



SONG OF VICTORY

THE WONDERFUL SOUND OF THE CELESTIAL DRUM

Composed by Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche*

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Contents

ROOT TEXT	1
COMMENTARY	5
1 Importance of the Text	5
2 Background of the Text	7
3 Opening	9
Title	9
Homage	11
4 Main Text	17
Encouragement to Practice Vajrayāna	17
Encouragement to Arouse the Mind of Bodhicitta	23
Encouragement to Arouse the Mind of Renunciation	29
Encouragement to Develop A Virtuous Personality	34
5 Closing	40
Dedication	40
Colophon	41

Root Text

I. Opening

A. Title

Song of Victory: The Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum

B. Homage

The embodiment of the wisdom of all the buddhas, who are the
protectors of all sentient beings,
Venerable Mañjuḥṣa, who appears as a young boy,
May you abide forever in my heart on the stamens of
an eight-petaled lotus,
Bless me, such that my words will benefit all sentient beings.

II. Main Text

A. Encouragement to Practice Vajrayāna

1. The Merit of Practicing Unsurpassed Vajrayāna

The Great Perfection, profound and luminous,
Just upon hearing its verses allows one to break the roots
of saṃsāra,
And through the six-month practice of its essence to
achieve liberation,
May you all engrave this in your hearts.

2. The Conditions for Practicing Vajrayāna

Those who with great fortune encounter such supreme teaching
Must have been accumulating merit in previous lives through
numerous eons
And possess the same conditions for achieving enlightenment as
Buddha Samantabhadra,
Dharma friends, may you all be joyful.

B. Encouragement to Arouse the Mind of Bodhicitta

1. The Reasons for Arousing Bodhicitta

For the sake of all sentient beings submerged in the fearful ocean
of saṃsāra,
In order to help them attain the eternal happiness of buddhahood,
You should shoulder the responsibility of benefiting others,
And discard the poisonous food of attachment to yourselves.

2. The Merit of Arousing Bodhicitta

This blocks the gate to the lower realms,
Allows you to attain the happiness of higher realms,
And eventually leads you to ultimate liberation from saṃsāra,
You should practice this essential teaching without being distracted
at all.

C. Encouragement to Arouse the Mind of Renunciation

1. The Merit of Observing Precepts

For all kinds of grand events in saṃsāra,
Do not have any thought of desire.
Do observe the pure precepts, the magnificent adornment in the world,
To which human and gods make supreme offerings.

2. The Fault of Breaking Precepts

Since all the temporary and ultimate happiness
Result from observing the pure precepts,
And breaking precepts leads one to take rebirth in lower realms,
You must make the right choices and not fall into confusion.

D. Encouragement to Develop A Virtuous Personality

1. The Reasons for Developing A Virtuous Personality

Always comply with your friends in word and deed
Be a person of integrity filled with kindheartedness.
In order to benefit yourselves in the long term,
The pith instruction is to benefit others at the present moment.

2. The Merit of Maintaining A Virtuous Personality

These are the pure standards for being a good person,
And the skillful means of all buddhas of the past, present and future,
Also the essence of the four dharmas of attraction,¹
Each of you, my disciples, should never forget!

III. Closing

A. Dedication

I dedicate this virtue to all sentient beings,
May they transcend the abyss of saṃsāra.
May all my heart disciples be joyful
And take rebirth in the Western Pure Land of ultimate bliss.

B. Colophon

In the seventeenth cycle of the Tibetan calendar and the year of the fire rat [1996], the teacher and the disciples had overcome all the external, internal, and secret hindrances. On this auspicious day, Ngawang Lodrö Tsungme² celebrated the victory, and sang extemporaneously among the almost five thousand monastic persons. Sādhu!

Commentary

By Khenpo Sodargye

Importance of the Text

The Dharma activities of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's life can be divided into six main phases. Each phase is marked by an important pith instruction text. These six texts are respectively *Dawn Flush of Advice*, *Drops of My Heartfelt Advice*, *Nectar Drops of Advice*, *Song of Victory*, *Teachings of the Four Vehicles*, and *Teachings during Magnetizing All that Appears and Exists*. As well as these texts, there are also the teachings given just before His Holiness entered nirvāṇa.

These texts are not like ordinary articles drawn from a few years of academic research, but rather they are the essence of His Holiness' wisdom gained through a lifetime of study, reflection, and practice. His attained realization, his biography, and his considerable merit have proven him to be a great saint and an enlightened master in each of his lifetimes spanning from the time of Buddha Śākyamuni to that of Guru Padmasambhava. Not only has he accumulated abundant good karma in his previous lives, but during his present life, he has spent more than sixty years focused on the study, reflection and practice of the Buddha's teachings, which he began around five years of age, and continued into his late 60s. His Holiness has devoted his entire life to all sentient beings and Buddhism, and his words and teachings, distilled from such a deep well of wisdom, are indeed very precious.

The *Song of Victory* was an extemporaneous vajra doha³ sung by His Holiness in front of almost five thousand ordained saṅgha on an auspicious victory-celebrating day in the September 21, 1996, when His Holiness and his disciples had dispelled all the external, internal and secret hindrances.

Those with wisdom will fully understand how transcendent the *Song of Victory* is after they study it. In the past, when His Holiness gave us teachings, to begin with we did not recognize their great worth. However, after constant contemplation of the Dharma and as time went by, along with exposure to various religious doctrines, we realized that His Holiness is indeed the most extraordinary of human beings.

The fact of the matter is that even though the Buddha taught eighty-four thousand teachings, few would be able to master them all in one lifetime. However, now that His Holiness has summarized these teachings into this wonderful pith instruction based on his practice and realization, we should treasure it and try to comprehend its profound meaning.

Theoretically speaking, Dharma practitioners should study both sūtras and tantras extensively, such as the Five Great Mahāyāna Treatises.⁴ But life is short, and it is hard to know how much longer one will live. Many changes can happen in a few brief moments and nothing is certain. Therefore, the study of a short text containing great pith instructions is of great value to all practitioners; otherwise, they may not be adequately prepared when the time comes to leave this world.

His Holiness requested all his lineage disciples to teach or chant the *Song of Victory* once before they teach or study a Dharma text, so that any obstacles

that may occur during the process can be dispelled. Likewise, if someone aspires to follow the Dharma, chanting this text once beforehand will make their aspiration come true, and protect them from encountering any obstacles. Additionally, any obstacles that may be encountered while studying or practicing the Dharma can be transformed into favorable conditions just by reading this text or by taking it with you everywhere. Therefore, His Holiness requested again and again that anyone who took refuge in or relied upon him should memorize the *Song of Victory* and grasp its profound meaning.

Background of the Text

In September, 1995, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche planned to visit Taiwan and then to leave for Nepal to stay in Padmasambhava's cave for an Amitāyus Buddha retreat. But after he arrived in Chengdu, there were some problems related to the processing of his passport application. He also suffered a deterioration in his physical health, and the hospital in Chengdu was unable to diagnose the cause of his illness. Consequently, he stayed at Chengdu for more than five months, remaining in a state of *sāmadhi*, and except during meal times, he did not utter a word.

Then one night, His Holiness had a dream in which Venerable Atiśa, Venerable Dromtönpa,⁵ Jamgön Mipham, and Lama Lodrö,⁶ all appeared to him. Venerable Atiśa silently cast his kind and loving gaze at His Holiness. Venerable Dromtönpa said, "We have come here because Venerable Atiśa is very concerned about you. These huge surging waves of

the ocean will terminate on March 10, do you understand the implications? (By this he meant that His Holiness would, at that time, fully recover from his illness.) Venerable Atiśa and Venerable Dromtönpa then disappeared.

Jamgön Mipham remained seated majestically, prayed forcefully to Padmasambhava in an extremely wrathful way, in order to dispel all external, internal, and secret hindrances and to vanquish various kinds of evils manifested from confusion and differentiation. After that, he transformed himself into a flash of light and disappeared.

Lama Lodrö gave some merciful advice: “You should reside in the luminous state of Great Perfection, the great union of appearance and emptiness. Out of this profound concentration, you should benefit sentient beings with bodhicitta, exchanging others’ suffering with your own happiness. Then, all unfavorable conditions will disappear into emptiness.” He also gave some other teachings and then also dissolved into luminosity.

After this dream, His Holiness began to recover slowly and, as predicted by Venerable Dromtönpa, he had completely recovered his health by March 10. On returning to Larung Gar, all his disciples gave His Holiness a most ceremonial welcome. He sang the *Song of Victory* extemporaneously among the fourfold assembly of all the disciples. Everybody’s happiness at that moment was indescribable. His Holiness also named the college of Han disciples as *Victoriously Māra-Subduing Land*, indicating the great victory.

I. Opening

A. Title

Song of Victory: The Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum

1. The Meaning of the Title

In the title, Victory means that practitioners are able to dispel all external, internal, and secret obstacles and achieve the complete victory through the blessings of the guru and the Three Jewels. Song refers to a doha, a song composed extemporaneously by an enlightened being with a certain level of realization. Celestial drum is a huge drum in the thirty-third heaven, the appearance of which is due to the great merit of celestial beings.

This *Song of Victory* is described by the metaphor The Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum because this drum has a natural sound that means: “all you celestial beings, do not fear.” As when celestial beings were battling the asuras, with the help of the wonderful sound of the Celestial Drum, they were able to defeat the asuras and win the battle. Hence the title draws this analogy between the *Song of Victory* and the Wonderful Sound of the Celestial Drum. This short text contains the essence of all the Sūtrayāna and Tantrayāna teachings, as well as the very profound pith instructions of His Holiness’ lifetime of practice.

2. Four Main Aspects of the Path

In *The Three Principal Aspects of the Path*, Lama Tsongkhapa discusses three main aspects, which are renunciation, bodhicitta, and nondual wisdom. However, in this short text, His Holiness summarizes the entire path of enlightenment into four main aspects, including the additional aspect of

virtuous personality. Also, nondual wisdom can be explained within both the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna paths. In the *Song of Victory*, nondual wisdom is described from the perspective of the Great Perfection, or Dzogchen, the highest level of realization in Vajrayāna practice, based on the view of emptiness in Mahāyāna teaching.

The realization of the Great Perfection is the most desirable enlightenment worthy of seeking by spiritual practitioners. What is the prerequisite for such enlightenment? It is bodhicitta. Without bodhicitta, as Śāntideva says in *The Way of the Bodhisattva*, there is no way to achieve full enlightenment, no matter how much supreme merit one possesses. Then how can bodhicitta arise in one's mind? For this to occur, one needs to first possess a mind of renunciation, which is in turn derived from a virtuous personality. Therefore, the sequence of practice should be: a virtuous personality to be a good person, a mind of renunciation to abandon all worldly attachment, an aspiration of bodhicitta to guide all living beings to achieve buddhahood, and eventually, the practice of Dzogchen to achieve full enlightenment within a single lifetime. These are the four main aspects of the path that are summarized in this *Song of Victory*.

B. Homage

**The embodiment of the wisdom of all the buddhas, who are the
protectors of all sentient beings,
Venerable Mañjughoṣa, who appears as a young boy,
May you abide forever in my heart on the stamens of
an eight-petaled lotus,
Bless me, such that my words will benefit all sentient beings.**

1. Sincere Devotion to Mañjuśrī

In this verse, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche is saying that the buddhas of all the worlds in the ten directions are the protectors of all sentient beings and that the aggregate wisdom of all the buddhas of the ten directions is embodied in Mañjuśrī, who appears as a young boy to benefit all sentient beings. So we pray that Mañjuśrī will fill our eight-petaled lotus-hearts with his uniquely blessed bright sunlight and will remain perpetually in the stamens of my lotus heart. And we pray that, with the power from Mañjuśrī's compassion, our words can universally benefit all sentient beings in this world.

Here, an analogy is drawn between the eight-petaled lotus and the heart, which has many external, internal and secret meanings in Vajrayāna, and will not be discussed in detail here.

This is a homage to Mañjuśrī. His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche regarded Mañjuśrī as his main deity and after meeting Mañjuśrī in person at Mount Wutai,⁷ whenever he was going to compose a treatise he would always first pay homage to Mañjuśrī. This demonstrates his extraordinary faith in Mañjuśrī.

His Holiness has always had a close affinity with Mañjuśrī since his childhood. According to his biography, he recited the Mañjuśrī mantra, *Oṃ Arapacana Dhīh*, aloud as an infant, immediately after he was born. At the age of six, he discovered a copy of the *Speech Lion of Mañjuśrī*, hidden in a pile of rocks, and noticed a verse at the end, saying there was a man in India aged ninety-nine years old who after just one day of practice attained enlightenment when Mañjuśrī appeared before him.

His Holiness thought, “If someone that old could meet Mañjuśrī after just one day’s practice, I should be able to practice and attain enlightenment without any problems because I am beginning at such tender young age.” He was very thrilled and practiced with full concentration for a few days. Consequently, he experienced many signs of attainment, and naturally mastered all the scriptures and commentaries in the sūtras and tantras.

His Holiness often emphasized that Dharma practitioners should chant Mañjuśrī’s mantra frequently and pray to Mañjuśrī often, because the power of the blessings from Mañjuśrī are quite special, compared to those from other buddhas. As ordinary beings, we cannot determine whether Buddha Śākyamuni’s blessing or Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī’s blessing are more powerful, but it is quite possible to make a reasonable judgment according to relevant sūtras, since this has been explained in the related sūtras.

On the surface, Mañjuśrī appears as just a bodhisattva. But based on what is mentioned in the sūtras, he actually attained buddhahood a long time ago, and he is the embodiment of the aggregate wisdom of buddhas and bodhisattvas from all the worlds of the ten directions and is regarded as the father of all buddhas. He guided infinite sentient beings to achieve

buddhahood by motivating them to arouse bodhicitta. Hence the power of his blessing is inconceivably amazing.

Everyone can benefit from the blessings of Mañjuśrī. The key lies in whether or not one has authentic faith in him. Once when I visited Mount Wutai, I was constantly filled with the hope that I would see Mañjuśrī in person, and in the end, although I did not see Mañjuśrī, I was quite sure that I did receive some blessings which enabled me to memorize and fully recite certain Dharma texts after reading them only a few times. So I would say that different people may have different levels of faith, but as long as they are blessed by Mañjuśrī, all the scriptures and commentaries in Sūtrayana and Tantrayana will come to manifest in their mind. If one constantly prays to Mañjuśrī, wisdom will be bestowed upon this person lifetime after lifetime. And meanwhile, blessings from all the buddhas can be integrated and passed on in the continuum of his or her mind.

2. A Great Story of Mañjuśrī⁸

Once when the Buddha was teaching the Dharma at Vulture Peak, in the city below the mountain there was a prostitute named Marvelous Golden Ray. She was very beautiful and enticingly attractive. But more amazingly, her entire body glowed with a golden aura. Thus, the emperor, ministers, and all sorts of men became extremely enchanted by her. Although she was just a prostitute from a lowly caste, a huge crowd always surrounded her.

One day, she accompanied the son of a business owner on a shopping trip to the market. They were planning to have some fun at the amusement park. Along the way Mañjuśrī transformed himself into a handsome young man,

for he knew the circumstances were ready to enlighten Marvelous Golden Ray. His entire body glowed with an extraordinarily dazzling light. Marvelous Golden Ray noticed that the light radiating from the youth far surpassed her own golden rays and as she stood in the glow of his light, her own light was fading away. She became greedy for his clothing, and immediately dumped the son of the business owner, climbing out of the vehicle they were traveling in and attempted to seduce the young man with her beauty.

At that moment, Mañjuśrī empowered Vaiśravaṇa to say to Marvelous Golden Ray, “You must not be envious of the young man, as he is the Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, who is the aggregate of all buddha’s wisdom. He can fulfill all your wishes. What do you need?” Marvelous Golden Ray said, “I do not need anything except for his beautiful clothing.” Mañjuśrī then replied, “If you can enter the door of bodhi, I will give my clothing to you.” As she did not understand what that entailed, Mañjuśrī then started to give her detailed instructions.

At Vulture Peak Śākyamuni Buddha voiced his praise, saying “Well done!” during the course of Mañjuśrī’s teaching which was so profound and that it jolted the cosmos of a billion universes. Mañjuśrī’s retinue asked the Buddha why he had said this. The Buddha replied, “Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī is preaching the Buddhadharma with compassion and wisdom in order to enlighten a prostitute. You may go there if you would like to listen.” Many of the Buddha’s disciples went over to hear Mañjuśrī’s teaching. Some gained the purity of the Dharma-eye and saw the truth clearly and purely. Some gained the full apprehension of the truth of no birth; some achieved

non-regressive fruition. Tens of thousands of sentient beings benefited after listening to the teachings of Mañjuśrī.

Marvelous Golden Ray also developed a firm understanding of the theory that nothing possesses a real existence. She really wanted to follow Mañjuśrī and to live her life as a Buddhist nun. But Mañjuśrī told her that the path of renunciation did not necessarily mean shaving one's head, but rather, involved practicing Buddhadharma diligently and giving up one's self-interest for the benefit of others. Mañjuśrī also advised her to return to the vehicle of the business owner's son and leave with him.

When Marvelous Golden Ray and the son of the business owner returned to the amusement park, they came face to face with impermanence as she died in his embrace. At first, he was greatly saddened. But as her body started to gradually decay, with blood and pus effusing from her eyes, ears, nostrils and mouth, and a foul smell emanating from her body, the businessman's son became extremely frightened and ran all the way to Vulture Peak to seek protection from Śākyamuni Buddha. Śākyamuni Buddha imparted the Buddhadharma to him, and he attained full apprehension of the truth of no birth. The Buddha then predicted: "Due to the empowerment of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī in inspiring her motivation, Marvelous Golden Ray will attain buddhahood in the future, named Precious Light Buddha. And the son of the business owner will become a bodhisattva acting on her behalf, named Bodhisattva Virtuous Brilliance."

The son of the business owner was puzzled, "Why will the disciple of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī, Marvelous Golden Ray, attain Buddhahood? But I, as the disciple of the Buddha, will only become a bodhisattva?" He could not

understand this. The Buddha said, “The merits of Bodhisattva Mañjuśrī are inconceivable. I also made my initial vow to develop bodhicitta in front of Mañjuśrī, as did the immeasurable number of buddhas in the past; so have the immeasurable number of buddhas of the present, and so will it be for the immeasurable number of buddhas in the future.”

3. The Right Motivation of Receiving the Teaching

His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche composed this text neither for the sake of recovering from his grave illness, nor for the desire to become wealthy or to attain happiness for himself. Rather, he prayed for Mañjuśrī’s blessing in order to benefit all living beings, temporarily or ultimately, through his words and his teachings. Likewise, we also need to examine our motives when receiving his teaching. Some people muddle along without any sense of purpose. They see others go for the teaching, so they follow them without any specific purpose. As a matter of fact, the purpose of receiving Dharma teachings should be to benefit the numerous sentient beings, not just for the benefit of oneself. Each practitioner should adjust his or her motivation accordingly.

II. Main Text

A. Encouragement to Practice Vajrayāna

1. The Merit of Practicing Unsurpassed Vajrayāna

**The Great Perfection, profound and luminous,
Just upon hearing its verses allows one to break the roots
of saṃsāra,
And through the six-month practice of its essence to
achieve liberation,
May you all engrave this in your hearts.**

a. The Incredible Merit of Dzogchen

The unsurpassed Dzogchen, or Great Perfection proclaiming the luminous essence of tathāgatagarbha, is difficult for ordinary people to fully understand, and so it is often criticized by those with little wisdom. However, one can cut off the root causes of saṃsāra simply by listening to its verses, and those with great capacities are able to attain liberation if they practice its essence diligently for six months. Therefore, we should all seek to have this Great Perfection deeply engraved in our hearts.

The Great Perfection is the essence of all sūtras and tantras, and its merits are beyond all description. People can attain liberation by merely hearing its words, touching its texts, attaching them to their body, or understanding their meaning. According to Āryadeva's *Four Hundred Stanzas on the Middle Way*, people with doubts about emptiness are still able to break free from the cyclic existence of the three realms. This is even more true for those who have learned the unsurpassed Vajrayāna.

If someone with extraordinary faith and strong conviction practices Dzogchen by following the sequence of preliminary, main and concluding practice, that person may attain liberation in six months. It is stated in the *Vajra Pañjara Tantra*, “If one has been practicing for six months with unshaken faith and conviction, one will be able to attain the fruit of Vajradhara.” It is also mentioned in the *Tantric Solemn Oath*, “With determined faith and conviction, one will attain the fruit of Vajradhara in six months.” This is also further stated in the *Chetsun Nyingthig* and the *Longchen Nyingthig*.

Hence the Great Perfection is truly transcendent. Jamgön Mipham said in his teachings, “In this degenerate age, sentient beings are burdened with deep and heavy afflictions, which cannot be easily mitigated by other Dharma methods. But one can completely cast off all the afflictions with the unsurpassed Great Perfection.”

Here His Holiness told us that since the Great Perfection is so extraordinary, we must not abandon or defame it. If one really cannot arouse faith in it, it is okay to leave it alone or to bring up one’s doubts in front of authentic teachers. However, one must not have preconceived negative ideas about Vajrayāna without a proper reason.

b. An Amazing Example of a Dzogchen Practitioner

I had personally witnessed quite a few Dzogchen practitioners who achieved the realization of Dzogchen and had auspicious appearances before death. And I was particularly impressed with a Han bhikṣuṇī named Míng Hui. Below is her story.

Ming Hui had enormous faith in the Vajrayāna. Originally, she was being treated for an illness in the Han area. Later, she learned that His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche was going to teach Dzogchen at Larung Gar. She recognized the impermanence of life and not knowing how much longer she had to live, she decided to going back to Larung Gar to receive the teaching. His Holiness lectured on Longchenpa's *Finding Comfort and Ease in the Nature of Mind* for about 100 days and she studied very diligently during that period.

On September 1, 1993, after the teaching ended, she returned to the Han area to receive further treatment from the doctor. On March 1, 1994, her caretaker and Dharma friend Zhen Ru bhikṣuṇī called me from Jinfeng Monastery, where they were living, and said that Ming Hui had died and at the moment of her passing, she held a dignified sitting position praying to her lineage guru and Amitābha. When her body began to shrink, a number of auspicious signs appeared. It was exactly six months after her completion of the teachings to the day of her death, not one day more or less. This was indeed a very rare occurrence.

Ming Hui bhikṣuṇī did not always appear to be the most gifted intellectually, however, her faith was indeed very strong. The prerequisites, for those with great capacities, to practice the Great Perfection are primarily their faith and conviction. Those with the strongest faith in their gurus and in the Three Jewels, and especially in Vajrayāna, who will not abandon their faith even at their deathbeds, will indeed achieve great accomplishments. Hence His Holiness said that, "It is very difficult to encounter the Great Perfection

during this degenerate age, for it is such an extraordinary path.” We must keep these words firmly in our hearts.

c. The Preliminary Practice of Dzogchen

Many Vajrayāna followers nowadays believe one must rely on the original purity or luminosity in order to effectively discover the true nature of one’s mind. Indeed, as an ordinary practitioner, one must start with the preliminary practice and can then become empowered to take on the main practice. Venerable Longchenpa, Jamgön Mipham, and His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche have all set out rigorous requirements for the practice of Dzogchen. It is crucial to abide by this sequence of practice, otherwise one would struggle to achieve proper realization. As such, it is like trying to paint beautiful motifs on the walls of a building when its foundation has not yet been stabilized. The risk is that after a while, the whole building would collapse. Therefore, we should only start painting on the walls after the foundation has been made secure and safe.

2. The Conditions for Practicing Vajrayāna

**Those who with great fortune encounter such supreme teaching
Must have been accumulating merit in previous lives through
numerous eons
And possess the same conditions for achieving enlightenment as
Buddha Samantabhadra,
Dharma friends, may you all be joyful.**

a. The Same Conditions with Buddha Samantabhadra

Here “supreme teaching” refers to the great teaching of Dzogchen, and “those with the great fortune” refers to those who have received the initiation for or listened to the teaching of the Great Perfection, or those who have similar auspicious connection with Dzogchen. His Holiness says, “For those who have had the opportunity to encounter the Great Perfection, it is a result of accumulated merits over many lives. To be able to encounter such great teaching is like sharing a similar karmic circumstance with Buddha Samantabhadra, an instance that is worthy of joy and delight.”

All of us have had the good fortune in this life to have met our gurus, to receive their teachings on Vajrayāna, and to have received empowerments and pith instructions. Such wondrous encounters with Vajrayāna are the result of the good karma accumulated through numerous previous lives. Venerable Longchenpa made two inferences in *The Treasury of the Supreme Vehicle*:

- (i) Since we have encountered the unsurpassed Vajrayāna in this life, we must have made offerings and attended to an infinite number of buddhas, and have also been their followers or disciples in our past lives.
- (ii) Since we have encountered the unsurpassed Vajrayāna, we will definitely attain realization in this present life, during the bardo, or in a future life.

So according to the inferences of Buddhist logic, if one has heard and studied Vajrayāna, this person must possess a transcendental affinity with Vajrayāna. We are in fact sharing a similar circumstance with Buddha Samantabhadra which has allow us to encounter Dzogchen in this present

life. It is because of this transcendental tantric Dharma that Samantabhadra attained the state of self-liberation in one split second. It is an accumulation of our good karma in numerous previous lives to encounter this supreme teaching.

As it is said in *Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra*, a person who was lost and wandering in the forest would have the sense that he was close to a village once he saw a cattleman. By seeing a cattleman he knew he could be leaving behind his fear of being lost. Similarly, once we have encountered a vajra guru who guides us on the Vajrayāna path, like a fish that has been hooked and will surely be pulled to the shore, we will soon be liberated.

b. Do not Break the Vows of Vajrayāna

However, if one slanders Vajrayāna or betrays the guru and his teachings, the consequences will be very serious. The Vajrayāna vows are very rigorous, and if one breaks the vows, this person will indeed accumulate negative karma that can lead this person to the lower realms. This applies not only for Vajrayāna vows, but also for the bodhisattva vows, and even the precepts for lay Buddhists which are also very stringent. If one takes refuge in the Three Jewels today, and criticizes the Three Jewels tomorrow, one will definitely sink into the three lower realms. Therefore, His Holiness said in his other teachings that as long as one does not break the vows in this present life, one will become accomplished in the next life even if one does not practice diligently. Vajrayāna practitioners must be determined to keep the vows in this very life.

B. Encouragement to Arouse the Mind of Bodhicitta

1. The Reasons for Arousing Bodhicitta

**For the sake of all sentient beings submerged in the fearful ocean
of saṃsāra,
In order to help them attain the eternal happiness of buddhahood,
You should shoulder the responsibility of benefiting others,
And discard the poisonous food of attachment to yourselves.**

a. Why Should We Take the Responsibility of Altruism?

We must shoulder the immense responsibility of benefiting others by discarding the unhelpful and dangerous attachment to our own egos, to help sentient beings steeped in the cyclical horror of saṃsāra to achieve the ultimate happiness of buddhahood.

In general, living beings can be classified into two categories. First, the enlightened beings are those who have already obtained either temporary or ultimate peace and happiness. These are arhats, pratyekabuddhas, bodhisattvas, as well as buddhas who have achieved perfect merits and wisdom. The other includes deluded or ignorant beings who have never tasted such peace and happiness gained through enlightenment, and have been driven by karma to wallow in saṃsāra and exposed to dangerous circumstances.

Saṃsāra means wandering about or moving on without interruption. There are six realms of beings in saṃsāra, gods, asuras, human beings, animals, hungry ghosts, and hell beings. All these beings wander about in the six realms. Some would be lifted into the three higher realms where the suffering

is not as fierce. But some could be instantly dragged into the abyss of three lower realms by their own negative karma. As said in Candrakirti's *Introduction to the Middle Way*,

*Beings think "I" at first, and cling to self;
They think of "mine" and are attached to things.
They thus turn helplessly as buckets on a waterwheel,
And to compassion for such beings, I bow down!*

Based on the authentic teachings and the personal perceptions of the enlightened buddhas and bodhisattvas, we have learned clearly that all deluded beings have previously been our parents and now are suffering. So carefully have they cared for and tended to us that we are closely connected to each other. Even though they do not recognize us now, anyone with any conscience would never leave them behind to pursue his or her own peace and happiness, but would also seek to give them as much peace and happiness as possible. That is, to liberate them forever from the dreadful ocean of saṃsāra and attain supreme enlightenment.

Therefore, we need to assume the responsibility to help them gain temporal happiness by providing them with good food and clothing, while at the same time guiding them to achieve the ultimate happiness through the realization of arhats, bodhisattvas and buddhas. We must, as much as possible, rid the poison that is selfishness to avoid serious retributions to ourselves. It is stated in Śāntideva's *The Way of the Bodhisattva*,

*If to serve myself I harm another,
I'll suffer later in the realms of hell.
If for others' sake I harm myself,
Every excellence will be my heritage.*

b. Discard the Poison-like Attachment to Oneself

When Ra Lotsawa⁹ was meditating on his deity in a quiet place, he realized that he had wanted to be in this kind of solitary retreat all of his life. But one day his deity told him, “You might as well go out to benefit living beings. The merits of even a brief moment of doing so will be much greater than diligently meditating on your deity in quiet isolation for billions of eons.” Hence the merits of being altruistic and helping others are far greater than self-absorbed penance even for endless years.

Again in Śāntideva’s *The Way of the Bodhisattva* it is said,

All the joy the world contains

Has come through wishing happiness for others.

All the misery the world contains

Has come through wanting pleasure for oneself.

Therefore, we must not allow our bodhicitta to drift away in the course of our practice. Patrul Rinpoche also said, “If you practice the unsurpassed Great Perfection without the premise of bodhicitta, it will become the practice of Hīnayāna or Tīrthika”.

That was why His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche said that selfishness is like a poison, an excellent metaphor which we should often contemplate. People with a strong sense of selfishness will fail eventually, regardless of where they are situated. Most of our arguments, afflictions, and quarrels are the products of selfishness, which would not appear if we become selfless. Thus, we should strive towards this goal to become real bodhisattvas.

In fact, we need not pay much attention to what people say, but instead, should just do whatever is possible to benefit others when we are still alive and able. Whether people are aware of what we are doing or not, it is quite alright either way. I believe that some of the things that we have done may not ever be known by other people in our lifetime, but all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, as well as our gurus will clearly know. The law of causality will always prevail. Therefore, it is of no value to help others for the sake of our own reputation and fame. Rather than being contaminated by all kinds of worldly concern, we should solely resolve to try all our best to benefit others.

2. The Merit of Arousing Bodhicitta

**This blocks the gate to the lower realms,
Allows you to attain the happiness of higher realms,
And eventually leads you to ultimate liberation from saṃsāra,
You should practice this essential teaching without being distracted
at all.**

a. The Merit of Bodhicitta

The merits of arousing bodhicitta include: blocking the gate to the lower realms, allowing us to obtain relative temporal peace and happiness in the higher realms of human beings and gods, and enabling us to ultimately attain liberation from saṃsāra. With the understanding of this fact, every Dharma practitioner should focus on the practice of this essential teaching.

The merits of bodhicitta, either the bodhicitta of aspiration or the bodhicitta of action, are immeasurable and boundless. This has been addressed in great detail in *Compendium of Trainings, The Way of the Bodhisattva*, and many other Mahāyāna sūtras. Simply put, the merits of bodhicitta can be manifested in two ways:

(i) If one arouses genuine bodhicitta, all negative karma can be eliminated in one's mind continuum, as a result, the doors to lower realms are blocked. Śāntideva says:

*Just as by the fires at the end of time,
Great sins are utterly consumed by bodhicitta.
Thus its benefits are boundless,
As the Wise and Loving Lord explained to Sudhana.*

The great sins refer to heavily negative karma that is difficult to purify, such as those accumulated through the five crimes with immediate retribution,¹⁰ or by criticizing the Dharma. But they can all be eliminated the moment bodhicitta arises in one's mind, like the fire at the end of time burning out the entire world. If one's negative karma is cleansed, there will be no chance of falling into the lower realms.

Hence His Holiness said that a person with bodhicitta cannot possibly fall into lower realms. We must try our best to generate bodhicitta before we die, and must make sure our bodhicitta is not impaired after it arises. In this way, we will avoid rebirth in the lower realms.

(ii) With bodhicitta, one's virtuous roots will become stronger and stronger. Consequently, one can gain rebirth as a human being or god to enjoy all the

temporal peace and happiness of the higher realms. Furthermore, one can perfect all the merits of the five paths and ten bhūmis, and attain the ultimate and unsurpassable fruit of buddhahood.

Therefore, the benefits of bodhicitta are indeed immense for living beings. Śāntideva also said,

*The pain-dispelling draft,
This cause of joy for those who wander through the world —
The precious attitude, this jewel of mind,
How shall it be gauged or qualified?*

b. Conclusion Made by Buddhas

It is the conclusion made by buddhas through long-term contemplations, with their unsurpassable wisdom, in numerous eons. Just like some scientists who devote themselves to research for a long period of time, so that they can invent something they believe will be of great benefit to all humankind. Similarly, the Buddha discovered that bodhicitta would bring the most benefit to all living beings. After repeated observations over a long period of time, it was found that innumerable living beings can readily attain the supreme fruit of buddhahood by arousing bodhicitta in their minds. Therefore, Śāntideva said,

*The mighty buddhas, deeply pondering for many ages,
Have seen that this, and only this, will save
The boundless multitudes,
And bring them easily to supreme joy.*

Hence His Holiness encourages all his disciples to cultivate bodhicitta and practice this essential teaching without distraction. We must not allow our

minds to be tempted by the eight worldly concerns and lose our direction. We must earnestly practice the pith instruction of bodhicitta, for it is the most important and precious approach among all the practices.

C. Encouragement to Arouse the Mind of Renunciation

1. The Merit of Observing Precepts

**For all kinds of grand events in saṃsāra,
Do not have any thought of desire.
Do observe the pure precepts, the magnificent adornment
in the world,
To which human and gods make supreme offerings.**

a. Real Mind of Renunciation

In order to achieve ultimate liberation from saṃsāra, we must not have even the slightest thought of desire towards the glitz and wealth in this ordinary world. Instead we should conscientiously observe the pure precepts, to which humans and gods make their transcendent offerings.

For those who hope to break away from reincarnation and attain liberation, the attainment of fame, power, high social status, and sensual enjoyment should be totally meaningless and not stir up any desire within them. If they sincerely view luxurious cars and mansions as if they are just objects in a dream, illusions, or bubbles, and truly feel that the three realms are nothing but a house on fire without any momentary bliss, they have aroused a real mind of renunciation.

However, in the beginning, many people are just like Nanda (the Buddha's half-brother) and have difficulties in completely abandoning yearnings and attachment towards worldly life. But if we persist in studying Buddhist teachings, we will eventually become aware of the insecurity of saṃsāra and further arouse renunciation in ourselves.

So how to arouse a real mind of renunciation? There is no better approach than contemplating the four thoughts that turn the mind away from saṃsāra: (i) the preciousness of being born a human being; (ii) the impermanence of life; (iii) the defects of saṃsāra; and (iv) the infallibility of the law of cause and effect. After we have completed these four common preliminary practices, true renunciation will most certainly arise in the continuum of our minds. At that time, we will constantly long for the liberation from saṃsāra, just like a prisoner desperately wanting to be freed from his prison. Lama Tsongkhapa says in his *Three Principal Aspects of the Path*,

*Freedom and endowments are difficult to find
And life has no time to spare.
By gaining familiarity with this,
Attraction to the appearances of this life is reversed.*

*By thinking over and over again
That actions and their effects are infallible,
And repeatedly contemplating the miseries of cyclic existence,
Attraction to the appearances of future lives is reversed.*

*When, by having trained in that way,
There is no arising, even for a second,
Of attraction to the pleasures of cyclic existence,
And all day and night the intention seeking liberation arises —
Then the thought of renunciation has been generated.*

b. The Magnificent Adornment in the World

Having aroused renunciation, we must receive and uphold the pure precepts, which are the most magnificent adornment in the world and to which humans and gods make offerings. The precepts are the foundation of all virtuous qualities. This is declared in the *Sūtra of Individual Liberation* that “it is a bridge for going to good destinies.” It is not very appropriate for monastic Buddhists to adorn themselves with jewelry such as earrings and bracelets. But a practitioner endowed with untainted precepts, which is the most dignified adornment, is worthy of prostration, worship, and offerings from humans and gods.

All sentient beings have different capacities to receive their own levels of precepts. For those with a stronger renunciation mind, they can receive ordination and observe the novice precepts, and the bhikṣu or bhikṣuṇī precepts. But if circumstances do not allow one to leave home and join a monastic community, one should at least observe one of the five precepts for lay practitioners, or take the refuge vows guided by a mind of renunciation. It is almost impossible for a practitioner to accumulate any merit if none of these precepts are carefully observed. In Nāgārjuna’s *Letter to a Friend*, it is stated,

*Keep your vows unbroken, undegraded,
Uncorrupted, and quite free of stain.
Just as the earth is the base for all that’s still or moves,
On discipline, it’s said, is founded all that’s good.*

The earth is the basis of everything on this planet. Similarly, all merits are born on the basis of precepts. If one does not receive and uphold any precept, it will be difficult for that person to be reborn even as a human or a celestial

being, not to mention attaining liberation. That is why in the *Thirty-Seven Practices of a Bodhisattva*, Thogme Zangpo says,

*If, lacking discipline, one cannot accomplish one's own good,
It is laughable to think of accomplishing the good of others.
Therefore, to observe discipline
Without samsaric motives is the practice of a bodhisattva.*

2. The Fault of Breaking Precepts

**Since all the temporary and ultimate happiness
Result from observing the pure precepts,
And breaking precepts leads one to take rebirth in lower realms,
You must make the right choices and not fall into confusion.**

The temporary benefits of taking rebirth in the realms of humans and gods, and the ultimate happiness of enlightenment and liberation all result from observing the pure precepts. If one breaks the vows and does not repent completely, one will definitely fall into one of the three lower realms. Therefore, it is imperative that a practitioner chooses correctly in his or her own conduct in order to avoid falling into confusion.

It is stated in the Sūtra of Individual Liberation that the only destination for those who break precepts is the three lower realms of the hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals. Accordingly, in the Condensed Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra, it is also said, “Those who break their precepts cannot even help themselves, let alone benefit others.”

Observing the pure precepts has become more and more difficult in this degenerate age. In particular, it is becoming more difficult for monastic people to follow uncontaminated precepts in this highly commercialized

information age. Televisions, laptops and cell phones provide constant sensory stimulation and continual temptation. As a result, many people do not have true renunciation in their minds, and very few can stay in remote and solitary places and focus solely on the practice of Dharma as did practitioners in ancient times.

Therefore, if one has a certain level of renunciation and a sincere desire to achieve enlightenment, it is quite necessary to take the threefold refuge vow and observe the five precepts. In case a person has broken any of these vows, one should receive them again from a qualified teacher.

The reason for this is that, in the same way that flowers, grass, and trees can only grow from soil, all merit grows and prospers on the basis of precepts. In one of his texts, *The Main Path to Enlightenment*, Lama Tsongkhapa specifically refers to a teaching in the sūtras, which says that in the degenerate age the merit of holding even one day's precepts would outdistance the merit of making offerings to buddhas and bodhisattvas in thousands of millions of eons. Therefore, we must not be confused and miss our aim in this degenerate age. We should be extremely careful in our choices to accept the causes and conditions that will help protect our precepts, and to discard the unfavorable conditions that will lead us to break our vows. This should be the goal we all strive towards!

D. Encouragement to Develop A Virtuous Personality

1. Reasons for Developing A Virtuous Personality

Always comply with your friends in word and deed

Be a person of integrity filled with kindheartedness.

In order to benefit yourselves in the long term,

The pith instruction is to benefit others at the present moment.

a. The Importance of Virtuous Personalities

What a virtuous personality entails is that we must always be respectful with our family members and friends in what we say and do; to be kind and act with integrity; and that if we wish to benefit ourselves in the long run, the key is to benefit others in the present moment.

Dharma practice requires a virtuous personality. This is the essential teaching summarized by His Holiness through many years of his teaching. His Holiness required that anyone who studies at Larung Gar must follow three rules, which are (i) to cultivate a virtuous personality; (ii) to uphold the pure precepts; (iii) to listen, reflect, and meditate on the Dharma teachings.

Regardless of whether one studies the Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna teachings, it is imperative that one has a virtuous personality; otherwise, making any progress in one's Dharma practice becomes impossible. Jamgön Mipham says in *The Words on the Mundane and Transmundane Codes*,

*Worldly rules are the foundation of Buddhadharma,
If one does not act nobly in the world,
One will never grasp the supreme principle of Buddhadharma,
Not to mention to achieve enlightenment.*

b. What are Virtuous Personalities?

In this verse His Holiness identified the following standards for a virtuous personality and expected us to remember them well.

“Always comply with your friends in word and deed.” We must always get along peacefully with our family members and friends regardless of their age and status. From a worldly perspective, a person with good characteristics is respectful to those of higher status, compassionate to the less privileged, and gets along harmoniously with those who are their equals.

There is a metaphor in Tibetan areas: “When one hundred yaks are all climbing uphill, the Gaba (the inferior type of yak) run downhill.” This is a very vivid illustration. A man who has a negative personality is always clashing with others in his behavior. People all feel relieved when someone like this leaves the group. It is like having a pterygium removed from one’s eye; its departure is reason for celebration.

As the Buddha says, “I will comply with worldly people.” If the Buddha behaves in this way, we ordinary human beings must surely do the same. Of course, compliance does not mean being without principles. Compliance does not mean that one should comply with other’s greed or hatred. We comply with deeds that are rational and in accordance with the Dharma, and in this way, we get along harmoniously with everyone.

“Be a person of integrity.” Whatever we say and do, we must be fair-minded, honest and impartial. We must be free of self-attachment and aversion to others. Additionally, we must never place ourselves in a dominant position, nor judge things unfairly. We must abide by the truth and be impartial.

Hence, it is imperative to be a person of integrity. Then, no matter how we have been misunderstood or defamed, we will never really be harmed. Our kind and honest nature will shine like pure gold, and not be tarnished by hindrances or darkness.

“With kindheartedness,” if someone appears to have integrity and seems to be willing to comply with other people, but is vicious in mind, then this person’s moral quality is questionable. The mind is the root of everything. Lama Tsongkhapa once said,

*If the intention is good, the levels and paths are good.
If the intention is bad, the levels and paths are bad.
Since everything depends on intentions,
Always make sure they are positive.*

If one is kind-hearted, everything will be bright; but if one does not set his or her heart right, one will only be moving towards darkness.

These three principles of being a decent person are of great importance. His Holiness further pointed out that if we would like to benefit ourselves in the long run, being of benefit to other people in the moment is fundamental. As ordinary human beings, it is impractical never to think of our own well-being, but if we harm those around us in the process of pursuing our own goals, we will not advance. It may appear to be a kind of selfishness to help others for the sake of our own benefit. It is indeed better to not have such thoughts. If you really cannot arouse a truly altruistic mind, you should at least try to be kind to other people for your own advantage and survival.

His Holiness once said jokingly, “After having lived for this many years, I have noticed that many people have very little worldly wisdom. Most of

them are only selfishly trying to benefit themselves, even though this is not necessarily a good strategy. For example, a young person may love someone and would try everything possible to possess the other party, including restricting his or her freedom. The result is often counterproductive. Others may take a different approach by wholeheartedly supporting and helping the person they love. By doing so, they are more likely to be accepted by the objects of their affection. When we study Buddhadharma, if we do not realize how important a virtuous personality is, and do not try to cultivate good characteristics, we will not be able to reach any state of enlightenment in our practice.”

2. The Merit of Maintaining A Virtuous Personality

**These are the pure standards for being a good person,
And the skillful means of all buddhas of the past, present
and future,
Also the essence of the four dharmas of attraction,
Each of you, my disciples, should never forget!**

a. The Merit of Maintaining Virtuous Personality

From a secular and purely ethical perspective, possessing a virtuous personality is seen as synonymous with being a good person. From the perspective of seeking enlightenment, it is the most effective means to achieving buddhahood for all buddhas of the past, present, and future. It is also the essence of the four dharmas of attraction that bodhisattvas follow. All Buddhists should keep this in mind and never forget.

Virtuous personalities are “pure standards for being a good person,” the basic principles that govern the life of a decent human being. During Buddhism’s prime period in Tibetan history, Emperor Songtsen Gampo set up the Sixteen Guidelines for being a good person,¹¹ which included developing devotion for the Three Jewels; seeking out and practicing the sacred Dharma; repaying the kindness of one’s parents; being honest, having little jealousy, and so on.

A virtuous personality is not only essential in a worldly life, but even importantly, it is a guide to an enlightened life. In fact, it is the path of the most “skillful means” to attain buddhahood for all buddhas of the past, present, and future. Regardless of which buddha we are referring to, he or she must have been a good person prior to enlightenment.

Even if we put aside the accomplishments of their realization and enlightenment, we can also easily tell that truly enlightened masters are extremely attractive in terms of their personal charisma. For myself, I have followed and relied upon many great spiritual teachers in my life, and the appeal of their words and deeds exceeds ordinary people’s imagination. These great teachers, as a result of their virtuous personalities, have reached a unique state beyond the secular world.

Virtuous personalities are also “the essence of the four dharmas of attraction,” which include: (i) giving what others like, in order to lead them to love and receive the truth; (ii) speaking gentle words, with the same purpose; (iii) giving benefit to others, with the same purpose; (iv) cooperating with and adapting oneself to others, to lead them into the truth. These are the four major methods of bodhisattvas to benefit sentient beings, and they are all built upon a virtuous personality. With a virtuous personality,

one is willing to give, to speak pleasing words, to benefit others, and to cooperate with and adapt oneself to others in order to lead them to enlightenment.

b. The Heart Advice of His Holiness

Because of the reasons given above, His Holiness offered this heart advice: “For those of my students who have faith in me, you must always remember to be a virtuous person, now and in the future. If you cannot be a good person, all your other cultivations are like trees without roots and will never grow and flourish.”

In the past, the esteemed Kadampa masters would first observe a student’s personality before admitting them as a disciple. If the student was not a decent person, the masters would not accept him as a disciple nor pass on the Dharma lineage to them. On the other hand, if a student was a good person but may be less learned, the masters would still expect him or her to be a good student. Therefore, a virtuous personality, rather than intelligence is the critical element here. A good person is not necessarily one with solemn appearance, a beautiful voice, and elegant manners; he or she must be kind-hearted.

It is not unusual for people to have differences in opinions on minor issues. Even some bhikṣu or bhikṣuṇīs in the saṅgha around the Buddha experienced these kinds of problems. But overall, no matter which school is followed, either from a Mahayana or Vajrayana background, a saṅgha needs to remain as a congenial community and to have a harmonious and cohesive atmosphere. This is also a manifestation of a virtuous personality.

In summary, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche addressed four major pith instructions in this text, which are nondual wisdom in the context of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna teachings, bodhicitta, renunciation, and virtuous personality. These four pith instructions are the essence of all 84,000 Dharma teachings being summarized through his theoretical study and personal realization. Each of us must keep them firmly in mind.

III. Closing

A. Dedication

**I dedicate this virtue to all sentient beings,
May they transcend the abyss of saṃsāra.
May all my heart disciples be joyful
And take rebirth in the Western Pure Land of ultimate bliss.**

The merit and virtuous roots resulting from the composition of this song have been transferred to all sentient beings to help them transcend the horrifying abyss of the six realms of saṃsāra. The essence of the 84,000 Dharma methods has been summed up in the four pith instructions addressed above. May great bliss arise in the hearts and minds of those with faith in His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche and in Buddhism. May all sentient beings, with auspicious affinity, be reborn in the Western Pure Land, attain ultimate peace and happiness, and benefit innumerable sentient beings in the future.

B. Colophon

In the seventeenth cycle of the Tibetan calendar and the year of the fire rat [1996], the teacher and the disciples had overcome all the external, internal, and secret hindrances. On this auspicious day, Ngawang Lodrö Tsungme celebrated the victory, and sang extemporaneously among the almost five thousand monastic persons. Sādhu!

There are sixty years in a full cycle of the Tibetan calendar. The chronological record of Tibetan history began in 1027 AD. The year when His Holiness composed the *Song of Victory* was in the seventeenth cycle of the Tibetan calendar in the year of the fire rat on September 21, 1996. As mentioned earlier, this was when His Holiness returned to the monastery after overcoming all external, internal and tantric hindrances, and had a joyous reunion with all of his disciples. The monastery arranged a Vajra Entertainment Dharma Assembly for this special occasion, during which the entire narrative of His Holiness' illness and recovery was performed, including some dohas originally sung by Venerable Dromtönpa and Jamgön Mipham as a blessing to His Holiness.

Ngawang Lodrö Tsungme is His Holiness' Dharma name. He sang the *Song of Victory* extemporaneously surrounded by almost five thousand monastic persons, Sādhu! Sādhu!

* Translated into English from Khenpo Sodargye's Chinese version.

¹ There four are explained in the commentary below.

² This is an alternative name for Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche.

³ For a discussion of Tibetan song genres inherited from India, see Roger Jackson 1996.

⁴ For a list of these, see <http://kopanmonastery.com/about-kopan/monastic-education/the-five-great-treatises>.

⁵ One of Atiśa's famed disciples. To read about this figure, see <https://treasuryoflives.org/biographies/view/Dromton-Gyelwa-Jungne/4267>.

⁶ This was one of Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's root teachers.

⁷ Mount Wutai, or Wutai Shan, is the sacred abode of Mañjuśrī in central China.

⁸ More details can be found in Mañjuśrīvikrīḍitasūtra, translated by Dharmarakṣa from Sanskrit into Chinese in West Jin Dynasty.

⁹ On this figure, see Cuevas 2015.

¹⁰ See Lopez and Buswell 2016: 40–1.

¹¹ These sixteen guidelines are referred to as human values (mi chos) in contrast to the Buddhist ethics with its code of ten virtues (dge bcu).



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