

Lomo: Annual Divinations

Lomo (ལོ་ལོ) is the annual practice of conducting divination and astrological calculations. It takes place at the beginning of each year to predict a person's anticipated wellbeing for that year. Bhutanese elders carry out the annual divination using readings from astrological books. The divination is believed to indicate the potential obstacles to be faced by the family members over the course of the year, with regard to business, travel, health and other affairs of life. Depending on the results of the divination, remedial measures may also be prescribed and they include recitation of prayers, performing rituals, freeing animals from slaughter, changing of name, hoisting of prayer flags, and even changing of parents for astrological purposes.

In order to prepare *lomo*, the astrologer has to carry out a lot of calculations to check the following conditions.

1. The five life forces

Sok (སོག་) is the life essence which resides in the heart and is related to the vitality and stability of one's life.

Lü (ལུ) is one's body related to physical health.

Wangtang (རྟང་ཐང་) is the esteem, power and charisma that influences one's wealth, possessions, and fulfilment of life goals.

Lungta (ལུང་ཏཱ་), or windhorse, is related to one's fortune, luck and reputation, and one's capacity to avoid bad circumstances.

La (ལཱ་) is the vital force that is linked to one's psychological and emotional stability.

2. *Parkha* (པར་ཁ་) of the eight trigrams to check which direction is favorable or not in course of one's engagement and which times are of high risk and disadvantages based on one's birth sign.

3. *Lokmin* (ལོག་མིན་) or the divination feature to check whether you fall under *namgo* or *sago*. If *namgo*, then it is important to avoid climbing, high places, etc., for that year and if *sago*, then one should avoid digging foundations, going underground and so forth for that year.

Divination also checks the *mewa* energy of birth and that of the current year and check their compatibility. If they are the same, it is said to be not good.

4. *Lokak* (ལོ་ལྔ་ལྔ་) is the year misfortune. This is checked to see whether you fall under some misfortunate period due to one's birth mark and the configuration of stars. If your birth sign and the current year sign are the same, which happens after every twelve years then it is called *lokag*; and the period is deemed to be inauspicious and negative for the person. When the current year sign is the 7th or opposite of the person's birth sign, it is called *dun-zur* and also considered bad. If the current year is same element as the birth element, then this too likely needs remediation and protective measures.

5. Shishé signs are identified by counting four up and four down from current year sign. For example, if this year is a Monkey year, the shishé sign would be Rat and Dragon. People born in Rat and Dragon years will accordingly likely face obstacles during the Monkey year.

6. The Seven Obstacles

Each of these eventualities affects the entire current year.

- If the current year sign is the same as one's birth year sign
- If the current year sign is the opposite of one's birth year sign
- If the current year sign is the animal sign adjacent to one's birth year sign and the same element as your birth year element.
- If the current year sign is the same as one of three destroyers
- If the wife and husband have same descending parkha for the current year
- If the current year animal sign is the sign as the year one's father or grandfather died
- If descending parkha is the same as birth parkha
- The following four are obstacles of mewa energy
 - Descending mewa is the same as the mewa of the current year
 - Descending mewa is the same as the birth mewa
 - Descending mewa is the second black one
 - The element of the descending mewa is the same as the element of the enemy of the birth mewa.

These and other astrological and divination factors are considered in drafting the annual divination for the astrologer to guide the people in living safe, happy and healthy lives.

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