vajra body,
Summoning the three realms with the laughter of unceasing speech,
Presence for the student.
Within a mind of great vajra passion,
You bestow the two siddhis, the supreme of all that we desire.
With great vajra iron hocks and laosos,
You bind the phenomenal world into great bliss.

Playful dance of the boundless net of miraculous display,
Huts of magnetizing deities of the infinite three roots,
As numerous as sesame seeds from an open pod,
We supplicate you with devotion: grant your blessings.
Bestow the supreme and ordinary siddhis
And the Siddha that magnetizes without obstruction the glory of all that we desire.

This was composed by the one named DHIH [Ju Mipham] on the first day of the seventh month of the Earth Horse year of the fifteenth sixty-year cycle [August 18, 1879]. There is no doubt that those who practice this supplication will accomplish all the activities of magnetizing according to their wishes. If it is written on a red banner raised aloft, or if it is fashioned into a wheel that rotates above a fire or in the wind, its purposes will be accomplished. MANGALAM

Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee.

2001, 2010 by the Nalanda Translation Committee.

Some of our revisions may go unnoticed by most people. For example, in the “Innovation for Raising Windhorse” we plan to hyphenate the Kalachakra mantra: OM HA-KSHA-MA-LA-VK-RA-YAM. We hope that this will encourage people to pronounce this as if it were two words, OM and HAKSHAMALAVARDAM, rather than sounding each of the syllables separately, as many do. These very special seed syllables are often written as a monogram, known as the “all-powerful ten,” and they are meant to be read as a unit; these components being H-K-SH-M-L-VA-RE-VM and the A vowel, added to each syllable.

For specific identification of these deities, see our website.
Last November, many sangha members in Halifax received the Wrathful Gesar empowerment from His Eminence Namkha Drimed Rinpoche. In addition to the short daily practice that we made available at that time, this year we completed draft translations of over 300 Tibetan pages from his terms cycle, including a longer sadhana, a fire offering, and other supporting texts, all at the request of Sak Yong Mipham Rinpoche. This September we began to review our translation and learn the practice and ritual details from Lama Tenzin, a senior chöpon of Namkha Drimed Rinpoche. Eventually the Sak Yong plans to introduce a complete Gesar drupchen, or group practice intensive, as part of our end-of-year dion season practices. This includes a peaceful Gesar guru yoga and Dorje Tsegal sadhana by Ju Mipham.

In preparation for the upcoming 25th anniversary of the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungupa Rinpoche’s parinirvana, Shambhalla Publications will be publishing three volumes of his teachings from all the three-yana Vajradhata Seminars. We reviewed a draft of the mahayana volume this year, especially with reference to various technical details of dharma. With Khengo Tiering Gyume we translated all of the Vidyadhara’s note cards for his vajrayana talks, and we are completing translations of all the others. These will help editors Judy Lief, Ellen Kearney, and Carolyn Gimian in their work. They will also be published on a companion DVD which will include facsimiles of the original note cards, printed Tibetan, and English translations.

We were again delighted to work intensively with Changling Rinpoche of Shchen Monastery, who returned to complete his teaching of Khengo Gangshar’s Naturally Liberating Whatever You Meet. We reviewed several translations included in our Daily Chant Book, as well as some of our questions on the Dorje Tsegal sadhana (peaceful form of Gesar) by Ju Mipham. This year we published transcripts of Changling Rinpoche’s 2009 teachings and are already working on the transcripts of his 2010 teachings at Dorje Denma Ling. In Halifax, Changling Rinpoche began teaching the view of “crazy wisdom” and Dzog Chen, in preparation for teaching The Sadhana of Mahamudra next year. We are also transcribing those teachings and hope to review and annotate our literal translation of this sadhana with him, so that we may find a way to share this with the vajra sangha. We will let you know more about our plans in the coming months.

In honor of the hundred-year anniversary celebration of His Holiness Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, we republished in booklet form his own “Life Drop of Blessings” guru yoga, and presented this to Yangsi Khyentse Rinpoche on his first tour of North America. Sherab Chodzin requested a guru yoga for His Holiness when he met him for the first time in France years ago, and this is the text they gave him, writing a special verse at the end for him. This text is now available to all tantrikas in a new edition, complete with practice commentary.

For the Söpa Chöling three-year retreat at Gampo Abbey, we updated the Sognyag (red Avalokiteshvara) and Mahakala practice manuals. Currently we are working on revising and refining the Vidyadhara’s The Golden Dot: The Epic of the Lha. We will republish this in an elegant format similar to his Shambhalla terma texts. Also, in the near future we will republish Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé’s final chapter of The Torch of True Meaning on mahamudra practice, which has been used at vajrayana seminars in connection with recognizing the nature of mind.

You may be pleasantly surprised to see that our website, www.nalandatranslation.org, now has some improved functions and a whole new look. We will continue to improve and expand the website over the coming year. Please note that there is a special Ernita section within our list of publications. This includes some important amendments to existing texts, many of which were posted over the last year, especially amendments to the Vajrayogini Manual, Vajrakila texts, and The Sadhana of Mahamudra funeral liturgy.

Teaching and Other Activities

Larry led a Chakrasamvara retreat at Sky Lake. He also conducted the gate-opening ceremony at Sopa Chöling this summer for the completion of groups E and F of the three-year retreat.

Scott taught a weekend program in Toronto on the Vidyadhara’s Avalokiteshvara Sadhana, which the Shambhalla sangha received from Karma Senge Rinpoche. Over the holidays, he again led a mahamudra program in Halifax. In March, he taught a weekend program on ljung and valid cognition in Bellingham, Washington.

In May, at the suggestion of Dungchen Popon Rinpoche, Scott attended an organizing conference in Bangkok for the Common Buddhist Text project, an endeavor to create a common set of classical scriptures representing the Theravada, mahayana, and vajrayana traditions for worldwide distribution. Under the auspices of the United Nations, the project is supervised by MCT, a Buddhist university outside of Bangkok, and awaits funding approval by the Royal Thai government.

This summer, Scott prepared an edition of our translation of Ju Mipham’s Lion’s Roar of Emptiness of Other, a long-term project of the Translation Committee, for a course taught by Popon Rinpoche at Nitartha Institute’s summer program. Scott also taught valid cognition and the modes of engagement of mind at the program. He continues to be involved with a weekly class in Halifax that focuses on contemplative practice and is leading a group of aspiring junior translators—both young and not-so-young—working on the Vidyadhara’s writings and terma from Tibet.

Mark continues to lead Vajrayogini fire offerings at Dorje Denma Ling, particularly weekend ones focusing on magnetizing and enriching. He has also been giving dharma talks in Washington, DC, when he visits his family there.

Tingdein taught the practices of Sognyag and Mahakala Pernaikhen at Sopa Chöling to the three-year retreatants of Groups E and F.

Patricia has been teaching the Tibetan of the Lightening of Blessings and the Wirma Sadhana to a small group of dedicated students in Halifax.

Walker spent the winter editing his book, The Great River Of Blessings—The Rinchen Tershil in Orissa, India. The book is available for free download at: www.sakyongfoundationprojects/chnukdraigtari. In the spring, he also led a Vajrayogini four-karma fire offering at Dorje Denma Ling.

Jessie translated once again for Mingyur Rinpoche’s Khengo Gyurme at the Tergar Institute in Bodhgaya.

It had been some years since we had taken some time for envisioning the future and reflecting on our past. We initiated an annual three-day group retreat, held after Shambhalla Day, where Committee members practiced together and discussed our overall vision, group dynamic, and how better to serve our community. One of the insights that came out of our retreat was our desire to create a venue for sharing our experience more. This led to our hosting the first ‘Translators’ Tea’ in May, an informal gathering open to the entire community. We performed a Busad, had tea and snacks, and then discussed—through lively questions and answers—the Busad, the translation process, and any questions that were on people’s minds. We will host our next tea this November. Please visit our website to hear podcasts of these at: www.nalandatranslation.org.

Bound for China

It has been over three years since we’ve been able to work with Karma Senge Rinpoche. There is little likelihood of his obtaining a passport soon, so we are making plans to visit him next spring to continue our work on the Vidyadhara’s terma and writings composed in Tibet. We have prepared draft translations of the majority of this large corpus, but much remains to review. Karma Senge Rinpoche also holds the transmissions for the many practices included, and we must find a way to share this with the vajra sangha. We will let you know more about our plans in the coming months.
Although there is no debate about how to translate another excerpt from the same discussion on the first “nang-si” (the phenomenal world). This year we offer that we had with Changling Rinpoche on the Tibetan term gzhi) is sugatagarbha, “the thing to be purified” is the mandala of deities. So what is complete purity?

TO: Or it might mean “purified of the kleshas.”
CR: Yes, it is the completely pure mandala of deities. So you could say “in the phenomenal world, the completely pure mandala of deities...”
MN: When we speak of “the phenomenal world,” it sounds like samsara.
CR: Yes. In this case, the phenomenal world is just samsara.
PK: The phenomenal world means samsara, even though it is the mandala of deities.
CR: Yes. It depends on the context. Sometimes “the phenomenal world” goes with both samsara and nirvana, sometimes only with samsara. In this case, the completely pure mandala of deities is talking about samsara. We don’t need to establish nirvana as the mandala of deities. We are establishing samsara as the mandala of deities.
PK: So we could say: “In the phenomenal world, the completely pure mandala of samsara.”
LM: To me, to say places too much emphasis on phenomenal world. It is more important to emphasize completely pure mandala of deities. I understand your point, but I still much prefer the current translation: “in the mandala of deities, the completely pure mandala of the phenomenal world.”

CR: I also like the way it reads in our current translation, and I think it is very clear. The mandala of deities is the completely pure mandala of the phenomenal world. This is how I understand the development stage. The stanza says that if the world is completely pure, one’s three gates ripen as vajra nature.

LM: But that is different from what Rinpoche is saying. If complete purity goes with the mandala of deities, our translation is not exactly saying what Rinpoche is saying.
CR: So now the question is: What is complete purity? Everybody can answer.

WBT: It is “phenomena that are free of concept.”
TO: Or it might mean “purified of the kleshas.”
CR: In this particular line, who is completely pure? If the phenomenal world is completely pure, who is going to be completely purified? The deities! No. The deities are completely pure and the phenomenal world is going to be completely pure. The phenomenal world is “the thing to be purified” (Tib. chang-chu; byang brgyad), complete purity is “the purifier” (chang-chu; byang brgyad), and “the result of the purification” (chang-du; byang brgyad) is the mandala of deities. So what is complete purity? In other words, is complete purity “the purifier” or “the thing to be purified”?

SW: The purifier.
CR: “The ground of purification” (Tib. chang-shi; byang gzhi) is sugatagarba, “the thing to be purified” is the phenomenal world, and “the purifier” is complete purity.

This discussion is continued at: www.nalandatranslation.org/projects/articles

Your Generosity Will Result in More Translations

We need your help. Please consider our appeal and donate whatever you can. All contributions are tax deductible. Please also send us your ideas and suggestions for what Buddha and Shambhala dharmas you would like to see in English—we invite both suggestions and critique. Please send us your contributions, inspirations, and inquiries using the enclosed envelope and donation card. And please keep the translation as a gift from us.

TO ACCOMPLISH our core tasks, the Committee currently employs Larry Mermelstein, Mark Nowakowski, Tingdzin Otro, Scott Wellenbach, and Patricia Kirigin full time, and Jessie Litven part time. Other members are supported on a project basis, as feasible. Members regularly engage in essential and related activities, often on a volunteer basis.

This year, through your generosity, we received CAD $82,000 from the many sangha members who make an annual translation contribution (“tandra dues”). You form a core group that allows our work to continue. Your support is essential. We hope you will continue to appreciate the value of our work and support it generously. For those in a position to do so, please also consider making a contribution to our endowment fund. Your endowment plays a key role in providing a stable financial base for the Translation Committee. As the ranks of the committee grow, it is the annual distribution from our endowment and the ongoing support of the sangha that allow us to continue with the current level of our work—and expand it.

PROJECTED BUDGET FOR 2010-2011

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WHO WE ARE

The Nalanda Translation Committee—founded in 1975 by the Vidyadhara Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche—propagates the teachings of the Vidyadhara and supports the activity of Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, Shambhala International and its students, and the practice and study of Buddhist and Shambhala teachings by:

• creating fresh and authentic translations of Tibetan practice texts and commentaries in English and other Western languages
• translating from a variety of other genres of Tibetan Buddhist literature, including biographies, songs of realization, philosophy, and culture
• publishing those texts to ensure quality and consistency
• assisting with their transmission through teaching activities and the creation of supporting materials
• helping with the performance of Buddhist & Shambhala ceremonies

When we translate works for the public of the Buddhist and Shambhala teachings, we use the name Nalanda Translation Committee. For translations restricted to certain levels of vajrayana or Shambhala practice, we use the name Vajrayovana / Vajrayano / Vajravaiscana Translation Committee.

OUR TRANSLATIONS ARE AVAILABLE from us directly and through our main distributors, including by mail order, from:

Samadhicollective.com, e-mail: info@samadhicollective.com
Jizzit: Boulder: www.jizzit.com, e-mail: info@jizzit.com
Alaya in Marburg, Germany: e-mail: alaya@gmx.de

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You can see a list of our available publications at: www.nalandatranslation.org/publications

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS: As always, we are very grateful for all the help we receive in creating this newsletter: Liza Matthews’ elegant design and photographs, Barry Boyce’s sage editorial counsel, and Marvin Moore’s superb photographs.

Choosing the Right Word: Much Abo About Namdak