

A JOURNEY TO THE WEST I

Recollections of Accompanying My Guru to Europe and
North America in 1993

Compiled by

Khenpo Sodargye

***Homage to the supreme guru
who possesses non-referential, great compassion!***

*The entire itinerary of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche's
dharma trip in Europe and North America in 1993 is recorded and related
in this book in ten chapters.*

*I pray to the guru, the deity, and the dharma protectors
for their permission and blessings!*

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PREFACE

This book, *A Journey to the West*, mainly focuses on the precious teachings of H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche during his travels to Europe and North America to spread the dharma in 1993. From the Land of Tibet, which was starved of information, to the technologically advanced United States, Canada, and France, the audiences' dispositions and preferences were completely different, and as a result there was a huge variance in the way Chojé, Lord of Dharma, delivered the dharma teachings. If he were an ordinary person, Chojé would have felt very uncomfortable with the unfamiliar culture and environment. But he was quite at ease, and with his exceptional wisdom and preeminent realization, he deeply impressed and influenced a large group of Europeans and Americans.

Looking back on Yidzhin Norbu's entire life of seventy-one years, the details of this journey to the West remain unknown to most people. I had the privilege of accompanying him on this trip, and as a witness, I feel it is necessary to reveal his elegant demeanor to everyone. For a long time, I wanted to collate my notes that were recorded back then and the material I brought back from the trip and compile them into a book. Later, I was able to collect even more material through various channels, but I have been putting it off until now because I was busy with dharma teachings and other matters.

This year coincides with the 30th anniversary of Chojé's visit to Europe and North America, and the 20th anniversary of his parinirvana. Given such a special occasion, I put everything else aside and primarily focused on this book. Starting in December 2022, I began to write this book in both Tibetan and Chinese simultaneously, and also had the International Translation Team¹ translate it into English, Japanese, and so forth. Most of the time, I worked more

than ten hours every day, during which I encountered some health issues and had to undergo an operation. Just after I was discharged from the hospital, driven by a strong feeling of impermanence, I continued working on the book. Then, by the end of April 2023, I completed my draft.

In June, when I invited Khenpo Tsultrim Lodro Rinpoche to help me preview this book, at that time he said, “This year is the 20th anniversary of Lama Yidzhin Norbu’s parinirvana. It is best that we can distribute this book to the sangha as a gift during the Parinirvana Dharma Assembly.” All the khenpos in charge of Larung Gar this year, including Khenpo Tsondu Tarchin and Khenpo Wangchuk Tsegyal, attach great importance to this book and suggested that this book be offered to all lineage disciples of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok at the dharma assembly as a remembrance. Moreover, the primary individuals in the preparatory team responsible for arranging this dharma assembly have proofread this book and promised to take charge of all affairs to put it into print. It is particularly worth mentioning that Tulku Tendzin Gyatso has not only proofread the book in a meticulous manner, but also provided precious advice for the improvement of some content based on his experience of writing the extensive biography of Chojé in recent years.

In July, I gathered the suggestions and feedback from everyone, carefully examined and revised the necessary parts, and finalized the draft in a satisfactory way. In the process of writing the book, I listened to the recordings of Rinpoche’s original teachings many times, first compiling them into the written format in Tibetan, and then translating them into Chinese. When I encountered some stories or certain statements mentioned in the teachings, I would look up the related materials to make sure they were true and accurate. While laying out the manuscript, the photos of each stop were arranged in the appropriate places according to their times and dates. Some of these photos are screenshots

from video recordings at that time. Although not of highest quality, the photos represent accurate, historical footage.

Previous great masters have said that it is permissible to make mistakes in dharma teaching and debating, but composing a text must be rigorous and free of error. However, I found that even Yidzhin Norbu's oral teachings rarely needed any correction or adjustment after they were written down. What he taught was already perfect on its own. His words were eloquent, valuable, and captivating in such a way that everyone will derive benefit.

In this book, besides Rinpoche's original teachings, I also added some of my recollections. Following the principle of "not boasting or exaggerating about one's guru with false words," I tried to make sure all the content was accurate. If there were some details that I could not remember clearly, I felt okay about leaving that out. As for the empowerments that Chojé gave during the trip, I did not include them in this book since I wish in the future to compile a separate book as a faithful recording of the liturgies and procedures of all the empowerments that he granted.

From the book, the reader can see that Chojé did not take a single day of rest during the three months of this trip. He was either carrying out his enlightened activities or was on the way to the next place of his enlightened activities. Within the one hundred five days, he gave forty empowerments and sixty-eight talks, and his traveling by car and airplane alone was more than two hundred hours. Without the great compassion and altruistic aspiration to benefit sentient beings, an ordinary person simply could not have made such a fully packed trip.

Thirty years ago, Yidzhin Norbu clearly observed the capacity and preference of westerners, and without any reservation, he passed onto them the precious teachings of Secret Mantra that were difficult to obtain even in the Tibetan monastic community. Such an exception was the first and also the last time. If

anyone wants to practice any of these supreme tantric teachings in the future, they must first seek the empowerment, transmission, and guidance manual of the teaching from a qualified lineage master. Otherwise, it will be harmful and unproductive.

In this day and age, most people are used to speed reading on the Internet and are inseparable from their smart phones. They may not have the patience to read through long articles of dharma teaching, preferring short quotations and magical experiences to satisfy their searching minds instead. However, for a person who truly seeks liberation, these profound teachings that arose naturally from the ocean of Rinpoche's wisdom are priceless beyond all else. Especially, for those who never met him, just reading this book is equivalent to meeting Chojé in person and listening to his teaching face to face.

This book is a true documentation of the teachings given by a great Buddhist master in this modern age. For worldly people, it may be easier to learn more about Buddhism from another perspective. For dharma practitioners, they can find the actual pith instructions they need for their own practice right here. For dharma teachers and propagators, they can be inspired by these stories about H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. For lineage disciples, they will refresh their memories of Chojé's impressions that spread the dharma in the West, and they can go on to be inspired by emulating his spirit of propagating the dharma for the benefit of all beings.

I would like to thank everyone who was involved in this project called *A Journey to the West*. Whether they were typing, editing, proofreading, typesetting, printing, or provided photos, audio, and video recordings, all these elements of participation have enriched this publication, enabling it to present this history more vividly and memorably.

If there are any errors in the book, I sincerely repent them in the presence of my guru and the wisdom deity. With this merit, I make the dedication to all sentient beings throughout the universe to swiftly attain the fruition of the ultimate guru!

*Written by Sodargye in the Rainbow Light Cave,
A sacred terma place of Padmasambhava that is fully endowed with supreme blessing
The Seventeenth Day of the Fifth Month of the Water Rabbit Year
July 5th, 2023*



Tracing the Footsteps of My Guru to the West in **1993**

ITINERARY

Tokyo 1 day, 1 talk

Hawaii 4 days, 4 talks, and 3 empowerments

Boulder 7 days, 5 talks

Rocky Mountains 7 days, 10 talks, and 2 empowerments

California & Oregon 16 days, 11 talks, and 9 empowerments

Washington, D.C. 9 days, 6 talks, and 2 empowerments

New York City 8 days, 6 talks, and 3 empowerments

Boston 8 days, 4 talks, and 5 empowerments

Nova Scotia 6 days, 6 talks, and 2 empowerments

Southern France 8 days, 7 talks, and 3 empowerments

Hong Kong 4 days, 1 talk, and 3 empowerments

Taiwan 7 days, 5 talks, and 5 empowerments

Chengdu 7 days, 2 talks, and 3 empowerments

105 days, on the trip


68 talks

200⁺ hours, travel time

40 empowerments

14 cities

Traveling **41,680** kilometers,
equivalent to traveling around the earth once



June 12th–June 17th

BEGINNING

SCHEDULE

June 12th

Departed from Larung Gar for Dartsedo

June 13th

Arrived in Chengdu

June 14th

Flew to Guangzhou

June 15th

Went through Shenzhen customs and reached Hong Kong

June 16th

Passed through Tokyo, Japan and gave teachings

June 17th

Flew to Hawaii, United States

PREPARED SECRETLY OVER THREE YEARS

When Kyabjé Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche visited India in 1990, he already had the plan to go to the West to spread the dharma. Once, His Holiness² spoke to me in private, “I am planning to visit the US and some other western countries in three or four years to teach the dharma there. If you are interested and your family would agree, I can bring you along. For the moment, do not reveal this plan to anyone else to avoid unnecessary obstacles. Although there is nothing mysterious about our traveling abroad, to ensure that everything goes smoothly, the plan should be kept confidential. You have always been tight-lipped about such matters. That is good!” Having said those words, Yidzhin Norbu continued, “To move forward with this plan, I would like Khenpo Namdrol to be in charge of communications with the dharma centers, and you to be responsible for making all the preparations.”

Hearing these words, my mind was overcome with both excitement and stress. I thought to myself, “I must make every effort to serve my guru by trying my best to please and satisfy him, regardless of the outcome!”

After our conversation, I began secret preparations for the trip, such as passport applications, fund raising, and gathering necessary materials, such as a good camera and so forth. I also tried to learn about the manners and customs of the western world to be prepared. Back then, there was no worldwide web or social media, so I made do with the resources available at the time.

In addition, I needed to organize and prepare the dharma texts, liturgies, and ritual implements. In particular, it was necessary to make recordings of certain teachings and liturgies because, since 1990, Chojé’s vision was already compromised, making it difficult for him to read the texts. Although he could memorize the shorter texts and common liturgies for empowerment, it was still necessary to record the longer ones so that during his teaching, he could listen

to a paragraph and then take a pause to explain it. Since Khenpo Chimé Rigdzin had a very good voice and was good at reading, I asked him to help me make the recordings of the *Chetsun Nyingtig*,^a *The Flight of the Garuda*,^b and other texts that His Holiness would teach. Once he asked me in a whisper, “Why would you need these recordings? Is Yidzhin Norbu planning for a long journey?” Although awkward, I declined to reply and quickly changed the subject.



0.1: The tape recorder used by Chojé for many years

In the following three years, His Holiness received many invitations from important Buddhist centers in the US, Canada, France, and other countries. Back then at Larung Gar, there were very few people who even understood English. Even if some might understand, I could not ask them for help because I had to keep the information hidden. Nonetheless, I was able to figure out the meaning of those invitation letters and reported the content to Rinpoche.

Generally speaking, I secretly prepared for the trip for some three years. Before we embarked on the journey, I felt fully prepared for what was to come.

^a *lce tsun snying thig*.

^b *lta ba'i mgur mkha' lding gshog rlabs*; Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol.

THE FIRST GRAND DHARMA ASSEMBLY OF SUKHAVATI

In 1993, the year of the Water Bird in the Tibetan Calendar, His Holiness was sixty years old. At the beginning of that year, he gave the teaching of *Exploring the Nature of Mind: Treatise of the Precious Vajra Garland*^a at Larung Gar Five Sciences Buddhist Academy. During that period, the construction of the first dharma hall for the Han Buddhist sangha called “The Sutra and Mantra Dharma Hall for Han Sangha” was completed. Rinpoche consecrated it and imparted the Dzogchen empowerment to the Han sangha, as well as the teaching on Longchenpa’s *Natural Freedom of the Nature of Mind*.^b

Afterward, Yidzhin Norbu invited Tulku Tishta and Khenpo Tepas from Domang Monastery to come and give the empowerment and teaching of *Dupa Dō*^c to the entire sangha at Larung Gar. During that time, His Holiness went to Drango, Garze, Palyul, Nyarong, Dawu, and other Tibetan regions to spread the dharma teachings. On the trip, he bestowed profound empowerments for the fortunate ones, such as *Nyingtig Yabzhi*,^d *Kalachakra*,^e and other suitable instructions.

At that time, I was thirty-one years old. Together with the sangha, I received the empowerments from Tulku Tishta and the teaching on the *Commentary on Dupa Dō*^f from Khenpo Tepas, which lasted for approximately half a month. Meanwhile, I taught Longchenpa’s *Chariot of Excellence*,^g the commentary on

^a *nyug sem zur chad dorjé rinchen treng wa* (gnyug sems zur dpyad rdo rje rin chen phreng ba).

^b *sem nyid rang drol* (sems nyid rang grol); Longchen Rabjam.

^c *'dus pa mdo*; *Sutra which Gathers All Intentions*.

^d *snying thig ya bzhi*; *Four Sections of the Heart Essence*; Longchen Rabjam.

^e *du kyi khor lo* (*dus kyi 'khor lo*); *Wheel of Time*.

^f *pal chi dō gong pa dupa'i drel pa* (*dpal spyi mdo dgongs pa 'dus pa'i 'grel pa*); Khenpo Nuden.

^g *shingta zangpo* (*shing rta bzang po*); Longchen Rabjam.

Finding Rest in Illusion,^a and *Chariot of Surpassing Purity*,^b the commentary on *Finding Rest in Meditation*,^c to the Han sangha.



0.2: Choje consecrating the Sutra and Mantra Dharma Hall for Han Sangha

^a *gyu ma ngal so (sgyu ma ngal gso)*.

^b *shingta nam par dag pa (shing rta rnam par dag pa)*; Longchen Rabjam.

^c *samten ngal so (bsam gtan ngal gso)*.

A month later, His Holiness returned from his trip of spreading the dharma. Because many great masters in the past predicted that anyone who connected with him would certainly be reborn in Sukhavati, he decided to hold the Grand Dharma Assembly of Sukhavati for the first time. The dharma assembly was arranged to begin on the first day of Saga Dawa and continued for fifteen days.



0.3: The first Grand Dharma Assembly of Sukhavati with unprecedented splendor

As soon as this news came out, hundreds of thousands of people from different regions gathered at Nubzur for this event, pitching tents everywhere on the grassy fields. It was a spectacular scene with shiny white tents spread over the hills and fields and throngs of devotees like an ocean with no shore in sight. When the devotees tossed their white offering khata in the air, it looked like waves of water crests. The sound of chanting mantras seemed to be louder than the roar of dragons. No words could fully describe the momentum of this grand event. I was so gratified that my loving parents also traveled a long way from my hometown to attend this great gathering.



0.4: The first Grand Dharma Assembly of Sukhavati

During the dharma assembly, His Holiness bestowed the Amitabha empowerment, and every day bestowed teachings on the *Infinite Life Sutra*^a and Ju Mipham Rinpoche's *Sun-like Instructions of a Sage*.^b He exhorted everyone to chant the name of Buddha Amitabha a million times and to abstain from the misdeed of abandoning the dharma and the five misdeeds with immediate retribution. He assured everyone that in doing so, they would certainly take rebirth in Sukhavati. In addition, Lama Mumtso³ also imparted an Avalokiteshvara empowerment and the teaching on *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas*.^c



0.5: Chojé teaching at the Sukhavati Dharma Assembly

By virtue of this Grand Dharma Assembly, numerous people created auspicious causes to be born in the pure land of Sukhavati.

^a *od dō* ('*od mdo*), Skt. *sukhavatīvyūhasūtra* or *amitabhavyūhasūtra*.

^b *drang song lung nyi sok* (*drang srong lung nyi sogs*); Ju Mipham.

^c *gyalse lag len so dunma* (*rgyal sras lag len so bdun ma*).

A MYSTERIOUS PHONE CALL

On the afternoon of the first day of the Sukhavati Dharma Assembly, shortly after His Holiness finished teaching, someone came running up to him and said, “Khenpo Namdrol is trying to phone you, could you come to Nubzur Township’s office to answer it?” At that time, Yidzhin Norbu was still sitting on the dharma throne and chanting the dedication prayer known as the *King of Aspiration Prayers for Excellent Conduct*^a together with the sangha. Nevertheless, he immediately stood up and asked me to accompany him to the office to answer the phone.

At that time, there was only one landline at the Nubzur Township government office, which was located roughly half a kilometer away from where the dharma assembly took place. We took a car ride to the office. As soon as he arrived, His Holiness took over the handset and shouted into it, “This is Jigphun,⁴ this is Jigphun.” The phone quality was so poor that the voice was faint. He asked me to try to listen. I took over the handset but also struggled to hear. After quite a few tries while passing the handset back and forth between His Holiness and myself, we finally understood what the phone call was about.

It turned out that Khenpo Namdrol had traveled all the way from India and arrived in Chengdu. He had established the itinerary of His Holiness’ trip abroad. Every stop was arranged with a specific schedule, and there was not much time left before we were to set out. Khenpo Namdrol advised us to bring our identification cards and passports to Chengdu the very next day to apply for visas. His Holiness was unable to go to Chengdu because he was giving dharma teachings every day during the assembly. Therefore, I traveled to Chengdu the following day on my own, carrying the documents of everyone who was going on that trip.

^a *zangpo’i chod pa’i monlam kyī gyalpo (bzang po’i spyod pa’i smon lam kyī rgyal po).*

As soon as I got to Chengdu and met up with Khenpo Namdrol, we hurried to the American consulate. The consulate itself was not large, and in fact many people had already had their visa applications rejected on that very day. A female student even fainted upon learning her visa had been denied. Another person's visa was not only denied, but his visa was also stamped with a special mark making it even more difficult for him to travel to the US in the future.

By this time, I was longing to go to America with my guru. Seeing that so many people were rejected, I felt a little bit uneasy. Because usually a visa had to be applied for in person and the other three applicants, His Holiness, Ani Medron, and Lama Mumtso, were not present, I wondered if the consulate would even seriously consider our applications. Finally, I arrived at the visa officer's window and gave him the four passports. The consulate officer was a tall, red-haired man. He glanced at the passports and then looked at me, asking, "Are you all going to America? Where are the others? They cannot get the visas if they do not show up." I had to explain, "They will not get here for a few days because they are far away and have pressing obligations for the moment. However, our schedule abroad is already planned, and your consulate only works one or two days a week. So, I came alone, afraid it might already be too late to wait for their arrival. Can you please help out?" Hearing my words and looking at my maroon robe, he appeared very pleased and exclaimed with his thumb up, "Very Good!" Then, he stamped all our passports! Having the visas in hand, I was completely overjoyed.

Returning to Khenpo Namdrol's hotel, I noticed that he even had a landline in his own room! That was the first time I had laid eyes on such luxurious accommodations. While we were conversing, he abruptly made an odd inquiry, "How did you know the phone number of my room that day?" I asked, "Didn't you call us? I assumed that you had acquired the phone number of the township office through your connections." His eyes widened in surprise as he said,

“How is that possible? I never knew there was a phone in the Nubzur Township office!”

He went on, “I attempted to contact His Holiness the day after I arrived in Chengdu. However, it was extremely challenging to reach Sertar, as there are very few places with telephones. I was so worried that I had squandered a day but had no idea what to do. In the afternoon, I became somewhat sleepy. As I was dozing off, all of a sudden, the phone rang. I picked it up, still a bit dazed, and then the voice of His Holiness came through, “This is Jigphun...”

Making phone calls was rather expensive back then, but he did not pay for that call, and neither did we. To this day, we still find this account to be extremely incredible! Could this be the work of the dharma protectors in action?

DEPARTED FROM THE LAND OF TIBET

I returned to Larung Gar as soon as I got the visas, at which point the dharma assembly was not yet over. After reporting the details to His Holiness, he appeared very pleased.

Toward the end of the dharma assembly, he publicly announced his plan to travel abroad, saying, “I am not going to western countries for sightseeing and tourism, but rather in order to propagate the dharma there. This is very meaningful. Since this is an unusual journey, I hope the sangha will pray to the dharma protectors to bestow powerful blessings upon us for it.” Rinpoche continued, “Khenpo Namdrol and Ngodrup Dorje from India will accompany me, and from Larung Gar only Sodargye will go with me. Since we are traveling such a distance and our return may therefore be uncertain, in case Sodargye does not return, I believe that Tulku Tishta and Khenpo Tepa will not blame me. While we are away, all the resident sangha should listen attentively to

the dharma teachings of the khenpos and khenmos and diligently study and practice the dharma.”

Before departing, I appointed a Han Chinese khenpo and khenmo to teach *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*^a to the male and female Han sangha separately during my absence. Since my parents did not want to return to their hometown, Drango, at that time, I borrowed a black yak-hair tent for them to stay at Larung Gar.

Although I now had a bit more experience than the time we first went to India, I still felt great pressure in having more responsibilities for traveling abroad. I alone was not only responsible for His Holiness’ clothing, food, housing, and health care, but also for everything related to his dharma teachings. I had to carry a heavy yellow backpack at all times to keep commonly used medication, a camera, a tape recorder, notebooks, and other necessities on hand.

On June 12th, the day after the completion of the dharma assembly, we left the academy and arrived at Dartsedo in the afternoon. There, His Holiness met an old friend, who was the head of the local police department. He reminded us, “Both domestic and overseas situations are tense, complicated, and uncertain at this moment. If you do not travel soon, I worry there might be unwanted changes. Leave immediately and travel overseas directly from other provinces or Hong Kong. In this way, you can avoid needing to acquire approval from the provincial departments of Sichuan.”

On the 13th, we went from Dartsedo to Chengdu. On the early morning of the 14th, we took the 5 am flight to Guangzhou. After we landed, a female lay practitioner dressed in red came to receive us at the airport. She told us that our accommodations had been arranged. Actually, we did not know her and were not sure if we should trust her. But His Holiness said she looked like a devout

^a (*byang chub sems dpa'i spyod pa la 'jug pa*), Skt. *bodhicharyavatara*; Shantideva.

Buddhist, and it was okay to follow her arrangements. We stayed in Guangzhou for one night.

DIFFICULTY GOING THROUGH CUSTOMS

On June 15th, we arrived at Shenzhen customs en route to Hong Kong. Suddenly the customs officer complicated the process and declared, “Something is wrong with your passports! When you traveled to India in 1990, you left China with a stamp but returned without one. That is illegal!” In 1990 when we returned through Nepal, we had gotten temporary passports to facilitate the shipping of buddha statues and other items, which was fairly common in that region. But even after we explained this to the customs agents, they refused to listen and insisted that the incident be reported.

They confined us in a room and barred us from leaving. We supplicated to Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok for blessings to dispel the obstacles. He appeared to be in a state of meditation at this point, praying solemnly to Orgyen Padmasambhava and appealing to the dharma protectors King Gesar^{a,5} and red Tsen (Tsi-u Mar-po). He was silently murmuring something at the same time. A few minutes later, the customs officer walked in and said that despite our unusual circumstances, we were allowed to leave. It was truly a miracle that such a tricky situation just suddenly reversed itself. This experience deepened my faith in the incredible blessings of His Holiness and the dharma protectors.

After passing through the customs, we took a car to the Hong Kong Palyul Center and spent the night there. The next morning, His Holiness asked us to write down the prayers he had recited the day before at the customs’ office, which read as follows:

^a *gling ge sar*.

On the border between Shenzhen and Hong Kong, I felt a little worried when it came to checking the passports. Then, in my pure meditative experience, I had a vision of Orgyen Padmasambhava, the legendary King Gesar, accompanied by the dharmapala red Tsen. Witnessing them, I prayed:

*The three secret qualities of all buddhas and bodhisattvas
In infinite pure realms are embodied in you;
In your presence, O Padmasambhava, to you I devotedly pray!
Grant blessings so all our wishes will be spontaneously fulfilled!*

*Your wisdom, compassion, and power have reached perfection.
You lovingly care for the beings of the Snow Land as
your only children.*

*You, the werma^{a,6} of accomplishment, please look upon us and
Grant blessings so that all our aims may be easily accomplished!*

*Your compassionate response to supplication is swifter
than lightning.*

*Your way of enacting entrustment is more powerful
than a thunderbolt.*

*Yaksha Tsi-u Marpo, King Enemy Subduer,
Destroy all negative forces and obstacles immediately!*

*When such wholehearted supplications are made,
May terrors and illusory appearances dissolve into
the dharmadhatu.*

*May all attachments to self and the deity
Vanish in the non-referential dhatu of dharmakaya.*

Ngawang Lodrö Tsungmé wrote down this prayer at the residence of Drubwang Pema Norbu^{b,7} on the morning of the following day.

^a *wer ma.*

^b *grub dbang padma nor bu.*

During our stay in Hong Kong, Khenpo Namdrol gave me a yellow shirt and a dhonka,⁸ telling me that they had been brought from India and that the Indian cloth was of outstanding quality. I wore these two pieces of clothing throughout the entire trip while attending many empowerments and teachings given by His Holiness, so I grew quite attached to them. Until now, having worn them for thirty years, they are still fresh and unfaded. In fact, wherever I go, I carry these articles of clothing with me, which I acknowledge is a sentimental attachment or perhaps a natural expression of my devotion to Yidzhin Norbu.

FLEW OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN

In those days when we embarked on this overseas journey, countries were not as open or receptive as now. We were supposed to be the first Tibetans to go directly from the Land of Tibet to the United States. I learned that it was summer in the US, so I prepared a set of light clothing for His Holiness and bought a new suitcase. Compared to our last trip to India, this time we did not bring much food.

On June 16th, after a flight of about four hours from Hong Kong, we landed at Tokyo International Airport. The airport was like a crystal palace. It was clean and crystal clear, spacious and sparkly bright, and the floor was so spotless that when you walked on it, you could even see your face reflected in it. That was my first time being in a developed country, which made me feel like I was in a different world.

The busy schedule did not allow His Holiness to stay in Japan for long. Nonetheless, he spared time to lecture on the subject of compassion and wisdom to those who were interested in Shingon Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism. He also explored the connection between Buddhism and science with the audience, and during the discussion, he said, “Both science and Buddhism are essential

to humanity. While science fulfills people's material needs, Buddhism offers spiritual contentment. Neglecting Buddhism and single-mindedly pursuing material pleasures would be only counterproductive. In many Asian countries, both the rich at the top and the common people are in great need of the Buddhadharma that is like nectar..." Everyone in the audience was extremely inspired and showed great reverence for His Holiness.



0.6: Chojé giving teachings to some Japanese

After a short stay in Japan, we boarded the plane for our trip to Hawaii, United States. His Holiness flew in economy class. I remember that there were no complimentary meals on that plane, and all the flight attendants were middle-aged or older. During the flight, His Holiness needed hot water to take

his medication, and luckily, I had taught myself a little English, which came in handy at the time. “Hot water” was the first English phrase that I spoke during this trip.

For hours, the plane soared high above the infinite Pacific Ocean, where the sky and the sea seemed to blend into a single blue hue. That sight was utterly bewitching, but occasionally I felt somewhat desolate and lonesome, because there was only one scene out the window of the plane for such a long time. His Holiness gazed gently out through the window, with a red mala in his hands and a compassionate and contemplative expression on his face.

After a seven-hour flight, we landed at Honolulu International Airport in Hawaii, which is now known as the Daniel K. Inouye International Airport (HNL).



1st Stop

June 17th–June 22nd

United States

HAWAII

SCHEDULE

June 18th

Conferred the bodhisattva vow at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling in the morning and introduced the Great Perfection in the evening

June 19th

Gave the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment in the morning and taught the practice manual of the *Peaceful Manjushri, Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, in the afternoon

June 20th

Gave the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment in the morning and taught the practice manual of the *Peaceful Manjushri, Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, in the afternoon; and afterward, visited Hawaii Volcanoes National Park and witnessed the volcanoes that are located close to the Pacific Ocean

June 21st

Gave the empowerment of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* in the morning and visited the Punalu'u Black Sand Beach in the afternoon

A TSAMPA INCIDENT

Hawaii is an enchanting archipelago, a vacation destination for many famous people. I had heard about the forests of sandalwood, the stunning coral reefs, shimmering white sand beaches, azure ocean, dancing peacocks, and the gentle ocean breeze that nourishes the spirit. However, when I glanced at the atlas on the plane, this island chain appeared to be a tiny insect dropping into the vast ocean, which gave me a feeling of being isolated and fearsome.



1.1: Hawaii in the infinite ocean

At customs, we had a bizarre incident when a police dog sniffed out a bag of tsampa flour we had taken with us. The customs' inspectors instantly dispatched a group of police officers because in their eyes, this huge bag of "white powder" was unquestionably narcotics and we Tibetans a group of smugglers. After a lengthy explanation, they were still skeptical. I had to demonstrate by taking a few bites of tsampa in front of them; thus, they were relieved and let us exit. The officers also cautioned us against bringing these foods the next time because many agriculture products from certain countries were prohibited entry into the United States in case they may carry plant pests or foreign animal diseases.

Because of the unexpected incident, we missed our planned flight from Honolulu to Hilo and took the next flight instead. Due to the lengthy journey

and a long delay at customs, as well as jet lag resulting from the eighteen-hour time difference between Hawaii and the Land of Tibet, His Holiness appeared to be rather exhausted. Finally, we boarded the rescheduled flight that took about an hour to Hilo. In the late evening, we finally arrived at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling.

INTERNATIONAL CALLS WERE VERY EXPENSIVE

As soon as we were settled in, His Holiness said to me, “Can you make a call to inform our center that we have made it safely to the US? Also give this message to my friend from the Dartsedo police office.”

Back then, because the only prevalent communication devices were landline telephones, I asked the resident monk Lama Lobzang Dhonden for advice because it was late and finding a phone booth was not easy for me. He said that I could use his phone, a big mobile phone that was like a brick. I called the Nubzur Township office many times but was never able to reach anyone. However, I was able to reach His Holiness’ friend at the Dartsedo police office, so I requested his assistance in passing the information on to the sangha at Larung Gar.

Even though he was a little inebriated that day, he was sober enough to tell me, “On June 16th after your group departed, I got a warning from my superiors saying you were not authorized to leave the country. It is good to know that you have arrived now...” Khenpo Namdrol cut me off before I could respond, saying, “Hang up, hang up, international calls are very expensive!”

His Holiness called this friend the next day and spoke with him for a little while longer. Khenpo Namdrol peeked at him several times but dared not remind Rinpoche of the expense. I chuckled to myself as I noticed this from the side.

THE TRANSLATOR ARRIVED

The well-known American dharma translator Sangye Khandro, who had interpreted for many great Tibetan lamas, would serve His Holiness as his translator during this trip in America. That day, she, too, had taken a flight from California to meet with Kyabjé Rinpoche in Hawaii. Once the interpreter was in position, Rinpoche's journey to teach the dharma in the US was ready to begin.



1.2: Sangye Khandro in 1993

THE FIRST DHARMA TRANSMISSION

On the morning of June 18th, Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche conferred the bodhi-sattva vow ceremony at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling, also known as Wood Valley Temple. Because it was his first dharma teaching in the US, the host center of this dharma activity organized people to sing auspicious verses for Chojé and made the following introduction:

We have incredibly unique karma to be together here on this auspicious occasion. His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok is unable to stay for an extended period of time, so we shall fully embrace the dharma teachings during the course of the next short but precious four days and make a firm commitment to uphold and practice the teachings since this opportunity is quite rare.

In the Land of Tibet, to receive the dharma directly from Khenpo Rinpoche, pilgrims must endure great hardship and take a long journey from India or other parts of the Land of Tibet to the area where he resides. It is

not only quite hard to go there but even more challenging to stay there, because the place where Rinpoche lives is so cold and impoverished. Nonetheless, individuals who seek the dharma are willing to go through a great deal of difficulty just to be able to hear teachings from His Holiness in person.

Now, thanks to our past aspirations and prayers, all of us here are able to meet Yidzhin Norbu with such ease and sit here comfortably, seeing Rinpoche's majestic face and hearing his nectar-like dharma teaching.

Even though you lead a busy life and have a lot of obligations, you must put everything on hold for these few days, so that you can benefit fully from this series of teachings. The time to be with such a revered master as Rinpoche is short but so precious that we must abandon worldly ambitions and give the teachings our undivided attention. Also, be aware that a great number of Buddhists are here together to receive the dharma, and all of us need to maintain a virtuous intention with the same hope that the dharma we're going to receive will be firmly upheld and extensively disseminated!

At the commencement of the transmission, sitting graciously with compassion on the dharma throne, Yidzhin Norbu spontaneously sang an auspicious verse that we had never heard before:

*The dome of the sky is full of rainbows spread by auspicious
celestial maidens.*

The ground is filled with auspicious people who enjoy the ten virtues.

*The location completes the auspicious peaceful and
wrathful mandalas.*

May auspiciousness be perfected and ever-increasing!

After that, he wished everyone, “Tashi Delek” and explained this verse:

You have sung some auspicious verses for me before you receive the teaching. Therefore, I also chanted an auspicious verse for you before I impart the dharma teachings.

What does this verse mean? The opening sentence states that the auspicious celestial maidens are deeply joyful about this special and auspicious occasion, so they spread colorful clouds and dazzling rainbows that fill the entirety of space.

The second sentence means that after turning the wheel of dharma at this auspicious location, everyone will delightedly carry out the ten virtuous deeds.

The third is that Hawaii completes the signs of the peaceful mandala because it is a place like the blissful pure land of Sukhavati. It is also endowed with the signs of the wrathful mandala because it features fiery volcanoes.

The last sentence points out that this location is quite fortunate. May this auspiciousness last, spread, and ever increase! May everything be complete, always fortunate and sublime!

I did not prepare this verse in advance; it just came to me on the spur of the moment. I was instantly inspired after hearing your beautiful and auspicious chanting, and I spontaneously sang this song of good fortune for you.

Everyone was thrilled upon hearing this, as Chojé’s words were like rays of warm sunlight shining into everyone’s heart. A few peacocks were leisurely roaming on the lawn in front of the temple and quite timely made piercing calls that seemed to pass the mood on to everyone.

Following that, Yidzhin Norbu officially bestowed the bodhisattva vow.

Homage to the root gurus:

*Embodiments of all the buddhas of past, present, and future;
All-pervasive lords of oceanic mandalas and buddha families;
Glorious and noble masters whose kindness is unparalleled;
Precious root gurus—I bow down at your perfectly unblemished
feet and prostrate myself in devotion.
I take refuge in you! Grant your blessings, I pray!*

Homage to Buddha Shakyamuni:

*Who could ever tire of looking upon your noble face as bright and
clear as a flower in bloom?
The radiant stamen of your signs and marks are like nectar for the
eyes of all beings.
The petals of your compassion extend to encompass the three worlds.
O Lord of Sages, White Lotus, rest your lotus feet today in the lotus
pool of my mind!*

Homage to Padmasambhava:

*You are the embodiment of the wisdom and power of all buddhas,
Who graciously upholds countless wheels of mandala and
Takes the appearance as a great sage in this world.
You are the unparalleled Lotus King of the Supreme Vehicle!*

Homage to Venerable Longchenpa:

*In the expanse where all phenomena come to exhaustion, you
encountered the wisdom of dharmakaya;
In the clear light of empty space, you saw sambhogakaya buddha
fields appear;
To work for the benefit of all beings, you appeared to them in
nirmanakaya form—
Omniscient Sovereign of Dharma, I prostrate myself before you!*

Homage to Ju Mipham Rinpoche:

*The wisdom of Manjushri, Lion of Speech, arose in your heart,
And you trained in the infinite aspirations of Samantabhadra,
Performing the enlightened actions of the buddhas and their heirs—
Manjughosha Guru, at your feet, I pay homage!*

Homage to the Three Roots:

*Vidyadharas of mind, symbolic, and oral transmission lineages,
Deities in peaceful, wrathful, and passionate forms,
Dakinis of three spheres, and protectors of three tantras—
To the ocean-like gatherings of the Three Roots, I prostrate
to all of you.*

Homage to Manjushri:

*Now, from the wish to benefit others,
I visualize you upon the fresh lotus of my heart.
May the melodious sound of your nectar-like speech,
Confer its splendor upon my mind, O Manjushri!
You fully know the suffering of the three realms.
You extinguish the fierce fire of the hells and others.
As I swiftly benefit beings with great diligence,
I supplicate the noble ones—please bestow your power!*

Inviting all beings to listen to the dharma:

*In the worlds of the ten directions,
For the disciples of all the sugatas,
The wonderful dharma of the root teacher will be raining—
Those of you who wish to listen, please gather here!*

To benefit all sentient beings as limitless as space, please generate the unsurpassed bodhicitta!

Today I am extremely pleased and happy because all the circumstances for the dharma teaching are perfectly gathered, including the place, the time, the teacher, the retinue, and the teaching.

Five Perfections

The Perfect Time. I am particularly delighted about the time. According to the Tibetan Calendar, this month is the Saga Dawa month during which the Buddha's birth, enlightenment, and nirvana took place. This is the month when the Buddha's enlightened activities began and ended. So, it is the most auspicious period of the year.

I am also pleased that in this month right before I came here, we held a Grand Dharma Assembly of Sukhavati, in which some three hundred thousand Tibetans and more than ten thousand monastics gathered and made the aspiration to be reborn in Sukhavati. This auspicious gathering marked a favorable beginning because everyone present planted the seed to be reborn in the western pure land of Sukhavati.

The Perfect Place. Then, just after that gathering, I came to the United States, one of the most powerful countries in the world, to teach you the dharma. This interdependent arising is very auspicious, so I am deeply joyful.

The Perfect Teaching. In terms of the dharma, I am especially pleased. Although there are many good and wonderful religions in the world that bring people peace and happiness, being Buddhists, we are very fortunate to be able to encounter the dharma and be aware of its value in that the dharma can bring us permanent peace and happiness. Such awareness is a sign of understanding the significance of "the excellent eon." Most Buddhists are well aware of this important fact, but this understanding does not come from blind faith.

Although the Hinayana path that leads to self-liberation is also worthwhile, its motivation is only for oneself. Comparatively, the Mahayana

pursuit is much grander because it is motivated by the mind to benefit all sentient beings instead of just focusing on personal liberation. Therefore, we are very fortunate to follow the Mahayana path. Especially, it is even more fortunate for us to meet the Vajrayana, or Secret Mantrayana, which is the pinnacle of the Mahayana that has the potential to enable us to recognize the nature of mind and to quickly achieve fully enlightened buddhahood in a single lifetime. We are so lucky to have all these coincidences.

The Perfect Teacher. Personally, I encountered Buddhism at birth, began to give dharma teachings at the age of fourteen, and have been carrying on this undertaking ever since. I used to be quite adept at teaching. However, now as I am getting older, my health has declined, and my eyes no longer see texts clearly. Therefore, I feel that the quality of my teaching decreases in such a situation.

I had very little chance to learn about politics, technologies, and traditions of different western countries. I do not even know the eating habits. Therefore, I am a little embarrassed that the way I explain the dharma may fail your expectations and cannot satisfy your interest. I can only explain that this is the result of the karma from our previous lives. If there are any mistakes in what I say, you can correct me.

The Perfect Retinue. Today, most of you are Buddhists from different countries and nationalities, and you all have a certain level of faith and intelligence.

These are the five kinds of perfection.

Common Preliminaries

Before I get into the main topic, let me first emphasize the difficulty of obtaining a human body. Now that we have already gained the precious human body that has the freedom and potential to practice the dharma, it is very rare. Why? First of all, it is rare in terms of its cause. This human body is the result of accumulating merit, abstaining

from non-virtue, and practicing virtue throughout numerous lifetimes. It is not obtained through other means.

Secondly, this can be illustrated by an analogy. If we throw beans onto a wall, the chance of a single bean sticking on the wall is very slim. However, the chance of getting a human body is even less than that.

Thirdly, a human body is very rare in terms of its quantity. The Buddha taught in the sutras that the number of people who practice non-virtuous activities is equivalent to the number of dust particles on the entire earth, while the number of people who have attained the perfect human body and practice virtuous deeds is equivalent to the number of dust particles on a thumbnail.

Having obtained such a rare human body is of great significance. If you want to gain long life, health, wealth, and fame in this life, it is possible for you to have all of these by relying on this human body. Moreover, if you want to engage in dharma practice for the welfare of future lifetimes and to eventually attain the inconceivable buddhahood that is free from any suffering both physically and mentally, it is also possible for you to accomplish this goal by utilizing this body.

However, while you are endowed with such a precious body, if you do not seize the opportunity by all means to practice the dharma for the benefit of self and others, you may quickly lose it because death may come at any time. This is the impermanence of life. At the moment of death, you will certainly drift to other realms under the force of karma; this is the infallible karmic law. At that time, there would be no freedom to practice virtuous deeds and no opportunity to seek happiness; this is samsara, the repetitive cycle of frustration and suffering. Therefore, when you are still free and at ease right at this moment, you should practice pure and wholesome deeds.



1.3: Chojé with a warm smile

As for how to perform virtuous deeds, our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, out of his great loving kindness and compassion, taught many methods and compared them respectively to ordinary metal, gold, diamonds, and wish-fulfilling jewels. Among all these practices, the most supreme are those that are like wish-fulfilling jewels. So, out of so many methods that the Buddha had taught, which one do you prefer? The average, the medium, the better, or the best?

(The audience answered, “The best!” Then, everyone laughed.)

Ha ha, well, since you want to practice the best dharma, let me tell you that among the 84,000 teachings of the Buddha, there is nothing better than bodhicitta and the Great Perfection.

Bodhicitta is a teaching that all Mahayana practitioners can practice. The Great Perfection, on the other hand, is a Vajrayana teaching of Secret Mantra, which does belong to the Mahayana teaching, but can be practiced only by those of particularly sharp faculties and is not applicable to all Mahayana practitioners. Do you want to practice both or just one?

(The audience said, “Both!” And everyone laughed.)

Very good! It is excellent that you want to practice both. Most of the great masters in the Land of Tibet practiced these two together, and seldom chose only one of them. It is very excellent that you have such an aspiration!

Today, I am here to first introduce bodhicitta, and then give you the bodhisattva vow.

The Qualities of Bodhicitta

Now, I will talk briefly about bodhicitta.

With his great loving kindness and compassion, our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni had repeatedly observed over countless eons what

would be the most beneficial to sentient beings and would best help them to eliminate their suffering. By thorough investigation and reflection, the Buddha found that there was no better way than to practice the precious jewel-like bodhicitta. Bodhicitta can temporarily bring sentient beings peace and happiness in the human and celestial realms and ultimately enable all of them to attain supreme buddhahood. Therefore, people in this world who want to be free from suffering and attain happiness must rely on bodhicitta.

Once bodhicitta arises in a person's mind stream, that person is no longer an ordinary being. The moment bodhicitta arises, in terms of the name, the person's name becomes that of a *bodhisattva*, an heir of the tathagatas, who is completely beyond the realms of mundane beings. In terms of the significance, from then on, the person becomes the object of reverence for celestial beings, nagas, rakshasas, yakshas, gandharvas, humans, spirits, and other beings. Knowing the inconceivable benefits bodhicitta brings us, we need to cultivate bodhicitta.

As an example, one tael⁹ of magical, alchemical elixir has the potential to instantly turn a thousand taels of ordinary iron into gold. In the same way, bodhicitta can quickly transform this ordinary human body that is impure and unpleasant into the buddha body that is so perfect in appearance that beings will not tire of seeing it and that can benefit all sentient beings at all times.

Without bodhicitta, all forms of good deeds, including those of the body, like doing prostrations and circumambulations, and those of the speech, like chanting sutras and mantras, would be like the banana tree that bears fruit only once and then decays. Quite the contrary, the good deeds carried out with bodhicitta are like the wish-fulfilling tree in the celestial world or a fruit tree on earth, which keeps bearing fruit one after another. Bodhicitta can result in rebirth as a benevolent ruler, like a chakravartin or universal monarch on earth or Indra and Brahma in the celestial realm. Finally, you can attain supreme buddhahood to constantly benefit all sentient beings spontaneously and pervasively.

With bodhicitta, the mundane negative deeds you have accrued from beginningless time, such as killing and stealing, will be burned in a flash, like a heap of hay incinerated by fire. Even if you have committed a heinous crime, such as killing your father or mother, if you later give rise to bodhicitta, you will be liberated in the snap of a finger from the lower realms instead of suffering there endlessly. Therefore, those who want to purify their negative karma should also practice bodhicitta.

The above are a few of the qualities of bodhicitta. If you want to learn this topic more extensively, the *Sutra of the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas*^a gives a detailed explanation through more than one hundred analogies. If you want to understand the meritorious qualities of bodhicitta in the most concise way, keep in mind the following three points. First, if you possess bodhicitta, you will not fall into the three lower realms. Second, if you possess bodhicitta, even without diligent practice, you can still be effortlessly reborn in the higher realms of humans and gods. Third, if you possess bodhicitta, you can attain the fruition of buddhahood and pass beyond the cycle of old age and death.

Today we are gathering here under auspicious connections. Let us take this wonderful opportunity to receive the bodhisattva vow together.

Preliminary: Take Refuge

First, before taking the refuge vows, clearly visualize the space in front of you to be filled with the buddhas of the ten directions, the bodhisattva mahasattvas of the ten bhumis, and the lineage of vajra masters. With them as witness, you will generate bodhicitta. After visualizing this, recite this after me:

*All buddhas who dwell in the ten directions,
All great bodhisattvas on the ten levels,*

^a *pakpa sangye palpoche dō* ('phags pa sangs rgyas phal po che'i mdo), Skt. *buddhavatamsakasutra*.

*All great teachers, vajra holders—please turn your minds
toward me, I pray!*

Before developing bodhicitta, you must embrace the refuge vows. Without taking refuge in the Three Jewels, it is impossible to accomplish any level of dharma. So first I will give the vows of refuge.

When taking refuge in the Three Jewels, first you go for refuge in the Buddha. That is to vow that from now on and for all lifetimes going forward, refuge is taken in the root teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni. You will not convert to any other teacher who promotes a different doctrine that goes against the Buddha's teaching. To make such a vow is to take refuge in the Buddha.

Next is to take refuge in the dharma. That is to vow to practice the dharma that the Buddha taught, and to not embrace any doctrine other than that. This is the vow of taking refuge in the dharma.

Third is to take refuge in the sangha. That is to vow to follow the Buddha's disciples or followers, such as Manjushri, Vajrapani, Avalokiteshvara, and Padmasambhava, take them as an example by aligning yourself with them through view and conduct, and thus learn and practice the path of liberation. This is the vow of taking refuge in the sangha.

In short, even if your life is in danger, you must never abandon the Three Jewels and must promise to always follow them.

Next, recite the refuge vows three times.

*Until the essence of enlightenment is reached,
I go for refuge in the Buddha;
I take refuge in the dharma,
And in the entire host of bodhisattvas.*

(Disciples recited after Yidzhin Norbu three times.)

Now you have taken the refuge vows. Do you understand?

Today, you have taken the refuge vows and become Buddhists. The difference between a Buddhist and non-Buddhist is whether or not refuge has been taken.

You also need to know that from now on, whatever dharma you practice will have obvious results, and the power generated will certainly be significant. From now on, whenever you have any fear or suffering, just pray to the Three Jewels wholeheartedly, and you will certainly receive protection. If you wish for worldly fame, happiness, power, and status, just pray to the Three Jewels sincerely, and these benefits will come to you as well.

After taking refuge in the Three Jewels, you must abstain from intentionally harming any sentient being and try to truly benefit them instead. This is most essential!

Main Practice: Generate Bodhicitta

Next is the main part of the ritual for receiving the bodhisattva vow—the generation of bodhicitta. There are two types of bodhicitta, aspirational bodhicitta and practical bodhicitta. Aspirational bodhicitta is the wish or prayer for all sentient beings to attain buddhahood. In addition, practical bodhicitta is to engage in the many bodhisattva practices and disciplines through the six paramitas of generosity, discipline, patience, and others.¹⁰ That is the practical application of the aspiration in order to actualize the wish.

Now, join me in reciting the verses for taking the bodhisattva vow three times. After the first recitation, visualize that you have generated aspirational bodhicitta. After the second recitation, visualize that you have generated practical bodhicitta. After the third recitation, visualize that these two bodhicitta's arise simultaneously in your mind.

Following this, take the bodhisattva vow, and you can then be called *a child of the buddhas* and *bodhisattva*.

*Just as all the buddhas of the past
Have brought forth the awakened mind
And through discipline the bodhisattvas
Abided and trained step-by-step,
Likewise, for the benefit of beings,
I give rise to the bodhicitta,
Follow their conduct, and
Will abide and train myself.*

Now that you have received the bodhisattva vow and have developed the precious jewel-like bodhicitta in your mind stream, you can be called *a bodhisattva*. In particular, if on the basis of aspirational bodhicitta you really benefit sentient beings through your body and speech, that is the practical application of bodhicitta.

Of the two types of bodhicitta, the latter is supreme. Although aspirational bodhicitta also has all the above-mentioned qualities, when practical bodhicitta arises in your mind, even if you fail to actually perform good deeds but rather just relax and sleep, the virtue and merit will continue to endure, like the steady stream of a river, increasing every day. The qualities of practical bodhicitta are so vast that even space cannot contain them. The benefits of this are inconceivable. Such being the case, of these two kinds of bodhicitta, it is more important that you focus on the practical application of your bodhicitta aspiration.

Why does bodhicitta bring about such great merit? To illustrate, just as space is boundless, the number of sentient beings is boundless. The object of bodhicitta is to wish that all countless sentient beings obtain happiness and freedom from all suffering. Because this aspiration is for the benefit of innumerable sentient beings, through reasoning, you can understand why it produces vast merit.

Surely, the incredible merit of bodhicitta, the altruistic intention to benefit all sentient beings, can also be illustrated by many stories from the Buddhist sutras. For example, many eons ago, there was a merchant guide named Daughter of Sea Captain Vallabha.¹¹ Due to the force of negative karma, he was reborn in a lower realm, which was the karmic result of kicking his mother in the head with his foot in his previous life. Karmically, he had to experience the pain of the iron wheel spinning on his head and smashing his brain to a pulp. At that time, he thought to himself, "There are so many beings suffering such pain. What an agony! I wish all their sufferings will ripen upon me and their pain disappear immediately." When such an aspiration occurred to him, the iron wheel rose into the air, and he was immediately freed from suffering and enjoyed peace and happiness.

If his intention of wishing just one class of sentient beings to be free from suffering has such incredible merit, it goes without saying that our bodhicitta of wishing all sentient beings throughout the universe to be free from suffering and to enjoy happiness has immeasurable merit.

Furthermore, if someone makes offerings to the buddhas of the three times over hundreds of millions of years with the seven treasures, delicious food, exquisite clothing, and so forth, their merit and virtue are naturally great. But if a person has the kind intention to wish all sentient beings to attain buddhahood even once, their merit and virtue far exceed the former.

Practice after Taking the Vow: Rejoice in Oneself and Others

The bodhicitta is as precious and rare as a wish-fulfilling jewel. It is said that the wish-fulfilling jewel appeared at the beginning of the eon, but not now. When a universal monarch appears in the world, the wish-fulfilling jewel will appear along with the monarch and this has the potential to rain down clothes, food, treasures, and so on within one yojana¹² radius to satisfy sentient beings. It is a precious treasure

that is only obtained by those with great merit, and unfortunate ones usually do not have access to it.

If we compare bodhicitta to the wish-fulfilling jewel, bodhicitta is much more significant. Now that each of you have generated bodhicitta, you should rejoice from the bottom of your hearts. In this state of mind, everyone please recite after me the following verses of being joyful for your generation of bodhicitta:

*Today, my life has born its fruit.
This human state has now been well-achieved.
Today, I take my birth in Buddha's lineage,
To become the Buddha's child and heir.*

*In every way, I will undertake
Activities befitting such a rank,
And I will refrain from sullyng
Or compromising this exalted and faultless lineage.*

*I am like a blind man who has found
A precious gem inside a heap of dust,
For so it is, by some strange chance,
This precious bodhicitta has been born in me.*

Next, please all sentient beings with the following words, telling them, "May the eight classes of gods and demons, including nagas, powerful ghosts and gods, and other non-human beings in this world, have a joyful mind and do your best to help and protect me. Now that I have made the vow and promise to free you from the suffering of samsara and to place you in the fruition of buddhahood, you should take delight in this. In particular, Goddess of Volcanoes and Fire, Madame Pele, ruler of the Hawaiian Islands, possesses the appearance of burning fire. You and all the other protectors of the land must now be happy and rejoice. I will do my utmost to benefit you, and you should do your utmost to dispel obstacles and create favorable

conditions for the protection of the dharma centers. Especially, please safeguard those who learn and practice bodhicitta.”

While thinking in this way, recite after me once again:

*Today, within the sight of all protectors,
I summon beings, calling them to buddhahood,
And until that state is reached, may they receive every
earthly joy!
May gods and demigods and all the rest rejoice!*

*May bodhicitta, precious and sublime,
Arise where it has not yet arisen;
And where it has arisen, may it never fail,
But rather grow and flourish, ever-increasing forever.*

Now this session is complete, so let us dedicate the merit together.

Upon hearing this lecture, I felt so happy to have received such precious teachings. As His Holiness bestowed the bodhisattva vow, he clearly laid out the relevant benefits, the pith instructions, and the steps for the entire ritual. This made me recognize that this special liturgy was easy to perform and the best choice to follow if in the future, we would take the bodhisattva vow by ourselves or initiate it to others.

After a short break, the audience was eager to raise questions to Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok.

Q: I am still not sure how to take refuge in the Three Jewels. Could you please explain further?

HHJP: To take refuge in the Three Jewels, you should think of the Buddha as the sole unsurpassable guide, the dharma as the sole unsurpassable sublime path, and the sangha as the sole unsurpassable companion. You should develop such a resolution for taking refuge.

Q: When talking about practical bodhicitta, you mentioned generosity, discipline, and patience out of the six paramitas. What are the other three?

HHJP: The remaining three paramitas include: diligence, a joyful mind that embraces virtuous activities; meditative concentration, a single-pointed meditation without distraction; and transcendental wisdom, a state of directly realizing emptiness.

Q: What is *yana*? What is the difference between the Sutrayana, the causal vehicle, and the Vajrayana of Secret Mantra?

HHJP: *Yana* literally means “vehicle.” Through vehicles, sentient beings are sent to the destination, so this process is called *a causal vehicle*, and the destination to be reached is called *a resultant vehicle*.

The text *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom*^a said:

*What then is the vehicle that leads to awakening?
Mounted upon it, all beings can reach nirvana.
It is vast like space and an immeasurable palace, and
This brings forth joy, happiness, and peace as
the supreme vehicle of all.*

The Sutrayana holds the view that an ordinary being can only attain buddhahood by following the spiritual path, which in their perspective is separate from the fruition. Comparatively, the Secret Mantrayana, the resultant vehicle, or Vajrayana, believes that sentient beings are originally buddhas, and they just need to be reintroduced to this inherent nature. So, in its view, the path and the fruition are not separate.

Q: We are so glad to have you here! It is said that the Land of Tibet has undergone devastating damage. While it is normal for any

^a *pakpa sherab kyi parol tu chinpa düpa tsik su chepa* ('*phags pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa sdud pa tshigs su bcad pa*), Skt. *Prajñāpāramitāratnaguṇasañcayagāthā*.

place to encounter some difficulties, in your place with Buddhism flourishing, blessings abounding, and people practicing bodhicitta, all such conditions raise the question of why such a sacred place has to endure immense suffering.

HHJP: Generally speaking, it is very rare for those who have generated bodhicitta to undergo harm. So, when it happens, it is a source of great joy because of the opportunity to use the adverse circumstance to enhance practice. Mahayana practitioners always look for opportunities to enhance their practice. Taking our root teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni, as an example, at the causal stage many others inflicted harm on him, so that gave him the opportunity to practice generosity, such as giving away even body parts to benefit others.

Certainly, there are other causes for the Land of Tibet to experience a hard time, but for now, this reason is good enough.

Q: Is it true that the bodhicitta cultivated in our minds belongs to the category of mind? Does it have any effect on our bodies?

HHJP: Of course, bodhicitta is the awakened mind. As long as you are alive and the body functions, the mind of bodhicitta will have an impact on the physical body.

A MANJUSHRI STATUE BESTOWED BY MANJUSHRI

That afternoon, after giving the bodhisattva vow, although His Holiness was supposed to have a good rest to get over jet lag, many local people arrived at the temple with the wish to meet him and receive his blessing. Westerners really love to ask questions. Out of curiosity, many people came up with a great number of questions regarding His Holiness himself, Larung Gar, the Land of Tibet, and so forth.

I can clearly recall that a man asked His Holiness, “I have heard that during the Cultural Revolution, when Red Guards found you meditating in a cave, they attempted to drag you away. However, at that moment you managed to quickly increase the size and weight of your body, so they failed to move you. How did you do that?” Amused, His Holiness answered, “That was only their perception. I was just playing with them.”

I also remember Miguel Schwabe, one of our hosts at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling, and he spoke some Tibetan. I recall that whenever Rinpoche was not giving teachings, Miguel would find a chance to go to his room and ask all kinds of questions. I learned that His Holiness had even demonstrated some miraculous powers in front of him. On October 20th, 2017, I sent a person to interview him, and this is what he told us:

I asked Rinpoche, “How was your pilgrimage to Mount Wutai?”^a

Rinpoche said, “Oh, there were too many people. On my way to Mount Wutai, since the news about my visit spread very quickly, more and more people gathered in the group. Since most people took the train, the train got more and more crowded. The overpacked train even worried the police. In those days, most people in Han Chinese regions had no idea of Tibetan Buddhism, but they wanted to go on a pilgrimage with me.

^a Riwo Tse Nga (*ri bo rtse lnga*), Wu Tai Shan (Pin. *Wǔtái Shān*); Five-Peaked Mountain.

Actually, I did not want to simply make a pilgrimage; I preferred doing a retreat.”

I asked again, “Did you meet Bodhisattva Manjushri?”

Rinpoche said, “Of course. I met Manjushri when my retreat at Sudhana Cave was about to end. So, I knew that retreat must be very good.”

I followed up, “Did you get anything from Manjushri?”

Rinpoche answered, “Yes. Here.”

While replying, he gently raised his hand to the top of his head. Immediately a small statue about three inches tall appeared in his hand. He did not reach into his pockets, he did not touch anywhere on the table, he only put his hand in the air slightly above the top of his head with ease. Then, a statue emerged in his hand.

While my eyes were glued on that statue, Rinpoche gracefully handed it to me. With excitement, I immediately reached my hands to it. After quickly touching the top of my head with it, I held it close to my eyes and gazed at it carefully. It occurred to me, “This is unbelievable! I am holding a Manjushri statue bestowed by Bodhisattva Manjushri.”

That statue is so special, extremely exquisite, and gorgeous. It was quite a weight in terms of that size. I do not believe it was a hallucination.

After examining it for a few minutes, I returned it to Rinpoche. It then disappeared from his hands.

Amazed by what I had seen, I pondered, “Was Rinpoche showing supernormal power to me?”

I had met so many great masters and saw their manifestations of

supernormal power too. But Rinpoche’s manifestation is a different story.



1.4: Miguel gesturing the size of the Manjushri statue

Totally awed, I wondered if it might have something to do with his previous reincarnation as Lerab Lingpa, the great tertön.

I am so fortunate! I do not think there are many chances to see what I saw.



1.5: Left to right: Lama Lobzang Dhonden, Lama Mumtso, Ani Medron, Chojé, Miguel Schwabe, Khenpo Sodargye, and Greg Herbst

INTRODUCTION TO THE GREAT PERFECTION

When imparting the bodhisattva vow in the morning, Chojé mentioned that the two most essential trainings in Tibetan Buddhism were the practices of bodhicitta and the Great Perfection. The topic of bodhicitta was already covered during the ceremony, and as for the Great Perfection, a series of teachings were scheduled in the following two days, which were the empowerment and practical instructions on the *Peaceful Manjushri*.^a In order to help the audience gain understanding and cultivate faith in the Great Perfection beforehand, Khenpo Rinpoche gave the following teachings in the evening:

*You are the embodiment of the wisdom and power of all buddhas,
Who graciously upholds countless wheels of mandalas and
Takes the appearance as a great sage in this world.
You are the unparalleled Lotus King of the supreme vehicle!*

For anyone who embraces a religious tradition, whether a Buddhist or follower of other religions, at times such as giving or receiving teachings and engaging in practices, it is normally required to first praise and pay homage to their principal deity. Following this common practice, here, I praise and pay homage to my own principal deity and make the commitment to turn the wheel of dharma for sentient beings that have karmic connections with me.

Then, according to the extraordinary tradition of Mahayana Buddhism, as I mentioned earlier, it is indispensable to generate the supreme enlightened mind, bodhicitta, every time before giving teachings, receiving teachings, or engaging in practices. Speaking of the attitude of listening to a dharma teaching, you should tune the mind with the aspiration, “I am listening to the dharma in order to place all sentient beings in the state of buddhahood.” Such an attitude is very crucial.

^a *jampal zhi* ('jam dpal zhi).

So, how can you gain the ability to place all sentient beings in buddhahood through listening? To this question, I will refer to a teaching from Buddha Shakyamuni. The Buddha said, “The merit of meditating for nine years is not as great as teaching or hearing the dharma once.” That is to say, even if you do a nine-year solitary retreat, it is less beneficial than if you listen to the dharma in front of a qualified teacher and contemplate its meaning. Therefore, for those who aim to be of benefit to sentient beings, listening to the dharma is particularly necessary.

Moreover, the Buddha also taught in the scriptures that in order to signify the commencement of a dharma teaching, it is necessary to first sound the dharma drum, blow the conch, and strike a dharma gong. If anyone hears these sounds, even if it is an animal, a beast, or a bird, the door to the lower realms is blocked for them, and they will no longer take such a lowly rebirth. If that kind of benefit can be produced, then it is needless to say that listening to the dharma is of inconceivable benefit. Through listening to the dharma, you can dispel the darkness of your ignorance and foolishness. When you encounter a wise person, listening to the teachings or instructions from him or her is the best gift you can receive, through which you will gain incredible benefits in this life.

Further, receiving dharma teachings brings about great benefit for your future lifetimes. As said in a sutra, “Even if you repeatedly make offerings to the meritorious field of the Three Jewels and practice generosity to sentient beings in the lower realms for years, it is not as beneficial as listening to the dharma only one single time.” Also, some sutra says that building all kinds of stupas and statues of buddhas all over the world with seven types of precious gems is not as good as hearing a four-line stanza of the Mahayana teaching. It is also stated in many sutras that even if you make all sorts of material offerings and do all kinds of service every day to the buddhas and bodhisattvas dwelling in the countless realms of the ten directions, it could not

produce the same great merit as to hear one four-line stanza of the Mahayana teaching.

Since listening to the Mahayana teaching has such great benefits, I hope you can listen to this teaching with the good motivation, “By the virtue of listening to this dharma, may all sentient beings be free from suffering and experience happiness.”

The Appearance of Lord Buddha in This World

What kind of dharma am I going to teach today?

Countless eons ago, when our root teacher, the Lord of Great Compassion, the unsurpassable Buddha Shakyamuni, was in his causal stage of training, he met the Great Sage of Shakya, the Tathagata Shakya Thubchen, who had appeared in the world at that time. He offered the Buddha a pair of boots, a *kashika* parasol,¹³ and five hundred seashells. Having made the offerings, for the first time, he generated the supreme bodhicitta, “In order to benefit sentient beings, I shall henceforth follow the bodhisattva path.”

Afterward, he began the bodhisattva training of the six paramitas in a gradual way. He practiced generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, and meditative concentration in order to accomplish the accumulation of conceptual merit. Also, he trained in the development of the realization of emptiness of self to accumulate nonconceptual wisdom. As he devoted himself to these two types of accumulations, in the first countless eons, he was able to ascend to the path of accumulation and the path of unification, the first two bodhisattva bhumis in which one is still an ordinary being. In the second countless eons, through the accumulation of more merit and deeper purification of obscurations, he gradually entered the path of seeing and the path of meditation, passing through the first seven impure bodhisattva bhumis, from the first bhumi of Extreme Joy all the way to the seventh bhumi. In the third countless eons, he reached the final three pure bodhisattva bhumis—the eighth, ninth, and tenth bhumis.

At the end of the tenth bhumi, he took birth in the Tushita Heaven as a sage called the Dampa Tog Karpo, meaning White-Crown God. There, he turned the wheel of dharma extensively for the celestial beings. Then, in order to tame and liberate sentient beings in Jambudvipa, on the fifteenth day of the Ashadha month, the sixth month in the mid-summer of the Earth Sheep Year, from the Tushita Heaven, he entered the womb of Queen Mayadevi in Kapilavastu. After ten full months, he was born from the right side of Queen Mayadevi without causing her any pain in the Lumbini Grove (now in Nepal). Before the age of twenty-nine, he lived in Kapilavastu as a prince under the care of his father, King Shuddhodana. At the age of twenty-nine, driven by revulsion toward everything in samsara, he left the palace, shaved his royal hair in front of a stupa,¹⁴ and renounced the lifestyle of a householder.



1.6: Choje expounding the dharma in Hawaii

On the bank of the Nairanjana River, he went through six years of austerity, drinking only one drop of water and eating only one grain of rice every day. This was to set an example for future practitioners and let them understand that practicing the sacred dharma requires perseverance and austerity. In the late spring, on the fifteenth day

of the fourth month, Saga Dawa, he attained perfect, complete, and unsurpassable enlightenment at the place that is now known as the Vajra Seat, Bodh Gaya in India. Forty-nine days later, at Deer Park in Varanasi, he turned the first wheel of dharma in which he taught the Four Noble Truths. Later, the Buddha went to Vulture Peak Mountain in Rajagriha and turned the second wheel of dharma in which he taught the absence of characteristics of all phenomena. Afterward, in Vaishali and various other places, he performed the third turning of the wheel of dharma on fully distinguishing the reality beyond a trace of doubt. Finally, in order to purify sentient beings' attachment toward permanence, he manifested the act of entering parinirvana at Kushinagar.

That was a brief history of the Buddha's appearance in this world from the perspective of Sutrayana.

The Buddha's Prophecies

How did the Vajrayana teachings, the Secret Mantrayana, thrive in the world?

When the Buddha was alive in this world, he taught the glorious *Guhyasamaja Tantra*^a to King Indrabhuti in Oddiyana. In front of the Shri Dhanyakataka Stupa in southern India, he taught *Reciting the Names of Manjushri*^b and the *Kalachakra Tantra* to an incredible gathering of beings, including the Shambhala King Suchandra.^c In addition, he gave various Vajrayana teachings of Secret Mantra to a few fortunate disciples in the realms of gods, nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, and so forth.

As he was passing into parinirvana, the Buddha prophesied, "Now, I have extensively expounded the dharma of Sutrayana, the causal vehicle, to many karmically fortunate beings, but I have rarely taught

^a *sang du kyi gyu* (gsang 'dus kyi rgyud).

^b *jampal tsan jod* ('jam dpal mtshan brjod).

^c Dawa Zangpo (zla ba bzang po).

Vajrayana, the resultant vehicle. In the future, the teachings of Secret Mantra will be widely spread.” In terms of who would turn the dharma wheel of Secret Mantrayana, the Bhagavan foretold, “Twenty-eight years after my passing, at the request of the Five Excellent Ones of Sublime Nobility, the teachings of Secret Mantra will be widely taught.” The Buddha also prophesied the place the teachings would be taught, “The Five Excellent Ones of Sublime Nobility will spread the tantric teachings at Mount Malaya in Sri Lanka.” He also prophesied that, “Eight years after my passing, Orgyen Rinpoche Lake-Born Vajra^a will be born into this world and propagate Vajrayana even more extensively than myself.” As predicted, Orgyen Padmasambhava was born into our world in the milky lake of Oddiyana, which is identified by many scholars today to be in present-day Pakistan.

In addition, the *Sutra Requested by the Immaculate Goddess*^b also clearly prophesied, “The dharma will spread from north to north and flourish in the northern territory of the Land of Snows.” Some prophecy also says that the dharma will flourish to the south in the southern territory. Today, it is true that the Buddhadharma is essentially flourishing in Sri Lanka and the Land of Tibet. In Sri Lanka, the doctrines of the common vehicles flourish, while in the Land of Tibet, the Mahayana teachings of Secret Mantra are widely spread.

Moreover, the Buddha also prophesied in the sutras the appearance of many learned and accomplished masters. For example, he had predicted that many great masters, such as Nagarjuna, Saraha, and others, would appear in India. There are also prophecies that several dharma kings would successively appear in the Snow Land of Tibet. Not only that, Padmasambhava of the Old School Nyingmapa, Lama Tsongkhapa of the New School of Gelugpa, Jetsun Milarepa of the Kagyu, and lineage masters of the Sakya School, were all prophesied in the Buddhist scriptures.

^a Tsokye Dorje (*mtsho skyes rdo rje*).

^b *lhamo drima med pé dō* (*lha mo dri ma med pa'i mdo*).

Reflecting on all these prophecies, it can be realized that our root teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni is truly extraordinary. Nowadays in this world, there are many scientists who tirelessly engage in scientific research. They have conducted extensive research, are currently engaged in research, and will continue to carry out more in the future. However, how many of them could omnisciently understand all truths of the world and teach the essential points of reality, like our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni?

In a word, according to the prophecy of the omniscient Buddha, who possessed miraculous power and great compassion, the Secret Mantrayana teachings will gradually become prevalent in many regions.

The Flourishing of the Great Perfection

Within the teachings of Secret Mantra, there are the three outer classes of tantra and three inner classes of tantra, each of which has a rich history of how it has been disseminated. However, since the others are not the subject you have requested this time, I will not elaborate on their history. Here, I will focus on how the Great Perfection, or Dzogchen, has been brought into this world and flourished.

So how have the Great Perfection doctrines been spread? Initially, the source of all buddhas, the primordial buddha, Dharmakaya Samantabhadra, demonstrated the perfect, complete, and unsurpassable enlightenment. Then, by the unobstructed power of his blessing, the Three Supremes or Three Regents naturally emerged: the representative of enlightened body, the Vajrasattva statue that is made of one hundred and one kinds of precious jewels in the size of a human at the time when human lifespan is one hundred years; the representative of enlightened speech, the *Sole Heir of the Doctrine Tantra*,^a four fingerbreadths wide, written with gold on aquamarine paper; and the representative of enlightened mind, a crystal vajra with the length of

^a *tenpa bu chig gi gyu (bstan pa bu gcig gi rgyud).*

the forearm of a human being at the time when human lifespan is one hundred years. These three are called the Three Supremes or Three Regents of Buddhism. In whichever realm these three appear, sentient beings will enjoy peace and happiness free from suffering. Also, in that realm, the Vajrayana doctrines of Secret Mantra will naturally flourish, and many sentient beings will naturally accomplish spiritual attainment with no great efforts required.

With the blessing of the Three Supremes, the twelve founding teachers of Dzogchen had already appeared in different places or realms in succession. When the Three Supremes naturally emerged in the realm of Akanishtha, by the unobstructed power of his mind, Buddha Samantabhadra transmitted the teachings of the Great Perfection to the five buddhas of the five families, who are actually his own self-manifestation, in the way of the direct mind transmission of the buddhas. In the pure sambhogakaya field of Akanishtha, this self-occurring tantra, *Sole Heir of the Doctrine Tantra*, descended into the palm of Vajrasattva. Thereby, the doctrine of the Great Perfection became prevalent in the realms of gods, humans, nagas, and so forth. In the nirmanakaya realm, this self-occurring tantra has been existing in the space above Bodh Gaya always proclaiming itself and will remain in space there for many years to come. As long as it remains there, the Great Perfection doctrine will not vanish and will continue to flourish evermore. Anyone who practices it will achieve accomplishment and attain extraordinary states of enlightenment. Other than this text, the representatives of enlightened body and mind are present in different worlds as well for the benefit of sentient beings there.

With the blessing of the *Sole Heir of the Doctrine Tantra*, the first human Dzogchen master Garab Dorje was conceived without a father and was born in Oddiyana, west of India. He arrived instantly in Akanishtha in the presence of Vajrasattva. From Vajrasattva, he received the entire 6,400,000 stanzas of the Great Perfection and all the Dzogchen

empowerments, such as the royal vase empowerment,^a as well as all the practice guidance and pith instructions. Garab Dorje had memorized all 6,400,000 stanzas by heart and compiled them into the doctrines of the Great Perfection.

When Garab Dorje turned the wheel of dharma, there was a learned Buddhist scholar in India called Manjushrimitra, or Jampal Shenyen in Tibetan, who was perfectly versed in the ten sciences. He heard that Garab Dorje had claimed that the karmic law of cause and effect did not exist, so he decided to debate with the master. He found Garab Dorje, but even when he had exhausted his storehouse of knowledge, either that of the basic or advanced vehicle, he still could not defeat Garab Dorje. Having lost the debate, he employed his miraculous power in the wish to overcome the master but failed again. Realizing that he was wrong and feeling ashamed, he begged Garab Dorje for forgiveness and followed him as a disciple. From the master Garab Dorje, he received the Great Perfection doctrine in its entirety.

When Garab Dorje's enlightened activities in this world were completed, he entered parinirvana at Danatika River. Jampal Shenyen cried out in despair and, expressing deep grief, lamented, "If you enter parinirvana, the lamp light of the Buddhadharma will dwindle and die out, and all sentient beings will be trapped in unbearable suffering." At that time, Garab Dorje's body had already dissolved into rainbow light. However, being moved by his disciple's cry, in the clear sky in a mist of rainbow light, Garab Dorje's right hand and forearm reappeared in which was a small golden casket containing the teaching of the *Three Vital Statements that Strike the Crucial Point*.^b Garab Dorje handed this last teaching to Jampal Shenyen. Later, Jampal Shenyen compiled the 6,400,000 stanzas received from Garab Dorje into three categories: the outer category of mind, the inner category of space, and the secret category of pith instructions.

^a *gyal thab chi lü*g (*rgyal thabs spyi blug*).

^b *tsig sum ned deg* (*tshig gsum gnad brdeg*); Garab Dorje.

Afterward, Jampal Shenyen turned the wheel of dharma for humans and non-human spirits in the great Sosaling charnel ground. At that time, there was a master named Shri Singha in a place called Auspicious Gate.¹⁵ He had attained all eight common spiritual accomplishments and was a great erudite who was versed in the eighteen sciences. Once, Avalokiteshvara appeared and prophesied to him, “Noble son, your root guru in many lifetimes now lives at Sosaling charnel ground in India. Go and find him.” Then, through his miraculous power, Shri Singha flew in space about a foot high above the ground and reached Sosaling in India in only seven days. He met Jampal Shenyen, followed him, and received all his teachings without exception.

Finally, Jampal Shenyen passed into parinirvana by transforming his body into a beam of rainbow light and disappeared. Seeing this, Shri Singha wept in distress and prayed to his teacher. Then, from the sky descended Jampal Shenyen’s last instruction, *Six Meditative Experiences*.^a Just by chanting it, Shri Singha’s mind became nondual with the wisdom of his guru.

Afterward, Shri Singha returned to his motherland China, and went to Mount Wutai to enter into meditative absorption in the Siljin or Cool Grove charnel ground. At that time, in eastern India, there were two great panditas, Jnanasutra and Vimalamitra, who had been close dharma friends, sharing the same ideals and following the same path for five hundred lifetimes. One day, when they were entertaining themselves in a garden, Vajrasattva descended from the sky and prophesied to them, “Noble sons, both of you have been panditas for five hundred lifetimes, but still have not yet attained buddhahood. If you want to reach buddhahood in this very life, you should go to the Cool Grove charnel ground in China.” Impetuous yet courageous, Vimalamitra immediately returned home, put on his dharma robes, packed his begging bowl, and set out for China. In nine years, he

^a *gom nyam drug pa* (*sgom nyams drug pa*); part of the Vima Nyingtig; Manjushrimitra or Jampal Shenyen.

stayed to receive empowerments, guidance, and pith instructions from Shri Singha. Having followed his teacher for nine years and received the teaching fully, he went back to India. Only then did Jnanasutra travel to find Shri Singha in China, where he spent twenty-one years together with the master, receiving even more superior empowerments, guidance, and pith instructions than Vimalamitra did.



1.7: Chojé introducing the history of the Great Perfection

When Shri Singha lived in the Cool Grove charnel ground in China, Padmasambhava and the great translator Vairotsana also came to rely on him and received the Great Perfection teachings from him. At the time when Shri Singha passed into parinirvana, he gave his last instruction, *Nailing Down the Seven Points*,^a to Jnanasutra, through which the wisdom minds of Jnanasutra and Shri Singha became nondual. Later, when Jnanasutra passed into parinirvana, his body transformed into a mass of light from which his final teaching, the *Four Modes of Placement*,^b descended to Vimalamitra.

All the above-mentioned great human masters vanished into light and disappeared at their parinirvana except two of them. One is Orgyen

^a *zer bu dun pa* (*gzer bu bdun pa*); included in the Vima Nyingtig; Shri Singha.

^b *zhag tab zhi pa* (*bzhag thabs bzhi pa*); Jnanasutra.

Rinpoche, Padmasambhava. He has never entered parinirvana but lives as a king of rakshasas in Chamaradvipa, the Ngayab continent. The other is Vimalamitra. He remains at Mount Wutai in China without abandoning his fleshly body and manifests a real emanation in the Land of Tibet once every one hundred years. Meanwhile, Vimalamitra keeps sending emanations to this world unceasingly. In 1987, along with tens of thousands of Tibetans, I made a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai and paid homage to Vimalamitra. During our stay, some people saw Vimalamitra and Manjushri in the sky. There were also people who saw lions, rainbows, magnificent images of people and birds, or many other incredibly auspicious signs. Even today, people who make a pilgrimage to Mount Wutai continue to see such kinds of auspicious signs.

In a later time Vimalamitra emanated an illusory body from his primordial wisdom in front of Chetsun Senge Wangchuk in Tibet and bestowed upon him his entire empowerments, guidance, and pith instructions. Once when Chetsun Senge Wangchuk was making a tsok offering among one hundred thousand dakinis, his physical body dissolved into a light sphere. Then, all the dakinis began to pray to him, and following that, he bestowed upon them the Great Chetsun's *Heart Essence of Chetsun*^a in three sections and then passed into parinirvana.

Thus far, great Dzogchen masters appeared in the world one after another, and along with that, there also emerged a great number of practitioners who followed them to practice Dzogchen and attained rainbow body. For example, it is well known that one hundred thousand practitioners accomplished rainbow body in the same period of time at the Kathok Monastery in Kham. Even to this day, practitioners who accomplish the inconceivable rainbow body, a state of accomplishment where the body transforms into rainbow or dissolves into light, are emerging constantly from time to time.

^a *chetsun nyingtig* (*lce btsun snying thig*); Chetsun Senge Wangchuk.

For instance, there was an old layman from Yidlong in Dege named Sogyal (Sonam Namgyal), who had accomplished the rainbow body through practicing the Great Perfection. I guess most of you know his story, right? His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche's *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Its Fundamentals and History*, mentions him. The place where my Buddhist institute is located today is a mountain hermitage where Kyabjé Dudjom Rinpoche's predecessor, Dudjom Lingpa, and his disciples resided most of the time. It was in this place, thirteen disciples of Dudjom Lingpa accomplished rainbow bodies at the same time.



1.8: Audience putting their palms together reverently

In monasteries across the Land of Tibet, there have been many practitioners who achieved rainbow body or who at least at the time of their death shrank their bodies to a small size, and this type of miracle continues to happen to the present day. In our Dzogchen lineage, there were and still are so many disciples who demonstrate auspicious signs of accomplishment

upon death, such as body shrinking or dissolving into light. In short, about sixty percent of Dzogchen practitioners have achieved apparent signs of spiritual attainment through practicing the Great Perfection.

I have touched briefly on the history of the Dzogchen lineage to strengthen your faith in the Great Perfection. A good criterion to examine whether a doctrine is genuine or not is to check if it leads to spiritual attainment or at least some experience. Up until today, accomplished practitioners keep emerging in the Nyingma School, the lineage of vidyadharas, and this is the most powerful evidence to show that the Great Perfection is a genuine and pure practice.

The Extraordinary Attributes of the Great Perfection

Then, you may ask, “So, in what approach can we learn the teachings of the Great Perfection?”

The answer is if you want to extensively study the Great Perfection, you can refer to the eleven topics of Dzogchen. To summarize their key points, the core is the practice of trekchö, which reveals the view of primordial purity, and the practice of tögal, which brings the realization of spontaneous presence.

The practice of trekchö refers to the actual practice to ascertain the view that all phenomena are empty in nature. The essential pith instructions that fall into the category of trekchö are practiced in their own forms by all schools, such as Sakya, Nyingma, Kagyu, Gelug, and so forth. For example, the *Supreme Medicinal Nectar*^a by Lama Tsongkhapa of the Sarma tradition is identical to the fundamental teachings of the Nyingma’s Great Perfection from its beginning to the end. Not only that, many practitioners in the lineage of Tsongkhapa, such as Changkya Rolpe Dorje, have also accomplished spiritual attainment by practicing the Great Perfection.

Comparatively, the practice of tögal is a unique practice that no other school has. The Great Perfection has four types of uncommon teachings. Jampal Shenyen divided the 6,400,000 stanzas of Dzogchen into three classes: the outer category of mind, the inner category of space, and the secret category of pith instructions. Shri Singha further classified the secret category of pith instruction into four cycles: outer, inner, secret, and quintessential secret. Except for the innermost Nyingtig teachings, none of the other Great Perfection doctrines teaches the practice of tögal.

To put it simply, in terms of actual practice, trekchö and tögal are the two core training paths in the Great Perfection, which are clearly taught in

^a *zhu lan dudtsi man chog (zhus lan bdud rtsi sman mchog)*; Tsongkhapa.

the *Nyingtig Yabzhi*.^a Initially, the Nyingtig teachings were brought into this world and transmitted in the Land of Tibet by Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra. These are known as *Pema Nyingtig*^b or *Khandro Nyingtig*^c and *Vima Nyingtig*,^d respectively. Because they are the initial Nyingtig teachings propagated in Tibet, these two are called *mother Nyingtig*. Afterward, Omniscient Longchenpa composed the *Lama Yangtig*,^e a commentary and offspring of the *Vima Nyingtig*, *Khandro Yangtig*,^f a commentary and offspring of the *Khandro Nyingtig*, as well as a condensation of the important pith instructions of the two mother Nyingtig texts known as *Zabmo Yangtig*, *Profound Quintessence*.^g Then, the two mother Nyingtig and their two commentaries known as the *child Nyingtig* are collectively called *Nyingtig Yabzhi*, *Four Sections of the Heart Essence*.

All training techniques in Buddhism can be acquired through two ways of transmission: explanatory transmission and oral transmission. *Oral transmission* means to transmit teachings that are classified as the secret cycle, or more advanced teachings, to only a small number of fortunate disciples. The *explanatory transmission* refers to the case in which, when the attendees are all suitable dharma vessels, the teaching can be given to a large audience.

In terms of the Dzogchen teachings, before the omniscient Longchen Rabjam, great masters only transmitted the Great Perfection to a few individuals person-to-person rather than to a larger audience. Since the time of Longchen Rabjam, more people have become suitable vessels for Dzogchen. Therefore, if the master is an accomplished one and all the disciples are qualified, the master can impart Dzogchen teachings to hundreds of thousands of disciples at once. Nowadays,

^a *nyingtig yab zhi (snying thig ya bzhi)*; Longchen Rabjam; *Four Sections of the Heart Essence*.

^b *padma nyingtig (pad ma snying thig)*; Padmasambhava; *Heart Essence of Pema*.

^c *khandro nyingtig (mkha' 'gro snying thig)*; Padmasambhava; *Heart Essence of the Dakini*.

^d *vima nyingtig (bi ma snying thig)*; Vimalamitra; *Heart Essence of Vimalamitra*.

^e *lama yangtig (bla ma yang tig)*; Longchen Rabjam; *Quintessence of the Guru*.

^f *khandro yangtig (mkha' 'gro yang tig)*; Longchen Rabjam; *Quintessence of the Dakini*.

^g *zabmo yangtig (zab mo yang tig)*; Longchen Rabjam; *Profound Quintessence*.

in the Land of Tibet, many realized lamas give teachings to large audiences. Likewise, in India and other places, Dudjom Rinpoche, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Penor Rinpoche, and many other great masters have bestowed empowerments of *Rinchen Terdzod*^a and *Nyingtig Yabzhi* to large gatherings of people in various occasions.

Some people may question, “Why do they transmit so publicly?” This is because there were only very few qualified disciples in the past, but now there are a great number of people who are suitable dharma vessels for receiving these profound teachings.

You may start to have some misgivings, “According to the Buddha’s teaching, before the appearance of Buddha Maitreya, as time passes, the world systems and time degenerate to become more chaotic, the karma and fortune of sentient beings decline rather than improve. Why is the noble dharma that is suitable for beings becoming more sublime?”

According to the view of the general tantras, as afflictive emotions of sentient beings become stronger, the dharma must become more profound to resolve these afflictions. In other words, when the dharma gets more profound, it indicates that the afflictive emotions of sentient beings are becoming stronger. When sentient beings are carried away by distractions unceasingly, only dharma that strikes the point will be effective. Generally speaking, kriya tantra, or action tantra, is the lowest among all tantras, and it is most popular when the lifespan of humans is limitless. Then, when the lifespan of humans decreases to 80,000 years, charya tantra, or conduct tantra, blossoms vigorously. When humans’ lifespan shrinks to 30,000 years, yoga tantra is most prevalent. Afterward, when the five aspects of degeneration and strife become rampant, the highest yoga tantra flourishes.

The more degenerate the time is, the more profound the tantra there is to fit the need of sentient beings. Finally, when human lifespan lessens

^a *rin chen gter mdzod*.

to only ten years, the Great Perfection will become more popular than ever. At that time, a dakini named Dakini Paldzin will teach the Great Perfection, and anyone who sees, hears, remembers, or comes into contact with this teaching will be liberated. Meanwhile, any other doctrines would become less and less effective as the time degenerates. As Ju Mipham Rinpoche said, “When the world is enveloped in the darkness of degeneration and decline, the enlightened activities of Padmasambhava will become as brilliant as the moon.”

Also, according to the Sutrayana teaching, the Buddhadharma will go through four stages of duration: the period of fruition, the period of accomplishment, the period of transmission, and the period of symbolic representation. The first two periods have already come and gone. Now, we are in the middle of the period of transmission, during which time besides teaching and listening to the dharma, there is barely any other form of practice more profound in the Sutrayana tradition. Generally speaking, the blessing of sutras keeps declining. This is true if it is observed with an unbiased view. In the past, Guru Rinpoche and the great pandita Vimalamitra traveled across the entire land of India and then came to the Land of Tibet, but even so, the Great Perfection was unable to flourish widely at that time. But now, many Tibetan lamas give empowerments and teachings abroad. Take the example of America, the most powerful nation in the world, the Great Perfection has become prevalent in this land. This is a sign that the blessing of this practice has become more and more powerful.

If you observe people here today, you can also realize the blessing of Dzogchen. Based on your attitude and mentality, I could infer that you must have devotion to the Buddhadharma in general and special faith in Tibetan Buddhism. In particular, you must have vivid conviction and interest in the Great Perfection. This is already an apparent sign that you can receive the blessing of the Great Perfection in your mind streams. So obviously, you are suitable dharma vessels of the Great Perfection. Do you agree with me? In the tiny Snow Land of

Tibet, there is little knowledge about modern science and few erudite scholars of worldly knowledge. However, due to the prevalence of the profound Great Perfection that carries great blessing, a great number of Tibetan lamas have been spreading the dharma and especially the Great Perfection in various countries across the world. So, just from this point, you can see that the Mahayana teachings, the Great Perfection in particular, are of inconceivable blessing and merit.



1.9: Chojé and Khenpo Namdrol

Again, some of you may wonder, “In the past, the yogis of the Great Perfection all flew to the land of the vidyadharas without leaving their physical bodies behind. They accomplished rainbow bodies and now dwell in pure lands. But why did the Great Perfection masters of the present day, such as Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, leave their physical bodies behind without transforming them into light?”

In fact, there are two reasons to explain why their bodies did not transform completely into rainbow light. One important reason is that they could have transformed their bodies into rainbow light, but they chose to leave their bodies in the world as an object of homage for

fortunate beings to generate faith. In other words, if their entire body could most benefit sentient beings, they would leave their entire body in this world; if leaving only hair and nails would most benefit sentient beings, they would dissolve into rainbow light except for their hair and nails. Nowadays, some lamas have left their nails and hair upon nirvana, and some have left their entire bodies. Whatever the case, you should understand they chose to do so because their remains would evoke beings' faith and be an object of homage, which beings can make prostration to and circumambulate around. As a result, those beings would avoid falling into the lower realms. So, there is great significance for them to do so.

Another reason is that if a lama has many disciples who have grave negative karma or keep impure samaya, the lama would be contaminated to the point that the body could not completely dissolve into rainbow light. This could happen too.

You may ask, "What is the difference between intentionally leaving the body in this world and not being able to dissolve the body into rainbow light?" Take Dudjom Rinpoche and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche as examples. Dudjom Rinpoche was Padmasambhava himself appearing in this world in the form of a human being. Even if the entire world had been full of samaya breakers, they could not hinder his body from dissolving into rainbow light. Similarly, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche was the emanation of King Trisong Detsen, so even if all his disciples and all sentient beings in the whole world had broken their samaya, they could not obstruct a great master like him from dissolving into rainbow light. As you can see, the remains of these two great masters were left and preserved only to serve as objects of worship, offerings, and circumambulation for you and other devotees.

However, for ordinary practitioners or beginners like us, in order to accomplish the rainbow body through practicing and realizing the Great Perfection, we must scrutinize carefully when choosing disciples. Otherwise, since the ordinary body is in itself the aggregate of impurity

and the source of suffering, if disciples violate samaya, it is bound to obstruct us from achieving the rainbow body. As a result, the physical body would have to remain. For every one of you present, I am unable to examine your mind streams, but for me, it is certain that if any of my disciples violate samaya, I would be affected and lose the chance to attain the rainbow body.

Above is a brief introduction to the attributes of the Great Perfection.

The Blessing of the Great Perfection

Just by hearing teachings on the Great Perfection, even if you do not practice diligently, buddhahood will be attained in no more than seven lifetimes. Once receiving empowerment and instruction, as long as wrong views toward your lama, including disparagement and also withdrawing your faith, do not occur, then liberation will certainly occur in the bardo just after this life.

On the basis of receiving Dzogchen empowerment and instruction, if a practitioner understands the meaning and applies that through earnest practice, if faith is strong, then buddhahood can be realized within six months. If faith is middling, buddhahood will occur within seven years, and even if faith is weak, buddhahood will be attained in no less than twelve years.

After receiving empowerment and instruction, if you do not have the chance to practice, as long as pure samaya is maintained and your body always touches a text of the Great Perfection, liberation will come about soon. If a dying sentient being hears the teachings of the Great Perfection, then liberation will come to pass in not too long of a time thereafter. Even if a text of the Great Perfection is kept close to your pillow, and prostrations, circumambulation, or butter lamp offerings are presented to this text, then liberation will not be far away.



1.10: Chojé looking aside gently

Why is the Great Perfection the summit of all vehicles? The Great Perfection transcends all eight vehicles because anyone who sees, hears, remembers, or touches a text on this teaching will swiftly achieve buddhahood. This is the reason the Great Perfection is called *liberation upon hearing and contact*. This is so inconceivable that from now on, as long as we do not hold wrong views toward the teaching or the teacher and never slander them, buddhahood will soon be reached and samsara that is full of suffering and the causes of suffering will have been traversed!

At that time, both body and mind will be free from all forms of suffering. Wouldn't you like it? (Laughs)

THE FOUNDATION OF DHARMA PRACTICE

On the morning of June 19th, His Holiness gave the empowerment of his own terma, the cycle of *Peaceful Manjushri*, to the audience gathered in the temple, including people affiliated with the temple and those from other places. Before the empowerment, His Holiness addressed them with the following words:

Before receiving the empowerment, you should reflect like this, "In order to benefit all sentient beings throughout the reach of space, I will listen carefully and spread this practice in the future."

Here, I give you permission to translate this teaching into any language and spread and propagate it in every country across the world by any means.

In fact, spreading the dharma is the duty-bound responsibility for every one of you. Take Khenpo Namdrol as an example. He not only teaches the dharma extensively to the Tibetan monastics in India but also tries to promote this practice in places like Taiwan and Hong Kong. His activities of disseminating the dharma and benefiting sentient beings are deep and vast. I believe you must also have such ability,

and I hope you can propagate this practice on a large scale and in a profound way.

The main training of Mahayana Buddhism is to cultivate the vast, altruistic intention to help all sentient beings. So, please do not think it is not your business to carry forward this teaching. Nobody should neglect this sacred mission. In terms of shouldering this mission, Khenpo Sodargye has also set a good example for you. He has been disseminating this teaching to a great number of lay practitioners and monastics in the mainland of China. Similarly, you should all remember to contribute your effort to spread this practice on various occasions.

The empowerment was finished in the morning, and following that, Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche gave two lectures on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*,^a the practice manual of the *Peaceful Manjushri*. One was in the afternoon and the other the next day. The first lecture covered the part from the beginning stanza to generating bodhicitta. I did not record the teaching completely and just excerpted a part to share with you.

Kyabjé Yidzhin Norbu said:

As mentioned earlier, when listening to this teaching, you should think, “I am here to listen to this exquisitely profound teaching and practice its meaning for the purpose of placing all sentient beings throughout the reach of space in buddhahood.” Please cultivate this intention before receiving the teaching.

The teaching you are going to receive is *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, which provides step-by-step instructions for practicing the *Peaceful Manjushri*. If you want to actually follow this path, there are two kinds of instructions: the overall explanation of the stages of the path and the specific pith instructions for actual practice. As for the first, I have

^a *sangye lag chang* (*sangs rgyas lag 'chang*).

elaborated on all the stages in the text entitled *Heart Essence Bindu of the Heart*.^a The second, the pith instructions of the actual practice, are elucidated in the practice manual *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. Speaking of these two texts, *Heart Essence Bindu of the Heart* follows the extensive pandita approach, while *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* follows the profound kusali approach.

In terms of actual practice, you can follow the guidance of either of these two texts, because both of them provide a complete and accurate path to perfect buddhahood. This time, I am going to focus on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, and before that, I would like to supplement it with some teachings from the *Heart Essence Bindu of the Heart*.

Decreased Desire and Contentment

A prerequisite for practicing pure dharma is to have less desire and to be content. Specifically, *to have less desire* means to never think, “If only I could acquire what he (or she) has” when seeing someone who possesses abundant wealth, distinguished power and influence, and good reputation. *Contentment* is to always be satisfied with a sense of contentment, thinking, “This is good enough,” regardless of whether you enjoy nice food and drink or not. A content person will never insatiably engage in meaningless mundane projects for a pursuit of better material enjoyments.

If you are a person with less desire and contentment, you will not cling to the glory, reputation, and achievements of this life. Otherwise, you will blindly hold on to this world and lose the chance to practice pure dharma. No matter how much pleasurable enjoyment you experience, it only increases your desire and will never satisfy you. For instance, when somebody gets a pound of gold, he would want two pounds; when one becomes the owner of a region, he would wish to own two; when a person is elected as the leader of one country, he would want

^a *nying tam nying gi tiglé (snying gtam snying gi thig le)*; Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche.

to be the sovereign of two countries. The pit of desire can never be filled. Therefore, we must learn to decrease desire.

No matter how much energy you spend on worldly pursuit, even if you devote your entire life, there will never be an end to this. For the majority of people throughout their life, they chase after happiness, wealth, and fame. For that goal, they have to put in limitless effort every day, but the reward is usually insignificant, and suddenly they find that their life has reached its end. Considering this, it is more than wise to give up all kinds of worldly engagements and get involved only in accomplishing everlasting peace and happiness.

Think about happiness, wealth, or fame in this world. Aren't they like what happens in a dream? Suppose we dream of doing business. Sometimes we are happy regarding a profit, and sometimes we are depressed about a loss. But this is just a dream, and we have never even done any business in reality. How then can there be profit or loss? Similarly, happiness, possessions, and reputation in this world do not truly exist and are not different from the appearances in a dream. Think about your own life from birth till now. Some of you have had a wonderful life so far, some have suffered tremendously, while others have mixed feelings about their life. However, all of these are no different from the dream of last night. Besides memories, the pleasures and misfortunes that once happened will no longer be experienced.

Some people may argue, "Although what happened is gone, the happiness or suffering I'm experiencing is real for me." In fact, these emotions are exactly the same as what happened in last night's dream! No matter whether you enjoy happiness and feel joyful or are distressed by misfortune in the dream, when you wake up the next morning, nothing really happened. Similarly, the happiness and suffering you experience today, however vivid they may be, will not exist by the next dawn. Your current emotions are as insubstantial as a dream.

In the same way, the emotions of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow are no different from those in the dreams of tomorrow and the day after tomorrow. They are not everlasting or solid. Since the experiences of suffering and happiness have never truly existed and are based on delusion, there is no reason to be attached to them.

Whoever you are, once you decide to practice genuine dharma, you need to train yourself to be content, desire less, and maintain the mindset, "As long as I don't feel cold or hungry, all is good." Otherwise, if you spend lots of energy on worldly things, you will never be able to practice the sacred dharma. So, be satisfied as long as you have enough food and clothes. Even if you become the king of the world, besides clothes, food, transportation, and living environment that are needed for daily use, you would never be able to enjoy everything you possess. Therefore, too much wealth, enjoyment, fame, and glory will not do you any good.

In terms of spiritual practice, the best case is to focus only on the practice of dharma and never get involved in worldly and trivial things. One who can accomplish that is considered as a supreme practitioner. If you cannot totally give up worldly pursuit and you practice the dharma but also seek the glory and wealth of this life, you can only be counted as a middling practitioner. If you eagerly chase after happiness and glory of this life yet have some interest in the dharma, you are an inferior practitioner. In the worst case, if you only desire for the peace and wealth of this life but have no wish to practice the dharma at all, you will never become a practitioner or a Buddhist.

Therefore, please examine your own mind according to what I said. If you were not a practitioner at all in the past, you need to start now to first become an inferior practitioner at least. If you were an inferior practitioner, you should do everything possible to reach the level of a middling one. If you were a middling practitioner, then stretch a little bit more and see if you can turn into a supreme practitioner who has no desire in this life at all.

Relying on a Teacher

For anyone who genuinely wants to follow the spiritual path to enlightenment, initially, it is critical to have little desire and be content. With those qualities as the basis, you need to rely on a qualified teacher. Why? Because you need to follow the instruction of a teacher to get rid of all your faults that go against the dharma and cultivate every potential quality that you do not have in your mind.

What are the criteria for a qualified teacher whom you can rely on? According to Buddhist terminology, a teacher must possess certain uncommon characteristics that distinguish him or her from ordinary people. You should follow a teacher who meets the required qualifications and has abundant merit and virtue. The most basic qualification is that he or she must possess loving kindness, the wish for all sentient beings to have peace and happiness, and compassion, the wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering. Loving kindness and compassion are the most fundamental qualities a teacher should have, and on that basis, the teacher must also be able to explain the meaning of the dharma. Only when all these criteria are met can a person be called a *qualified teacher*.

Then, what are the ways for a disciple to rely on a teacher? The supreme way is to practice the dharma received from the teacher; the middling way is to wholeheartedly attend to the teacher so he or she is pleased; the inferior way is to make material offerings to the teacher to please him or her and to repay his or her kindness. These are the three ways of pleasing the teacher that a student must do when following a teacher.

As a disciple, you should request and receive teachings from the teacher. The best teachings are the sutras directly taught by the Buddha and shastras that interpret the intended meaning of the sutras, composed either by the great Indian masters, such as the Two Supreme Ones¹⁶ and Six Ornaments,¹⁷ or by Tibetan accomplished masters and scholars,

such as those of the eight lineages of attainment in the Land of Snows. It is important that you receive these teachings directly from the teacher.

Of course, the spiritual path is not just about receiving teachings from the teacher. It is not right if you just listen to a teaching before the dharma throne and then put it aside. You need to memorize all the words and their meaning by heart. If you are unable to grasp all the teachings, you should at least master the one that you are going to practice. Take the profound *Peaceful Manjushri, Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. After listening to the explanation of the entire text from the teacher, you must remove any doubt or confusion about the words and their meaning through deep reflection. If you merely read it by yourself in an absent-minded manner and try to discern the meaning through your dualistic mind, you will never understand the deeper meaning.

This is especially the case for Vajrayana practices. Even if you know the words inside out, you will not comprehend the secret meaning behind the words nor the pith instructions for practicing because these are not explicitly written in the texts and can only be revealed by qualified teachers. Considering this, make sure you rely on a qualified teacher.

In general, due to different elements, capacities, inclinations, intentions, and afflictive emotions of the recipients, different ways to teach the dharma have to be adopted. If only one way of teaching is employed, it would be like prescribing the same medicine to all patients, in which case most patients would not be cured, and worse still, it is likely to cause more suffering to them. However, *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* is not the usual case, in that whoever practices this manual wholeheartedly will benefit immensely. In Tibetan medicine, myrobalan¹⁸ is effective to dispel all four hundred four kinds of diseases. When making a prescription, if the doctor uses myrobalan as the main ingredient and supplements it with various other medicines according to the health situation of the individual patient, the prescription may produce instant results. In the same way, *Placing Buddhahood within*

Reach is as universally effective as myrobalan. If a teacher imparts it to the disciples, he or she should base the teaching on this practice manual and also add some pith instructions to supplement this. Otherwise, merely relying on one single teaching, it would be hard to place everyone in the state of buddhahood.

MAGIC POWER

At noon on June 19th, Kyabjé Yidzhin Norbu sat on the lawn close to the shrine room enjoying the beautiful scenery. Amazingly, a group of visitors with brown hair and pale eyes showed up. Meanwhile, another group of visitors with golden hair and blue eyes came from another direction. The first group had about thirty people, and they came from North America. The second group had about seventy people and were from South America. Immediately attracted by Rinpoche's tranquil and gentle manner, as well as his distinguished charisma, they all came close and sat down around him with respect. Delightedly, His Holiness said to them, "What an auspicious occasion! You brown-haired people from North America, you golden-haired people from South America, and this black-haired old Asian man could gather together in this way." Following that, he gave a spontaneous talk about the value of human life. Finally, all these one hundred people took refuge in the Three Jewels.

In the afternoon, the active volcano known as Kilauea in the southern part of this island of Hawaii began erupting. Some local people were in a panic and came to His Holiness for blessings. He said to the people around him, "More than a thousand years ago, a conflagration in Mount Hepori at Samye in central Tibet was extinguished by Nanam Dorje Dudjom, the Indestructible Subduer of Mara, through his clairvoyance. Now, since I have the name as being the reincarnation of Dorje Dudjom, may I be able to put this fire out!" After saying this, His Holiness took out his phurba and chanted a secret mantra while

abiding in a meditative state. Soon afterward, we were told that the volcano became quiet.

On the second day, some geologists purposely called on Rinpoche and expressed their gratitude. They praised him from the depth of their hearts, saying, “The might of Tibetan Buddhism and your blessings are truly unbelievable!” The resident lama at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling, Lobzang Dhonden, told me that this story was featured in the local news.

ANOTHER MANIFESTATION OF REALIZATION

One time, His Holiness privately told me, “Our tour to the West this time would be different from our previous dharma trips. When we visited those sacred sites in the Lands of Tibet, India, Nepal, and Bhutan, I would reveal termas from time to time; and during our pilgrimage to Mount Wutai in the Han regions, I also had some pure visions and special meditative experiences in which some teachings spontaneously welled up in my mind. However, since these few western countries have a short history of several hundred years and the Buddha and Guru Rinpoche did not come to visit here, there would be no



1.11: Chojé conversing warmly with everyone

terma for me to reveal. Plus, western people prefer to be rational and value realism. They may not give credence to miraculous experiences. So, I will focus

on giving empowerments and teachings this time, and you do not need to be prepared for recording or taking notes all the time as you did before.”

Just as he said, throughout the tour, His Holiness primarily gave empowerments and teachings. He did not display supernatural powers publicly, nor did he reveal any earth or mind terma. He simply interacted with westerners as a dharma practitioner and a scholar of Tibetan Buddhism.

Even though he seldom demonstrated any miraculous behavior, most of those who saw his sublime body and heard his voice teaching the dharma underwent some small or even dramatic transformation in their life. This is probably due to the power of his profound aspiration of being a great accomplished master. Obviously, His Holiness became very popular among western people. So, we can see that just through ordinary behavior and simple words, great masters with solid practice and genuine realization can greatly influence sentient beings and transform their minds. To ordinary people, it is unimaginable, but in reality, it is a reflection of his inner realization.

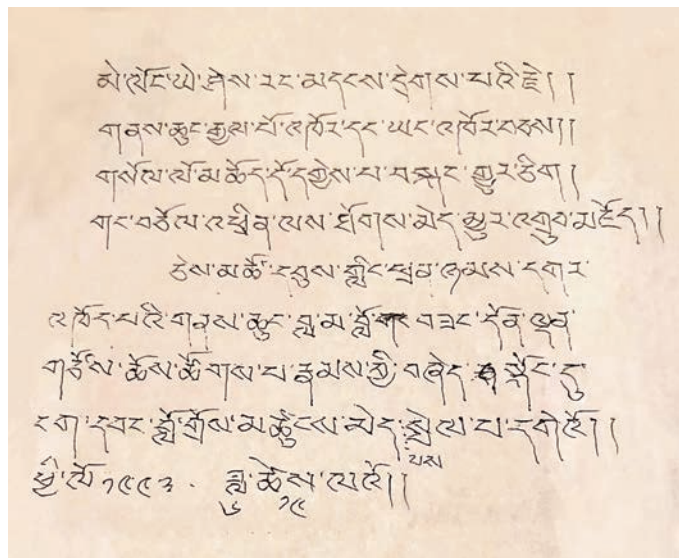
THE CONNECTION WITH THE NECHUNG PROTECTOR

One day at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling, at the request of disciples living there, His Holiness composed a short prayer to the Nechung protector:

*The natural manifestation of the mirror-like primordial wisdom,
Dharma protector, King Nechung, to you and your assemblies,
I supplicate and make offerings. May you be delighted
And may whatever activities entrusted to you be accomplished
swiftly without hindrance.*

In order to satisfy the request of disciples from Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling located on a beautiful island, represented by Lama Lobzang Dhonden, Ngawang Lodrö Tsungmé joyfully wrote this down. May it be virtuous!
June 19th, 1993

I wrote down these words in Tibetan, and the original copy has been kept in the dharma protector's shrine ever since then.



1.12: The prayer to the Nechung protector transcribed by Khenpo Sodargye

On the morning of June 20th, Choje bestowed the empowerment for the concise practice of *Tendrel Nyesel*,^a a terma revealed by Tertön Lerab Lingpa. Before the empowerment, His Holiness touched on his connection with the Nechung protector.

Let me say a few words about the Nechung protector by referring to the biography of the great tertön Lerab Lingpa, Nyala Sogyal.

Nyala Sogyal was the body emanation of the mantra adept Dorje Dudjom, the head of many accomplished mantrikas who practiced Vajrakilaya in the Land of Snows, the speech emanation of Dakini Vajravaraḥi, and the mind emanation of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava. As an incredible tertön, he was able to fly in the sky like a bird, swim in the water like a fish, pass through rocks without any obstacles, read the mind of others without obstruction, and dispel all kinds of degeneration and misfortune of the Land of Snows through his mighty power. Specifically, he was the extraordinary teacher of His Holiness the thirteenth Gyalwa Rinpoche Thubten Gyatso.

The great tertön could talk to the Nechung dharma protector, Dorje Drakden, like having conversations with human friends. They gave prophecies to each other and discussed what activity should be adopted or abandoned. They were, and are, closely associated. Now, let me briefly introduce the origin of their relationship.

Two years ago, during my visit to Dharamsala in northern India, the monk who was the medium of the Nechung protector came to meet me. As we talked about his samaya commitment to Tertön Sogyal, he clearly recollected scenes with the great tertön, then tears gushed from his eyes, and overjoyed, his body kept shivering.

Whether toward the previous Nyala Sogyal or to me as his reincarnation, the Nechung protector has always been extremely kind and helpful. In the past, Nyala Sogyal was known as a senior Secret Mantra

^a *rten 'brel nyes sel*.

practitioner and a great master of Nyingma, enjoying high prestige in the area of Kham. However, when he first came to U Tsang, central Tibet, he was just an unknown ordinary Secret Mantra practitioner. One day, when the tertön visited a marketplace in Lhasa, the Nechung protector suddenly appeared with a khata in his hands. Before a big crowd, he addressed the tertön as Padmasambhava, offered the khata and prostrated to him with veneration. From then on, Tertön Nyala Sogyal gained vast respect and support from the people in central Tibet. It was also through the effort of the Nechung protector that Nyala Sogyal was introduced to Gyalwa Rinpoche Thubten Gyatso, who then received teachings from him and also gave teachings to him. Afterward, it was again the Nechung protector who first assisted the tertön to expand his enlightened activities.

Similarly, when I offered the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*^a empowerment in Dharamsala, the Nechung protector once again descended. He sincerely prostrated to me and then offered me a buddha statue, a sutra, and a stupa. Afterward, he related our meetings in the previous life, prophesied some things in the future, and gave various praises to me. Because of that, I was also venerated and supported by Tibetans living in that area. Due to his assistance, my activities have always been vast and prosperous without any obstacles or unfavorable conditions. Now, as I recall all of this, I feel grateful to the Nechung protector since he has been extremely kind and helpful to me.

Before we set off on this tour, one day in the Land of Snows, a clear thought crossed my mind, “It is said that there is a Nechung dharma center in the United States. If I could visit it, that would be amazing, but it seems it is not in the plan. What a pity! I will not be able to make it this time.” However, shortly afterward, I was told that there was a dharma center of the Nechung protector on the island of Hawaii in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, and it had been added to our trip. Hearing that, my heart was filled with joy.¹⁹

^a *phur pa mgur khug ma*.



1.13: Statue of the Nechung protector enshrined in Nechung Temple, Hawaii

In fact, there are two categories of dharma protectors: wisdom protectors and worldly protectors. The latter are still subject to afflictive emotions and the karmic law of cause and effect, just like us ordinary beings. However, emanating from the unobstructed power of great compassion of Guru Rinpoche, the Nechung protector is a genuine wisdom protector and is renowned as the King of Karma or King of Activity among the Five Great Kings, the five most powerful spirit heroes who provide protection against enemies. Among all the dharma protectors, the Nechung protector is the main protector who was designated by Guru Rinpoche to protect all dharma and to bring peace and happiness to all sentient beings in the Land of Tibet. For any practitioners who pray to or meditate on this Nechung protector, any form of misfortune or disaster will be completely dispelled.



1.14: Chojé praying with his palms joined

Here, your dharma center has become the pillar of all dharma activities in this place. Please make your center more stable, more prosperous, and more long-lasting. To make it happen, it is especially essential to wholeheartedly praise and make offerings to the Nechung protector.

I am really happy to be able to come to this Nechung Temple because it is indeed an auspicious start that my first stop to teach the dharma

in western countries takes place in the dharma center of Nechung. I strongly believe that, from now on, every activity I engage in will be free from obstacles or unfavorable conditions.

In addition, I encourage every one of you to pray to Guru Rinpoche sincerely and make a great effort to engage in the practice of generation and completion stages dedicated to Guru Rinpoche. In brief, Guru Padmasambhava is the one who vigorously performs and carries out all enlightened activities of all buddhas. If you pray to him, his compassion and blessings come more swiftly than other buddhas. Especially in this place, everyone seeks refuge and hope in Guru Rinpoche, and he is also the only and ultimate field of refuge of the Nechung protector. So, if you pray to Guru Rinpoche, you are like-minded with the Nechung protector, and you will surely achieve extraordinary spiritual attainments. As mentioned earlier, it was Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava who initially entrusted the Nechung protector as the lord of all dharma protectors. Also, in various sadhanas of making offerings to this protector, practitioners are required to clearly visualize themselves as Orgyen Padmasambhava. When I visited India, the Nechung protector told me that he had never broken a samaya commitment and never would, both now and in the future. Finally, he encouraged me to propagate the dharma, especially that which is related to the activities of Guru Rinpoche.

These accounts have been recorded in written format, so you could refer to them if you are interested in knowing more.

GURU YOGA OF MANJUSHRI

In the afternoon, Yidzhin Norbu taught the practice manual of the *Peaceful Manjushri, Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. He elaborated on the part from guru yoga to the completion stage. For the part on the Great Perfection, he only granted the oral transmission without any explanation.

Following is a passage from his teaching on guru yoga:

Some people perceive their gurus as ordinary human beings who have bodies of flesh and blood. Others view their guru as Manjushri himself, and if they touch their guru, they feel they are touching Manjushri. Among these two views, which one is correct?

To perceive the guru as Manjushri is correct. There are many reasons to support this view, but I am afraid I will not have enough time to expound on this topic extensively.

To make it simple, your guru really is Manjushri, and that is why you need to visualize the guru as Manjushri. In this practice of the guru yoga of Manjushri, you should consider that the essence of Manjushri is your root teacher. Why? Because if you perceive both the appearance and essence as Manjushri, there may be a tendency to feel Manjushri is beyond your reach. To many of you, Manjushri is the noble one residing at Mount Wutai, who went to India many times when the Buddha was physically there but has little to do with where you are living now. If you pray to him, it might seem you would receive little blessings. On the contrary, your root guru has come to you in person and bestowed empowerments and teachings, so you would naturally feel much closer to him and that it is easier to receive great blessings if you pray to him. For this reason, when you visualize Manjushri, you should know that his essence is your root guru.

If you want to achieve the realization of the Great Perfection, the best way is to pray to your guru. If you already have some realization of the

Great Perfection but wish to improve your experience and attainment, letting it continuously increase and lead you to buddhahood, there is no better method than praying to your guru. Therefore, it is essential to meditate on and pray to your guru.

Here is the method to visualize and practice guru yoga. Firstly, visualize your root guru in the space in front of you in the form of Manjushri and reflect, "From now on, other than you, I will never seek another refuge, and even in my dreams, I will only pray to you, my guru." With devoted faith, make the mandala offerings to the guru, visualizing that you offer to your guru your body, possessions, and all root of virtue accumulated throughout the three times. Then, contemplate that in front of the guru, you sincerely disclose and confess all the misdeeds and downfalls created in all lifetimes since beginningless time, swearing that even when your life is at risk, you would never commit those misdeeds again. This is the remedy to purify misdeeds. Next, contemplate, "I would only pray to you, my guru. Please grant me empowerment and pith instruction so that my mind will be brought to maturity and liberation." Again, reflect, "Please bless me so that I can practice the Great Perfection's path of clear light and achieve the same realization as yours." Like this, you need to pray to the guru with total devotion.

The verse of this prayer was directly transmitted and taught by the Buddha, so it possesses extremely powerful blessings. When you recite it, do not recite it in English, but in the original Tibetan language. Here it is:

zhon nu'i ku lu jang wa po

Appearing in the form of a youthful kaya,

yeshé dron mé rab tu gyan

Splendidly adorned with the wisdom luminosity

jigten ti mug mun sel wa

That can dispel the darkness of ignorance in the world—

jampé yang la sol wa deb

To you, Lord Manjushri, I pray.

The first line depicts what Bodhisattva Manjushri looks like. He appears as a youth sixteen years old. *Splendidly adorned with the wisdom luminosity* indicates that Manjushri is the embodiment of the omniscient wisdom of all buddhas, so he is adorned with the luminosity of wisdom. Just as a lamp can dispel darkness, the great wisdom of Bodhisattva Manjushri can remove the stupidity and ignorance of all sentient beings. In front of such a lord, Bodhisattva Manjushri, pray sincerely to bless your mind streams. While contemplating in this way, wholeheartedly chant this four-line prayer a thousand, ten thousand, or even one hundred thousand times.

In the end, visualize that from the middle of the guru's eyebrows, his throat, and his heart center radiate respectively white, red, and blue light rays that dissolve into your three corresponding places. Thereby, all the misdeeds and obscurations of your body, speech, and mind are purified, and you obtain the qualities of your guru's three kayas. Finally, the guru melts into light that again dissolves into you, whereby you and the guru become the same. At this point, concentrate on the state that is imbued with the view of the Great Perfection. Relax and abide. When conceptual thoughts arise again, visualize that the entire universe and the inhabitants within are the body of the guru, all sound is the speech of the guru, and all thoughts are the wisdom of the guru. Remain in this pure perception and dedicate the virtue to all sentient beings to attain supreme buddhahood.

GURU YOGA OF GURU RINPOCHE PADMASAMBHAVA

That day, His Holiness also taught a guru yoga practice of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava composed by Ju Mipham Rinpoche (*Shower of Blessings*).^a Here is the teaching:

First, you do not need to perceive yourself as the deity. You simply visualize your body as it is in your ordinary form. Then, in the space in front of you appears the immaculate Dhanakosha Lake of Oddiyana, which is filled with the pure water of eight good qualities. It was the place where Guru Padmasambhava was born.

Then, in the center of the lake, visualize a thousand-petaled lotus blossom. Atop that is a full moon disk, upon which sits Orgyen Rinpoche, Padmasambhava. His complexion is white, tinged with red, brimming with energy and vitality. His right hand holds a vajra, and his left hand a skull cup containing a jeweled vase. His body is adorned with the ornaments of the perfect sambhogakaya, including the five silk ornaments and eight jewel ornaments. He is in union with Yeshe Tsogyal, who is white in color and holds a curved knife in her right hand and a skull cup in her left hand. Surrounding them are all the noble beings in the mandala of self-occurring tantras. You must visualize all these clearly and distinctly.

Third, in front of the visualized Guru Rinpoche, reflect, “Whether I go up or down and whether I experience agony or joy, misfortune or fortune, the omniscient Guru Rinpoche, know me. Please bless me.” With tremendous faith and devotion, pray to him sincerely and fervently. Then, in terms of your body, place your palms together; in terms of speech, sing respectful prayers; and in terms of the mind, recollect his excellent qualities. Thus, you pay homage to him respectfully.

Next, contemplate, “I offer to you, Guru Rinpoche, all that I am excessively attached to, including my body, possessions, and all root

^a *chin lab char beb (byin rlabs char 'bebs).*

of virtue accumulated throughout the three times.” Visualize making offerings to Guru Rinpoche in this way.

Then, confess negative deeds by thinking, “Since beginningless time until now, life after life, I have committed limitless misdeeds driven by desire, anger, and ignorance. For all the misdeeds I have done, now I confess and openly disclose in front of you, Guru Rinpoche. I regret whatever misdeeds I have done before, and I swear never to repeat them even when my life is at risk. Please bless me so that my downfalls and misdeeds can be completely purified.”



1.15: Left to right: Khenpo Namdrol, Ngodrup Dorje, and Sangye Khandro

Next, rejoice over others’ virtue in this way: “For any virtue created by anyone, whether inferior or superior to me, I sincerely rejoice without envy or enmity.” Like this, if you can really rejoice at the virtue of others, you will not only accumulate the same merit but also may be able to attain more excellent merit than the actual doer. Therefore, it is very necessary to rejoice from the bottom of your heart at the virtue of any other individual.

Next is to beseech Guru Rinpoche to remain in this world. As long as space remains, the vajra body of Padmasambhava is beyond birth and death, so actually there is no need to pray to him to remain in this world. However, his nirmanakaya appears in the world in various forms according to the various inclinations of sentient beings. So, we still need to pray to him to remain in this world as long as possible. Then, contemplate that you supplicate the emanations of Guru Rinpoche to turn the wheel of dharma for the benefit of all sentient beings until samsara is emptied.

Then, dedicate all your virtue that has been accumulated to the attainment of the same state and accomplishment as Guru Rinpoche.

Next, pray for Guru Rinpoche's blessing so that the misdeeds, obscurations, and downfalls of your body, speech, and mind will be completely purified. Visualize that all the qualities of Guru Rinpoche's body, speech, and mind enter into your own mind, so that you can conduct vast activities to spread the dharma and benefit sentient beings.

Finally, contemplate that through praying in this way, from the heart center of Guru Rinpoche, fine shafts of light with five colors radiate and extend into your own heart center like a spider's thread and dissolve there. In this way, you attain all the excellent qualities of body, speech, and mind of Guru Rinpoche. While you meditate in this way, recite fervently the *Seven-Line Prayer*^a and the mantra of Guru Rinpoche.

The *Seven-Line Prayer* is all-embracing, and all dharma is condensed into it. If I were to teach it, I can explain it from all levels of dharma. Ju Mipham Rinpoche has presented an elaboration of it in his *White Lotus*,^b an explanation of the *Seven-Line Prayer to Guru Padmasambhava*, which you can refer to. So, I will skip explaining the meaning here.

^a *tsig dün sol deb (tshig bdun gsol 'debs).*

^b *pema karmo (padma dkar po).*

In brief, the *Seven-Line Prayer* is of immense blessing, completely transcending any other practice. So, now I will give you the transmission:

Hung
In the northwest country of Oddiyana,
Upon the stamen of a lotus flower,
Having realized the most astonishing supreme siddhi,
You are known as the Lotus Born,
Surrounded by your retinue of countless dakinis.
Following you, I practice.
Please approach and bestow your blessings.
Guru Padma Siddhi Hung

om ah hung benzar guru padma siddhi hung

In daily recitations, you need to recite the mantra of Guru Rinpoche and the *Seven-Line Prayer* as much as possible. At the end of each session, visualize that from the middle of his eyebrows, his throat, and his heart center radiate white, red, and blue light rays, which dissolve into your three places. Through this, the blessing of the body, speech, and mind of the guru enters your mind stream. Finally, the guru melts into light, which transforms into a perfectly round and rosy, white bindu, or light sphere, with a *hung* syllable in its center as adornment. Contemplate that the bindu dissolves into your heart center, whereby the guru's wisdom and your mind merge inseparably and become of one taste. Abide in this state of realization without any thought and rest in samadhi. *Ah Ah Ah...*

Following that, Yidzhin Norbu imparted the transmission of the *Excellent Vase of Splendor*,^a the tsok feast offering to accompany the vajra *Seven-Line Prayer*. When giving that transmission, he taught a very useful instruction:

^a *pal gyi büm zang (dpal gyi bum bzang).*

As for the tsok feast offering, you can offer whatever pleasing food and beverages you have. You can place them in front of the representatives of the Three Jewels or on an individually set altar or the like. Then, chant this concise sadhana of tsok offering and visualize offering them to Guru Rinpoche and the gathering of dakas and dakinis. Visualize that they accept and enjoy your offering, after which you eat the remainders as a way of accepting siddhis. This is a great method to effortlessly perfect your accumulations. Because of this, I would suggest you make tsok offerings and recite this sadhana on a regular basis as much as you can.

As for the way of reciting this sadhana, you can follow what I taught or just follow exactly the complete ritual of Ju Mipham Rinpoche. Practice in either way that makes you feel comfortable.

It would also be a good idea to practice tsok offering at each meal every day. Before each meal, you could recite the following four-line stanza of tsok offering to turn eating into a virtuous activity.

Hung

Hung

ah lé choying dang nyam kapalar

*With ah, a skull cup appears as vast as the space
of dharmadhatu.*

om lé nang sid dod yon tsok su sham

*With om, all appearance and existence are displayed
as the tsok offerings.*

hung gi dechen yeshé rolpar gyur

*With hung, they transform into the wisdom play
of great bliss,*

hrih yi tsa sum lha tsok gyépa kang

*With hrih, gurus, yidams, dakinis, and all the deities gathered are
pleased and satisfied.*

Although eating itself is just an ordinary mundane activity, if you recite this sadhana and visualize offering the meal to Guru Rinpoche, having meals can also accumulate great merit. So, I would encourage you to recite it very often.

CHASED BY A RAINBOW

Along the southeastern shore of the island of Hawaii, between Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling and the Pacific Ocean, Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is located. It is a world-renown volcanic area, which contains two of the most active volcanoes in the world. On the afternoon of June 20th, we paid a visit there. When passing by some valleys on our way there, some locals told us that the volcanoes had been erupting from time to time in the recent decade and that the lava from the crater ran all the way to the south of the island, covering the road and gushing into the Pacific Ocean. They also showed us the ferocious imprint of the magma's solidification.



1.16: Left to right: Chojé, Lama Mumtso, Ani Medron, and Khenpo Sodargye

After arriving at the park, we first went to the visitor center. There, we watched some documentary films about volcanic eruptions in Hawaii and learned about some local history. Afterward, we drove to the seashore. This was the first time we got so close to the boundless Pacific Ocean. We could not go too close to the lava,



1.17: Chojé on the shore in Hawaii

but from where we stood, we could still clearly see the dense steam that surged into the air where the scorching lava entered the water. The water in that area was boiling and bubbling. We were told that even around that hot spot in the water, there were oceanic creatures living. Amazed, Yidzhin Norbu said, “How inconceivable the karma of sentient beings is!”

On our way back, an amazing thing happened—a rainbow followed Khenpo Rinpoche just like a shadow. Wherever his car moved, the rainbow moved closely. Hawaii is known as the Rainbow State, so it is not unusual to see rainbows in Hawaii. But this rainbow was really different since it seemed to chase after Rinpoche a long way and followed his car closely. So, he stopped and sat down by the road to take a picture with that rainbow as the background. After a while, the rainbow gradually disappeared. I noticed that Chojé kept reciting something silently, not sure if it had something to do with Pele, the Hawaiian Goddess of Volcanoes and Fire.



1.18: The rainbow chasing Chojé



1.19: Chojé with the rainbow that chased him

LEFT A PAIR OF SHOES



As Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok departed from the Land of Tibet, I had packed some light summer clothes, but no extra shoes for him. So, he arrived on this tropical island in his heavy Tibetan leather boots. It certainly would be too hot and cumbersome if His Holiness had to wear them all the way on this tour, especially in such a place with a tropical climate.

So, I found a chance to ask someone in the temple to take me to a shopping mall in Hilo nearby. When we entered the mall, I was amazed that there were neither glass sales counters nor salespeople standing behind the counters. All the goods were neatly displayed within customers' reach, so I could freely pick up anything I felt interested in.



1.20: The leather sandals purchased for Choje

Out of a large selection of shoes, I picked up a pair of sturdy leather sandals. It was priced at over 70 US dollars, almost 800 RMB at that time. Although they were quite pricey, I still bought them, because His Holiness' feet were too large to fit comfortably even in the largest-size shoes in China. I was very glad to get him a pair of well-fitting shoes in America.

After we got back, His Holiness tried them on, and they turned out to be a perfect fit and comfortable. His Holiness wore them during our entire trip, and even after we returned to the Land of Tibet, he would still wear this pair of

shoes often. They were worn by His Holiness on many occasions throughout his life but had never broken down.

When we left Hawaii, His Holiness' Tibetan leather boots were left at Nechung Dorje Drayang Ling. The resident lama held them as a treasure. He wrapped them in a piece of yellow cloth, locked them in a cabinet for years, and only showed them to a couple of fortunate people.



1.21: The pair of leather boots left by Chojé in Hawaii, preserved by Nechung Temple for almost thirty years

So far, this pair of shoes has been preserved on this island for almost thirty years. Until recent years, I entrusted a person to try to get them back with an amount of donations for the temple. After multiple attempts, the people in charge of the temple finally agreed.

In 2017, I was invited by some universities and monasteries in Hawaii to give dharma lectures. That time, I wished to revisit the monastery. However,

due to some reasons out of my control, my itinerary to travel abroad that year had to be canceled, so I did not make it in the end.

NECHUNG PROTECTOR AGAIN

On the morning of June 21st, prior to giving the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment, once again His Holiness talked about his connection with the Nechung protector:

In the past, Orgyen Padmasambhava brought the dharma to Tibet and made it shine throughout the Land of Snows. In order to make that happen, it was necessary to stimulate all good conditions and dispel any possible obstacles or unfavorable conditions. So, before coming to Tibet, Guru Rinpoche carried with him this *Vajrakilaya* sadhana that was hidden in a small pouch and hung around his neck. Since it was such a special pith instruction that he rarely transmitted to anyone, this sadhana was called the *Vajrakilaya Neck-Pouch*, or *Phurba Gurkhukma* in Tibetan.

Speaking of dharma practice, it is a universal law that however profound a practice could be, if favorable conditions are not present, it is unable to benefit sentient beings much; on the contrary, as long as all favorable conditions come together, even a not-so-advanced practice can immensely benefit sentient beings. In terms of the practice of *Vajrakilaya*, it has never had even one trace of anything inauspicious, and every interdependent arising related to it is perfect from the outer, inner, or secret aspects.

The root holder of this practice is Gyalwa Rinpoche and the Nechung protector, the chief of all dharma protectors. I handed it into their hands right after I revealed this terma. How did I do so? Actually, I did not directly ask Rinpoche to receive this practice from me, saying such words like, "I have this sadhana, and it is better for you to practice it." It was Rinpoche who voluntarily came to me and said, "Since

you have this *Vajrakilaya* practice, please grant me its empowerment and instructions for practice.” Then, treating it as making mandala offerings to him, I offered him the empowerment and explained the practice instructions.



1.22: Chojé with meditative expression when taking a rest

Out of immeasurable joy, he wrote the prayer to the lineage masters of this practice, in which he made supplications to my various past reincarnations. Moreover, when a fire offering sadhana for the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* cycle appeared in my mind, he was beside me and he wrote it down in person. Because he is a great spiritual guide who makes incessant endeavors for world peace, that is something hard to imagine. But it is the result of his previous aspiration and our karmic connection.

Then, how did I entrust this practice to the Nechung protector? He received the empowerment directly when he descended into the body of the oracle. Usually, since it is an intense process, the protector will not stay for very long to receive any empowerments and teachings. But that time, he stayed to receive empowerment and listened faithfully and respectfully. During the teaching, he offered me a buddha statue, a text, and a stupa and exhorted me, "Please rely on this *Vajrakilaya* practice to benefit sentient beings more extensively. Also, please compose a sadhana of subjugating activity." Therefore, at that time when I was in Dharamshala, I composed an offering prayer to him to show my appreciation, because he had helped me to accomplish what I wished for.

This time, when I just came here (Hawaii), at the request of the Nechung protector and many disciples here, I also composed a four-line prayer to the protector. If you chant these two prayers regularly, the Nechung protector will wholeheartedly assist you and give you uncommon great protection.

My relationship with the Nechung protector is not newly created; our bond has been established and strengthened through many lifetimes. In the past, Tertön Sogyal had given the protector empowerments, teachings, and many instructions. The Nechung protector also predicted different things that the tertön needed to do and guided him to find the places where terms were hidden. Between the thirteenth Gyalwa Rinpoche Thubten Gyatso and Tertön Sogyal, the Nechung protector would take messages back and forth to assist their communication. As I mentioned yesterday, when I was in Dharamshala, the oracle came to me. At that time, I was talking about stories happening in my previous life. Then, the protector descended, and he was overjoyed, like a father and a son meeting again after a long separation. Imbued with faith and devotion, he came close to me and burst into tears. His facial expressions showed that his devotion and faith in me is overwhelming.

When I visited Nechung Monastery the next day, some monk asked me, “Would you like to invite the Nechung protector to come?” It occurred to me that if he were to give prophecies regarding political matters, I would have trouble when I go back. So, I declined, “Thank you, but no.” However, because they already knew what happened the day before, they said, “Although you do not invite the protector to come, observing from his joyful expression and respectful manner when meeting you, it is very likely that he will suddenly descend.” Thus, the apparel for the protector was prepared.

Then, when I was giving the empowerment, the protector indeed descended. When the oracle just went into a trance, the monks immediately put the special outfit on him. Then, the protector came, and with unsurpassable respect and sincerity, he offered me a buddha statue, a text, and a stupa. Complying with my wish, he did not touch on politics, said some auspicious words about flourishing the dharma and bringing peace and happiness to sentient beings, and wished Gyalwa Rinpoche to remain in this world for a very long time and for his activities to flourish. What the protector said was written down, and you can refer to it for details.²⁰

In addition, there are more stories about my connection with the Nechung protector, but it would take a very long time if I elaborate as you may wish, so I think what I have said so far is good enough. All in all, I have just briefly explained to you about the wonderful occasion of how this practice was transmitted to its root holder Gyalwa Rinpoche and the Nechung protector. Because this practice has such an unusual background, it is filled with enormous blessing power unmatched by any other practice. It is from this *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* practice that Guru Rinpoche began his dharma propagation in Tibet, and it is the mother of all dharmas in Tibet. Anyone who practices it will enjoy all wonderful and auspicious circumstances, eliminate all misfortunes, and have all their wishes fulfilled.

Now, I am going to give you the empowerment of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*.



1.23: Chojé going out on a tour

Later that afternoon, we visited Punalu'u Black Sand Beach Park. It is made from basalt sand formed from basaltic lava. After erupting from craters, lava may run all the way to the ocean. When encountering the ocean water, it cools down and becomes solidified. Through years of the scouring of water and eroding of wind, black sand has come into being. Besides, the pitch-black sand beach is a recreation area with picnic tables and benches and beautiful palm trees embellishing the coastline. With all it can offer, this park is a very famous tourist site on the Big Island. It was indeed a sight to gladden the heart. Chojé enjoyed the scenery and got some relaxation. Now, this marked a perfect ending of Rinpoche's dharma propagation in Hawaii.



1.24: Chojé at the seaside



1.25: Chojé and his entourage with a lot of laughter

A MAGICAL COUNTRY

During our stay in Hawaii, I was so impressed by the modern technology, as well as the economic power of western countries. For instance, there was a sound sensor light at the entrance of the building where we stayed. It would turn on once someone passed the entrance and turn off after a while. The sound of coughing could also turn it on. In those days, besides light bulbs, I had never seen such things. It was really interesting to me. I thought there must be someone hiding somewhere to operate it. Out of curiosity, I asked many people how it was operated, but nobody could give me a good answer. They only knew how to install or use it but did not know the principle of the technology.



1.26: Khenpo Sodargye in Hawaii

Also, everyone who attended the teachings had a big mobile phone and drove a car. For me, this was unimaginable because in those years, even the richest families in the Tibetan region, who were often referred to as a *10K yuan family*, meaning that their wealth has gone above 10,000 yuan, possessed only bicycles, and there was barely anyone who owned a motorcycle. In most cases, only the top officials working for the government could have the right to use a car. Still, they could not drive the car themselves, and the car could be driven only by an assigned driver. So, it was hard for me to imagine that everyone had a car to drive by themselves.

Since Hawaii was our first stop, when we arrived there, I found so many things interesting and new. Though after I got used to them they were not so appealing anymore, they were really unforgettable to me. However, His

Holiness was never attracted to those material things. What he cared about was how to help sentient beings get rid of afflictive emotions and how to liberate them from samsara.

MY CONCH IS FILLED WITH HIS HOLINESS' BLESSING

I had a chance to interview another Buddhist who attended Yidzhin Norbu's teachings in 1993, and his name is Greg Herbst. He has strong faith in Rinpoche and is a very devoted practitioner. When he attended our interview, his friend said, "He dressed up today." Carefully taking out his giant conch and placing it close to him, he started to tell us what he could recollect:

When Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche visited us, I worked as a firefighter in Hawaii Volcanoes National Park. The resident lama, known fondly as Tipola, was my teacher. Besides dharma practice, I went to a lot of religious ceremonies of native Hawaiians.

The conch is an important instrument in their ceremonies, so I learned how to blow it, and I am quite good at it. So, following the tradition of Buddhism, I blew this conch outside of the shrine room before Rinpoche started to teach. Then, I placed my conch close to his throne when he taught because based on native Hawaiians' belief, the vibration of his voice would be stored as good energy or *mana*, which is the Hawaiian word for divine energy. Based on Buddhism, his voice could also be stored in the conch as blessing.



1.27: Greg Herbst now and the conch that he placed by Chojé's throne in 1993

During Chojé's stay, he visited the Volcanoes National Park. Since I worked there, I took him to the office of the superintendent. When he was introduced to a rock that Hawaiians believe to have some medical effect, he was quite curious and asked, "Can it cure me?" When hearing that, I guessed that His Holiness might have some health issues.

We also went to the crater, and the photo that has a rainbow in the background was taken there. Then, we drove all the way to the coast to see the place where lava fell from the cliff to the ocean. Yidzhin Norbu and his entourage were all quite amazed. The photo of Rinpoche, Miguel, and I was taken at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park.



1.28: Left to right: Greg Herbst, Chojé, and Miguel Schwabe

Though many years have passed, Yidzhin Norbu's visit is still so vivid in my memory. I guess it is from his direct blessing, as well as my conch. It

stored his voice. I thought you would like to take a look, so I brought it here. I can blow it for you. Dhuoo... Dhuoo...

But you know, even today, I still cannot believe that a great lama like Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche would come all the way from the Land of Tibet to our tiny temple to take care of us.



1.29: Chojé at the Black Sand Beach Park



2nd Stop

June 23rd–June 29th

United States

BOULDER

SCHEDULE

June 23rd

Arrived in Boulder

June 24th

Taught on *Compassion in Buddhism* at Karma Dzong Meditation Center

June 25th

Had physical examination at UC Health University of Colorado Hospital

June 26th

Taught on the *Secret Mantrayana Method of Recognizing the Nature of Mind* at Lone Hawk Farm

June 27th

Taught on the *Stage-by-Stage Practice of Milarepa* at Mile Hi Church

June 28th

Taught on a *Brief Introduction of Shambhala* at Karma Dzong Meditation Center

June 29th

Met with the managing members of Karma Dzong Meditation Center and local Buddhists and gave a farewell talk

ARRIVED IN BOULDER

After the journey to Hawaii, we set off for the next stop, the Vajradhatu Shambhala Center in Boulder, Colorado. On the afternoon of June 22nd, we flew from Hilo International Airport to Honolulu International Airport, which was a one-hour flight, and then proceeded on to our flight to San Francisco. Five hours later, we arrived at San Francisco International Airport. We were met at the airport by the tulkus and many disciples who had arranged for our tour, which included Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche, Venerable Chagdud Rinpoche, Lingtrul Rinpoche, and many others. Then, we went to rest at the home of one of Gyatrul Rinpoche's students in Menlo Park, where we spent the night before proceeding on to Denver the next day.



2.1: Chojé at San Francisco International Airport



2.2: Chojé and Gyatrul Rinpoche

On June 23rd, we left San Francisco in late morning and continued to fly to Denver. The flight took about two and half hours, crossing the continental divide and approaching the plains to the east of Denver, arriving at the previous airport, Stapleton International. Our final destination of Boulder was another hour's drive from there.



2.3: View of Denver



2.4: Stapleton International Airport

The city of Boulder is located at the foot of the Rocky Mountains, where they meet the great plains. It is a beautiful and quiet city, like a giant garden, full of energy and passion. Along the way, we passed through many hills dotted with high trees and pretty houses in various styles.

We were accommodated in Marpa House at 891 12th Street near the center of Boulder. This was a residential dharma center of Vajradhatu in Colorado at the time, and many great lamas who had come to Boulder to teach the dharma had stayed there. Many practitioners were also living there in order to fully engage themselves in dharma practice. They had renounced their hometowns and careers in order to live a simple and meaningful life in this Vajradhatu sangha community.



2.5: Marpa House

All this was due to the great kindness and personal charisma of Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, who established Vajradhatu and attracted many Americans, young and old, to the dharma path. This was a truly amazing and influential event some fifty years ago. Vajradhatu later became a well-known international organization and eventually included more than one hundred meditation

centers and several residential retreat centers in America and Europe. It is considered one of the largest Buddhist organizations in the US.

As one of the main organizations that invited His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche to the US, Vajradhatu provided us with great assistance in applying for visas and getting approval for traveling abroad from both the US and Chinese governments. This time, as scheduled, Yidzhin Norbu would stay six days in Boulder and give dharma teachings to different groups of people.

COMPASSION IN BUDDHISM

On June 24th, Yidzhin Norbu went to the Karma Dzong Meditation Center, where a grand dharma assembly was held and many great masters, monastics, lay Buddhist followers, as well as non-Buddhists, were gathered together to receive Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok's teaching. In the stately hall, Rinpoche was seated on a well-adorned throne, and the host speaker introduced him to the audience by saying:

His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche is an unsurpassed scholar and enlightened master of great accomplishment in today's Land of Tibet. He has perfected the Mahayana and Tantrayana teachings in all four schools of Tibetan Buddhism. He is the embodiment of all buddhas. Just by hearing his speech or seeing his face with pure faith, one will be able to shut the door to the three lower realms. Such an auspicious opportunity for us to be able to meet him in person indeed results from the tremendous amount of merit accumulated in our many lifetimes.

Then, in accordance with the preference and capacity of the audience, Chojé gave the following teaching:

*With your great compassion, you embraced this turbulent
and degenerate world,
And made five hundred mighty aspirations.
As exalted as the white lotus,
Whoever hears your name shall never return to samsara—
Most compassionate teacher, Lord Buddha Shakyamuni,
to you I pay homage!*



2.6: Chojé starting to teach in Boulder

Starting with this verse of praise and supplication to Buddha Shakyamuni, I pay homage to my heart deity and set my altruistic motivation for giving this teaching.

Today, I would like to share with you the essence of the Buddhadharma, the Buddhist view of vast and pervasive compassion, which is not

inconsistent with any other religious tradition in this world, such as Christianity.

There are several important reasons for me to give this teaching in the West. I have established the same view in the Land of Snows, namely, that there is no inconsistency among the four major schools and many other minor branches in Tibetan Buddhism. Certainly, all capable masters and upholders of the Buddhadharma have the unshakable responsibility to establish and explain this key point concerning the similarities of the major traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. Personally, I have taken it even a step further. I have engaged in actual practices to bring all different schools and traditions together. As a result, now in the Land of Tibet, the upholders and masters of all different lineages enjoy a harmonious and cohesive relationship, and their followers embrace the nonsectarian understanding of the various teachings and practices that developed in Tibet. Given such a satisfactory result, I have been acknowledged for this by many great masters. Now, as I came to the West, I feel it is necessary for me to elaborate on this idea again, letting people understand that the four major religious traditions thriving on this planet, as well as many minor religions, indeed lead to the same ultimate understanding.

To be specific, every religious tradition unanimously advocates for not harming living beings and, additionally, benefiting living beings to the best of one's ability. If all religious followers, such as those of the four major religious traditions, can uphold the same view and perform the same code of conduct, then the peace of the whole world—the fundamental issue that everyone cares about most—can be actualized without hindrance, and everywhere on earth will be blessed with ease and happiness. There is no doubt that all religions share the same purpose for the benefit of this world.

Now, I will talk about this view from the perspective of Buddhism. Some may wonder, "How do you actualize the teachings taught by the Buddha?" The Buddha himself answered this question, "Avoid all

non-virtue and cultivate all that is virtuous.” This answer encompasses the essence of all the Buddha’s teachings. *Non-virtue* refers to any negative thought or deed that may bring harm to self or others and, therefore, should be fully abandoned. If not, you will cause more and more suffering to both self and others. *Virtue* refers to whatever can be done to benefit self and others either physically or mentally. As such, abandoning non-virtue and embracing virtue are the perfect conduct and the perfect thought that encompass all key instructions in Buddhism.

Perfect Conduct in Buddhism

Perfect conduct in Buddhism can be carried out through the practice of the six paramitas.

Generosity means to dedicate your body, possessions, and all root of virtue accumulated throughout the three times for the benefit of all sentient beings. Some may ask, “Must I give away my body, my possessions, and my virtue all at once?” I’m afraid nowadays nobody in this world is capable of doing this; and because you do not have such capability, this is all the more reason to follow the teachings in the Buddhist scriptures and cultivate practice stage-by-stage. As your mental capability becomes stronger, you can make greater offerings to others. As it is said in Shantideva’s *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*:

*Our guide instructs us to begin
By giving lesser things, such as vegetable greens.*

At the very beginning, you train to offer simple, small amounts of goods, such as vegetables or any edibles, as a way of practicing generosity. Gradually, you will be able to give away more valuable things, including clothing and belongings, and eventually, it may even be possible to donate your spouse and children to benefit other living beings.

Such practice is essential to you. As the Buddha taught, if you hold the thought, “If I give this away to others, what will be left for me to enjoy?” such a self-centered thought of considering only personal benefit first will land you in the realm of hungry ghosts. The behavior based on such a thought is inferior. On the contrary, if you think, “If I enjoy this first then what is left to give as an act of generosity expressed toward others?” that kind of consideration for the benefit of sentient beings will begin to lead you to the higher realms. The conduct motivated by this consideration is wholesome and one that a dharma practitioner should perform. Arya Shantideva states in his *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*:

“If I give this, what will be left for me?”

Thinking only of oneself is the way of evil ghosts.

“If I keep this, what will be left to give?”

Showing concern for others leads the way to higher rebirth.

Learning about this virtuous practice and its opposite, namely, non-virtue, you engage actively in the practice of generosity for the sake of peace and happiness for all sentient beings in their present and future lives and then make appropriate dedication prayers. If you persevere in this practice, eventually, the stage of a noble being will be reached. At that time, there will be no difficulty for you to give away your head or limbs in order to benefit others because you value generosity over self-cherishing, knowing that your physical body is the same with vegetables or any other inferior things by nature.

Discipline. In Buddhism, there are three types of discipline, i.e., the vows of pratimoksha, the bodhisattva vows, and the samayas of Secret Mantrayana. The vow of pratimoksha requires you to abstain from harming others, such as killing. In addition, the bodhisattva vow requires you to benefit others directly or indirectly and to save others from suffering with your best efforts. Being trained in this way, once the practitioner achieves unobstructed meditative absorption and miraculous power, he or she can spontaneously benefit billions of

sentient beings every day. This is the samaya of Secret Mantrayana, which involves swiftly accomplishing vast activities for the welfare of all sentient beings. It is certain that every one of you can reach this stage.

Patience. Following the Buddha's teaching on purifying your own mind, you should never disturb others' minds but focus only on taming your own mind. This is the root practice in Buddhism. Certainly, you should not speak unkind words or do unkind things that would be harmful to others. Just observe your own mind and rid yourself of any negative or malicious mental state, such as anger directed toward others.

Diligence means to joyfully engage in virtuous activities and practices and, more specifically, to take pleasure in maintaining harmless and peaceful behavior. How do you do that? It is through cultivating loving kindness and compassion toward others. *Compassion* means, for instance, when you see someone who suffers from a physical illness or undergoes any heartbreaking misfortune, you think, "May they be free from all kinds of suffering." *Loving kindness* means to hold an attitude such as thinking, "How wonderful it would be if all beings could always enjoy peace and happiness."

Temporary peace and happiness refer to longevity, good health, abundant possessions, widespread fame, and so on in this ordinary world. You sincerely wish that sentient beings enjoy all these types of happiness. This wish needs to be further cultivated through gradual practice and, ultimately, cultivating the prayer that all beings may attain the utmost bliss and happiness in the pure land of Sukhavati the moment they pass away. What you experience in the pure land is beyond description since any type of happiness in this mundane world cannot compare with it. Therefore, maintaining this motivation, you need to diligently learn and practice the methods of directing yourself and others to take rebirth in Sukhavati.

The methods of taking rebirth in Sukhavati are to pray to the Buddha, practice the dharma, and serve the sangha with respect. If you can perform these wholesome deeds in regard to the Three Jewels, you will be much happier in old age. The reason is that through these practices, you will soon be reborn in Sukhavati and enjoy happiness hundreds of thousands of times greater than whatever was experienced in this world. Therefore, incomparable joy will be felt.

Generally speaking, for most people, death is approaching as they age, and as a result, they feel more pain in both the body and the mind. However, for those who engage diligently in the Sukhavati practice, they will not have a fear of death but rather will be much readier for the transition when the time comes. As the Buddha told us, those practitioners aspiring to take rebirth in Sukhavati will become more joyful when their lives come to an end. Why? Just like a severely sick person would be overjoyed when recovering fully from sickness, a person who is able to be reborn in the pure land will completely rid himself or herself of suffering in samsara. Such is the unique outcome that only the Buddhist tradition can provide. An ordinary person would be ecstatic if he became the world's richest man tomorrow, whereas the bliss and happiness attained from liberation is hundreds or thousands of times greater than that. That is why a Sukhavati practitioner becomes more and more joyful as this life approaches its end.

This is obvious in your daily life. All excellent dharma practitioners enjoy more happiness and ease as they get older, while most ordinary people become more distressed in the face of aging. The difference between the two tells us of the qualities of the Buddhadharma.

Some may wonder, "Is it possible for an ordinary person to be reborn in the pure land of Sukhavati?" The answer is "yes," without a doubt. If you can spend half the effort and hard work that you would put into your worldly lives in practicing the dharma, and in particular,

never forget praying to the Three Jewels, I promise that you will be successfully reborn in Sukhavati.

Meditative concentration is to single-pointedly pray to the Buddha, practice the dharma, and show respect to the sangha without any distraction. As such, diligently and constantly engage in spiritual practice.

The way of meditation varies among different religions, including Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism. According to the view of Buddhism, the essential point of meditation is to settle the mind in single-pointed concentration. For instance, if you think of Buddha Shakyamuni at all times and under all circumstances, that would be the perfect practice of meditative concentration.

Transcendental wisdom is to realize how to abandon non-virtue and engage in virtue. To cultivate such wisdom, you need to first listen to dharma teachings in the presence of a qualified teacher and then contemplate the meaning in order to dispel doubts. Finally, you must blend these teachings with the mind and put them into actual practice through meditation. Through this process, you will develop a firm conviction in the truthfulness of the dharma.

If you can deepen the wisdom of contemplation and the wisdom of meditation, it will become easier to understand advanced scientific knowledge. Although many religions in this world cannot keep up with the pace of science and remain consistent with the view of science, Buddhism can nonetheless coexist with science and support its development. As you learn the Buddhadharma, the discoveries and theories of science will very likely resonate with you. In the same manner that you broaden your knowledge of science from different dimensions, a conviction in Buddhism can readily arise in your mind. If you go deeper into the Buddhadharma, it will be clear that there are similar descriptions in Buddhist scriptures on the mysteries of science that puzzle many people and that the Buddha has already

addressed the hidden meaning and rules that have been or have not been discovered by scientists. It is worthwhile for any of those who want to better themselves in regard to material possessions or spiritual wealth to study and practice Buddhism, and they will soon find themselves greatly benefited from the dharma. I am sure such a benefit can be verified by everyone's personal experience.

That being said, I do not have much time to expound on this topic. Now, in the Land of Tibet, there exist both the Kangyur and Tengyur, the total of which are more than three hundred volumes. You may refer to them for a more detailed exposition on the perfect conduct in Buddhism. For now, let's move on to the next topic.

Perfect Thought in Buddhism

The Buddha claimed that all sentient beings equally share the same aspiration to attain happiness and to be free from suffering. This is an uncommon teaching that other religions in this world are not able to preach. Many other religions aim at benefiting most sentient beings, but inevitably bring harm to some other beings. For instance, they work for the well-being of humankind, while unfortunately depriving animals of their lives. Or they are only concerned with the benefit of a certain group and completely disregard others' bodies and lives. Buddhism can never be like this because the goal is to benefit all beings without a single exception.

The Buddha said in the sutras, "Just like you would treat yourself, never harm others." Anything beneficial to you is also beneficial to others, and anything harmful to you is also harmful to others. All living beings wish to be happy and wish to avoid suffering, and this mindset applies to everyone. That is why the essence of Buddhism can be condensed into the key point of wishing to bring benefit to all living beings. A person who is able to put himself in another's position and be thoughtful of others could not possibly dislike the path of Buddhism.

I'll give you an example to illustrate this. If there are two companions, one of whom often helps you, while the other often annoys you, which one will you like? I am sure that you will choose the person who is kind and helpful but stay away from the malicious one. Just like you, all beings prefer those that help them and try to keep their distance from those who harm them. Buddhism is a religious tradition that unfailingly aims to bring benefit to each and every sentient being. If you are able to analyze the Buddhist philosophy rationally and objectively, it is certain that you will come to love Buddhism.

Great masters who follow in the footsteps of the Buddha have the same goal in their activities. Generally speaking, there are masters of perfect qualities, of middling qualities, and of inferior qualities. How do you distinguish these three types of masters? The perfectly excellent masters can extensively benefit all beings and absolutely refrain from harming any of them. The middling ones can benefit beings while occasionally and unintentionally bringing harm to them. The inferior ones are those who completely neglect the well-being of others and always inflict severe harm on them, considering only themselves. So, there are good and bad masters in Buddhism, and the key criterion to recognize them is whether they are able to benefit sentient beings.

The same applies to your worldly lives. For instance, if someone in the US is intelligent, capable, and very kindhearted, it is generally considered that this person will very likely make a beneficial impact on their community and even the country at large. On the contrary, if there is a person who has great ability but harbors hostility toward society for the sake of a personal agenda, then it is agreed that this person would be unable to bring much peace or harmony to the country. Therefore, it is unanimous that people from anywhere in the world, whether American or Tibetan, always prefer consideration and kindness rather than those bringing harm to others.



2.7: Chojé joyfully sharing the dharma with the audience

Many of you present here are already Buddhists, and you understand my points. I hope all of you can develop a deeper love for Buddhism and engage more diligently in dharma practice.

Some of you who are followers of Christianity would also love the Buddhist philosophy of altruism. As we know, when being crucified, Jesus Christ underwent unimaginable suffering. But he knew his crucifixion was necessary to pay for the sins of all humankind and to make it possible for humankind to attain happiness. Carrying the pain and suffering of others and bestowing happiness upon them was the spirit of Jesus, which inspired numerous people to follow him, and that is what gave birth to the religion of Christianity. I believe his altruistic practice is the fundamental reason that Christianity has remained thriving in the world for so many centuries. Christianity is also a religion that aims for the benefit of many sentient beings.

For some of you who are non-believers, if you are curious and truly searching for what Buddhism advocates, I believe you will take delight in hearing the answer. The reason is obvious. If you want to be happy,

then being helpful to others certainly makes you happy; but if you hurt others, it is impossible for you to enjoy any happiness. To the degree of how you have helped your friends, you receive the same amount of joy and benefits as a reward. But if you hurt them either to their face or behind their back, you would have no way to be truly joyful.

For others who just want to pursue worldly pleasures and security with food, clothes, and all necessities, it is also essential to follow the sublime path of Buddhism that is tranquil and harmless and to joyfully practice the dharma as much as possible.

I sincerely wish all of you present here, as well as all your friends, can truly practice this unique and peaceful path of not harming any sentient beings. May you enjoy auspiciousness and happiness! Tashi Delek!

PHYSICAL EXAMINATION AT UC HEALTH

Yidzhin Norbu felt quite well on this trip, but, still, since he had a few basic health issues and was in the US where advanced health care technologies were available, all of his disciples urged him to take this opportunity to have a thorough check-up and, in particular, to see if his eyesight could be restored. Therefore, we put his physical examination on the schedule and made an appointment at UC Health University of Colorado Hospital.

On June 25th, we accompanied Chojé to the hospital. UC Health was founded in 1989 and has been recognized as one of the nation's top hospitals. Back in 1993, it was renowned for vision diagnosis and treatment. It was clean and quiet in the hospital, and the entire medical staff seemed kind. They spoke in an affable manner, avoiding any unsuitable words that might annoy the patient. They followed an orderly way to do the examination, performing every step without haste. The nurse first did some regular tests with instruments and kept

a record of the results, and then the doctor came for a detailed inquiry before continuing with a few specialized instruments. When they needed Yidzhin Norbu to follow their instructions, they spoke very gently, “Now, please look to the left, that’s great... And now, please look to the right, you did a good job...” The whole process made us feel relaxed and left me with a lasting positive impression.

The result of Rinpoche’s examination was positive. His overall health condition was satisfactory, but, unfortunately, there was no effective method to restore his sight, which was probably due to the lack of merit on the part of sentient beings. On the same day, Ani Medron also had a physical check-up because of certain heart problems that caused her to be on regular medication.

MISSED THE HOMELAND

One afternoon while Yidzhin Norbu was resting in his room, Ani Medron, Lama Mumtso, and I enjoyed leisure time on the grass outside the door. The sun was shining and the sky blue, dotted with white clouds. Looking at the snow mountains in the distance, a familiar feeling made us think of our homeland.



2.8: The distant view of Boulder

Although it was less than half a month since we had left the Land of Tibet, perhaps because this was our first time crossing the endless Pacific Ocean and we were in such a faraway and unfamiliar country, we began to feel quite homesick and started to talk about our homeland. Lama Mumtso had a small black tape recorder in her hand, playing some dharma songs that she had recorded while in Tibet.

During the chat, a strong feeling welled up in my mind, and I expressed this naturally, “As I accompany Lama Yidzhin Norbu on this trip, I feel intense pressure and always worry if I have arranged everything well. But I feel truly grateful that Rinpoche takes me with him, and I truly cherish this golden opportunity that is upon me. All of you have shown inexpressible kindness to me. Aside from the fact that Yidzhin Norbu has transmitted so many dharma teachings, you also support me in my life. Especially during my first winter (1985) at Larung Gar, I felt pinched since I barely had enough resources to survive. Soon after coming back from Nyarong, Chojé and you gave me 50 RMB (Chinese currency) and that carried me through the circumstances so that I could focus wholeheartedly on my dharma study and practice. Also, both of you give me nice food every new year. I will never forget your kind generosity and offer you my endless gratitude!”



2.9: Ani Medron and Lama Mumtso enjoying leisure time on the grass

Ani Medron smiled and said to me, “Jigphun would also help many other disciples, but you are very easygoing and do not decline his help. Unlike you, some disciples decline his generosity with many excuses, and that makes us feel embarrassed.”

We also talked about many experiences when we traveled together in India. Lama Mumtso was not very talkative, but this time she also shared some stories about her childhood.

THE SECRET MANTRAYANA METHOD OF RECOGNIZING THE NATURE OF MIND

On June 26th, Yidzhin Norbu was invited by Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche to Lone Hawk Farm to give a teaching on the nature of mind.

Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche gave the opening speech:

Om Svasti! May all accomplishments be attained!

Before getting started, I want to say a few words and also give a brief introduction for His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. When an occasion like this occurs, it is traditional to speak of the five perfections, or the five magnificent factors of this grand event, which are the perfect place, time, teacher, retinue, and teaching.



2.10: Arriving at Lone Hawk Farm

First, the perfect place is here in Boulder, Colorado, which is a magnificent place that has been blessed by His Holiness the sixteenth Gyalwang

Karmapa, Kyabjé Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, as well as many other great masters.

Second is the perfect time. This is the first time that all of us have gathered together to have such an extended seminar of Nyingma Summer Seminar in this country. This is a magnificent time for us.

Third is the perfect teacher. We are honored to have the magnificent master, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche, here with us. Rinpoche is a well-known master, a fully accomplished upholder of the Dzogchen lineage, and also a noble tertön. As we know, all great tertöns are the true embodiments of Guru Rinpoche Padmasambhava. Now, Khenpo Rinpoche has been traveling all the way from the Land of Tibet, and we are fortunate to have him present with us to teach the dharma.

Fourth is the perfect retinue. This is a magnificent retinue composed of Venerable Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, Venerable Gyatrul Rinpoche, as well as all of us.

Fifth is the perfect teaching. On this magnificent occasion, I have requested His Holiness to turn the wheel of dharma by giving us a direct pointing-out instruction on Dzogchen Atiyoga, the direct teaching on the nature of mind.

This wonderful event marks the time of our generation and our lives. I'd like to conclude here, and I will make the mandala offering to Yidzhin Norbu as all of us request him to turn the dharma wheel.

Then, Choje started to give the following teaching:

It is auspicious that we joyfully gather together here today. I want to start with the origin and history of Buddhism and talk about the instructions on the nature of mind in a brief way.

Buddhadharma: From India to Tibet

From the perspective of ultimate truth, our root teacher, Buddha Shakyamuni, who possessed all aspects of skillful means and cared for us with great compassion and loving kindness, had already achieved the fruition of the primordial protector, Buddha Samantabhadra. From the perspective of his manifestation, the Buddha aroused the supreme bodhicitta three countless eons ago, purified all defilements, accumulated immeasurable merit, and eventually was able to achieve buddhahood in Bodhi Gaya, India, carrying out the twelve enlightened deeds in this world more than 2,500 years ago.

Among these twelve deeds, the most essential one is the three turnings of the wheel of dharma for the sake of inspiring and guiding fortunate sentient beings. The first turning on the Four Noble Truths belongs to the common vehicles. The second turning on the absence of characteristics and the third turning on fully distinguishing the reality beyond a trace of doubt belong to the Mahayana path. All three turnings of the wheel were for ordinary sentient beings. Aside from that, the Buddha turned the wheel of dharma on the teaching of Secret Mantra that belongs to the Vajrayana path according to the faculties of the supreme sentient beings in the god realm, naga realm, yaksha realm, human realm, and many others.

All teachings on the common or lesser vehicles were passed on to the Seven Patriarchs,²¹ including Mahakashyapa who was appointed by the Buddha to be his successor, Ananda who was the successor of Mahakashyapa, and so forth. Thus, these teachings began to spread and thrive in the world. For the common Mahayana doctrines, the sections dealing with the profound view were compiled by Manjushri, and the sections on extensive conduct by Maitreya, both of which have

flourished throughout the world. The uncommon Vajrayana teaching of Secret Mantra was compiled and carried forward generally by the lords of the three families and, specifically, by Vajrapani, the Glorious Lord of Secrets, who had the main responsibility of transmitting the tantric teaching to the human realm. Meanwhile, numerous great masters, such as the Two Supreme Ones and Six Ornaments, ensured that the Buddhadharma would thrive in the holy land of India, like the sun shining on the earth forever.

The Buddha himself had prophesied, “My teaching will spread and increase from north to north.” He had also foretold that eight years after his parinirvana, one who would surpass him, Padmasambhava, would appear in this world and would travel north to the Land of Snows to propagate his teachings. Exactly as the Buddha’s own prophecy declared, Guru Rinpoche went to Tibet.



2.11: Chojé teaching at Lone Hawk Farm

This mantra adept, Orgyen Tsokye Dorje or Padmasambhava, is the single primary emanation of all three figures of Buddha Amitabha in Sukhavati, Lord Avalokiteshvara in Mount Potala, and the unsurpassable Buddha Shakyamuni in Bodh Gaya. He was an unsurpassable

great being who carried out extensive dharma activities within the three spheres—heaven, earth, and the subterranean—subjugating all evil demonic forces and those disembodied entities who had broken their vows. It was Padmasambhava who first dispelled all obstacles and negative conditions to the spreading and thriving of the dharma in Tibet by taming all vicious spirits, demonic forces, and vow-breaking spirits. During the same period, the great Khenpo Bodhisattva, Shantarakshita, went to Tibet and propagated the Sutrayana teachings. Later, the one hundred eight great panditas, including Vimalamitra and Shantigarbha, were invited to Tibet, and the one hundred eight great Tibetan translators, including Vairotsana, Kawa Peltsek, and Chogro Lu'i Gyaltsen, were sent to India. As a result, the corpus of the Buddhadharma that had remained in India was brought to Tibet and translated into Tibetan. The flourishing of Buddhism in Tibet was unparalleled, even compared to what had happened in the holy land of India.

A few centuries later, when Venerable Atisha Dipamkara Srijnana, the intentional manifestation of Buddha Amitabha, came to Tibet, he said, “Previously, I thought that I had mastered all the vast and profound dharma flourishing in India and all the scriptures that had been shown to me in the sky by dakinis dwelling in realms, such as Oddiyana, yakshas’ and gandharvas’ realms, and all oceanic dharma teachings, particularly, all tantric teachings, were within the scope of my knowledge. However, when I saw the Sanskrit manuscripts of tantras preserved at the Samye Monastery, I realized that what I mastered was even less than one percent of them. There is no end to the tantras of the Secret Mantra tradition! It appears that the teaching has been propagated in Tibet as it had not been before, even in India.”

Once, the great accomplished master Orgyenpa, one of the founders of the eight lineages of attainment, also spoke with deep feeling, “In today’s Tibet, just the titles of all tantras in the Nyingma Secret Mantra tradition are longer than the content of the complete Kangyur

and Tengyur. It is so inconceivable because those tantras include everything!”

Back in that time, it was the Earlier Translation School of Ngagyur Nyingma that flourished in Tibet. Later, the Sarma Schools that follow the Later Translations of Buddhist texts from India, including Sakya, Kagyu, and Kadam, came into existence one after another. The Kadampa was further developed into two main schools, the old Kadampa that was founded by Venerable Atisha and the new Kadampa or Gelugpa founded by the great Tsongkhapa.

The Uncommon Feature of Ngagyur Nyingma

Thinking about the flourishing of all the eight lineages of attainment in Tibet such as Kadampa, as well as the great qualities of every lineage master, it is true that all of them are the actual reincarnations of Orgyen Rinpoche, Padmasambhava.

For example, in both Sakya Pandita’s biography and the prophecy of Guru Rinpoche himself, it mentions that Sakya Pandita was the emanation of Padmasambhava. In the school of Kagyu, the peerless Gampopa, also known as the Da-od Shonnu, or Chandraprabha, said in his biography that he was an emanation of Padmasambhava.



2.12: Audience joyfully listening to the teaching

In the school of Kadam, there is the same statement that both Venerable Atisha and the great Tsongkhapa were emanations of Padmasambhava. As for the school of Jonang, some biographical writings claim that the two well-known great lineage masters, Dolpopa and Taranatha, were indeed manifestations of Padmasambhava.

In the *Father Teachings of the Kadampa School*,^a Venerable Atisha said, “In Tibet, all great lineage holders who spread the Buddhadharma in the beginning, ensured its flourishing in the middle, as well as long-term prosperity in the end are without exception manifestations of Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava.” Even Guru Rinpoche himself said, “As long as you show devotion to me, the Buddhadharma will remain in the world. If you ever start to lose faith in me and nobody remembers to supplicate me, the dharma will quickly disappear from this world.”

From the perspective of ultimate truth, all great lineage holders and patriarchs who were born in Tibet shared the same mind stream. From the perspective of the phenomenal level, however, no such masters as great as Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava, the great Khenpo Bodhisattva, and Vimalamitra have ever been born in the Tibetan Land of Snows. Not only these inconceivably great panditas, no lotsawas equal to those at the time of Padmasambhava have ever appeared in later times.

Why can I make this conclusion? During the life of Lhodrak Marpa Lotsawa, the matchless one among all translators who was responsible for later translations was Ngok Loden Sherab. While attempting to translate Maitreya’s *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras*^b from Sanskrit into Tibetan, he noticed there were many *ahrakha* in the seventh chapter on the six paramitas. This term *ahrakha* literally means “non-attachment” in Sanskrit. Nyog Loden Sherab had no way to distinguish all the repetitions of this Sanskrit term *ahrakha* by just translating every one of them as “non-attachment,” and he actually had no idea what this was actually referring to. Feeling frustrated, he did some research on the Ngagyur Nyingma’s translation of Buddhist texts. Amazingly, he found that the great translators in earlier times understood the proper use of the same term *ahrakha* based on the sound of the syllables. Every usage of the term *ahrakha* then had a specific meaning in regard to the

^a *kadam pha chö* (‘ka’ gdams pha chos).

^b *tekpa chenpo dō de gyen* (theg pa chen po mdo sde rgyan); Maitreyanatha.

six paramitas of generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and wisdom. Moreover, in terms of every paramita, for example generosity, there were three *ahrakha* referring respectively to the generosity of the past, present, and future. He read a line of translation which says:

*Not going to be attached, not attached, and never having been
attached—
The nature of attachment is non-attachment.*

As he noticed such beautiful paraphrases that took the factor of context into full consideration, his arrogance was completely shattered, and he composed a verse to express his admiration:

*Vairotsana was like the boundless sky itself;
Kawa and Chok were like the sun and moon;
Rinchen Zangpo was like the great dawn star—
Compared to them, we are like mere fireflies.*

This story indicates the extraordinary features of those great translators who did the earlier translations in the time of Padmasambhava.

Speaking of the great panditas, Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra have already gone beyond the aging process of the physical body. Orgyen Rinpoche now lives in Ngayab Ling, the south-west subcontinent of Jambudvipa, which is inhabited by rakshasas, and there he turns the wheel of dharma to guide beings. Vimalamitra now lives on Mount Wutai in the Han region and teaches the dharma there.

All dharma practitioners who follow Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and the great Khenpo Bodhisattva are called *Nyingma followers*. They are able to learn and practice the complete and intact sutras and tantras, and this is the uncommon feature of Nyingma.

Some may wonder, “The New Schools also provide complete sutras and tantras. Why would you say this is the uncommon feature of the Old School?” Indeed, over three hundred volumes of the Kangyur and Tengyur existing in today’s Tibet were mainly translated in the period of the Earlier Translation. There are just a few scriptures that were translated independently by translators of the New Schools. Therefore, anyone who practices sutras and tantras in general, the three inner classes of tantra in particular, and more specifically, the Dzogchen Atiyoga are referred to as followers of the Old School of Nyingma. This is the indispensable criterion for determining whether a practitioner belongs to Nyingma or not.



2.13: Chojé conferring pith instructions

Does your center practice the Nyingma tradition? If yes, please remember this point. This is the most fundamental point, and I repeat again: It is Nyingmapa more than any other school that possesses the complete and intact teachings of Sutrayana and Tantrayana. This is the uncommon and unique feature of the Nyingma School. Other schools, such as Sakya and Kagyu, only possess Anuttarayoga Tantra that includes the mother tantras, father tantras, and nondual tantras. However, the three inner classes of tantra in terms of Mahayoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga are exclusive and specific to the Nyingma

School. The Dzogchen Atiyoga teaching that enables practitioners to achieve buddhahood in the swiftest way is only accessible in the Nyingma School.

At the beginning, it was these two great masters, Orgyen Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra, who introduced and spread the Dzogchen teaching in Tibet and established the Nyingma School. In the middle period, it was Omniscient Longchenpa and the great pandita Rongzompa who carried forward the teaching and propagated it in the Land of Snows. In the later period, it was Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo who made the Nyingma teaching flourish once again in Tibet. These are the three periods of the Dzogchen teaching, namely, the period of the earlier propagation, the middle propagation, and the later propagation.

In the period of the earlier propagation, the Dzogchen teaching taught by Orgyen Padmasambhava was regarded as “the new Dzogchen” or “the Terma Dzogchen,” and the teachings given by Vimalamitra were commonly known as “the old Dzogchen” or “the Kama Dzogchen.” Thus, there are two types of Nyingtig, the old *Vima Nyingtig* of Vimalamitra and the new *Khandro Nyingtig* of Padmasambhava.

In the period of the middle propagation, Omniscient Longchenpa provided extensive teachings on the mind’s nature of luminosity based mainly on the seventeen tantras that belong to the secret category of pith instructions. The great pandita Rongzompa elaborated on the view of the mind’s essence of emptiness by following the twenty-one mother and child tantras that belong to the outer category of mind, as well as the tantras of the inner category of space that are classified into the three sections of white, black, and variegated space.

In the period of the later propagation, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo transmitted profound instructions to fortunate beings, guiding them on the path of Dzogchen, and Omniscient Ju Mipham Rinpoche expounded the vast doctrines on Buddhist philosophy, subduing those

harboring wrong views in Buddhism and the Nyingma tradition in particular. If you want to study the Dzogchen teaching that is only specific to the Nyingma tradition, you must follow the teachings of these six great masters.

The Pith Instructions on the Actual Practice of Dzogchen

In regard to the actual practice of Dzogchen, generally speaking, the teachings can be categorized into *gyu*, *lung*, and *men ngak*.^a *Gyu* means the tantras, *lung* the transmission of the tantras, and *men ngak* the intimate instruction given by the master known as *upadesha*. I assume most of you are advanced Vajrayana practitioners who have already gained some meditative experience in the actual practice of pith instructions, so I will focus on the section of *upadesha* to briefly talk about this aspect of Dzogchen practice.

There are two paths of training in the section of *upadesha*, *trekchö* and *tögal*, translated as “cutting through” and “directly crossing over.” The path of *trekchö* emphasizes original purity as the ground, cutting through as the path, and the dissolution of all substance into particles as the fruition. That brings liberation in a body of light. The path of *tögal* emphasizes spontaneous presence as the ground, directly crossing over as the path, and the achievement of the rainbow body as the fruition. The path of *trekchö* can lead idle ones to liberation because diligent effort is not required, but *tögal* does demand diligent effort in order to attain the state of its fruition.

Now, I will speak in brief about the view, meditation, conduct, and result that correspond to *trekchö*.

First, for the view, *trekchö* ascertains that all phenomena of appearance, existence, universe, and beings are fundamentally the illusory manifestation of the mind and that the mind itself is beyond birth,

^a *rgyud*, *rlung*, and *man ngag*.

abiding, and cessation, having the nature of emptiness like open space. This is the view.

There are two methods to recognize this view: the guidance through the door of shamatha and the guidance through the door of vipashyana. In the first case, the view is approached through effort in meditation. This mainly follows the Kagyu lineage, meaning that one starts with single-pointed shamatha meditation, makes gradual progress on the four yogas of Mahamudra, and applies the pith instructions of stillness, movement, and clear awareness to eventually recognize the nature of mind. The direct pointing-out instruction of Mahamudra is the essential teaching in the Kagyu lineage. Generally speaking, the Kagyu tradition emphasizes the six yogas of Naropa on the path of skillful means (upaya) and the instructions of Mahamudra on the path of liberation. Meanwhile, there are many unique and profound instructions in this tradition, such as special teachings elaborated by Karma Chakme Rinpoche in his *Mountain Dharma*,^a which are necessary for practitioners to study.

The second is to approach meditation through the view. This mainly follows the general guidance in the Nyingma tradition that first enables one to realize the very nature of mind as unborn, non-abiding, and unceasing, and then guides the practitioner to meditate on this view by applying the skillful methods of settling the mind. Nowadays, most Nyingma masters give teachings on the nature of mind in this way.



2.14: Audience joining palms, listening attentively

Indeed, many practitioners who follow the Nyingma or Kagyu traditions prefer to combine these two methods in their actual practice or when instructing others in their practice. To realize the ultimate

^a *ri cho (ri chos)*; Karma Chakme Rinpoche.

view of the two methods, the crucial point is to understand that the very nature of mind is none other than emptiness. This is what the Sutrayana teaching refers to as the Great Mother Prajnaparamita. As a matter of fact, the Great Middle Way, the Great Seal (Mahamudra), and the Great Perfection (Dzogchen), these three Great's, share the same essential view of the unborn nature of mind.

Many great Nyingma scholars ascertained this view from various aspects, but here I want to quote the teaching from the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje. In one of his prayers, the Karmapa said:

The absence of mental engagement is Mahamudra.

The freedom from extremes is the Great Middle Way.

Since, here, all is included, this too is the Great Perfection.

May I acquire the confidence of knowing one and realizing all.

The view of the Great Seal transcends attachment to any phenomenon; the Great Middle Way goes beyond any extreme, such as existence or nonexistence; the Great Perfection includes the essential points of the doctrines of all nine yanas. So, Karmapa Rangjung Dorje aspired to realize the true nature of mind by relying on these three Great's.

Second, for meditation, it is through meditative practice that one can go beyond conceptual or discursive thought and abide without grasping in the state of realization with awareness of the view. Again, many great scholars and accomplished masters in the Nyingma tradition gave detailed teachings in this regard, but I'd like to share Karma Chakme Rinpoche's teaching.

He said, "Now, turn inward and observe your own mind; you may recognize that mind exists nowhere and is the nature of emptiness. Abide in that state of emptiness and relax at ease. Other than this, there is no other practice called Mahamudra." In this teaching, Karma Chakme Rinpoche brought up the view and meditation of Mahamudra. When you observe your mind and pay full attention to it, at that very

moment you will discover its empty nature, and that is the view. As you recognize the view clearly and distinctly, you abide in it in a relaxed manner without forgetting it, and that is meditation. Although Mahamudra seals all phenomena that encompass both samsara and nirvana, nothing can seal Mahamudra itself. From this perspective, you can say that all phenomena in samsara and nirvana are none other than Mahamudra, and knowing that is the meditation.



2.15: Chojé on the spacious dharma throne

Third, for conduct, no matter what kind of thought arises in the mind, either good or bad, you need to recognize its essence and nature. Through that, realization can be enhanced and the level of practice improved. There are many teachings on this within the tantras and upadesha instructions of the Nyingma tradition, but nevertheless, I'd like to share with you what Karma Chakme Rinpoche taught in his *Mountain Dharma*.

He taught that when a favorable circumstance in accordance with your wishes occurs, observe the nature of mind, and that will improve the practice. When an unfavorable situation occurs, such as illness, death, or being defamed, observe the nature of mind, and that will greatly improve your practice. All in all, never forget to practice throughout all times, such as walking, abiding, sitting, and lying down, so that you can stabilize realization in daily life. That is called conduct.

Fourth, for the result, this can be posited by following Jetsun Milarepa's teaching. Venerable Milarepa said, "Inside I suffer from the sickness of Dzogchen, and outside I suffer from the sickness of Mahamudra. Not only do I experience the pain of the two sicknesses, I will even die because of them." In this teaching, Milarepa says that recognizing the unborn nature of mind is the realization of Dzogchen; abiding in that state of realization without any movement is the practice of Mahamudra; and the joint practice of both Dzogchen and Mahamudra not only leads to the elimination of all negative thoughts that are temporary like sickness, but also makes it easier to swiftly attain the ultimate state of buddhahood that is expressed metaphorically as "death," meaning the death of dualistic thoughts.

So, that is my brief explanation of view, meditation, conduct, and result concerning the path of trekchö. The upadesha instructions for actual practice follow the Nyingma tradition, and all the authentic references I have cited are from the Kagyu tradition. Today is a special occasion for me to present the teaching in this way.

For myself, I come from a Nyingma center to your Kagyu center; and from your side, you have been studying and practicing the Kagyu teachings and now have the chance to follow the uncommon teaching in the Nyingma tradition for your advanced practices. Given this auspicious coincidence, I present my teaching by combining the two traditions together.

One more reason for me to present the teaching in this way is that the Nyingma and Kagyu lineages are so strongly connected to each other, completely different from the other lineages of attainment. As I mentioned earlier, the peerless Gampopa was the emanation of Orgyen Padmasambhava. When the second Karmapa Pakshi, the reincarnation of the first Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa, was the guru for the Mongol emperors, he said, “Sometimes I am Padmasambhava, and sometimes I am the mahasiddha Saraha.” So, he himself admitted clearly that he was the emanation of Padmasambhava.

Speaking of the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje, if you want to study the four collections of the *Nyingtig* in the Nyingma tradition, you must rely upon Rangjung Dorje’s words and teachings because he was one of the gurus of Omniscient Longchenpa. Karma Chakme Rinpoche’s guru was Mingyur Dorje, the Palyul lineage master and revealer of the Namchö teachings, and his disciple was Rigdzin Kunzang Sherab, the first throne-holder of Palyul Monastery. So, we can say Karma Chakme Rinpoche belongs to both the Nyingma and Kagyu schools. Looking at all these great lineage masters, it is clear to us that Nyingmapa and Kagyupa have been closely related throughout history. This is why my teaching today was based on both traditions.

Now, to continue on, I assume the qualifications that are necessary for your main practice have been included in the view, meditation, conduct, and result of the trekchö path. Is that correct?

As for the second path of tögal, the actual practice of directly crossing over, I will not go into that subject at this time, but I will make the prayer we will meet again in this life. But if not, may we reunite in the pure land of Sukhavati; and at that time, I will give you the extensive teaching on spontaneous presence. In order to create an auspicious condition to make it happen, I will now conclude here.

GETTING USED TO DRINKING COFFEE

During this trip to western countries, Chojé felt comfortable with the local food, which was quite different from his travels to the Han regions and also in India, where we had to be more concerned with his meals. This time, we were seldom worried about how the local hosts would prepare food for him.

As Yidzhin Norbu's close attendant, my main job included taking care of his daily activities, such as bringing him medicine, helping him wash and rinse, doing his laundry, packing up for the next stop, and more importantly, preparing the audio recording of the text that he was going to teach and dealing with unexpected situations. There was a long list of things to do every day, and I was afraid of missing something, so had to pay full attention at all times.

At the time, Khenpo Namdrol took the main responsibility of working with the local organizers to arrange every event for the tour. He was also extremely busy, and both of us could only have a short break after Rinpoche and all the others went to sleep. But still, we needed to finish our daily chanting that could not be interrupted before going to bed. Khenpo Namdrol would chant *Reciting the Names of Manjushri*, and I also had this tantra in my daily chanting along with many other scriptures.

It was not surprising that we often dozed off and sometimes had a hard time even opening our eyes. Khenpo Namdrol would ask Ngodrup Dorje to make coffee for us so that we could be refreshed a little bit. I had never had coffee before, and the taste was strange for the first few times. Gradually, I started to get used to it and even began to love it!

Certainly, it was not good to drink coffee before sleep, but since I had to deal with so many things, drinking coffee really refreshed me and allowed me to cope with my brief sleep of only three or four hours every day during the trip.

THE STAGE-BY-STAGE PRACTICE OF MILAREPA

On June 27th, Yidzhin Norbu gave a teaching revolving around the Kagyu lineage at the well-known Mile Hi Church in Lakewood, Colorado, for the Vajradhatu community, as well as many non-Buddhists.

The Tathagata, Arhat, Omniscient One, Perfect in Illumination and Conduct, Knower of the World, Supreme Tamer of Men, Teacher of Devas and Humans, Bhagavat, Buddha Dharmakirtis Agara,^a to you, I pay homage! To you, I make offerings! In you, I take refuge!

*Relying on the four great aspirations made by
Buddha Dharmakirtis Agara in the past,
May his boundless wisdom, compassion, and power grant blessings
So I and all sentient beings may enjoy his fruition.*

Now, having supplicated and praised my deity to whom I have strong devotion, in order for the noble dharma to enter into your mind streams, I have chanted the full name of Buddha Dharmakirtis Agara seven times.

Today my teaching is about the essential points of dharma practice. The reason for sharing this topic is that I am hoping to help the novice Buddhists know more about Buddhism and how it developed and to also remind the senior Buddhists how to enhance and improve their actual practice. Also, for those following other religious traditions or having no religious beliefs, I am hoping through my teaching today, that they can gain a clear idea of what Buddhism is essentially about and then give careful consideration on whether it is worthwhile for them to enter Buddhism. If an individual deliberately decides to follow Buddhism, then this person will be able to advance along the dharma path gradually and stably.

^a Chomden Chödrak Gyatso'i Yang (*bchom ldan chos bsgrags rgya mthso'i dbyangs*); one of the eight medicine buddhas.

Introduction of the Kagyu Lineage Masters

I will first talk about the transmission of the Buddhadharma. Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, possessor of all omniscient skillful means, caring for us with great compassion and loving kindness, aroused the supreme bodhicitta long ago. He accumulated immense amounts of merit for three countless eons and finally demonstrated the realization of fully enlightened buddhahood in Bodh Gaya, India. Then, before the supreme sentient beings endowed with the uncommon powers, the Buddha appeared as Vajradhara and preached the extensive doctrines of Secret Mantra in many places, such as the highest pure realm of Akanishtha.

Where are these teachings flourishing today? In our human world, the Buddhadharma originated from Bodh Gaya, like the rising sun, and then gradually illuminated the entire land of India. Later, as prophesied by the Buddha himself, the Buddhadharma was propagated in the Snow Land of Tibet and has been thriving up to the present time. In Tibetan Buddhism, there are the eight great lineages of attainment and ten great lineages of study, and many of these dharma transmissions still remain active in today's world.

Among the eight great lineages of attainment, the first one that thrived in Tibet is the Earlier Translation School of Ngagyur Nyingma, represented by Orgyen Dorje Chang or Padmasambhava, Vimalamitra, and other great masters. A few centuries later, an extraordinary person in the place called Lhodrak generated a firm thought that a more complete system of dharma teaching would be necessary in order to greatly benefit the followers of the New Schools. This man was the well-known translator Marpa Lotsawa. In order to seek the dharma, he journeyed to India three times, experiencing all kinds of hardship. On his third journey, he encountered the peerless and most Venerable Atisha, who was on his way to Tibet.

While in India, Marpa Lotsawa undertook an exhaustive search for his guru and finally succeeded in finding Naropa, the well-known pandita guarding the North Gate of Nalanda University. Naropa was a chief disciple of the mahasiddha Tilopa, who was directly guided by Vajradhara in person. Marpa visited Naropa many times and received a series of instructions from his guru. He also relied on many other great accomplished teachers, including Maitripa. He brought all these teachings back to Tibet, and as a result, the doctrines of Secret Mantra in the New Schools began to thrive in the Land of Tibet.

Before Marpa was about to leave his guru Naropa, the guru gave him the empowerment of *Hevajra*. At that time, Naropa manifested the mandala of *Hevajra* with all the deities bright and vivid in the sky, while he just remained seated and asked Marpa, "Will you prostrate to me first or to the yidam first?" Marpa thought to himself, "I have received many teachings from the lama, and today I want to receive the teaching directly from the yidam." So, he told his teacher, "I'd like to prostrate to the yidam." As soon as he finished his words, all the deities melted into light and dissolved into the guru's heart center.

Then, Marpa reflected, "It seems like I've made a mistake. All deities are indeed the manifestation of the guru, and other than the guru, there are no other yidams to supplicate. Therefore, it is the guru whom I should serve and respect, and sadly, just now I've forgotten this. Since I always consider the guru greater than the yidam and keep visualizing the guru above my head whenever meditating on the yidam, I probably did not destroy the auspicious interdependence too badly, I pray."

Naropa knew what Marpa was thinking, and through his miraculous power, he gave him a prophecy, saying, "Since you chose the yidam instead of me, this damages the interdependent circumstances; yet given that you see the guru as the main deity in your daily practice, this indicates that your dharma lineage will spread far and wide, like the rising sun shining across the whole world."

Marpa asked his guru solemnly, "I have seven sons of my own blood, headed by Tarma Dode. Would you have any means by which my family lineage will never discontinue so that my descendants would also be able to propagate the dharma?" Unfortunately, Naropa responded, "The auspicious interdependence has been destroyed, and I cannot restore it."

If Marpa had created an auspicious interdependence, his family descendants would for sure have taken a more essential role than his lineage disciples in carrying through and propagating his teaching, and the Kagyu lineage would have prospered many hundreds and thousands of times more so than today's situation. Therefore, it is crucial to view the teacher as the principal source of siddhi and that the deity is inseparable with the guru to whom one always shows deep faith, devotion, respect, and joy.

At that time, Marpa asked his guru one more question, "Who will inherit and propagate my dharma lineage?"

Naropa asked him, "Who is your dearest disciple that you think most highly of?"

Marpa reported, "It must be my disciple Awo Thuchen, or Thopaga (Milarepa). I treat him as the one more important than my heart."

Hearing this, Naropa joined his palms together and spoke a verse of praise:

*Like the sun shining on the snow mountain,
In the northern land, in a place of darkness,
There is one called Mila Thopaga.
To this venerable one, I prostrate.*

Upon finishing this verse, he paid homage in the direction of the Land of Tibet. At that time, the mountain and trees also paid homage together with the great master. This happened at Odantapuri University situated

at Hiranya Prabhat Parvat Mountain, not far from Nalanda University. Naropa lived there at that time, and these days if you go to visit that place, you will notice that the mountain and trees still bend slightly down toward the Land of Tibet.

Later, on another occasion, Marpa Lotsawa told Milarepa, “You need to make an observation of your dreams to have a clear idea of how your dharma lineage will be propagated.”

That evening, Milarepa dreamed of four pillars in the four directions, and in particular, on the top of the northern pillar, there was an eagle. That eagle gave birth to a baby eagle, and then numerous baby eagles filled the sky.

Marpa explained to him, “The four pillars in your dream predict that I will have four great disciples who are Meton Tsonpo of Tsangrong, Tsurton Wangnge of Tolpo, Ngokton Chodor of Shung, and you Milarepa of Kungthang. The eagle on the northern pillar symbolizes you, and the baby eagle it gave birth to symbolizes your sun-like disciple Gampopa, the Da-od Shonnu, or Chandraprabha. The flock of eagles filling the sky symbolizes the lineage disciples of Gampopa, who will spread the Kagyu teaching throughout the world.”

Exactly as Marpa Lotsawa predicted by explaining Milarepa’s dream, in the time of Gampopa, his most outstanding disciples were the first Karmapa Dusum Khyenpa and the Protector of Migrating Beings, Phagmo Drupa, who were born in the same year. Their lineage disciples formed the four major schools of the Dakpo Kagyu, which are Barom Kagyu, Pagdru Kagyu, Karma Kagyu, and Tsalpa Kagyu. The Pagdru Kagyu School later splintered into eight sub-schools, i.e., Drikung Kagyu, Drukpa Kagyu, Taklung Kagyu, Yazang Kagyu, Trophu Kagyu, Shugseb Kagyu, Yelpe Kagyu, and Martsang Kagyu. As such, the dharma teaching of the Kagyu tradition spread across the world.

If just focusing on the Drukpa Kagyu and thinking about its propagation, people would all agree that these teachings reached even

farther than where an eagle could arrive after flying eighteen days in the same direction. Later, the spreading of the lineages of the red crown Karmapa and the black crown Karmapa was much more widespread. According to the historical record, in the pure vision of the first Karmapa, one hundred thousand dakinis manifested their hair as a black crown and offered it to him as a symbol of his accomplishment. Later, the Mongol emperor in the Yuan Dynasty offered a physical replica of that crown to the fifth Karmapa, which has been passed down to the current Karmapa. The red crown was offered by the Chinese emperor to the first Shamarpa, Drakpa Senge, as a replica of Karmapa's black crown. Also, the Tibetan legend says that once in Rati Bum Dzong of the Minyak region, there were one hundred thousand monks from the Kagyu School who were able to fly at the same time. As such, the lineage masters of the Kagyu School were like well-ordered gold mountains that appeared in the world one after another up until today, when the sixteenth Karmapa and your own guru Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche came and enlightened the modern world.

The above is just a very brief introduction of the main lineage masters of Kagyu. If I were to talk about them in more detail, the recounting of the life stories of each of them alone could not be finished in a few months.

Now, I will talk about the instructions of actual practice transmitted by the Kagyu lineage masters. There are three main transmissions: 1) the uncommon Secret Mantra practice that leads to the attainment of vajradharahood transmitted from the mahasiddha Tilopa; 2) the joint practice of Sutrayana and Mantrayana transmitted from Lhodrak Marpa Lotsawa, in which the Sutrayana practice refers to sutra Mahamudra or Mahamudra of reality and the Mantrayana practice refers to mantra Mahamudra or Mahamudra of the union of bliss and emptiness; and 3) the stage-by-stage practice transmitted from Jetsun Milarepa that starts with the beginning practices of abandoning all

non-virtue, continues with the practice of tummo (wisdom mystic heat) and the magical body, and the essence of Mahamudra that will be realized as a result of stabilizing the preceding practices. In this way, the Vajrayana practice of Secret Mantra will reach the fruition of vajradharahood in a single life.

Now I will primarily draw from the transmission of Milarepa because it is an easy path that includes all stages of practice that can be carried out by anyone of either greater or lesser capacity. To follow this path, the disciple must first understand the very nature of suffering in cyclic existence that involves birth and death and thus generate the mind of renunciation. Secondly, you need to cherish others more than yourself and thus generate the awakened mind of bodhicitta for the benefit of all living beings. Thirdly, you need to cultivate and meditate on the pure view that is none other than the mind transmission of Vajradhara and thus achieve the fruition of buddhahood.

The Actual Practice of the Basic Vehicle

So, how can you first cultivate the mind of renunciation?

You should contemplate as follows, “It is truly rare to obtain such a precious human body that can be used for dharma practice; therefore, since I have attained this precious body, I must make full use of it to practice the pure dharma.” Like this, you make the firmly determined vow and then continue to contemplate, “Although I have obtained the precious human body with all freedoms and endowments, it does not last forever and is fragile and unstable. After one hundred years or so, all humans present in the world will surely die without anyone left behind. I must recognize the undeniable fact of death and exert myself in dharma practice. My death is unavoidable; what is even worse is that I don’t know when it will come. This is another point I must bear in mind.”

For all of us present here, none of us can guarantee that we will stay well and alive in this world until next year and that none of us will die.

We never know what will come first, our next life or next year. Not just next year, we cannot even be sure we will not die next month. Since the arrival of the Lord of Death is unknown, you must spend all your time and energy practicing the dharma.

When death befalls, nothing is helpful except the noble dharma. Think about this, “Would high social status be helpful upon death?” Even a king who rules the whole world can only head alone to an unknown world after death without the power to take any assistant with him. Would great wealth be helpful upon death? Even a person who possesses the wealth of an entire country can only enter alone into his next life without taking anything with him, not even a mouthful of food or a patch of clothing. Do you think that fame will be helpful at the time of death? Even a world-famous person can only wander helplessly into a completely strange world without any privileges. Deeply reflecting on all these situations, you are urged to practice the dharma without further delay. Otherwise, when you finally remember the dharma and try to practice after having idled away most of your life, then it will be too late.

It should be clear that death is not the extinction of everything, like a fire being extinguished or water evaporating. Rather, both good and bad karma will accompany you to the next life. It should never be thought that nothing exists after death. I will share with you a few stories from the past. There used to be a learned non-Buddhist scholar who debated with the influential Buddhist philosopher Dharmakirti his whole life, but never won. In his next life, he became a debater at the age of eighteen and went to debate with Dharmakirti again, but still failed. Then, in the following life he became a debater one more time at the age of seven and later started to debate with Dharmakirti, unsurprisingly failing again. Eventually, he took refuge in Buddhism. So, in the non-Buddhist religions, many of them admit the existence of past and future lives, and there are many people who can recall their past lives.

There are similar stories in Buddhism. Chandragomin was a famous Buddhist scholar born in the south of India. His previous life was as a Buddhist pandita who had fierce debates with a non-Buddhist scholar. This non-Buddhist scholar denied the existence of past and future lives, but Chandragomin in his previous life could not defeat him and change his mind. As a result, this Buddhist pandita decided to prove the existence of reincarnation through his death, saying, “I will show you the existence of future life. Now I’m going to die; please preserve my dead body in the coffin with well-prepared holy medicine.” He then held a pearl in his mouth and made the vow, “After my reincarnation, may I master all the knowledge I have learned in this life, and if you see someone who is born with this pearl in his mouth, that person is my reincarnation.” After these words, the pandita died. Because of the vow he had made, Chandragomin was born with a pearl in his mouth, and meanwhile, the pearl preserved in the coffin was gone. Seeing this, the non-Buddhist scholar started to consider the true existence of past and future lives and asked Chandragomin to clarify his doubts by explaining to him the Buddhist philosophy. In that life, Chandragomin was even more brilliant at understanding the dharma and had no obscurations at all. So, he was able to offer a perfect answer to the non-Buddhist scholar who eventually accepted the existence of reincarnation, as well as the infallible teaching of Buddhism. Consequently, he followed Chandragomin, and he himself also rose to the status of a great pandita in Buddhism.

Now, I’ll talk about the history related to your Kagyu lineage, such as the reincarnations of the Karmapas. The first Karmapa was Dusum Khyenpa, the second Pakshi, the third Rangjung Dorje, up to the present sixteenth Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje. Every Karmapa was clearly predicted in many texts, such as *Gathering of the Wisdom Intent*,^a including their life spans. Also, the first Karmapa prophesied the parents and other details concerning the second Karmapa, and this tradition has continued with every reincarnation up to the sixteenth,

^a *lama gongdu (bla ma dgongs ’dus)*; revealed by Sangye Lingpa.

Rigpe Dorje. All of this gives strong evidence of the existence of past and future lives, and the above is some historical information that proves the existence of reincarnation. Certainly, there is logical inference to establish this truth, which is well expounded in many Buddhist scriptures. But I don't have time to discuss this part.

The view concerning reincarnation, karmic cause and result, involves knowing the fundamental teachings in Buddhism that can never be neglected or forsaken. Generally speaking, many people in the modern world hold doubts toward the law of karma, as well as the existence of past and future lives. Every one of you present here must deeply reflect on these essential teachings. For instance, when reflecting on the reincarnation of the Karmapas, this really helps us to establish the existence of past and future lives. If there were no reincarnations, then there would be no next Karmapa appearing in this world as predicted by the previous one, and the present Karmapa would have no way to recall his previous life, not to mention discussing the conduct and dharma activities performed by the previous reincarnation. Every Karmapa can clearly recall his previous life, just as though this happened yesterday. This is irrefutable evidence of reincarnation.

Also, due to the infallible law of cause and effect, engagement with wholesome deeds brings peace and happiness, while unwholesome deeds cause rebirth in an inferior circumstance. If you fall into the three lower realms due to the force of your negative karma, the suffering experienced there is unimaginable compared with any kind of suffering in this human world. It is long-lasting, unendurable, and of various kinds. Therefore, be vigilant in avoiding any negative deeds.

On the other hand, if you cultivate an abundance of virtue, it is certain that you can take rebirth in a pure realm such as Sukhavati. The pure land is unimaginable in terms of qualities that cannot be compared with anything in the human world. Therefore, you must be diligent in cultivating virtue in order to attain the inconceivable peace and happiness that comes from rebirth in a pure realm.

What are the non-virtues to be abandoned, and what are the virtues to be cultivated? Any action that causes harm to other sentient beings is non-virtuous, such as killing, stealing, lying or deceiving others, and slandering or sowing discord among others. All such negative deeds need to be forsaken from the root. The opposite is to engage in actions that do not harm others by observing mindfulness through body, speech, and mind.

This initial stage can be exemplified by how Jetsun Milarepa embarked on his dharma path. At first, his uncle, aunt, and other relatives mistreated him and developed hatred toward him. Based on this, gradually he came to understand that everything in samsara was unreliable and without true existence. In this way, he determined to rid himself of all negative deeds, including the least insignificant non-virtues, and started his journey of practicing only virtue.

The Actual Mahayana Practice of Sutras

The fundamental practice of Mahayana is to first take the refuge vows with the determination that even at the cost of your own life, the Three Jewels of refuge will never be forsaken. Along with that, you should follow the bodhisattva path by considering the welfare of all sentient beings and cultivating the attitude and conduct that cherishes others more than yourself. How do you do that? There is a famous instruction on mind training in Tibetan Buddhism that says, “May I take upon myself all defeat and offer to others all glory.” This indicates that in your spiritual practice, you must strive for others’ attainment of benefit, success, happiness, and joy, helping them to enjoy all that is positive and good, while readily taking upon yourself all kinds of suffering and misfortune. It is certain that as beginners you cannot accomplish this goal one hundred percent. Nevertheless, you can train yourself in this practice progressively.

What is progressive training? First, you need to cultivate the attitude that treats yourself and others equally. This is called making yourself

equal to others. Just like you wish for happiness, all beings equally wish for happiness; and just like you do not want to suffer, all beings equally do not want to suffer. In this regard, there's no difference between others and you. Therefore, you should treat others the same as yourself, trying your best to bring them happiness and free them from suffering. Like this, you develop loving kindness and compassion toward others.



2.16: The happy Chojé

Second, cultivate the attitude that considers others to be more important than yourself. I will give you an example of this practice. If you were to treat a person who has no blood relation to you kinder than your own son and if he still considers you as an enemy and imposes harm on you, then even though you are being treated unfairly and poorly, you would hold no grudge against him. Rather than reacting, you would take care of him with even more love, like a mother deeply loves her only son who unfortunately suffers from a mental disorder. No matter how the son hurts her, the mother would only be concerned when the son might recover from illness, without harboring any anger

or hatred toward his difficult behavior. Like this, you must learn how to develop an altruistic mind toward those who harm you.

For instance, a person who is not actually related to you may scold you with all sorts of harsh words in front of hundreds or thousands of people. Without having any sense of retaliation for this disrespect and rudeness, you would show this person your loving care because you are considering that anyone who directly points out your faults should be respected as a spiritual guide!

Perhaps you have brought no harm to a person, but without any reason, this person beats you or even beheads you. Still, you do not hate him at all, only wishing him to attain happiness and to be free from suffering. This is how you should develop an altruistic and compassionate mind toward all sentient beings.

This was exactly how Jetsun Milarepa treated his relatives who had been his enemies. After he relied upon Marpa Lotsawa and aroused the genuine bodhicitta in his mind, Milarepa showed great compassion to his aunt and other relatives who used to treat him like enemies, taught them the noble dharma, gave them instructions for actual practice, and eventually guided them onto the noble path.

Therefore, for each of you present here, please give deep consideration to this principal point of the Buddhist teaching. As I have mentioned earlier, my intention for giving this teaching is to inspire both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. I wish some of you who have yet to begin the practice of dharma may find a way to begin and those who have started may strengthen your practice. Also, I wish that by hearing my teaching, the non-Buddhists can give rise to a joyful mind toward the Buddhadharma. Everyone is willing to befriend those who are altruistic and take delight in helping others, and everyone will dislike those who harbor hatred and harmful intentions toward others. The very essence of the Buddhadharma is to settle the mind on the truly peaceful and harmless path through mind training. Without anger in

your mind, you would not intend to harm others either physically or verbally but would be more than happy to help others with all efforts. The key point of all 84,000 dharma teachings is none other than the training of the mind in this way. Therefore, if you think deeply and understand the true meaning of this, it would then be impossible to remain unhappy or indifferent toward the Buddhadharma.

There is another example I'd like to share with you. There used to be a non-Buddhist scholar who followed Maheshvara and later turned to Buddhism. In one of his works, he was known to have said that the more one understands the non-Buddhist philosophies, the deeper devotion and joy is generated in the Buddhist doctrine. This is quite true. For instance, some heretics claim that killing people is a virtuous act, and particularly, when at war killing many enemies on a battlefield is victorious and worthy of praise. The Buddha preached that killing is non-virtuous no matter what. If you do something harmful to other beings, you will have to undergo the suffering corresponding to your harmful action. The result of harming others only brings pain and suffering, and besides that, there is no benefit.

Also, some heretics claim that it is a virtuous act to commit adultery and destroy another person's family. The Buddha preached that this is always non-virtuous. Obviously, it is impossible to imagine that such behavior is positive because it only brings disharmony and hurts others. Only conduct that brings harmony to others both mentally and physically is considered virtuous.

Again, some heretics claim that speaking lies in order to attract hundreds of thousands of people to follow a certain path is virtuous, while the Buddha taught that speaking only truthful and honest words is virtuous. I do believe what the Buddha said, and lying can hardly be a wholesome act.

Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni was the only great spiritual guide who spoke of things as they are and spoke what is true with

his great love and compassion. All the prophecies that the Buddha made throughout history have come to pass without any deception at all. The Buddha was straightforward and always said that if your practice is carried out in a particular way, that will be the direction of the result. He also said that if you study and practice the profound instructions, then results will occur after a certain period of time. All of these statements have been proven to be the truth.

Concerning the Tibetan people in the Land of Snows, although this is a small population in a remote and backward region, people born in this place have been following and practicing the Buddha's teaching, and consequently, many of them have achieved enlightenment. Currently, there are more than five billion people in this world, while the Tibetan population is only around six million. But if you consider the ratio of accomplished spiritual practitioners among Tibetans, any other ethnic groups cannot compare with it. If you don't believe this, you may take a trip to the Land of Tibet and have a close observation of our people there; then you will understand what I am saying.

There are many lineages and schools in Tibetan Buddhism, and here I have just briefly mentioned the Kagyu lineage. If you cannot travel to the entire Tibetan region, you must at least go to Ngari, to the small place where Milarepa stayed. By virtue of his spiritual accomplishments, this great yogi could not be drowned by water nor burned by fire. He could move through rocks and mountains without any obscuration and could fly freely in the sky like a bird. In a number of historical holy sites, Milarepa left tangible signs of his remarkable achievements. Today, you can still make pilgrimage to these places.

If you think about it, many behaviors and activities of Jetsun Milarepa are quite rare in other religious traditions and nations. I am not fabricating anything. There may be some inconsistency between my narrative and other accounts. This is only because I am not familiar with certain details, but I don't have any intention to deceive you. I truly wish all of you can delve deeply into Buddhism. By doing so,

I believe anyone who hasn't entered into Buddhism would find it impossible to refuse the Buddha's teaching.

The Guidance of the Mahayana Practice of Secret Mantra

For the final part of my teaching, I will mention the cultivation of pure view, which is to directly practice what Buddha Shakyamuni or Vajradhara realized. This is the skillful practice of Vajrayana, which has many different methods to accomplish, such as shamatha or vipashyana meditation. This is exactly the uncommon practice of Jetsun Milarepa that led him to attain the ultimate enlightenment.

Such Vajrayana practice of Secret Mantra cannot be openly explained to everyone but must be limited to fewer people who possess the required capacity. As your guru explained before, the Vajrayana practice is supreme and wondrous; however, in order to approach it and eventually reach the highest state of realization, you must start with the very basic practice. This follows the progressive training system in Buddhism. Except for a few, not everybody can directly engage in the practice of Secret Mantra without any fundamental training. I myself truly rejoice in this traditional way, and if you have any question regarding the stage-by-stage practice, we may have more discussions in the next couple of days. So, please come and attend the teachings as scheduled.

For the non-Buddhists present here, you may think, "Why is the teaching of Secret Mantra kept secret? Is it because this tradition has some faults that cannot be divulged?" Certainly, there are no faults, but on the contrary, the essential points of Mantrayana are far more supreme than both Hinayana and Mahayana vehicles. The teaching of Secret Mantra will inspire all the faithful who are able to connect on this level. Because of this, most great lamas in the Land of Tibet, His Holiness the sixteenth Karmapa, and his four regents, as well as His Holiness Penor Rinpoche in India, all try their best to propagate this ultimate and unparalleled teaching.

Then, some may ask, “Why is it necessary to make it secret since it can inspire in this way?”

Indeed, as Buddhist scriptures state, “The teaching of Secret Mantra needs to be kept hidden not because it has any fault, but because practicing it secretly leads one to achieve accomplishment.” The Vajrayana teaching doesn’t have any minor or major fault, but by keeping this practice secret or private, this will enable a practitioner to swiftly attain the fruition of enlightenment.

Again, some may wonder, “Why does keeping it secret ensure the swift accomplishment?”

Just as with Tibetan medicine, if the doctor exposes its ingredients or formula to his or her patient beforehand, the medicine may lose its potency to function. If this information is unknown to the patient, it will produce an immediate effect. The same is true in the case of the Secret Mantrayana teaching. It is exactly due to this reason that we are obliged to keep the teaching inaccessible to the public.

For most of you, I truly wish you can follow a gradual path to complete all the necessary stages in your dharma practice, and Jetsun Milarepa is such a perfect example in this regard. In the past, the Buddhadharma originated and flourished in India. Now, as the Buddha himself prophesied, all the fundamental and essential dharma teachings have been well-preserved in the Snow Land of Tibet, where the continuity of the complete transmissions has remained unbroken until now. Therefore, it is beneficial for you to sincerely respect and cultivate devotion toward those Tibetan lamas who are endowed with great compassion and possess the transmissions of these precious dharma teachings. It does not matter which teacher you follow; as long as he or she is qualified to give you the dharma teaching, you will benefit. They will definitely bring you no harm, but only benefit.

If you think of these great masters in the US, they have expounded the dharma teaching and bestowed upon you precious instructions

of actual practice, all of which bring you tremendous benefit and happiness. This is obvious to every one of you. Therefore, when you have opportunities to serve them, for instance, when they come to your area, you should truly show your respect and devotion and do whatever you can to meet their needs. Your Trungpa Rinpoche shared the same dharma lineage with us. If he had not come to this country, although there are also Tibetans living here, it would not be so beneficial to both you and others because these Tibetans are not experts at the dharma and even worse, they themselves have created much negative karma through their thoughts and behaviors. Conversely, your master came and transmitted the dharma to numerous people, establishing this center of Karma Dzong and also over one hundred dharma centers worldwide. This great kindness to you westerners will definitely grant you happiness and ease in this and future lives.

Someone like me can hardly bring you great benefit because I am already very old and also seriously ill. Other than this tour, I do not think I can come to the US for a second time. So, I cannot help you too much. However, there are already many masters living in this country, which is certainly a result of your own merit. Therefore, each of you should devotedly serve them and put their teachings into your practice. Not only me, most Tibetan lamas have difficulty traveling to the US all the way from the Tibetan regions in China, because it requires many favorable conditions and assistance for a Tibetan to travel abroad from China.

Meanwhile, I hope you venerate those lamas who have left the Land of Tibet and now live in India and elsewhere, because they also have close connections with you. There is no need to mention all the teachers of the Kagyu lineage in India since you follow the same tradition with them. Currently, we have Gyalwa Rinpoche as our spiritual leader in Buddhism. He is the true incarnation of Avalokiteshvara, the noble lord of the world. If you have the opportunity to see him and listen to him in person, please do not hesitate to do so. Any connection with

him has significant meaning to you because it brings you vast benefits and results.

Also, I have learned that His Holiness Penor Rinpoche plans to return to the US next year. He now lives in the south of India and has been recognized as the supreme head of the Nyingma lineage. I myself am just a negligible teacher in his dharma lineage, while Penor Rinpoche presides over hundreds of monasteries in the Land of Tibet and has educated a great number of monastics in India, who can be seen everywhere in this world wearing the monastic robes. Such an astonishing guru is very rare in this day and age. Speaking of his personality, he is a compassionate teacher who solely helps sentient beings and never harms anyone, not even in the slightest. Regarding his religious role, he is able to maintain peace and harmony among all religious traditions in the world, and especially provide any possible support and service to all different Buddhist schools, including Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. Since he dedicates himself to the promotion of Buddhism as a whole and spends all his effort on this cause, he has been appointed as the supreme head of the Nyingma lineage by Gyalwa Rinpoche, as well as many other great masters. Although he mainly follows the Nyingma tradition, he treats all other Buddhist traditions and schools equally and gives them the same care and respect. If such a remarkable lama comes to your area in the future, you must request him to turn the wheel of dharma with your deepest devotion and veneration. Establishing an auspicious connection with him will bring you inconceivably great benefit.

These gurus living in the US nowadays all come from the same place as me, so I am quite familiar with them. As far as I know, they solely follow the Buddha's teaching and wholeheartedly work for the well-being of others. There is no way for them to do anything harmful to any being. If you can follow their guidance and put their teaching into your practice properly, I will be truly happy for you.

All in all, I wish that whatever you think and whatever you do becomes the cause of sentient beings' happiness and benefit, and in particular, may you give rise to a kind and gentle heart. Tashi Delek!

In the last part as Yidzhin Norbu was explaining the practice of Secret Mantra, he didn't give the actual instructions of Mahamudra or Dzogchen. He only emphasized that one should observe the tantric vows of pure view and, based on that, rely upon the qualified masters in the US who had attained a certain level of accomplishment and were experienced in these Vajrayana practices. In other words, the students should seek these precious teachings from their local lamas whom they can rely on in the long term. It is because the Vajrayana practice requires a practitioner to follow a qualified guru for a long time, and without the personal guidance from a close teacher, some typically uncommon practices cannot be successful. This is why Rinpoche just pointed the listeners in the right direction, while not providing them with the detailed instructions of Secret Mantra.

AWAKENED MY LIFE

A few years ago, when I was giving talks in the US, I met an American Buddhist named Lea Groth, who in her youth had attended the lecture that Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche gave at Mile Hi Church in Lakewood, Colorado, during his 1993 trip to the US. At that time, she was just a young and confused girl. But it was from that day on, as she recounted, that her life underwent incredible transformation.

Lea Groth described her experience with the following words:

I met Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche when I was thirteen years old. At that time, I was a little moody and more interested in hiding than being friendly to others. I had been raised as a Tibetan Buddhist by my Euro-American

parents, who were most active members of a Tibetan Buddhist group. For about a decade, this group invited all different Nyingma teachers to come and stay, and we received a real wealth of different teachings and styles. Since I had no siblings to distract me and no other family in the area to take care of me, I was the only one of us second generations in the group who regularly attended anything at the center.

It was already dark when we arrived at an odd-shaped church about thirty minutes from our house. The building was not terribly inviting, and inside was surprisingly atypical. It was hard to believe we were in a church. There were no crosses or dangling sons of God anywhere.

I am fairly critical by nature, and that day I entered that auditorium grumpy and skeptical. I don't remember well how it all got started, but I remember there were a lot of people on stage, and at first, I was not even sure which one was the important person we had driven all this way in the dusk to see. It was not a very typical Tibetan thing though, that I do remember. I was used to gold and brocade and implements and chanting, but this was very simple. I believe the main speaker was sitting in an armchair, and the others were in normal chairs. It was not terribly impressive until the main speaker started talking.

His voice was deep and resonating. It seemed to enter me and make profound sense to me, even though at the level of vocabulary I understood nothing. Honestly, I am not sure the words really mattered that much; the impact was all I needed.

At first, I will admit it, I was bored; but I am not someone who is ever bored for long, so I studied all those people on stage. In particular, I studied the older Tibetan man who was talking. I remember that he was looking at me, too, but I cannot be sure if that was my self-absorption or a false memory. Still, slowly, without being fully aware of the change, something opened in me, and a deep understanding arose. The carpet and walls and chairs in their mustard yellow and white became hollow, transparent, seemingly unreal. The swirls of emotion-ridden thoughts

subsided. My hormone-stressed teenage brain was temporarily pacified, dare I say, even silenced.

Ironically, I came out of that church more a Buddhist and less a seeker, more certain and much less confused. While I forgot the teaching and even the name of this great teacher for a long time, I never forgot the place and the change that had taken place in me. It was as if he had sealed me on my path. Not many months after that, I started attending teachings with my parents for real, that is to say with the volition and excitement of a real student, and no longer as the child forced to follow along.

Multiple times over the decades that followed, I thought of that yellow auditorium in that strange church. The memory tugged at me. I asked my mom multiple times, “Who was that teacher? Where was that place?” She remembered it all only vaguely, and she was never great with remembering Tibetan names, so it remained a mystery.

Then, as karma would have it, through my editing work, I became connected with Larung Gar. It is with deep gratitude and devotion to the great Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche for taking my mind and returning me to my true refuge, the Buddhadharma, in the yellow light of that extraterrestrial church.

What happened to Lea Groth is a strong expression of the inconceivable blessings of Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. What’s extraordinary about highly realized beings like Yidzhin Norbu is that they cannot only tame the minds of sentient beings by giving dharma teachings but can also transform their minds tremendously simply by their presence, their voice, or their eye contact, for example. On that account, if parents take their children to meet a noble teacher of high quality or to attend a dharma assembly, through the blessings of these occasions, children of deep virtuous root may be able to start a new page in their lives and embark on the path that reverses the cycle of samsara.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION OF SHAMBHALA

On June 28th, H.H. Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche returned to Karma Dzong to deliver additional teachings. In his talk, he explained the history and origin of the kingdom of Shambhala, as well as the auspicious connection between Shambhala and the Vajradhatu community.

I came all the way from the Snow Land of Tibet to the US. I find myself now in a place that can be called *the second land of Shambhala*. In fact, the actual kingdom of Shambhala is one of the five great sacred places according to the Buddhist doctrines. These five sacred places are: 1) Bodh Gaya, the sacred place located at the center of this world where all buddhas of the three times will attain full awakening; 2) Mount Wutai, the Five-Peaked Mountain in China, the sacred place of the east where Lord Manjushri now dwells; 3) Mount Potala, the sacred place of the south where noble Avalokiteshvara actually resides; 4) Copper-Colored Mountain or Oddiyana, the sacred place of the west, the Land of Dakinis, where Guru Padmasambhava abides; and 5) Shambhala, the sacred place of the north.

Where is Shambhala? It is located in a place that requires an individual who wishes to arrive there to travel for twelve years, and they must possess powers to travel anywhere at will. Many noble beings in the past have been there, one example being the great Indian Pandita Chilupa, who received the *Kalachakra* teachings during his visit. The shape of the realm of Shambhala resembles an eight-petaled lotus. How is such a shape formed? At the center of the lotus is the capital city Kalapa, surrounded by nine hundred sixty million smaller cities that form the shape of eight petals. All rivers of the kingdom wind their way through the land and flow into the river of the capital city, Kalapa.

Shambhala will be ruled by a line of thirty-two kings, consisting of seven Dharmarajas and twenty-five Kalkin Kings, with Kalkin

meaning “Holder of the Castes.” The first of the seven Dharmarajas of Shambhala was King Suchandra or Dawa Sangpo in Tibetan. He was with one of the first groups of disciples who received the *Kalachakra* teachings from Buddha Shakyamuni that took place at the great stupa of Shri Dhanyakataka in southern India, not long before the Buddha’s passing into parinirvana. King Suchandra compiled the *Kalachakra* teachings that were retained in his memory in a textual form of twelve thousand verses, well-known as the glorious *Root Kalachakra Tantra*, or *Shri Kalachakra* in Sanskrit. Dawa Sangpo and his succeeding kings held this root tantra and taught it to the inhabitants of Shambhala during their reigns.



2.17: Chojé concentrating on giving the teaching

During the reigns of the seven Dharmarajas, the inhabitants of Shambhala were subject to the caste system, just like in ancient India. They were classified into four principal castes: brahmins (priests, gurus, and so on), kshatriyas (warriors, kings, administrators, and so forth), vaishyas (agriculturalists, traders, and so forth, also called visayas), and shudras (laborers). A set of regulations in accordance with the

caste system existed, for example, only inhabitants of certain castes were allowed to receive the dharma teachings, while most other castes were forbidden to do so.

Through the endeavor of Manjushri Yashas, the eighth king in Suchandra's line, the caste system was abolished, and all inhabitants of Shambhala were united into a single vajra caste, the family of tantric practitioners. Thereby, Manjushri Yashas became known as the first Kalkin King of Shambhala, the first holder of the vajra caste. He composed the *Abridged Kalachakra Tantra* in five chapters, a condensed and simplified version of the *Root Kalachakra Tantra*, and taught it to hundreds of thousands of people, including the followers of the Melcha religion, which worshipped the sun, in his kingdom. His son and royal heir, Pundarika, wrote a commentary on it entitled *Stainless Light*^a to further explain it.

The *Root Kalachakra Tantra*, the *Abridged Kalachakra Tantra*, and the great commentary *Stainless Light* were propagated and flourished in India. In terms of the Tibetan translation of the *Kalachakra* teachings, the *Root Tantra*, the *Abridged Tantra*, and the *Stainless Light* were all translated into Tibetan.

In 1027, the *Abridged Tantra* appeared in India and the *Kalachakra* teachings were first brought to Tibet, and that year was named the year of Rabjung. Rabjung, literally meaning “the supreme one who goes forth” in Tibetan, has a connotation of the appearance of the dharma. So, this name was given to mark the important time when the *Kalachakra* teachings came to Tibet. Beginning from that year, Rabjung was employed in the Tibetan dating system as part of the calendar cycle. A Tibetan year following the Rabjung is properly identified by three parts, the first two, being the Animal and Element, correspond roughly to similar identifiers used in the Chinese Calendar, and the third part being the Rabjung. A Rabjung is a sixty-year cycle, and the first Rabjung was in 1027. This year (1993) is the seventh year of the

^a *drima med pa'i od* (*dri ma med pa'i 'od*), Skt. *Vimalaprabha*; Pundarika.

seventeenth Rabjung since the year when the *Kalachakra* was brought to Tibet.

For all the Dharmarajas and the Kalkin Kings, when one ruler's reign comes to an end, his successor immediately ascends to the throne. Each Kalkin King reigns over Shambhala for one hundred years, during which they teach the *Kalachakra* teachings and transmit the lineage to the inhabitants of the nine hundred sixty million cities of Shambhala. Samudravijaya and Aja were two exceptions, as the total reign of those two kings was four hundred three years, during which Samudravijaya taught the dharma for one hundred eighty-two years and Aja two hundred twenty-one years.

Who is the present Kalkin King in Shambhala? It is the twenty-first Kalkin King Aniruddha, and this year is the sixty-seventh year of his reign. After him, the twenty-second King Narasingha, the twenty-third King Maheshvara, and the twenty-fourth King Anantavijaya will appear successively and assume the throne.

The twenty-fifth, also the last Kalkin King of the Shambhala kingdom, is Rudra Chakrin, the wrathful wheel holder. By the time he assumes the throne, the dharma will have declined in the world with its name hardly heard by anyone. Even worse, among the outer cities and the inner capital city of Shambhala that are encircled by snow mountains, all the outer cities will have been conquered by armies of barbarians. When they are about to invade the inner city, Kalkin King Rudra Chakrin will appear to be furious. Fully armed, he will ride on his stone war horse through miraculous power, wield his iron wheel in the air and proceed to enter Jambudvipa, Aparagodaniya, and Purvavideha in a clockwise direction to fight against the armies of barbarians. After one year of battle, he will annihilate the armies of barbarians and hoist the victory banner of Buddhadharma on the four continents. He will rule the kingdom for one hundred years, and his two sons, Brahma and Sureshvara, will be the principal cause for the

Kalachakra teachings to thrive and prosper for as long as thousands of years, without any sign of decline.

The above was a brief introduction of the origin and history of Shambhala.

It is believed that your root lama, Trungpa Rinpoche, is the future Kalkin King Rudra Chakrin. In his life, Rinpoche did create many auspicious conditions in this regard. For instance, he assumed the uniform of a military officer and arranged many guards by his side. It is truly fortunate for you to have encountered Trungpa Rinpoche, received his teachings, and now uphold his lineage. By and large, anyone who practices the Kagyu teachings, and particularly the dharma teaching that Trungpa Rinpoche practiced, will be reborn in the realm of Shambhala as his warrior. What is the dharma that he practiced? As I said yesterday, it is the gradual and complete path to full awakening that had been practiced by Jetsun Milarepa. Among all his practices, the most important is loving kindness and compassion, which is the one and only sublime path that is harmless and peaceful and is commonly practiced by all Buddhist schools.

Some of you may wonder, “We know that our guru was an extraordinary and great lama, but how is his primary practice loving kindness and compassion?” Actually, all his activities were to transmit loving kindness and compassion. Had Trungpa Rinpoche been a person who pursued fame and material offerings, he would have gained much wider fame and many more offerings by staying in India or the Land of Tibet. In these regions, there are many lineage holders and great masters upholding the dharma, as well as numerous devoted Buddhist followers. Conversely, here in the US, before he came, except for very few individuals, the majority of the people had never even heard of the name of the Buddha, not to mention a word of the dharma, nor had they ever seen a monastic sangha. It is just because of this that Rinpoche came here and established Vajradhatu, which now has this main center along with over one hundred branch dharma centers.

What he accomplished is something no other great master in the past has ever done. This alone suffices to demonstrate the profound loving kindness and compassion in his mind.

Certainly, it may be inappropriate for me to talk about the qualities of your guru, just like a stranger introducing your family members to you. Nevertheless, since I have long heard of the vast activities that Trungpa Rinpoche had accomplished while I was in the distant Land of Tibet, now as I personally come here and witness his extraordinary deeds, my mind is filled with great amazement, joy, and devotion; so, these words just naturally roll off my tongue. There is a Tibetan saying that goes like “selling a needle to a needle-maker.” If we try to sell a needle to a needle-maker, it will rarely be successful. Likewise, speaking of all these qualities of Trungpa Rinpoche in front of his disciples may be more or less unnecessary, and please forgive me if there is anything inappropriate in what I’ve said.



2.18: Chojé together with the audience

When finishing these words, Choje gave the oral transmission of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas* and briefly introduced the merit of this teaching:

To sum up all the essentials of the Buddhadharma, it is the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas*. Anyone who sees, hears, recites, or practices this teaching will be free of illness; gain longevity, abundant possessions, and far-reaching fame; and whatever they wish in this life will be fulfilled. When this life comes to an end, they will easily be born in the pure land of Sukhavati. From then on, they will be free from any physical or mental suffering and solely enjoy unfathomable peace and bliss.

I believe what you truly want is peace and happiness in this and all future lifetimes, no longer experiencing any suffering. The primary goal of my journey to the West is to try to help more beings relieve their suffering and obtain happiness and ease. We do have the same goal, and now my giving you the oral transmission of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas* in Tibetan is the best way to achieve that goal. As long as you listen with devotion, even if you do not understand its meaning, simply hearing its words will bring you immeasurable benefit.

Ever since the flourishing of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas* in the Tibetan regions, it has been equally practiced by all schools in Tibetan Buddhism, including Nyingma, Kagyu, Kadam, Jonang, and Sakya. They all attach great importance to this practice. What is the key feature of this practice? It encompasses all the essential practices of the Buddha and his followers, including all lineage holders in India, Tibet, and other regions. Its core and ultimate intent are to cultivate loving kindness and compassion and to refrain from harming any sentient being at any time.

It would be more than enough for your spiritual practice if you have comprehended and grasped the meaning of this text. If not, you may

invite other lamas to explain its meaning. I am joining my palms in front of my heart to pray that all of you can practice and actualize this precious teaching.

I MADE A GARMENT

To me, traveling with Yidzhin Norbu was entirely different from my traveling alone. Every time I accompanied him to travel abroad, I would take as few personal belongings as I could, be they clothes or other items. During this trip to the US, while we stayed in Boulder, I found there was a big day-night temperature difference. It was a little cold in the morning and evening, but during the day, the sunlight was very intense. Given such weather, I felt the need for a garment to keep me warm in the morning and evening.



2.19: Chojé and Khenpo Sodargye wearing the garment he made

Unlike in India or Nepal, in the US, it was difficult to buy monastic clothes or robes. One afternoon when I had some free time, I went to a few malls around Boulder trying to find a proper garment that I could wear, but that was to no avail. With no other choice, I decided to buy a piece of cloth to make one. Again, a saffron fabric was rarely seen as I searched in so many stores. When I finally found a fabric of proper color, I took it to a tailor's shop, only to be told that the tailor had never made a monastic garment, so he had no idea how to do it.

Luckily, I used to make clothes on my own, so I trimmed the cloth at the shop and

taught the tailor how to seam it. Through our cooperation, the coat was soon made. It fitted me very well, and the size was just perfect. That coat served its purpose well during all the following stops throughout our journey.



2.20: The garment Khenpo Sodargye made

I had been keeping the habit of giving extra clothes to others, but this coat is an exception. After returning from abroad, I was kind of reluctant to give it away. To this day, I still take it with me on my trips and wear it very often. The fabric is of fine quality. Although it's been thirty years, the color has barely faded, and its shape is the same as when it was just made. It's just that I gained some weight, so it's a bit snug; but I can still wear it.

Of course, compared to Yidzhin Norbu and his dharma activities, this is something insignificant and not worth mentioning at all. However, as I wrote up to this point, this incident came to mind, so I went ahead and included it.

FAREWELL TO VAJRADHATU IN BOULDER

On June 29th, Yidzhin Norbu met all the managing members of Vajradhatu in Boulder, as well as some great masters from other dharma centers, gave blessings, and had conversations with them.

Since this was the last day in Boulder and we were about to leave, Yidzhin Norbu bid his farewell to everyone with these few words:



2.21: Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche offering a khata to Chojé

More unique than other places, Boulder can be called *the second land of Shambhala*. I consider it a truly auspicious connection for me to have arrived here and shared the dharma teachings with each of you. This trip brings me immense joy.

When I was in the Land of Tibet, I was hoping to come to the US. This time, it is through the kindness and warmhearted assistance of many great masters who currently live in India and the US, as well as the favorable conditions created by their dharma centers that my trip to the West was made possible. When I heard that there is a Buddhist organization called Vajradhatu, my heart was immediately filled with great joy. I am not lying about that. I do feel that I have a deep connection with you people here that was formed in our previous lifetimes.

I truly appreciate your invitation letter, which turned out to play a crucial role in helping me communicate effectively with the Chinese and American embassies, as well as other government departments, so that I could get a visa successfully. In addition to this great effort to invite me here, you also sponsored the airline tickets, as well as all

kinds of expenses, including food and accommodation. For all your kind assistance, I hold sincere and deep gratitude in my heart.

To conclude my words, I hope that we will be able to meet again in this present life. If for any reason we are unable to meet in this life, let us aspire to be reborn in Sukhavati in the west or Shambhala in the north, so that we may reunite in the next life.

After Chojé finished his talk, Khenpo Namdrol summarized the dharma activities in these few days in Boulder and then said the following words:

Over the past few days, His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche gave many supreme and precious teachings, and I'm sure that we all have greatly benefited. I am a khenpo at Ngagyur Nyingma Institute of Namdroling Dharma Monastery in southern India. In order to improve the overall quality of our students in learning and practicing the dharma, I went to Larung Gar three times to receive teachings of sutras and tantras from Khenpo Rinpoche. This time, His Holiness Penor Rinpoche appointed me as an attendant to accompany Khenpo Rinpoche on this entire trip.

Staying in your center and being with you for these few days, I can feel your strong conviction and devotion, as well as your deep interest in the dharma. This truly makes me joyful. On the other hand, although some of you may have been adept in learning and practicing the dharma, compared to practitioners in traditional Tibetan Buddhist academies, I would say that there is still some room for improvement.

Traditionally, Tibetan practitioners adhere to the guidelines listed in the sutras and shastras on observing a guru, before making a decision on whether to follow this teacher or not. In the West, however, it seems that most people would like to make such a decision merely based on a teacher's words. As a matter of fact, there are all kinds of teachers in terms

of their knowledge, training, and spiritual achievements. If a teacher does not have sufficient knowledge of sutras or tantras, it will be somewhat risky to rely on him or her.

Over the years, you have been properly engaging in dharma study and practice, embracing the Nyingma and Kagyu teachings without bias. I hope you will continue to practice both Dzogchen and Mahamudra in the future as you have always done.



2.22: Khenpo Namdrol in the middle of teaching

After Khenpo Namdrol's remark, the Vajradhatu representative expressed their gratitude to Yidzhin Norbu:

His Holiness, you said that when you received the letter from Vajradhatu that you had great joy in your mind. When we heard the name Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok, we had the same experience, and when we saw your picture, it was the same. This is such a miracle.

Then, we began to read about your miraculous activities, and we became excited, maybe in a confused way. It seems the most profound and difficult miracle to achieve is the miracle of being kind to others. If you are going to be the general in Shambhala, under the king who will have been Trungpa Rinpoche, I would like to now volunteer all of us to be your warriors.

Thank you again and again.

In the end, Lama Mumtso conferred the Manjushri empowerment to everyone and with that, the dharma activities in Boulder were complete.



2.23: Lama Mumtso giving the Manjushri empowerment



3rd Stop

June 30th–July 6th

United States

ROCKY MOUNTAINS

SCHEDULE

June 30th

Arrived at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center

July 1st

Gave the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment and related teaching

July 2nd

Taught the first and second lecture on *The Flight of the Garuda* in the morning and afternoon

July 3rd

Taught the third and fourth lecture on *The Flight of the Garuda* in the morning and afternoon

July 4th

Taught the fifth lecture on *The Flight of the Garuda* in the morning and a short talk in front of the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya in the afternoon

July 5th

Gave the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment and related teaching in the morning and a public talk in the afternoon

July 6th

Met with the managing members of the center and Dorje Kasung in the morning, and gave the teaching on the essential points of the practice manual of *Peaceful Manjushri*, together with a farewell talk, in the afternoon

AT THE FOOT OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

On June 30th, we left beautiful Boulder and drove to the north, traveling over mountain after mountain, like riding on a roller coaster. After a drive of two or three hours, we arrived at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center.



3.1: Rocky Mountains



3.2: The wooden house where Chojé stayed

As vast as the Himalayas, the Rocky Mountains are the largest mountain system in North America. They stretch 3,000 miles in straight-line distance from the northern part of western Canada to New Mexico in the southwestern United States. Drainage of the Rockies runs eastward to the Atlantic and Arctic oceans and westward to the Pacific Ocean. The general climate for the Rocky Mountains in July is very moderate and pleasant, neither too hot nor too cold. Forests, lakes, grasslands, and glaciers can be seen around the mountain ranges. Here, the sky is bright, the wind is clean, and the water is crystal clear and glistening. Being

surrounded by such a beautiful environment, the mind naturally becomes calm, as if being exposed to a solitary place where the great Tibetan masters of the past lived in retreat.

This dharma center preserved the Kagyu tradition of Tibetan Buddhism. Most of the practitioners were Americans. Staying away from the noise of the secular world, they built wooden huts or pitched tents on the mountain, practicing calm-abiding meditation all year round. Among them, some had been in retreat for more than six years. All of them were thrilled by the arrival of Yidzhin Norbu, eager to receive profound empowerments and pith instructions of Secret Mantra from him.



3.3: The wooden cabins at the center

A RELAXED CHAT



3.4: Chojé beginning to give teaching

As soon as we arrived at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center in the afternoon, Chojé gave a short talk to the people there and blessed them by touching their heads one by one. After a short break, he sat outside the wooden cabin, looking out into the forests and mountains far away and enjoying the beautiful landscape all around. Then, he had

a relaxed chat with Gyatrul Rinpoche and others.



3.5: Enjoying the scenery outside the wooden cabin

Gyatrul Rinpoche was recognized at a young age as a reincarnated tulku by Domang Monastery, a branch of the Palyul Monastery located in Drango. He went to North America to propagate the dharma in the 1970s. During their conversation, Gyatrul Rinpoche naturally talked about Domang Monastery, saying,

“When the opportunity comes, I’d like to revisit Sertar and Domang Monastery. Many years ago, at the request of Yangthang Rinpoche, I went to Domang Monastery. That time, I went there directly after I arrived at Drango without informing anyone in advance. When Tulku Tishta saw me standing in front of him, he was quite surprised and asked, ‘How come you are here? I didn’t expect you to come!’

“I told him, ‘I don’t like to inform everyone beforehand since there would be all kinds of welcome reception. I am the same old me, even worse than before, so there is no need to tell everyone in advance.’

“At that time, Domang Monastery was beginning to be rebuilt. There were about sixty monks with twenty or thirty dormitories. I wanted to build a Buddhist academy for the monastery but wasn’t able to do so for various reasons. I pray to the guru and the Three Jewels that everything will become better in the future.”

Khenpo Rinpoche said, “If the authorities give the permission, the construction of Domang Monastery wouldn’t be a problem. The Likhokma clan is a large clan, and considering its total population, Domang Monastery is not a big one to be named as the principal monastery of that clan. Generally speaking, the monastery is flourishing. The Upper and Lower Likhokma clans have over

one thousand households, who are all very united. No matter what instruction their gurus give, they will follow them and never violate a single word.”



3.6: Chojé at rest

Chojé also asked Gyatrul Rinpoche about the overall situation of Buddhism in the US, together with some other topics as well.

WESTERNERS' ATTITUDE TOWARD TIME

Every dharma center in the US is very good at time management. They often make explicit schedules for things to be done within the time duration from as short as several minutes or hours to as long as several years. Every time we arrived at a center and settled in, we would receive a detailed schedule so that we knew what we were going to do. If there were any changes, they would inform us ahead of time.

I also noticed that no matter what the occasion, westerners do have a good sense of time and attach great importance to punctuality. For instance, the time

for each lecture given by Rinpoche was scheduled for two hours, including the time for chanting before and after the teaching, as well as the English translation. If a lecture did not finish after two hours, some listeners would raise their hands and remind Chojé that the time was up and they had to go; otherwise, there would be some trouble for them, such as paying additional parking fees. If, however, a session was completed even five minutes earlier, Rinpoche would be requested to still teach something else until two hours had passed because they paid for a two-hour lecture. It had become a convention in the West that a fee was charged for a dharma lecture, unlike the traditional way in the East.

There was a particular time when Yidzhin Norbu was conferring the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment; and because the ritual was too long to be completed within two hours, he sincerely apologized to the audience for running overtime and kindly asked for their permission to extend the time for a half hour since the empowerment couldn't be interrupted.

At the beginning, Chojé and all of us were not used to the strict attitude about time in the West. In the Tibetan regions, after all, a dharma teaching can be quite free in style, and it depends on the teacher how long a teaching session will take. If the teacher elaborates on the content in great detail, he or she may teach several hours without a break; but it is also possible for a session to be finished within a short time if the teacher doesn't feel like talking too much. It can be quite uncertain. However, people in the West are serious about keeping their schedules neither longer nor shorter than the expected time duration.

When I inquired about why they were so strict about timekeeping, I was told that being punctual is a sign of respect for others in the western culture, and if one is often behind schedule, it indicates that this person may be not reliable. Punctuality is particularly important on formal occasions; otherwise, it may cause others many inconveniences. Since everyone's daily schedule has been

properly arranged in advance, if there is a delay at one event, all the subsequent activities will be affected. Therefore, people in the West follow their schedules strictly.



3.7: Chojé checking the time on his watch

As goes the saying “when in Rome, do as the Romans do,” Rinpoche quickly adapted to the western culture. Whether he was giving teachings or conferring empowerments, he would use his wristwatch to remind himself to finish on time. From then on, I also became a person with a strong sense of time. Whatever I do, be it big or small, either giving lectures, attending meetings, or having meals with others, I am never behind schedule.

REASONS FOR OPENING THE DOOR TO THE PROFOUND DHARMA

At Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, Yidzhin Norbu gave tantric teachings to the practitioners there for seven days. On July 1st, he bestowed the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment. Before getting started, Gyatrul Rinpoche shared a few words with the audience:

First of all, I would like to extend a hearty and warm welcome to all of you here, especially those who came all the way from somewhere else to attend this dharma activity. Having such a wonderful gathering is the result of our accumulating merit and purifying obscurations throughout countless eons in the past, so we should highly value such precious dharma activities. It is especially fortunate for us to be able to receive teachings from such a genuine realized being as His Holiness Jigme

Phuntsok Rinpoche, a true emanation of Guru Padmasambhava in this age. He has the power to grant liberation to those who see him, listen to him, and touch him. Being connected with such a great being through this activity, we will be able to recognize our buddha nature that is primordially within us, not to mention gain benefit, peace, and happiness in all lifetimes.

Our mind is like a mirror, and being able to see Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok is the result of our great merit that makes the mirror clear, so that the compassionate reflection of Rinpoche appears. Although you see the reflection vividly, you may not know who you are seeing. Therefore, I am here to introduce you to this great being, but my brief introduction is like the blind leading the blind.

Although we have enough merit to be able to see him, it is important that we should not waste our merit by overworking him because he is advanced in age and tired from his busy schedule and travels. Besides, he also needs to preserve his energy to meet thousands of sentient beings and to bless them, so we should check often to see whether he needs some rest. Instead of watching our watches too much, we should care more about our future life.

Please be aware that Chojé's physical health is the most important thing. Your tickets cannot buy his priceless teaching. Although in this country people have to buy tickets to attend the dharma teachings, it does not mean that we should treat Rinpoche's teaching as a service we deserve. It is very inappropriate to treat a dharma teaching like a business deal with the expectation that it has to produce profits. Instead, we should keep in mind that this is a golden opportunity for us to accumulate merit, an invaluable chance that can hardly be encountered again in our lives.

I'd better not say too much more. I am getting nervous because Guru Rinpoche himself is sitting there waiting to start his teaching. I'll just stop here.

Before conferring the empowerment, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok spoke about three reasons why he decided to confer the empowerment and instructions of *Peaceful Manjushri* at this center:

Today on this occasion endowed with perfect auspiciousness, the time has come to open the door to the profound tantric teachings.

In general, since the empowerment and instructions of *Peaceful Manjushri* belong to the teachings with sealed transmitted precepts, they are only accessible to recipients who have passed certain qualifications. In other words, for both a teacher to give the teaching and for a disciple to receive the teaching, there must be an extended time of observation. The teacher must examine the disciples for years, and the same goes for the disciples before the transmission of such precious tantric teachings can truly happen. However, this time I have decided to directly confer the profound empowerment and instructions to each of you. Mainly, I have three good reasons for this.



3.8: Chojé conferring empowerment

The first reason is that under the kind guidance of your guru, all of you have started with the practice of shamatha meditation and are following the complete path to enlightenment by engaging in the stage-by-stage practice. Instead of rushing into profound Vajrayana practices without any preliminary training,

you first accomplish the common path and then move on to the uncommon path. This is the authentic way to approach dharma

practice that can be fully trusted. I joyfully rejoice in your guru's compassionate and skillful guidance bestowed upon all of you. Therefore, I have decided to give you the empowerment that can ripen your mind streams and the instructions that enable you to reach liberation.

The second reason is that you and I are meeting together through the ripening force of our aspirations in past lifetimes, and there is an excellent karmic connection between us. Considering this, I am eager to reveal this secret teaching to you. How can I say that we enjoy an excellent karmic connection from



3.9: Western disciples at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center

past lifetimes? When I was teaching the dharma to thousands of monastic disciples and hundreds of thousands of lay disciples, the letters of invitation to travel to the US came to me, and they were written by a great number of Tibetan masters who were from the same hometown or of the same lineage as me. The moment I received these letters, I felt an ineffable sense of joy. I recognized that this was a sign of my karmic connection with you. From your side, such a sign was also obvious. Why? Your centers have been very careful about inviting guest lamas to give teachings, but as I was told, when hearing my name and reading a little bit about me, you not only had an overwhelming sense of joy, but also indeed made a tremendous amount of effort to issue invitations to bring me here from a distant country in the East. All of this shows that we have very good connections from past lifetimes, so I am more than happy to offer this teaching to you.

The third reason is that ever since your guru came to the US in the 1970s, he spent over a decade working to build the structures necessary to provide his disciples with thorough, systematic training in the dharma. Although his direct dharma activities that occurred while he

was alive have dissolved into the vast expanse of dharmadhatu, did he not provide opportunities for those who protect and assist in his activities, such as me, to strengthen the dharma connections with his disciples? Of course, he did so. Thinking about this, I would like to give you this profound empowerment and instructions.

With these three reasons in mind, I will first give you the empowerment that matures your being. Please consider, in order to place all sentient beings equal to limitless space in the state of buddhahood, you aspire to receive this profound empowerment and carry through all the instructions in your practice. Please adjust your motivation like this.



3.10: Chojé teaching the dharma to tens of thousands of disciples, Mount Wutai, 1987

In 1987, I traveled with tens of thousands of Tibetan disciples, as well as many Han Chinese and Mongols to Mount Wutai of the east. We repeatedly made aspirations in accordance with the great vows of Samantabhadra in front of Lord Manjushri. One time, with the blessing of Manjushri's wisdom mind, this ritual of the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment spontaneously arose out of my expanse of

awareness. This is exactly the dharma you will receive from me on today's occasion.

THE FIRST LECTURE ON *THE FLIGHT OF THE GARUDA*



3.11: Chojé drinking tea

From July 2nd to July 4th, Yidzhin Norbu taught the trekchö section of Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol's *The Flight of the Garuda* in five lectures. Since Chojé only concisely explained the verses without elaborating too much, I won't transcribe the full content of these teachings but selectively record some uncommon instructions in each lecture.

On July 2nd, prior to the actual teaching, Rinpoche expressed his two wishes for the audience:

Now I am going to give you the teaching that has an auspicious connection with you. Whatever virtuous deed you perform, be it listening to the dharma, practicing the dharma, prostrating, circumambulating, or making confessions, the first and foremost thing to do is to give rise to bodhicitta. This is indispensable. How do you generate bodhicitta in your mind? You should reflect deeply, "In order to place all sentient beings in the perfect, complete, and unsurpassable enlightenment, a state of permanent peace and happiness, I myself must attain buddhahood as soon as possible. It is only through the engagement of this profound teaching that I will be able to swiftly and easily attain buddhahood." This is the way of generating supreme bodhicitta.

Before the main teaching, I'd like to share two things with all of you. First, always be mindful to practice the dharma step-by-step from

the basic level to the advanced level, without mixing the order of how it should be. In other words, beginners should not perform the conduct of yogis of a higher level, and advanced practitioners should not engage in basic practices on the level of shravakas. As the *Stainless Light* states, “Beginners should not perform the conduct of yogis. Yogis should not perform the conduct of mahasiddhas. Mahasiddhas should not perform the conduct of the omniscient ones.” For you to carry this instruction into your dharma practice is my first wish.



3.12: Chojé giving teaching while listening to the recording of the root text

Second, since you have been practicing both Mahamudra and Dzogchen in an unbiased way throughout these years, I hope you will persevere in your practice in this manner without abandoning either of them. It must be known that Mahamudra and Dzogchen are like the feet and the eyes: Mahamudra corresponds to the feet that walk the road, and Dzogchen corresponds to the eyes that see the road. Why? Mahamudra emphasizes the skillful meditative practice that enables you to abide single-pointedly, and Dzogchen emphasizes the ability to directly recognize the view that enables you to clearly see the nature of mind. Both are indispensable, and the absence of either will make ultimate enlightenment unattainable.

Just like it is very difficult to reach a destination if you do not have eyes or feet, lacking the view of Dzogchen, and practicing the skillful meditative practice of Mahamudra alone will not enable you to cut through the root of samsara. On the other hand, if you just focus on the view of Dzogchen intellectually and fail to apply the meditative practice of Mahamudra, buddhahood is also not achieved.

This is why in the oral transmissions of great scholars and mahasiddhas in India and the Land of Tibet, these two practices were always combined together. Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen, the emanation of Lord Manjushri, once said:

*When the foolish practice Mahamudra,
For the most part, it causes them to be born as animals,
Or to take rebirth in the formless realm,
Or to fall into the shravaka state of cessation of perception
and feeling.*

This suggests that practicing Mahamudra improperly may cause you to neglect the practice of vipashyana and then fall into the extreme of indifference that does not contribute to full enlightenment. Thus, you will very possibly continue to be trapped in samsara.

Rigdzin Jigme Lingpa also said:

*Clinging to shamatha where the mind is clear and empty,
Discerning the nature of all phenomena with
a distracted mind, and
Abiding in the state of indifference with no action
Are the three deviations from the path of Dzogchen.*

You should know that vipashyana without shamatha will merely lead to a state of discrimination and distraction, which cannot lead to enlightenment. Therefore, I encourage you to always stick to your present practice of applying the instructions of both Mahamudra and

Dzogchen and never make them separate on your spiritual path. This is my second wish.

Of course, you need to rely on a perfectly qualified teacher to engage in such practice and to attain accomplishments. If an individual tries to practice alone without receiving any guidance from an experienced teacher, it will for the most part bring failure. Many of you have close connections with many lamas in the Kagyu lineage. In your area, there are actually some Nyingmapa teachers as well who are endowed with inconceivable qualities. It will be of great benefit if you can invite them and respectfully receive teachings and instructions from them. Favorable conditions for inviting teachers from faraway Tibetan regions are difficult to come by. Take me as an example. I am old and suffering from illness, and I also have a lot of disciples at Larung Gar who need my guidance. Therefore, due to my personal reasons and various external factors, I am afraid that this is probably the last time for me to come to the US.

Nevertheless, I hope we can build closer and deeper connections through this trip. That is, focusing on the Buddhadharma in these few days, we can benefit each other by exchanging the teachings, having discussions, resolving doubts, as well as sharing experiences about our personal practices. Such a gathering is completely different from worldly assemblies, such as those with a political agenda. I also feel my disciples will have a good affinity with you, and I hope in the near future they can build auspicious and close connections with you. This has nothing to do with any political or economic issue; it is just my heartfelt wishes and blessings for all of you.

Based on pure motivation, the above are my pieces of advice to you with regard to practicing the dharma and building connections with the gurus. Now we are going to study Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol's *The Flight of the Garuda*. Alright, ha ha ha, since my eyes cannot clearly see the text, my ears help me to "read" it. I will explain the root text while listening to its recording.



3.13: Chojé playing his mini black recorder

Yidzhin Norbu then played his mini black recorder and started the teaching from the beginning:

*Namo Gurubhya.
From the illuminating sun disc of your loving wisdom
Limitless rays of compassionate light shine forth.
I pay homage to Chokyi Gyalpo who in a single instant,
Dispels the darkness of ignorance of all beings in the three realms.*

and ended at:

*This is the song which indicates how to ascertain the character of
basic mind in its natural state.*

At the end of this lecture, Chojé summarized the teaching with the following words:

When you practice shamatha, it is not enough to just remain in single-pointed meditative absorption. You need to determine the genuine mind as it is during the single-pointed meditative absorption, and this constitutes the path of Mahamudra. Then, further investigate the

nature of mind and recognize its true reality; that is the path of the Great Perfection. Therefore, when it comes to following the path of Mahamudra or the path of the Great Perfection, their essences are the same. If the mind exists, ascertain its existence. If it does not exist, ascertain its non-existence. Just like this, thoroughly investigate the very nature of mind.

THE SECOND LECTURE ON *THE FLIGHT OF THE GARUDA*

In the afternoon, Yidzhin Norbu gave the teaching beginning:

Emaho!
Listen once again, fortunate heart-children!
First, here is how Dharmakaya Samantabhadra was liberated
Without having meditated even as much as an instant.
Then hear how the six kinds of beings have been wandering
through samsara
Without having committed even the slightest unvirtuous act.

to:

Decide with complete confidence that everything
Is the natural form of emptiness, nonexistent and yet apparent,
Through the magical display of one's mind,
After which you should rest in complete equanimity.

At the beginning of this lecture, Rinpoche said:

This time, as I am teaching the clear light Great Perfection and you are listening carefully, I believe most of you have truly understood it. Even though for now some of you cannot fully grasp this meaning, you should hold devotion and reverence for the teaching and have the conviction that one day you will eventually realize its true meaning. All of you want to practice the terma of *Peaceful Manjushri*. Its practice

manual, *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, is provided in this terma as well, and I advise you to apply it to your actual practice. In this way, you will be greatly benefited.



3.14: Lama Mumtso, Ani Medron, and the audience listening to the teaching attentively

For a long time, I have had a deep conviction that the teaching of *Peaceful Manjushri* will bring great benefit to westerners, especially to many of you present here because you are fortunate ones and have an auspicious connection to this teaching. Unfortunately, I came to the US at an old age, and it is difficult for me to stay to give you teachings and guidance in the long term. However, I will pray for you that you will actively practice this teaching and gain authentic benefit from it.

This teaching itself can be very helpful and convenient for you because its meaning is condensed and summarized, which makes it easy to practice. Although people in developed countries like you have busy schedules every day, you will still find it easy to practice *Peaceful Manjushri* on a daily basis. I believe this is a teaching tailored for people who live in developed countries in the West. I will repeat a verse from a prophetic text that I wrote down a few years ago that

precisely predicts that this teaching will bring great benefit to people in the West:

*The sun, universally benefiting all,
Rises behind the mountains in the east,
And shines to the west.
Ignorant lower mountains,
Do not be haughty.
When you are covered by the shadows before you,
Though you are free from the sunlight temporarily,
Eventually, you will be completely exposed to it.*



3.15: Chojé delivering the teaching wholeheartedly

What does this verse mean? The practice manual of *Peaceful Manjushri* was written down by me on Mount Wutai, to the east of Bodh Gaya, India, but people who have auspicious connections with it primarily live in western countries, and they will greatly benefit from it. Like the sun rises in the east while shining radiantly to the west, this indicates that many westerners will appreciate its value and receive immense

benefit from this teaching in the near future. I think this prophecy has been affirmed at this time.

THE THIRD LECTURE ON *THE FLIGHT OF THE GARUDA*

On the morning of July 3rd, Chojé gave the teaching beginning:

*It is said that on a single anther of the lotus
Which Buddha Infinite Ocean holds in his hand,
Is contained this entire three-thousandfold universe.*

to:

*Whether moving or still, mind is the continuity of awareness.
So, when you have fully comprehended stillness, occurrence,
and awareness,
Then practice these three as one.
This is how stillness and thought occurrence are nondual.*

He offered a brief instruction as follows:

It is essential to recognize that all phenomena are the illusory manifestations of your own mind and then to further realize the very nature of mind. In order to attain such realization, you need to practice shamatha first. You will not recognize the true nature of mind if you are not able to sustain single-pointed meditation for a long time. So, practicing shamatha is the first step.

Furthermore, it is not enough to just stay in single-pointed meditation where you think nothing and remain in a state of no thought. Such practice alone is as meaningless as falling asleep or remaining unconscious and will not lead you to any higher states of realization. You need to practice vipashyana based on shamatha. That is, while maintaining single-pointedness, investigate the nature of mind as instructed. By

looking directly into the mind's essence, you will realize that it is empty, devoid of any shape and color, and lacks any true essence. This is the practice of vipashyana. If you can reach this realization, it is all you need.



3.16: Chojé's bright eyes

On the foundation of shamatha, you seek vipashyana, and then you need to engage in the practice of uniting shamatha and vipashyana. Once you reach the state of the perfect union of shamatha and vipashyana, you've placed yourself on the utmost sublime path. Therefore, you should engage in the practice that unites shamatha and vipashyana in due course. Such practice needs to be repeated and enhanced as much as possible.

THE FOURTH LECTURE ON *THE FLIGHT OF THE GARUDA*

In the afternoon, Rinpoche gave the teaching beginning:

Emaho!

Fortunate and only heart children,

Listen with your undistracted and attentive ears!

*Allow this harmonious song by me, the singing renunciant
Tsokdruk Rangdrol,
To be kept on the white snowy peaks of your heart.*

to:

*This fruition, without anything to be accomplished,
Has not come under the power of acceptance and rejection,
hope and fear.
To realize the self-luminous and spontaneously perfect
present wakefulness,
The emptiness where the three kayas are naturally manifest,
Is precisely the primordially enlightened fruition.*



3.17: Khenpo Sodargye concentrating on Chojé's teaching

At the end of this lecture, Chojé said:

This time, the trekchö section of Shabkar Tsokdruk Rangdrol's *The Flight of the Garuda* is coming to your ears without missing a single word. You should listen to the oral transmission attentively and hold genuine devotion to this teaching. Check yourselves regularly whether you have truly understood this teaching. If not, make your best effort to delve into the text. I believe through the blessings of Shabkar Tsokdruk

Rangdrol and his teaching, you will be able to realize its meaning very quickly.

Now according to your faculties, I will summarize this text into three key points. First, do not feed your conceptual thoughts by letting them arise actively. Rest the mind in its natural state. Second, when the mind abides in the state of no conceptualization, relax naturally, observe its essence, and then recognize its nature as emptiness. Third, abide in such a state and sustain this realization in daily life.



3.18: Chojé giving the teaching earnestly

I'll repeat one more time: naturally rest the mind, recognize its nature, and maintain that state of realization. These three key points summarize all essentials in Mahamudra and in Dzogchen's three categories of tantra, transmission, and upadesha. Please continuously and persistently practice these pith instructions.

THE FIFTH LECTURE ON *THE FLIGHT OF THE GARUDA*

On the morning of July 4th, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok began with:

Emaho!

Once again, noble children, listen well!

*In this way, when you have maintained the view without
distraction,*

*Then later, even if you completely let go and leave things as
they naturally are,*

There will be no coming or going from the true state.

to the last verse of the text:

*By its virtue, may many fortunate disciples
Swiftly purify the stains of ignorance, kleshas, and concepts
Into the original space of primordial purity
And attain fruition in this very life.*

In the end, Choje concluded the teaching with the following words:

Today is the fifth lecture of the teaching on *The Flight of the Garuda*. I have spent more than ten hours on this teaching. The main purpose for me to teach you this text is to enhance your experience and realization of the nature of mind, and by doing so, I can purify the defilements of my speech. This time, I have explained every verse and sentence in the text without adding or reducing anything. Also, I have summarized and offered all the key points of this teaching to you.

This text explains the clear light Great Perfection and also includes the key points of all other paths, like Mahamudra and the Great Middle Way. Generally speaking, of all the infinite doctrines taught by the Buddha, the ultimate essentials are encompassed in the three paths of the Great Middle Way, the Great Seal, and the Great Perfection. If you follow the path of the Great Middle Way in a complete and correct manner, the key points of the Great Seal and the Great Perfection will be implemented in your practice as well. Likewise, whether you practice Mahamudra or Dzogchen, as long as your practice is authentic, accurate, and complete, the essentials of the other two paths will have been applied in your practice.

Therefore, it is pivotal to practice Mahamudra, Dzogchen, and the Great Middle Way simultaneously. Many realized masters of Kagyu and Nyingma lineages, such as the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje and Omniscient Longchenpa, engaged in their practices by following this method. We—teacher and disciples—should also combine the

three paths into one in our daily study and practice. It is of great significance.



3.19: Chojé looking at the audience with smile

How should you engage in such practice that combines the three paths as one? Sustaining the state of calm abiding, the aspect of the mind that is free from any movement is Mahamudra. The mind cannot be found anywhere, either inside, outside, or in between; such emptiness of the mind is the Great Middle Way. While abiding single-pointedly in emptiness, ascertain that the mind's nature is lucid, clear pristine awareness. Gaining certainty in this is the Great Perfection.



3.20: Audience in the tent for the dharma teaching

In his *Aspiration of the Mahamudra of Definitive Meaning*,^a the third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje said:

^a *nge don chag gya chenpo'i monlam zhuk so* (*nges don phyag rgya chen po'i smon lam gzhuks so*); Rangjung Dorje.

*This absence of mental engagement is Mahamudra.
The freedom from extremes is the Great Middle Way.
Since all is included here, this too is the Great Perfection.
May I acquire the confidence of knowing one and
realizing all.*

This citation means that being free from discernment and attachment is the Great Seal, going beyond all extremes is the Great Middle Way, and that which perfectly includes the essentials of all paths is the Great Perfection. Karmapa prayed for all sentient beings to realize this truth.

Since I came to your center, I have been encouraging you again and again to practice the teachings of both Nyingma and Kagyu without any biased view or personal preference. You should make such an aspiration and try as much as possible to create favorable conditions to actualize these two paths. Thank you!

MEETING THE LIGHT

Among American practitioners who received teachings from Yidzhin Norbu, many of them had also met other highly revered masters and received precious instructions from them. However, many disciples felt the effect that Chojé had on them was so special that it remained unforgettable even after so many years. There is a practitioner named Joshua Mulder who recalled this:



3.21: Joshua Mulder now

Everyone was shocked by the presence of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche when he visited our sangha. It had been six years since our root teacher, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, passed away, so everybody was in a state of lacking inspiration. When Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok came, it was

astounding because his presence was a powerful proclamation that the practice is real.



3.22: Left to right: Joshua Mulder, Gyatrul Rinpoche, Chojé, Sakyong Mipham Rinpoche, David Bolduc, and Bob King

Rinpoche was very definitive and energetic. There was an ancient, profound quality in him. You could see that he was thoroughly steeped and completely trained in the dharma. Seeing him was like being in the Himalayan Plateau, spacious and surrounded by mountains, as if you had arrived in a different realm. He had a very strong presence of solidity, genuineness, pride, and human dignity.

What benefited me most was that Chojé validated the practice as being real. I started to practice Vajrayogini when I was twenty-seven, and when I met Khenpo Rinpoche, I was forty-one, so by then I had been visualizing myself as Vajrayogini for fourteen years. The moment I saw Rinpoche, my entire visualization became real; there was a solid, human Vajrayogini sitting in front of me. He was Vajrayogini in person!



3.23: Chojé shouting out *phat* forcefully

At some point when he was granting empowerment, he shouted out *phat*, and people among the audience saw him levitate off his throne. That was like a direct experience of reality. It was a direct cutting through of the conceptual mind. He vividly demonstrated the ancient tradition from the Land of Snows in the land of America. And that is truly significant.

I FEEL PARTICULARLY FORTUNATE

Professor Judith Simmer-Brown was the department chair of the Religious Studies Department at Naropa University in Colorado, and author of the book *Dakini's Warm Breath: The Feminine Principle in Tibetan Buddhism*. She was in the audience when Yidzhin Norbu was giving teachings at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center and below is her recollection of meeting with him.

In the late summer of 1993, I attended a weekend retreat program with my husband, young children aged three and six, and my mother-in-law at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center at Red Feather Lakes, Colorado. The program's guest teacher was someone I had never heard of, except that he was rumored to be an important, unusual master fresh from eastern Tibet.

When His Holiness Khenchen Jigme Phuntsok swept into the tent with his entourage, my breath was taken away by his sheer presence. He was physically large and imposing, wearing the simple and rough robes of a monk with no brocades in sight. His face was weather-beaten and broad, exuding the uplifted and open energy of enlightenment. He spoke on an elaborate shrine on stage, and his raw, earthy directness stopped my mind.



3.24: Smiling Chojé

While I remember little of the details of Chojé's teachings from the weekend, they were based on the predictions of the *Kalachakra* for the coming Dark Age, the importance of propagating the teachings, and the urgency to protect the integrity of the dharma. He reminded us of the wrathful compassion of Gesar, who fearlessly overcame obstacles to the dharma. He praised our teacher, remarking on his incredible skill and foresight in bringing the precious teachings to the United States and Canada.

The several hundred attendees, members of my large Vajrayana community, seemed similarly taken aback by Khenchen's charismatic presence. Our root teacher had passed six years earlier, and the community was a bit fragmented and at sea without his guidance. We yearned for his directness, kindness, and humor.

Through the hospitality of our root teacher, we had hosted many other great teachers during his lifetime, including the most renowned teachers of Tibetan Nyingma and Kagyu lineages. Each of these teachers had their own distinctive qualities and teachings and bestowed their specific blessings on us as first-generation Vajrayana practitioners in America. But none of these teachers had the particular kind of bold vision and charisma Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok manifested.

In the years that followed, I learned more about Khenpo Rinpoche and began to follow the fragments of information that emerged about his remarkable role at Larung Gar. Even after his death, he still has brought new vitality to many Tibetan practitioners.

I feel particularly fortunate to have been in the presence of Chojé and to have received teachings from him. Given his remarkable charismatic presence, it is no wonder that he has had such a meaningful impact on Buddhism across modern Tibet.

A SHORT TALK IN FRONT OF THE GREAT STUPA

On the afternoon of July 4th, Yidzhin Norbu blessed the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya that was under construction at that time and participated in the Lamp Offering Ceremony as a celebration of the US Independence Day. He gave a short talk as follows:



3.25: The Great Stupa under construction

Today, I don't have much to say as I haven't prepared anything. But in accordance with your request, I'll just share a few words with you.

I believe all of you gathered here today must be Buddhist practitioners and in particular Vajrayana practitioners of Secret Mantra. I guess you have a deep faith and a heartfelt delight in Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche. If you want to follow him wholeheartedly, you should have a good understanding of Rinpoche's main activities that he fulfilled throughout his entire life. These activities can be summarized into two aspects: one is to demonstrate fierce conduct and in the near future, to be born in the kingdom of Shambhala, where he will employ the force of armies to tame and liberate unruly and rampant barbarians; the other is to practice Mahamudra and other skillful instructions that can lead you to attain buddhahood in this very life. I know you have

been engaging in these two main activities over these years and are authentic followers of the Buddhadharma and your teacher.

Being practitioners of the Great Vehicle, all of us have two goals on our dharma path: to enjoy the temporary peace and happiness in god and human realms and to attain the ultimate fruition of buddhahood. The Buddha taught many skillful means through which we can accomplish these two goals, the temporary happiness in the higher realms and the definitive virtue of full enlightenment. Mainly, we need to accumulate merit and to purify obscurations, where there are four key methods to use: 1) to



3.26: Chojé praying to the deity

erect a stupa in a place where there is no stupa, 2) to offer or build a monastery for a sangha gathering, 3) to pacify the disharmony within a sangha group, and 4) to cultivate loving kindness. In all Buddhist doctrines, these four are the most supreme practices for accumulating merit and purifying obscurations.

Within these four methods, the best one is to erect a stupa in a place where there isn't one. As the Buddha taught in the sutras, besides the inconceivable amount of merit accrued from actually building a stupa, even if a child simply makes the image of a stupa with sand while playing, this act alone generates so much merit that it will lead this child eventually to the ultimate enlightenment of buddhahood. This merit itself can bring about incredible results without a doubt.

In terms of the size of the stupa to be erected, as the sutras state, just to build a stupa in a size as small as a myrobalan seed will enable one to temporarily take rebirth as a chakravartin ruler possessing inconceivable wealth and happiness, and ultimately to attain buddhahood in a short period of time. The merit will be much more inconceivable if you erect a large stupa of fine quality.



3.27: The Great Stupa of Dharmakaya

Such being the case, if you make a generous donation to the construction of a stupa, it goes without saying that the merit accrued will be extremely vast. Even a small donation equivalent to the amount of one percent of your food consumed in the three meals of one day will generate the merit that enables you to not be born as poor and displeasing beings but rather to always enjoy a pleasing appearance and material abundance life after life and to attain buddhahood before too long.

As for those who personally participate in the construction of a stupa, if they spend time undergoing the hardships and difficulties involved in building it, there is no doubt that they will accumulate an inconceivable amount of merit. Even just carrying one stone for building a stupa during a tea break will enable you to be born as a chakravartin ruler as many times as the number of atoms that make up that one stone, and eventually, to attain perfect bliss and ultimate peace free from the suffering of cyclic existence.

These are the overall benefits that building a Buddhist stupa brings about. If you construct a magnificent stupa specifically for your guru, the merit generated is hundreds or even thousands of times greater than the general case. This is because the root guru is the union of the

Three Jewels—his body is the sangha, his speech is the dharma, and his mind is the buddha. Further, if this stupa contains the precious relics of your root guru, it will produce the same merit as building relic stupas for all the buddhas in countless worlds throughout the ten directions. Even if it is built with ordinary rocks and clay, you will still accumulate immeasurable merit comparable to building stupas for all the buddhas and bodhisattvas with seven kinds of precious jewels.



3.28: Chojé giving a short talk before the Great Stupa



3.29: Chojé talking with members of the Dorje Kusung

Since you are constructing this great stupa to honor your root teacher, you will accumulate merit and enjoy wholesome results as boundless as what I've just mentioned. Not only that, because your guru had an uncommon connection with Guru Padmasambhava, King Gesar of Ling, and Kalkin King Rudra Chakrin, building his stupa also allows you to make closer connections with these great beings, which in turn will bring you vast amounts of merit.

In addition, making a donation or serving this project physically or verbally will accumulate boundless merit. Anyone who takes part in this project with the utmost energy and enthusiasm will enjoy longevity, good health, auspiciousness, and happiness in this present life, and in their next life, they will be reborn in a pure land such as Sukhavati in the west, or Shambhala in the north. In the latter case, they will become the first principal disciples of the Kalkin King Rudra Chakrin.

Today is July 4th, the US Independence Day. Earlier on, Gyatrul Rinpoche reminded us of impermanence and that we are all going to die very soon. Now, I offer you the auspicious prayers that all of you will attain perfect happiness, both temporarily and ultimately. (Laughs)

Some claimed that the world would end in 1999. I'm not sure whether that is true or not, but generally speaking, in the near future, there may be diseases, hunger, unrest, and other disasters around the world. Considering these misfortunes, you should be confident that there is no negativity that cannot be purified through confession, there is no disease that cannot be cured through medicine, and there is no unfavorable condition that cannot be transformed through



3.30: Chojé waving goodbye from the car

accumulating merit. To erect such a strong, splendid stupa with sturdy construction will not only bring you peace and happiness but also auspiciousness to the whole country and even to the whole world. This great stupa carries inconceivable benefit. When it is completed, if you can actively make prostrations to it, circumambulate it, and praise it, both you and others will experience auspiciousness, and all wishes will be fulfilled. Tashi Delek!

PLUCKING CHOJÉ'S BEARD

For a long time during the trip, Chojé hardly had time to get any rest. He was either conferring empowerments and teachings or traveling on the way to different dharma centers. During our stay at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, every day he would give one lecture in the morning and one in the afternoon. He also needed to receive all kinds of people who came to see him at noon. Due to this very busy schedule, Rinpoche appeared to be physically unwell, especially with pain in his feet, and thus needed to be supported by the arm to walk or use a wheelchair. Sometimes, he had to take painkillers to relieve the pain.

One day, people of the dharma center called a massage therapist who was experienced at foot massage. Initially, Chojé could not get used to it since he never had a massage like this before. But gradually, he felt much better with this treatment and sometimes would take a nap during the massage. Seeing him fall asleep, the massage therapist would lessen the pressure so that he could rest.

During the foot massage, Rinpoche would ask me to pluck his beard. We used to do it with copper tweezers since there were no razors in the Tibetan regions back in those days. At first, I was very nervous and dared not touch his face nor pluck his beard too forcefully. Sometimes, I became exhausted and sweaty, but I still couldn't pluck too many beard hairs. This was particularly the

case when Chojé was falling asleep. Because I was afraid to hurt and wake him, I became more careful and plucked his hair as gently as I could. Once, when I was trying to find beard hairs on his face, he suddenly opened his eyes and said in a low voice, “Ah ley.” I was so scared that my mind suddenly went blank at that moment.

It took me a long time to get used to this job and relax. Each afternoon when Yidzhin Norbu was not so busy, the massage therapist would come and do a foot massage, and I would pluck his beard at the same time. Occasionally, I noticed some of his beard hairs were turning gray, and then a kind of sadness arose in my heart. Normally, the plucked hairs were not to be given to others, so I returned them to him.



3.31: Chojé in conversation

The massage therapist suggested Chojé do some exercise to try to lose some weight. He offered a kind of tea to Rinpoche and said, “It is very good for your health. It improves digestion and helps the body burn calories. It is also available in your hometown.” Chojé quickly became fond of the tea, and sometimes he would add milk to it and make a sort of Tibetan milk tea. Later, I found out that the tea that had been offered was pu’er. After we returned to Tibet, Rinpoche continued to drink it, so I had the opportunity to offer him pu’er tea for a long time.

Thanks to the foot massage treatment, Chojé’s feet got much better before we left Rocky Mountain Dharma Center.

THE EXTRAORDINARY QUALITY OF *VAJRAKILAYA GURKHUKMA*



3.32: Chojé giving teaching in the large tent

On the morning of July 5th, Yidzhin Norbu conferred the empowerment of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*. Before bestowing the empowerment, he introduced the origin and the extraordinary quality of this terma.

While you are receiving today's teaching, please generate the mind of bodhicitta. Contemplate that in order to benefit all sentient beings equal to limitless space, you will receive the empowerment that ripens your mind with the intention to carry out its stages of practice that lead you to liberation.

The terma of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* that you are going to receive was revealed by me at the Asura Cave at Yanglesho in Nepal when I and seven disciples were on our way to India in 1990. This terma was entrusted to King Jinamitra of Nepal by the second buddha, Orgyen Guru Padmasambhava, before transmitting any teaching in Tibet. Guru Padmasambhava decided to travel to Tibet in order to help the Buddhadharma flourish in Tibet, which was considered a dark land at the time, meaning *lacking dharma*. On his way to Tibet, Guru Rinpoche stayed and practiced in the Nepalese Asura Cave for some time, and during that time, King Jinamitra helped him dispel the obstacles to his body and created many favorable conditions for his dharma practice. With great joy, Guru Rinpoche solemnly entrusted this terma to the king.

As it is said in the *Le'u Dünma—The Prayer in Seven Chapters to Padmakara, the Second Buddha*,^a “In the rock cave of Yanglesho in Nepal, you liberated all obstacles and obstructors through Vajrakilaya.” The *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* is the leading practice for dispelling all obstacles created by demonic influences. It is the ultimate essence of the whole *Supreme Knowledge Tantra*^b and, like a mother, is the origin of the sixty-four common and thirty-two extraordinary Vajrakilaya cycles in Tibet. Relying upon it, all Tibetan local spirits, such as the twelve Tenma sisters,^c were subdued and bound under oath to protect the dharma.

^a *le'u bdun ma*.

^b *rigpa chog gi gyü* (*rig pa mchog gi rgyud*), Skt. Vidyottama.

^c *damchen mamu chu nyi* (*dam can ma mo bcu nyis*).

I revealed this terma by recalling a former life. This terma is titled *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* because Guru Rinpoche wore it in a small pouch bound around his neck since it was such a profound and pithy practice. Once revealing the terma, as the root text of the cycle says, “There will appear wonderful auspicious circumstances that will bring great significance.”

The circumstances when this terma was offered to its root holder are as follows: Gyalwa Rinpoche wrote the lineage prayer for the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*, and the colophon at the end reads, “I, Tendzin Gyatso, a bhikshu follower of Shakyamuni, who has a connection through karma and aspirations, wrote this.” Hence, we can see that Gyalwa Rinpoche is the root holder of this terma cycle. I had been practicing this terma since I revealed it, and before giving its transmission to anyone else, I went to Gyalwa Rinpoche’s residence and offered it to him. He attached great importance to this terma and treasured it as a wish-fulfilling jewel. He seriously and sincerely requested me to give the whole transmission to him immediately, so on the very day I arrived, I offered him the complete practice, including its empowerment and practical instructions.

The circumstances when this terma was entrusted to the dharma protector Nechung Dorje Drakden are that Nechung Dorje Drakden served as the messenger for His Holiness the thirteenth Gyalwa Rinpoche Thubten Gyatso and Tertön Sogyal, and he passed on prophecies related to both of them. He also requested many teachings from Tertön Sogyal. It was dependent on these auspicious conditions that this terma was revealed. When I was conferring the empowerment of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*, Nechung Dorje Drakden suddenly descended in a wrathful form and received the empowerment and instructions. In addition, at the request of Gyalwa Rinpoche and Nechung Dorje Drakden, the prayer for subjugating activity related with this terma cycle arose from the expanse of my awareness. Regarding the fire offering in this terma cycle, this too arose spontaneously from my

awareness expanse while I was with Gyalwa Rinpoche, and he humbly wrote down the words.



3.33: Chojé looking at everyone affectionately

Then, following Tertön Sogyal's tradition, this terma was also offered to the chief lineage holders in Sakya, Kagyu, and Nyingma lineages. As for the Nyingma tradition, since all the previous reincarnations of the mahasiddha Kyabjé Penor Rinpoche were the main holders of Nyingma lineage, I offered the empowerment of this terma, together

with its complete instructions, to the present Penor Rinpoche. In the Sakya tradition, there were two primary lineage holders from whom Tertön Sogyal never kept any secret, Gyalwa Thubten Gyatso and Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, and I offered the empowerment, instructions, and oral transmission to the reincarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, namely, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. In terms of the Kagyu tradition, the chief holder in the time of Tertön Lerab Lingpa was the fifteenth Karmapa Khakyab Dorje. Unfortunately, his reincarnation, the sixteenth Karmapa Rangjung Rigpe Dorje, had passed into parinirvana before I was able to offer him this terma; but I believe it will be offered to his reincarnation in the near future no matter where he may be.

This terma is endowed with perfectly auspicious signs that have never been tainted, irrespective of outer, inner, or secret aspects. There should be no doubt that anyone who practices this will obtain success and auspiciousness and be able to fully dispel all obstacles and negativities. This is indeed a sublime, profound, and unsurpassable practice that has never appeared before.

I won't say more about the extraordinary qualities of this terma. One simple fact is that ever since it was revealed, the circumstances in the

Snow Land of Tibet have greatly changed—the well-being of Tibetans improved, and the Buddhadharma has been flourishing. Not only for Tibetans, whoever encounters it will have full success, inner peace, sublime bliss, and auspiciousness, and everything will go smoothly according to their will. This is another undeniable fact. Especially, for those great lineage holders who have received this teaching, their enlightened activities will increasingly flourish and prosper, like the waxing moon. From this point alone, we can conclude that this terma will bring great benefit and auspiciousness to all sentient beings.

I have briefly introduced the origin and extraordinary qualities of the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*, and now I am going to confer the empowerment.

THE BUDDHA AND THE DHARMA

In the afternoon, Yidzhin Norbu gave a public talk about Buddhism:

On this auspicious occasion, I'd like to say a few words from the bottom of my heart. All of us present here today have obtained the perfect and excellent human existence, and as humans, we have a more superior level of courage, power, and intelligence than animals do in the ways of benefiting ourselves and avoiding all harm. These two things, being born as humans and the advantages of a human rebirth are what we should be aware of from the very beginning.

Since you have attained a supreme human body with intelligence, you should not waste your lives meaninglessly, like an animal not knowing what is good and what is bad. Rather, try every possible means to seek benefit and to avoid suffering. Seeking benefit is the shared nature of all beings. No matter who you are, you will be overjoyed when attaining happiness and heartbroken when encountering suffering. No one likes pain and suffering while disliking happiness and pleasure. Except for a few individuals, almost every person is actively searching for ways and methods to acquire happiness. However, among those

who do not follow any religious belief, most of them are just bustling around day and night to avoid obvious harm and running after petty profits. Their way of seeking happiness seems as inferior as that of animals. Instead, those who truly understand how to seek genuine peace and happiness are mostly religious believers.

In the world, there are three major religions, i.e., Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism, as well as a great number of other religious traditions. Among all these religions, some only try to pursue the well-being of the present life; some dedicate themselves to the benefit and happiness of both this and future lifetimes; and some, however, focus more on the happiness of future lifetimes than that of the present life. For anyone who is interested in following a religion, it is necessary to carefully examine the advantages and disadvantages of each religion before deciding which one to follow. Otherwise, it is unlikely that any benefit will be derived if you choose to casually embrace a religion without knowing anything about it.

There is no doubt that within the doctrines of the three major religions, as well as those of many other traditions, there are a lot of methods to pursue happiness and avoid suffering. For instance, some religions achieve peace and happiness for this and future lives by praying to their creator. Some obtain happiness in this life by worshipping the sun, the moon, Maheshvara, or Ganesha. Some seek temporary benefit and ultimate happiness by taking refuge in the Three Jewels. Basically, most religions are quite similar in requesting their followers to have faith in their own deities and pray to them, and to have firm conviction in their doctrines. However, it is necessary to ponder and analyze thoroughly and in depth whether the founder of each religion possesses the valid knowledge that is never deceptive and whether the doctrine each founder preaches is free of any fault.

Someone may wonder, "What are the differences among the founders of various religions?" Some of them focus only on their own benefit and the well-being of their retinues and followers; and in order to

achieve their goals, they would harm the rest of the majority of sentient beings. Some consider the benefit of all human beings while ignoring other types of living beings. Some benefit not only humans but all sentient beings. They endeavor to protect each and every being from harm and suffering; and not only that, they hold the principle of cherishing others more than themselves and constantly strive to bring benefit to others. Such being the case, is it better to focus completely on your own welfare and the welfare of those who are like-minded, or is it better to strive to benefit both self and others? This is a question worth reflecting upon.

Regarding the doctrines of different religions, some encourage their followers to harm other sentient beings for the sake of personal benefit, as well as their associates. Some advocate harming other beings in order to benefit human beings. And some urge followers to benefit infinite sentient beings extensively and equally and save them all from harm and suffering. Of these three types of doctrines, which makes more sense and is more appealing to you? Again, this requires deep reflection.

There are also some religions quite new in this world founded by individuals based on their own conceptual thoughts. If analyzed by proper reasoning, their doctrines do not stand up to examination and are full of faults and contradictions. These kinds of religions cannot be regarded as authentic, sacred religions. On the other hand, some religions originated in the world thousands of years ago, and their doctrines stand up perfectly well to analysis and examination throughout history. Hence, they are reliable and sacred traditions. All these aspects of various religions should be carefully, deeply, and meticulously studied before you decide to follow any of them. Otherwise, selecting one in haste or only according to which religion is more influential or more powerful cannot bring you much benefit.

As a Tibetan saying goes, “It’s like a hungry dog meeting a lung.” When a hungry dog encounters an animal’s lung, it does not wait to

sniff whether it even smells good or not, but just swallows it in one gulp. Like this, joining any religion indiscriminately is truly an unwise act. So, before following any of the religions that are thriving in the world, you need to learn more about them through the words of their founders and followers.

Now, I would like to briefly talk about the Buddha and his noble teachings, the dharma, from the perspective of a Buddhist or a dharma teacher.

The Noble Qualities of the Buddha

What noble qualities did our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni possess? He was a noble being endowed with perfect wisdom, perfect compassion, and perfect power.

Regarding his noble qualities of wisdom, he was omniscient, he had unlimited knowledge, and he knew the nature of all things. Specifically, he knew what would happen in the future, what was occurring at present, and what degree of suffering and happiness beings would experience in future lifetimes. All of these qualities have been clearly stated in the Buddhist scriptures.



3.34: Chojé with earphones

Not only the Buddha himself, but many accomplished practitioners who followed his path have possessed such omniscient wisdom as well. For instance, in the Land of Tibet, many great masters manifested, such as Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava and Jetsun Milarepa, who predicted the various changes in the external world, as well as the diverse suffering and happiness

that sentient beings experience internally in their minds. They also

carefully qualified this by reminding us that all these experiences are the manifestation of the karmic ripening of sentient beings.

What the Buddha and other great masters taught can be confirmed by thoroughly examining the phenomenal world. Scientists have never delivered a precise description of the phenomena in the world that are perceived similarly or differently by the various beings. However, according to the Buddha and his followers, it is sentient beings' karma and minds that are the source of all these phenomena. For example, some may feel fire is hot, while others feel it is cold; some regard fire as food, while some take it as a place to live. Similarly, for this planet Earth, some see it as square, and some see it as spherical; some see the sun revolving around the Earth, and some see exactly the opposite. There are various inconceivable perceptions that are merely caused by sentient beings' diverse karma. If I am to explain the diversity of the karmic manifestations of all the beings in today's world, only by relying on the Buddha's unmistakable words as valid logic can I give a satisfying answer. Otherwise, it is difficult to explain all these diversities and similarities.

Regarding their insight into the future, the root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni and all Tibetan accomplished masters who followed him spoke clearly about the present situation in the Land of Tibet, predicting what would happen in the future, including the suffering and happiness that would be experienced. In addition, they precisely mentioned that a great number of Tibetan lamas would establish dharma centers abroad, which has now come to pass. Just from this point alone, you can know that the Buddha and the great Buddhist masters were able to look into the future. I believe this is something not commonly seen among other religions in the world.

Talking about the Buddha's compassion, our root teacher loved others far more than himself. In order to benefit sentient beings, not only did he repeatedly offer others his wealth and possessions without stinginess, but he also gave his physical body, such as his head, hands,

and feet, to others thousands of times. Out of great loving kindness and compassion, the Buddha always put greater importance on benefiting others than on himself. What the Buddha did is completely beneficial for sentient beings and never brings harm to them. That being the case, do you think the Buddha is worthy of being cherished by humanity? Please reflect deeply on this.

Then, in terms of power, the Buddha and noble beings who follow his path were and are able to travel around every corner of the world during the duration of just a snap of the fingers. In the presence of fortunate beings, if needed, the Buddha could place the world and all its inhabitants into a mustard seed. Such is the inconceivable miraculous power the Buddha possessed. Among all his great powers, the most important one was the power of teaching the authentic dharma to sentient beings, and he transmitted an abundance of teachings. By internalizing these teachings, some are able to eliminate diseases, some can prolong life and achieve prosperity, some can improve their appearance, and so forth. If you practice any of them, you will experience the corresponding results.

The Buddha was endowed with numerous noble qualities, but the three great qualities of his wisdom, compassion, and power are the ones that bring cause for rejoicing. The logic is that no matter which religion an individual has founded and no matter what special qualities are possessed, as long as this person can bring peace and happiness, then he or she is the one who deserves our love and devotion. If you want to benefit sentient beings, you must possess wisdom. Otherwise, a foolish one who knows nothing would certainly have no idea of where to start even if this person wished to help the world. So, wisdom is the first prerequisite. For this reason, I discussed the Buddha's noble quality of wisdom first.

Even if you are very intelligent, if you harbor evil intentions toward sentient beings, inflict harm on them through bad behavior, or relentlessly fixate on making them unhappy, you cannot bring benefit to sentient

beings, and your intelligence only becomes an extremely negative weapon that harms others. This is not the case with our teacher. The Buddha not only possessed wisdom but was also replete with loving kindness and compassion. His loving kindness and compassion far exceeded the love of a mother for her only child. He loved and cared for all sentient beings equally with an impartial attitude.

Having only wisdom and compassion is still not enough; you must have power. Without power, you can hardly accomplish anything. Imagine a wise old woman who doesn't have hands nor feet and her beloved son is drowning in a river. The woman knows precisely that her son can be saved if she pulls him up with a rope. Sadly, because she has neither hands nor feet, no matter how much the mother loves the son, she has no way to rescue him. A lack of power is just like this example where there is nothing she can do.

In short, it is only the Buddha who possessed perfect wisdom, perfect compassion, and perfect power, while in comparison others only seem to have these qualities. Our root teacher had extraordinarily unique characteristics compared with the founders of other religions in this world. Of course, it is not right if you just take and accept my words to be true without any analysis. Since there are many founding teachers of different religions in this world, I suggest you read their biographies, the words they spoke, and the books they wrote and contemplate what is reasonable and what is not. You should not just listen to one person since it may not bring you the correct facts.

The above is a brief introduction to the Buddha.

The Noble Qualities of the Dharma

Now, concerning the dharma, which is the doctrine of Buddhism taught by the Buddha, Buddhism believes in the existence of past and future lives. If you take a foal or a baby calf as an example, the baby animal has an instinct to suck its mother's milk as soon as it is born, it always follows after its mother intuitively, loves its mother, and has

the instinct to hide from its natural enemies or predators. All these behaviors are caused by its habitual tendencies from previous lives. Otherwise, it is unexplainable why the baby animal behaves like this right after birth. This alone proves the existence of past and future lives.

In the same manner, various occurrences of happiness and suffering that each and every one of us experiences are the ripening effect of the karma that we created in previous lives. This is not determined by a certain individual, nor does it make any sense if our happiness and suffering were solely up to another person or creator instead of resulting from our own karmic deeds. You cannot find any valid reasoning to support such an assertion that would deny the effect of karma.



3.35: A huge crowd at the dharma assembly

It is true that in this world, some people refuse to accept the existence of past and future lives, while some hold firm to it. Whatever the case, as long as you engage in long-term analysis of this topic by referring to Buddhist scriptures, you will gain certainty of this infallible truth. Let's consider, is it better to seek happiness with the belief in the existence of past and future lives, or is it better to do so while denying their existence? In the previous case, you strive for the welfare of this

and future lives; and even if future lives turn out to be not existent, you would not suffer a big loss. However, if you only think about this life and blindly believe in the non-existence of future lives, when this life approaches its end and you find yourself having no choice but being pulled to an unknown future life, it will be too late to regret not having made any preparation beforehand. You would only feel great sorrow that you had been cheating yourself to such a degree. In the worst case, if you are born into the hell realm, any type of suffering experienced there is unendurable, and the life span is extremely long. Therefore, please consider carefully whether it is necessary to believe in the existence of reincarnation or not.

There are many reliable teachings and logical inferences in Buddhist scriptures to validate the existence of past and future lives. For genuine Buddhist followers, it is unnecessary to prove this since they have already developed a steadfast conviction. Even if gods from the celestial realm came to dissuade them from believing in this, their certainty will not waver. However, for those who are not serious Buddhists, they may not really trust Buddhist theories and be suspicious, “Do past and future lives really exist?” Even if there is no evidence to prove the non-existence of future lives, many people still hold this doubt with an inconsistent mindset.



3.36: Chojé with a solemn look

Anyway, it is safest to do everything in life with the recognition that the afterlife exists. As a Tibetan proverb goes, “Even if one stirrup snaps, the other still works.” If you choose what to adopt and what to abandon with the consideration of the existence of future lives, you can hardly go wrong. Otherwise, dis-

regarding future lives can only cause you to delude yourself and others. As a result, you will inevitably suffer the miserable consequences. That

said, it is best to acknowledge the existence of future lives and make sound preparations for them.

While admitting the existence of future lives, does Buddhism attach greater importance to this life or to the lives after this one? Future lives are valued more because no matter how overwhelming the happiness you may obtain in this life, it is temporary, and no matter how tremendous your achievement may be, it will not last forever. Even if you are ambitious to become the leader of the entire world, however vast your merit may be, you cannot possibly achieve this goal without painstaking efforts over one or two decades. Further, even if you have made it, eventually, you may only enjoy its privilege for a couple of decades. So, the happiness it brings to you is short-lived. Just as happiness is not long-lasting, so is the suffering you undergo in this life. As you can see, all of you present here are past your twenties or thirties, and not many of you are able to live for another fifty or sixty years. Given that both happiness and suffering are temporary in this life, pursuing happiness and eliminating suffering only for this present life should not be the primary goal.

Comparatively speaking, happiness and suffering in future lives are endless and countless. Take suffering for example. If you were to be born into the hell realm, you would find your body lying on the burning metal ground, being impaled by arrows and spears, being cut up by saws, and being tortured by other weapons. No sooner has your upper body been cut through, your lower body that had just been chopped up becomes restored, and no sooner has your lower body been hacked up, your upper body becomes restored. Just like this, you would relentlessly experience suffering for hundreds of thousands of years before there is an end to it.

Conversely, concerning happiness, if you are reborn in the pure land of Sukhavati, the ease and happiness you will enjoy there for one day far surpasses the most inconceivable happiness experienced in this human world throughout hundreds of thousands of years. The bliss

and happiness of Sukhavati are incomparable to any happiness in this world.

So how would I describe the situation if you disregard future lives and just focus on this life? It is like making a choice between working to assure yourself of food and clothing for one day compared to your entire life. I'm sure all of us feel it is silly if someone chooses the former. Whether you enjoy happiness or undergo suffering, that which is experienced in one day is short, but in one lifetime is long. So, you should try your best to pursue a lifetime of happiness. Similarly, this life is temporary, and all future lives are long and endless. If you fail to seek happiness for all your future lives, then it may not be too much to say that you are the most unwise among all the unwise. A Tibetan saying describes these kinds of people as "big dumb yaks with upper teeth," in which case the upper teeth make a yak even more clumsy. Conversely, if you work for the happiness of all future lives, extraordinary benefits for this present life will spontaneously come to you, and you will enjoy prolonged life, good health, abundant possessions, stately appearance, and many other privileges. All these benefits will reach you as effortlessly as charcoal that is naturally produced when you burn firewood.

For every one of you, you will suffer more and more, and your bodies will become increasingly weaker as you age. If you do not consider your future lives and do nothing for them, a tremendous sense of sadness will fill your hearts the moment you think that you will disappear from this world. However, if you have accumulated great amounts of merit for your future lives, the closer you approach death, the happier and more joyful you will become. Just like those great masters who have dedicated their entire lives to dharma practice, the closer their lives come to an end, the more inconceivable their ease and happiness become, as if a patient will soon be fully recovered from his sickness. It is described by the Buddha in the Vinaya, "The exhaustion of longevity brings about great joy, like being recovered from sickness."

You may have noticed that for most people who do not engage in any dharma practice, the older they get, the less they smile, and all day long they have a gloomy face. By contrast, true practitioners of Buddhism, except for those like me who have heart disease, will smile more and more and become happy and optimistic in their lives. This is the direct benefit the dharma brings to them in their present lives.

Gyatrul Rinpoche is a perfect example. The older he gets, the happier he feels. However, many worldly people of the same age have to experience more suffering because they have recklessly committed negativity continuously, and their agony is likely to increase as they get older. This is a striking contrast. Am I right? Look at Gyatrul Rinpoche; his face is beaming with happiness right now. Then, look around at those who do not practice; it seems like they all look sad with knitted eyebrows. (Laughs and applause)

Some people may wonder, “How do Buddhists work for the benefit of both the present and future lives?”

To attain peace and ease for future lives, you must embark on the sublime dharma path that is peaceful and harmless for the benefit of yourself and all other beings. This peaceful and harmless path is beneficial equally to all sentient beings instead of only serving those who appreciate the dharma and harming those who dislike it. Buddhism in itself is all-embracing and provides unconditional support and help to sentient beings of all kinds and of all levels.

According to the Buddhist doctrine, you do not just help those who are beneficial to yourself only and inflict harm upon those who are malicious. Instead, you should express even more kindness to any harm-doers. In addition, you must not venerate only exalted ones, such as royalty and brahmins, and those with renowned reputations and wealth but disregard commoners or people of lesser fortune. Instead, you must care more for those who are struggling and treat them with loving kindness and compassion. Also, you must not simply be kind to

human beings but continue to harm other types of beings, because all living beings suffer equally from physical illness and mental afflictions, for instance, animals, such as horses, cows. It is obvious that animals have the same desire for happiness and the same aversion toward suffering. Sadly, however, they have no idea of how to attain happiness since they do not have the intelligence that humans do. For this reason, they need more care and love.

The altruistic and compassionate spirit is also an important measurement for discerning Buddhist teachers. Dharma masters that possess pure, altruistic intentions and compassionate conduct are commonly regarded as good teachers, while those who lack compassion and altruistic activity are believed to be bad teachers. In this logic, those who have only a mediocre motivation and conduct to benefit others are referred to as average teachers. So, the criterion for being good or bad teachers is whether they follow the peaceful and harmless path to benefit beings. Those who fully embrace this sublime path are good teachers in name and in actuality.

There are different degrees of altruism. For instance, considering those Tibetan masters who carry out altruistic activities only in the Tibetan regions, it is merely altruism of a lesser degree. Rather, to benefit beings in places where the dharma is not flourishing at all is a truly remarkable activity endowed with great qualities. Given that most Tibetans take delight in performing virtue, it is not particularly challenging even to attract all Tibetans as disciples and to teach them the dharma. That is why propagating dharma in the Land of Tibet can only be counted as altruism of a lesser degree.

On the other hand, to spread the dharma in places where it is less prevalent, first, it is hard to attract people to listen to a teaching. Even if there are listeners to receive the teaching, second, it is difficult to help them understand the teaching. Even if these listeners finally understand the teaching, third, it is difficult to guide them to actually follow the noble path and put the teaching into practice. Hence, the

dharma activities of those great masters who live outside Tibet are truly amazing. The Snow Land of Tibet is a place where dharma is flourishing, so to propagate the dharma and to benefit beings there can only be deemed as an inferior kind of altruism. Instead, accomplishing the benefit of others with a broader attitude and a more diligent and undaunted spirit is considered superb altruism.



3.37: Chojé giving dharma teaching

The reason I share these words with you is that I hope those who have entered Buddhism can develop sincere faith and conviction in the Buddha and the dharma, and those who haven't taken refuge in Buddhism can be inspired to gradually enter Buddhism by deeply reflecting on my words.

Regarding the qualities of the Buddha and the dharma, even wise Buddhist scholars would find it difficult to describe them completely, let alone someone like me. I cannot enumerate all their qualities even if I were to speak for months. But now, it's time to move on to the next topic.

The Refuge Vows

Now, I will discuss how to take refuge in the Three Jewels. To take refuge in the Buddha is to wholeheartedly regard the Buddha as the one and only primary teacher in your life. To take refuge in the dharma is to follow wholeheartedly the teachings that the Buddha taught and never learn or practice doctrines that are contrary to the dharma. To take refuge in the sangha is to rely on the Buddha's followers as your sole companions on your spiritual path and never turn to those who hold wrong views toward the Buddha or even denigrate the Buddha. More than these, since the supreme embodiment of all Three Jewels is

the root guru, you should supplicate the root guru, adhere to the root guru's guidance, and emulate and practice the root guru's instructions. In doing so, you are taking refuge in the guru.

Now, if you aspire to become an authentic Buddhist, please repeat after me the prayer for taking refuge three times, so that you will receive the refuge vows:

*I take refuge in the guru;
I take refuge in the Buddha;
I take refuge in the dharma;
And I take refuge in the sangha.*

(Chojé recited the refuge prayer three times to bestow the refuge vows on the assembly.)

Having taken refuge in Buddhism, you adopt the identity of being Buddhists. From now on, whatever dharma you practice, you will gain benefits and blessings that are exceptionally greater than before. As long as you do not violate the refuge vows, in this present life, you will enjoy extended longevity and good health and be completely free from harm caused by evil influences. In all your future lives, you will be protected from the suffering in the lower realms. From this life onward, you will always be born as a human, blessed with noble birth, stately appearance, abundant possessions and enjoyments, and renowned reputations. Moreover, upon your death, you will be reborn in Sukhavati or other pure realms and eventually attain all the noble qualities of a buddha. These are the benefits of taking refuge in the Three Jewels.

Having taken refuge, it is essential that you observe the corresponding precepts. That is, having taken refuge in the Buddha, you should not forget to supplicate buddhas and bodhisattvas in your daily lives. Having taken refuge in the dharma, you must abstain from harboring malicious intentions or harming beings of superior, middling, and

inferior categories. Having taken refuge in the sangha, you are required to follow the Buddha's followers to embrace the path to full enlightenment and diligently engage in dharma practice. Most importantly, having taken refuge in the root guru, you should serve the guru with sincere devotion, abide by his or her instructions, and act according to the guru's intentions at all times and in all situations.



3.38: Chojé joyfully interacting with the audience

From now on until you attain complete enlightenment, it is necessary to be responsible for two things. First, always try by all means to bring benefit and happiness to all sentient beings. Second, since it is impossible to benefit beings if the dharma vanishes from the world, please do your best to uphold and spread the dharma. For instance, you may exert your efforts to establish dharma centers in places where there are no centers or to assist established centers to become more prosperous and thriving.

Now, you have become disciples of the Three Jewels. Please do not forget this title, and do not forget the Three Jewels. (Laughs)

ESSENTIALS OF THE PRACTICE MANUAL OF *PEACEFUL MANJUSHRI*

On the morning of July 6th, Yidzhin Norbu briefly met with the managing members of Rocky Mountain Dharma Center. Then, the Dorje Kasung came to pay their respects. They wore their military uniforms and sang a song of *Kalachakra*, creating auspicious signs for the Shambhala community to dispel obstacles in wrathful forms.

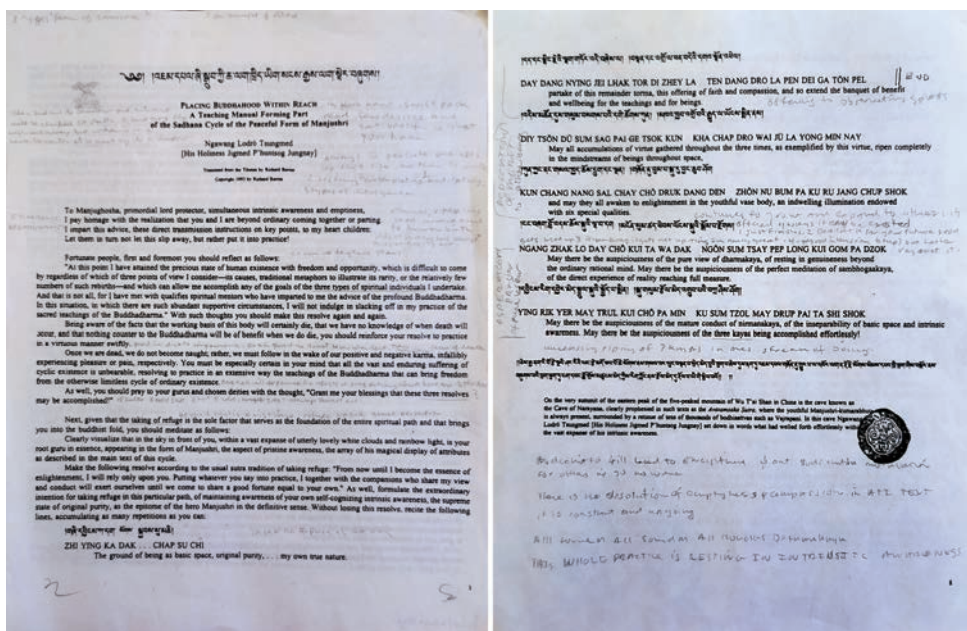


3.39: Chojé and the Dorje Kasung

In the afternoon, Chojé gave the reading transmission for *Peaceful Manjushri*, *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*; and without any preparation in advance, he expounded on the essential points to the audience or disciples gathered.

The cycle of *Peaceful Manjushri* in itself is the essence of all Dzogchen teachings and is endowed with many extraordinary qualities. What's more

exceptional was that the teaching Choje offered at this time was the condensed heart essence of the cycle. In a seemingly casual manner, with simple and direct words, he explicitly and precisely introduced each instruction in the manual in a manner that was full of pithy instructions and powerful blessings. These vajra words that arose spontaneously from the expanse of his awareness were something that ordinary people would find to be inconceivable.



3.40: Part of the handouts of *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* and the *sādhanā* of *Peaceful Mañjuśrī* in 1993

Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok taught as follows:

In general, this practice manual is a guidebook for the stage-by-stage practices of the complete path to full awakening, so it is not necessary to use its Tibetan version for your entire practice. If you have clearly understood the meaning in English, you need not go back to the Tibetan text and recite that as well. Regarding *sādhana*s and aspiration

prayers, it is best to recite them in their original language because that language has been blessed by the author.

Take the sadhana of *Peaceful Manjushri* as an example. Since it was written down in Tibetan, you should recite it in Tibetan to receive more blessings than if recited in English. The principle is that if a text, whether it be written in English, Sanskrit, or any other language, has been blessed by those who have accomplished the power of authentic words, you can use that language for recitation to receive the greatest blessings. For instance, although Buddhist sutras and the shastras composed by Indian masters were initially written in Sanskrit, when they were translated into Tibetan, great lotsawas such as Vairotsana blessed their Tibetan translations with the power of their authentic words of truth. Therefore, the sadhanas translated by them can be recited in Tibetan without losing any blessing. As long as a translation has been blessed by the authentic words of realized noble beings, no matter into which language it was translated, you can recite it to receive the same blessing as in its original language.

When will you accomplish the power of authentic words of truth? Those of superior faculties accomplish authentic words on the path of unification, those of medium faculties accomplish them on the first bodhisattva bhumi, while those of inferior faculties accomplish them on the eighth bodhisattva bhumi. The sign for accomplishing authentic words can be explained by two examples. For instance, if a city is on fire, when those with the power of authentic words say, "May the fire be extinguished," the fire will go out immediately. Or, if a person is seriously ill and those with the power of authentic words say, "May sickness be cured," the patient will recover soon.

I personally believe the Tibetan version of the sadhana of *Peaceful Manjushri* has been blessed by Lord Manjushri, and the sadhana of *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* has been blessed by Orgyen Rinpoche Padmasambhava. So, please recite them in Tibetan.



3.41: Chojé lifting his hand with a mala

The Essential Instructions of Placing Buddhahood within Reach

What is taught in *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*? It offers all the key points of an entire Buddhist path from the preliminary practices for beginners to the ultimate stage of attaining buddhahood.

When you first enter the path, it is of great importance to contemplate and meditate as much as possible on the four thoughts that turn the mind from samsara. The four thoughts are the difficulty of obtaining the freedoms and advantages of a human birth, the impermanence of life, the infallible law of cause and effect, and the suffering of samsara. These contemplations are the common preliminary practices.

First, contemplate the difficulty of obtaining the freedoms and advantages of a human birth. Be aware that such a precious human life that is endowed with freedoms and advantages is extremely difficult to obtain by thinking of its causes, the analogies illustrating the difficulties, and the numerical comparisons of such a precious existence with other forms of life. Since you have obtained such a precious human life, you should be filled with great joy, never wasting your life under any

circumstance, but using it to actively practice the pure dharma. This is the guidance on the precious human existence.



3.42: A large audience in the tent

Second, contemplate the impermanence of life. Though you have obtained the precious human life, your death is certain, and the time for your death is uncertain. At the time of death, nothing except the dharma will be helpful, so you must practice the genuine dharma. This is the guidance on the impermanence of life.

Third, contemplate the infallible law of cause and effect. When you die, you will not completely disappear like the cessation of fire or the evaporation of water. Instead, you will experience great happiness or immense suffering based on the virtuous or non-virtuous actions that you've created while alive. So, you must actualize the practices of adopting virtue and rejecting non-virtue. This is the guidance on the infallible karmic law.

Fourth, contemplate the suffering of samsara. Accumulating non-virtuous karma will lead you to be reborn in the three lower realms. In whichever lower realm you take rebirth, you will experience all kinds of unbearable suffering over an extremely long period of time. So, before these sufferings occur, you should diligently refrain from

negative actions and undertake positive ones. This is the guidance on the suffering of *samsara*.

These four thoughts that turn the mind are practiced by practitioners of both Mahayana and Shravakayana, so they are named *the common preliminary practices*.

There are two uncommon preliminary practices that belong to Mahayana: taking refuge and generating bodhicitta. The instruction on taking refuge is that according to Sutrayana, taking refuge is to have the determination that along the path until the attainment of buddhahood, you only have faith and devotion to the teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, you only follow the path of the dharma taught by the Buddha, and you only take the sangha as your companions. According to extraordinary Secret Mantrayana, taking refuge means giving rise to the view that your true essence is already buddha and concentrating on such a recognition as best as you can.

The instruction on generating bodhicitta is to reflect that all sentient beings are enduring endless suffering and are truly miserable. Yet, merely feeling pity for them is not enough; you should be able to place them in the state of buddhahood. Cultivating such a thought is the aspirational aspect of generating bodhicitta. Further, the path that does not require you to experience hardships for a long time but enables you to attain buddhahood easily and swiftly is the clear light Great Perfection. Therefore, in order to establish all beings on the state of perfect buddhahood, you follow the path of the clear light Great Perfection and maintain the view of this tradition. This is the practical aspect of generating bodhicitta.

Since taking refuge and generating bodhicitta are the paths stated in the uncommon Mahayana classifications, they are called *the uncommon preliminary practices*.

Next is the practice of guru yoga. First, you need to visualize the field of merit vividly. Visualize that in the sky before you, at the center of a

luminous and magnificent rainbow sphere and white clouds, appears your root guru who is inseparable from the bodhisattva Manjushri. His clothes and ornaments should be clearly visualized in the way described in the sadhana of *Peaceful Manjushri*.

Second is to make mandala offerings. Visualize that in front of your precious root guru, you offer to him or her your body, possessions, and all root of virtue accumulated throughout the three times without the slightest stinginess or attachment.

Third is to purify obscurations through the four remedial powers. The power of support is your root guru who is inseparable from Manjushri and seated in the sky before you. The power of remorse is to have intense regret for all the negative actions you have done in the past. The power of resolution is to resolve never to commit these negative actions again, even at the cost of your own life. The power of antidote is to fiercely pray to the guru in order to purify all the downfalls. You should earnestly purify your downfalls and obscurations through these four powers.

After the visualization of offering mandala and purifying obscurations, you begin the actual practice of guru yoga and supplicate: "Embodiment of all sources of refuge, gracious root guru, to you I pray. Please care for me and bless my mind stream. I pray that you bring my mind to maturity through empowerment that brings maturity and liberate my mind with the instructions that bring liberation. Please inspire me with your blessings, so that I may realize the profound and sublime path of the Great Perfection and bless me until I perfect the four visions." This is how you pray. At the end of supplication, visualize that the guru melts into light and dissolves into you, whereby your body, speech, and mind become inseparable from the guru's body, speech, and mind, and rest single-pointedly in this state. This is the complete instruction on the practice of guru yoga.

Next is the completion stage. First, visualize your body in its ordinary form, and in its central channel, there is the wisdom fire lit by the force of the winds that purifies all impurities of the body into the dharmadhatu. This is the completion stage of purifying the impurities.

Then, visualize yourself as the youthful Manjushri, and at the center of your body, clearly visualize the winds, channels, and bindus. This is the visualization stage. Next, relying upon the movement of the wind in the channels, fire blazes fiercely at the point below the navel. The flame rises up until it touches the inverted syllable *hang* at the crown, from which nectar begins to descend, and that nectar fills the whole body as you rest in the indivisibility of emptiness and bliss. This is the actual visualization of the completion stage.



3.43: Chojé in concentration

The above two instructions on guru yoga and the completion stage correspond to the preliminary practices of Secret Mantrayana in general, while the uncommon preliminary practice of the Great Perfection is to ascertain the true nature of the mind through the skillful means of shamatha and vipashyana.

The instruction on the actual practice of trekchö is to directly experience the nature of mind as the dharmata instead of intellectually understanding it through investigation and analysis. After that is the concluding practice of tögal, which provides the supreme skillful means through which to purify the corporeal body into buddha's body, perfect ordinary speech into buddha's speech, and mature the bindu into the great wisdom nature of mind. Relying upon the force of practicing tögal, you will gradually perfect the four visions and manifest the four kayas and five wisdoms that are the innate inner qualities of

mind's essence. This is the result of the Great Perfection in general. The aforementioned are instructions for achieving enlightenment in a single lifetime.

The instruction on achieving liberation at the time of death is that when death arrives, visualize yourself as youthful Manjushri, with your mind appearing as a white syllable *ah* at the center of the bindu in your heart. Chant *ah* with a pleasing sound. Visualize that the *ah* rises higher and higher as you chant, then shoots out of your crown and melts into the heart of the guru Vajra Manjugosha, who is seated above the crown of your head. Then, the guru ascends higher and higher, departing for the pure land of Sukhavati. Visualize this process repeatedly. This is the instruction on taking rebirth in Sukhavati at the time of death.

The instruction on the dharmata bardo is that after death, the stages of the dharmata bardo will dawn. Sounds, lights, brilliance, and the kayas of deities that are inconceivable to ordinary beings will appear. If you can recognize all those appearances as illusory, self-appearing phenomena and abide in that realization naturally, you will achieve fully enlightened buddhahood in the dharmata bardo.

For the instruction on the bardo of becoming, when the dream-like signs of the six realms manifest to you, you should pray to your guru and recall and practice all the instructions for achieving liberation at the time of death that you have heard and practiced before. In this way, you will be liberated in the self-occurring nirmanakaya pure realm.

This completes the three kinds of instructions for those of superior faculties to attain liberation within this lifetime, for those of medium faculties to attain liberation in the dharmata bardo, and for those of inferior faculties to attain liberation in the pure realm of the self-occurring nirmanakaya. Thus, all the instructions on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* have been introduced.

The Features of Placing Buddhahood within Reach

There are three notable features of this practice manual, which are conciseness, completeness, and the endowment of profound blessing. *Conciseness* means that this manual is short in length and clear in content, and such a text is rare to come across in India or the Land of Tibet. *Completeness* means that in order to practice all the essential key points involved in Buddhist teachings, this text is more comprehensive than other manuals. It expounds on the complete stages of the Buddhist path from the preliminary practices of the four thoughts that turn the mind away from samsara to the main practices of achieving perfect enlightenment. It is a complete, faultless, and swift method for a practitioner to attain buddhahood. The *endowment of profound blessing* means that just as all teachings of the Great Perfection are inconceivable and can grant liberation by simply seeing, hearing, touching, and recalling them, this manual is replete with all these qualities.

Especially, this manual possesses three kinds of superiority, which are that it possesses the close-lineage transmission, is free from obscurations caused by broken samaya, and is intended for this time.

The superiority of the close-lineage transmission: Between Lord Manjushri and you, there is only one person, I myself, so it is supreme in terms of a close-lineage transmission. (Laughs)

The superiority of being free from obscurations caused by broken samaya: In the process of transmitting a tantric teaching from generation to generation, the blessings of the teaching will decrease or even disappear if there are conflicts between a guru and a disciple or among vajra brothers and sisters. However, since this teaching was first transmitted, there has never been a samaya breaker in this lineage. This is a supreme quality.

The superiority of being intended for this time: Various Buddhist teachings are taught in accordance with different times for different beings. For

instance, some teachings are taught at the beginning of an eon when people enjoy longevity and don't have gross afflictions, while some are taught during a time when beings suffer from a short life span, illness, and strong mental afflictions. This practice manual, like the proper medicine prescribed for a specific illness, is an unmistakable teaching especially intended for our time.

There are many teachings that are able to not only benefit all beings of all places in general but are also specifically designed to flourish in certain places. This practice manual will, in general, bring great benefit to the whole world, but more specifically, as I told you in a previous lecture, it is meant to be propagated in western countries. In the Buddhist cosmology, Bodh Gaya is considered as the center of the world, and there are four major regions to its four directions. This manual is designed for countries to its west. This has been explicitly pointed out in the prophecy that came with the teaching: Although the sun rises from the east, its brilliance will shine to the west. So, I personally believe that compared to practitioners in the east, the western practitioners will gain blessings and accomplishments more swiftly if they engage in its practice.

I also believe that compared to practitioners in countries like India, part of which is literally "to the west of Bodh Gaya," the actual western practitioners in countries like the US will benefit much more from this manual. Certainly, this is not written directly in the prophecy and is only my personal opinion. Nevertheless, I do feel it is an extraordinary teaching that is closely connected to and suitable for all of you. People in developed countries are very busy and have little time to learn and practice the dharma. Yet, as mentioned above, this manual is easy to understand and convenient to carry out, so it meets your needs perfectly. (Laughs)

When you practice this manual, if you understand the meaning of the entire text, you can engage in its practice easily. I have accepted you as my direct disciples and have entrusted this manual to you. This is the

best I can provide for you. If you come to certain points that you do not understand, you should ask for guidance from a qualified teacher who has its transmission so that you learn the meaning and know how to carry on with the practice. This manual is not difficult and will not take much time to learn and apply. Only after you fully understand the meaning of every phrase and sentence will your practice bring you great benefit.



3.44: Chojé compassionately looking at the audience

Now, there are many lamas who have received the transmission of *Peaceful Manjushri*. The lamas present here and many other lamas in India and the Land of Tibet are holders of its transmission. There are also many Han Chinese practitioners who have its transmission. From among them, those who possess supreme qualities and are qualified to transmit the term of *Peaceful Manjushri* can assist you to carry forth your practice in the future and beyond.

That completes my brief instruction on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*.

BRIEF MEDITATION GUIDANCE ON *VAJRAKILAYA GURKHUKMA*

After finishing the teaching on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, at the request of the audience, Chojé transmitted the pith instructions for visualizing *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*.

According to your request, I will provide you with the concise method of how to develop the generation stage of the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* practice. Since the copies of the English version of this practice have been made available to you, I will just explain to you the essential points.



3.45: Chojé holding a phurba to confer the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* empowerment

The first part is the lineage prayer entitled *Lineage Prayer that Swiftly Engages the Blessings* written by Gyalwa Rinpoche. You need to supplicate the lineage gurus successively one-by-one from the dharmakaya Samantabhadra, the sambhogakaya Vajradharma, the nirmanakaya Padmasambhava, to Nanam Dorje Dudjom, the Indestructible Subduer of Mara.

From Rigdzin Godem, the vidyadhara Vulture Feathers, to Pema Wangchen, this is a supplication to all my previous reincarnations until the present. After that, there is a supplication to the wrathful Vajrakumara and the hosts of deities in his mandala. You pray to these noble beings in order to dispel all outer and inner obstacles. That is, you pray for their blessings so that all outer obstacles created by the mara of sickness, obstructive spirits, ferocious ghosts, and all other harmful forces can be averted and that all inner obstacles of the negative conceptual thoughts that prevent practicing the clear light Great Perfection can be pacified. Eventually, through their blessings,

you supplicate to attain the direct realization of the meaning of the generation stage, the completion stage, and the Great Perfection.

Next, you take refuge, generate bodhicitta, and make samaya vows. You take refuge in Vajrakumara, the deity who is the manifestation of your own awareness as absolute wisdom. To liberate all sentient beings from the ocean of suffering, you generate bodhicitta. You embrace the samaya vows with the commitment to keep the samaya of all wrathful deities in terms of knowing what to accept and what to reject.

Then, the actual generation stage begins. First, you need to arouse the view that all phenomena are empty and then abide in that view. Next, out of the state of emptiness, visualize that in an instant, you appear as the great, glorious Vajrakumara, King of Wrath.



3.46: Chojé in the middle of giving empowerment

How do you visualize the glorious Vajrakumara? He is dark blue in color with one face and two arms, and his palms are pressed together, rolling a phurba. He is adorned with ten heruka accouterments and eight ornaments of the charnel ground. More specifically, he wears a human skin, a tiger skin, and an elephant hide and is ornamented with a mala of dried human skulls, a garland of slightly moist human skulls, and a necklace of freshly severed human heads. Visualize Vajrakumara

in this terrifying form. He stands atop male and female rudras²² on the middle of lotus, sun, and moon discs, with his two legs spread wide apart in a striding posture. He is radiant within an expanse of blazing wisdom fire. You need to clearly visualize yourselves to appear in this way.

While reciting the mantra, maintain the view that all appearances are the deity, all sounds are the mantra, and all conceptual thoughts are the play of wisdom. Remain in such a state and recite the mantra.



3.47: Chojé just finishing an empowerment

When concluding the meditation session, you dedicate the merit by reflecting, “May the virtue accumulated in this practice, together with all my virtue, become the cause to actualize the fruition of the wrathful Vajrakumara.” Then, recite the verse of auspiciousness and contemplate, “By the power of the merit generated from my diligent practice of these profound generation and completion stages, may all inauspiciousness and disasters throughout the ten directions be constantly pacified, and may the brilliance of virtue and goodness shine throughout the three realms.”

The guidance manual for the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* practice has now been clearly explained for you.

FAREWELL PRAYERS

At this point, Yidzhin Norbu had completed all the dharma activities of conferring empowerments and giving teachings and practical guidance at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center. At the end of the last session, he offered his final prayers to all the students:

Now, my time here is approaching its end. I'd like to thank all of you at this center for your great kindness to me. You invited me to this country at the beginning, then covered the expenses for my trip and hosted me with the greatest hospitality. Like this gentleman, the scary full-bearded David,²³ he



3.48: First on the right: the scary full-bearded David Bolduc

greeted me the moment I got off the plane and has been taking good care of me and arranging everything for me wholeheartedly till now, the end of this visit. I am deeply impressed by your great delight and faith in me. Thank you so much for serving me so well, even finding doctors to treat my health issues. All of these things have caused you so much trouble, and there is no other way for me to repay your kindness. I can only pray for you sincerely that in all your future lifetimes you will experience perfect peace and happiness.



3.49: Chojé offering auspicious prayers and blessings

How do I offer my prayers for auspiciousness? First, may every managing member in your sangha community attain high realization and

great virtue and enjoy universal auspiciousness. Second, may all Vajradhatu dharma centers thrive and be fully endowed with success and prosperity. Third, may incomparable experience and realization arise in the mind of each and every one of you. Fourth, may you enjoy longevity, health, peace, as well as perfect happiness in this life. Fifth and last, may we be able to meet again in this life, so I can teach and you can listen to the sublime dharma. When this life comes to an end, may we be reborn in Sukhavati, the western Land of Bliss, where we will reunite at the feet of Lord Buddha Amitabha and enjoy the profound and vast dharma.

Chojé sealed the prayers by reciting the mantra of interdependent origination and verses of auspiciousness, and afterward, he made aspirations and dedication. With that, the dharma activities at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center were perfectly complete.



4th Stop

July 7th–July 22nd

United States

CALIFORNIA & OREGON

SCHEDULE

July 7th

Arrived at Ati Ling, Napa Valley, CA

July 8th

Visited San Francisco, CA

July 9th

Conferred the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment in the afternoon, Napa Valley

July 10th

Conferred the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment in the morning and gave the first lecture on *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the afternoon, Napa Valley

July 11th

Conferred the *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* and *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerments in the morning and teachings in the afternoon

July 12th

Gave the second lecture on *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the afternoon

July 13th

Went to the French Consulate in San Francisco in the morning and gave the third lecture on *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the afternoon

July 14th

Visited Marine World in the morning, gave the fourth lecture on *Chetsun Nyingtig* in the afternoon, and presided over the *Shower of Blessings* ganachakra in the evening

July 15th

The entourage rode in a hot air balloon in the morning, and H.H. Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche conferred the *Peaceful Manjushri* empowerment and teachings in the afternoon

July 16th

Taught on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* in the morning and flew in a private jet in the afternoon

July 17th

Conferred the *Yang Zab Nyingpo* empowerment revealed by Lerab Lingpa and taught on the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas* in the afternoon

July 18th

Conferred a longevity empowerment revealed by Lerab Lingpa and presided over a large ganachakra feast in the afternoon

July 19th

Visited Rigdzin Ling near Weaverville, California and gave the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment in the evening

July 20th

Visited Tashi Choling near Ashland, Oregon and taught to local Buddhists

July 21st

Consecrated the Vajrasattva statue in the afternoon at Tashi Choling and conferred a longevity empowerment and a phowa transmission from the Longchen Nyingtig tradition and teachings in the evening in Ashland, Oregon

July 22nd

Visited Yeshe Nyingpo Orgyen Dorje Den, San Francisco, California, and conferred the empowerment of *Jampal Yeshe Sempa*

ARRIVED IN NAPA VALLEY

On the morning of July 7th, we departed from Rocky Mountain Dharma Center and traveled about three hours by car to Stapleton International Airport in Denver. After nearly three hours of flying, we landed at San Francisco International Airport in California. From the airport, we were transported by car and arrived in the renowned Napa Valley after about two and a half hours.

Napa Valley is one of the earliest wine-producing areas in the United States to be recognized as a world-class wine region. Its scenery is beautiful, and the weather is pleasant. Along the main roads, vineyards can be seen almost everywhere, stretching along the hills. In the 1980s, as vineyards from Napa Valley became



4.1: The vineyards of Napa Valley

known worldwide, tourism there began to grow rapidly. Since then, Napa Valley has become a popular tourist attraction in California, where visitors can enjoy a variety of wine and gourmet food, as well as many outdoor activities.

In the late afternoon as the sun was about to set, we arrived at Ati Ling in Napa Valley. Tromge Jigme Rinpoche, son of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, was the resident lama of this dharma center. It was situated on a beautiful hillside where the environment was quiet and the landscape pleasant. Tall, lush trees surrounded the



4.2: Arriving at Ati Ling

center, and the dense foliage almost completely enveloped the building. Dappled light and shadows played across the ground, as beams of sunlight filtered

through the gap of the foliage, which gave me the impression of a dream. Even though it was quite hot outside, I felt considerably cooler as I walked through the center's gate and entered the trees.

Chojé stayed at Ati Ling until July 19th, totaling eleven days, the longest duration at any location in North America. Very close to Ati Ling was the Lincoln Theater at the Veteran's Home in Yountville, California, and this was the large venue where Yidzhin Norbu and other members of the entourage would give many empowerments and teachings in the days to come.



4.3: Lincoln Theater

DAILY SCHEDULE	
* Please note: schedule change—afternoon sessions have been shortened to 2:4 p.m. due to His Holiness' health.	
Friday, July 9 2:4 p.m. - 7:9 p.m. Tendrel Nyesh (Nyagla & gyal) Empowerment and Teachings	Thursday, July 15 10 a.m.-noon Sang-gay Lagter (Peaceful Manjushri) Empowerment (Note: This second offering of the Sang-gay Lagter will be given by His Holiness' niece, Tulku Ani Muntso, a lineage holder and incarnation of Dakini Mingyur Daldron. This is a rare opportunity to make direct connection with one of the most highly accomplished female Vajrayana practitioners of our time.)
Saturday, July 10 10 a.m.-noon - 2:4 p.m. Chetzun Nyingthig Empowerment and Teachings	Thursday and Friday, July 15-16 2:4 p.m. Teachings on the Sang-gay Lagter (July 11th or July 15th empowerment required for attendance)
Sunday, July 11 10 a.m.-noon - 2:4 p.m. Terms of III. Jigmed Phuntsog Jungnay: Sang-gay Lagter (Peaceful Manjushri) & Dhurma Gurkhuksa Empowerments and Teachings	Saturday, July 17 10 a.m.-noon - 2:4 p.m. Vajrakaya (Nyagla & gyal Lineage) Empowerment and Teachings
Monday through Friday, July 12-16 7:9 p.m. Introductory Teachings: Buddhism, Vajrayana Buddhism, and Vajrayana Preliminary Practices	Sunday, July 18 10 a.m.-noon - 2:4 p.m. Longevity (Nyagla & gyal Lineage) Empowerment and Teachings
Monday through Wednesday, July 12-14 2:4 p.m. Chetzun Nyingthig Teachings (July 10th empowerment required for attendance)	

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4.4: Chojé's teaching schedule in Napa Valley



4.5: Chojé together with the Tibetan devotees

VISITED SAN FRANCISCO

On July 8th, we took a day tour to famous San Francisco, one of the most recognizable and distinctive cities in the US, as well as being vibrant, artistic, and creative. People of diverse cultural backgrounds, such as Italian, Spanish, Mexican, Japanese, Chinese, and others, can be found all over the city, making it an accessible, multicultural blend, like a palette in the hands of a painter. As we explored the entire city's attractions, we were amazed by the inclusiveness of the local culture and the versatility of the locals.

Thereafter, we paid a visit to the Golden Gate Bridge, which is recognized as one of San Francisco's iconic structures. Its construction was completed in 1937. It is around 2.7 kilometers long and its towers are 227 meters tall. While its excellent design and distinguished color make it one of the most aesthetically

pleasing bridges in the world, unfortunately, its 75-meter-high deck also is the site of many suicides. In 1937, nearly three months after the bridge was completed, a World War I veteran committed suicide by leaping off the bridge. At the time we visited, we were told that nearly one thousand people had committed suicide from that bridge, so we softly chanted the Avalokiteshvara mantra for these deceased people. We then returned to Ati Ling fairly late that day.



4.6: Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco

THE *TENDREL NYESEL*

Starting on July 9th, Yidzhin Norbu began the series of empowerments and dharma teachings in Napa Valley at the Lincoln Theater.

This teaching event was jointly organized by Chagdud Gumpa and Pacific Region Yeshe Nyingpo. The majority of the audience consisted of Buddhists who had faith in the Nyingma lineage and had been practicing Secret Mantra for many years. Most of these practitioners came from the entire length of the West Coast of the US, and as far away as Hawaii and the Rocky Mountains. The theater that could seat over a thousand people was completely full, and people of many different nationalities and skin colors warmly welcomed Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. The translator for this series of empowerments and teachings was a translator and practitioner named Chokyi Nyima, Richard Barron.



4.7: Right: Chokyi Nyima, the translator

On the afternoon of July 9th, Chojé gave the empowerment of *Tendrel Nyesel*, a terma revealed by Tertön Sogyal. This terma contains three kinds of practices: elaborate, intermediate, and brief. This time, Rinpoche gave the empowerment for the intermediate practice.



4.8: Chojé sitting on the throne

THE FIRST LECTURE ON *CHETSUN NYINGTIG*

On the morning of July 10th, Chojé gave the empowerment of *Chetsun Nyingtig* based on Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thayé's²⁴ commentary entitled *The Supreme Elixir for Making Gold: A Clear Arrangement of the Liberating Empowerment for the Great Chetsun's Profound Essence of Vimalamitra*.^a In the afternoon, he began teaching the *Chetsun Nyingtig* terma revealed by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. The teaching was given in four lectures, and this was the first one.

*Having perfected the four visions of clear light,
Your awareness arose as the unchanging five kayas.
Pure form of the great transference rainbow kaya,
O deathless Vimalamitra,
Look upon me with loving kindness and compassion
And immediately bestow blessings of direct realization.*

Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, who is endowed with great compassion, loving kindness, and skillful means, gave rise to supreme bodhicitta many eons ago. Then, over three countless eons, he diligently engaged in the accumulation of merit and finally manifested the attainment of buddhahood in Bodh Gaya, India.

After attaining buddhahood, in order to benefit ordinary and extraordinary beings both of whom were to be tamed by the teachings of the common vehicle, the Buddha turned the first wheel of dharma on the Four Noble Truths at Deer Park to the five human bhikshus and the eighty thousand celestial beings.

Later, at Vulture Peak, he turned the wheel of dharma for the second time on the absence of characteristics in order to benefit all sentient beings to be tamed through the Mahayana path. By teaching the extensive, middling, and concise prajnaparamita sutras, the Buddha

^a *chetsun chenpo bimala'i nyingtig gi min ched wang gi lag lens al war kodpa ser gyur tsi chog (lce btsun chen po bi ma la'i snying thig gi smin byed dbang gi lag len gsal bar bkod pa gser 'gyur rtsi mchog);* Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thayé.

established the view that all phenomena—from material forms to the Buddha’s omniscient wisdom—are empty in nature.

Then, for extraordinary sentient beings who follow the Mahayana path, the Buddha turned the third wheel of dharma on fully distinguishing the reality beyond a trace of doubt at Vaishali and various other locations.



4.9: Conferring the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment

Afterward, for those with the sharpest capacity, the Buddha gave the Vajrayana teaching of Secret Mantra in a secret and brief manner. For example, he taught the *Guhyasamaja Tantra*, also known as *King of Tantras*, in Oddiyana, the *Kalachakra Tantra* at the great stupa of Dhanyakataka in southern India, and so forth. In brief, in different places where celestial beings, nagas, yakshas, gandharvas, or garudas

dwelling, the Buddha taught the Vajrayana teaching of Secret Mantra to benefit those who are of extraordinary faculties.

Upon passing into parinirvana, the Buddha prophesied, “Eight years after my passing, in the Dhanakosha Lake in the northwestern part of Oddiyana, a great being even greater than me, Padmasambhava, will appear in this world.” Also, Vajradhara, one of the twelve founding teachers of Dzogchen, conferred many tantras, including the *Reverberation of Sound Tantra*,^a at the time when the human life span was of infinite years. This tantra contains a prophecy saying that during the age of strife when the five kinds of degenerations become rampant, Garab Dorje, Jampal Shenyen, Shri Singha, Jnanasutra, and others will reveal this most profound and supreme dharma teaching, the Great Perfection. To be specific, the tantra mentions, “The daughter of Dhanakosha, her son Pramodavajra of no father...” that prophesies the appearance of Garab Dorje; “Manjushrimitra,” which is a prophecy of Jampal Shenyen; “Patron Shri Singha” predicts Shri Singha; and “Jnanasutra” foretells Jnanasutra. In addition, Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra would become the two greatest masters to spread the clear light teaching of Dzogchen in the dark Land of Tibet.

Vimalamitra’s system of teachings follows the seventeen tantras of the quintessential secret Heart Essence cycle, and within his tradition, there are the four volumes of profound scriptures.²⁵ These volumes of text are summarized into one hundred nineteen essential pith instructions. This is the cycle of *Vima Nyingtig*, which is also known as the *Old Nyingtig* or *Kama Nyingtig*. On the other hand, based on tantras such as the *Blazing Clear Expanse Tantra*^b and the *Six Essential Tantras that Grant Liberation through Wearing*,^c Padmasambhava transmitted his own complete Heart Essence cycle to Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal within seven years at the sacred site of the Zhotö Tidro Cave, as if giving a

^a *dra tal gyur gyi gyü* (sgra thal ’gyur gyi rgyud); also known as *Root Tantra that Proclaims Purity and Emptiness*.

^b *long sal bar ma’i gyü* (klong gsal ’bar ma’i rgyud).

^c *tak drol snyingpo’i gyü drüg* (btags grol snying po’i rgyud drug).

most precious jewel. These teachings are collectively called the *Pema Nyingtig*, also known as the *Khandro Nyingtig*, *New Nyingtig* or *Terma Nyingtig*. Some have said that all teachings of the *Kama Nyingtig* have a long duration in this world, but their blessings are not so swift, while the *Terma Nyingtig*'s blessings have a shorter duration but come much quicker. Both the *Kama Nyingtig* transmitted by Vimalamitra and the *Terma Nyingtig* transmitted by Padmasambhava are known as the mother Nyingtig.

To explain the hidden meanings of these two mother Nyingtig texts, the omniscient Longchen Rabjam composed the *Lama Yangtig* and *Khandro Yangtig*. To fully explain the essential points of the *Vima Nyingtig*, he composed the *Lama Yangtig*, which is subdivided into fifty-one sections of teaching. To elucidate the essential points of the secret meaning of *Khandro Nyingtig*, he composed the *Khandro Yangtig*. Because of this, the *Lama Yangtig* and *Khandro Yangtig* are known as the child Nyingtig.

The two mother Nyingtig texts and two child Nyingtig texts constitute the very famous *Nyingtig Yabzhi*, the *Four Sections of the Heart Essence*. Additionally, the omniscient master Longchenpa also compiled most of the profound secret instructions of the Heart Essence lineage into one text called *Zabmo Yangtig*.

In the Earlier Translation School of Ngagyur Nyingma, there are two ways of explaining the Great Perfection: the profound kusali approach and the extensive pandita approach. The two mother Nyingtig and two child Nyingtig texts follow the style of the profound kusali approach. Regarding the extensive pandita approach, there are the mother texts that are referred to as the seventeen tantras of the



4.10: The spacious yet packed Lincoln Theater

quintessential secret Heart Essence cycle plus the *Wrathful Black Mother Tantra*^a and the *Blazing Clear Expanse Tantra*, nineteen tantras in total. When it comes to the explanation of these tantras, it is not through the original words of Buddha Vajradhara but the pith instructions of the great vidyadharas, and these explanations are referred to as the texts of the heirs. In the extensive pandita approach, both mother and child texts are well explained as the fundamental texts, together with the special words and instructions of the guru as a supplement. Good examples of this would be the *Seven Treasures*^b and *Trilogy of Rest*^c compiled by Omniscient Longchenpa.

The hidden meanings of Padmasambhava are primarily elucidated through all the various terma teachings revealed by the hundred great tertons and many other ones. Although Padmasambhava had twenty-five disciples, including the king and the ministers, the guru was most satisfied by the three great disciples, the great Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal, the great Dharma King Trisong Detsen, and Nanam Dorje Dudjom. In particular, Nanam Dorje Dudjom was Guru Rnpoché's most favorite and outstanding disciple, surpassing even the great Dharma King Trisong Detsen. For this reason, the treasure teachings on the Great Perfection revealed by the subsequent reincarnations of Nanam Dorje Dudjom are more profound and complete than any other terma revelations. To name a few, there are the Great Perfection tantras *Unimpeded Wisdom Intent of Samantabhadra*^d revealed by Rigdzin Godem and *Wisdom Bindu*^e revealed by the great terton Lerab Lingpa. These teachings on the Great Perfection are easy to understand and possess immensely powerful blessings.

So, what will I be teaching at this time?

^a *tröma nagmo'i gyü* (*khros ma nag mo'i rgyud*), Skt. *khrodikālitāntra*.

^b *dzöd dun* (*mdzod bdun*); Longchen Rabjam.

^c *ngal so kor sum* (*ngal gso skor gsum*); Longchen Rabjam.

^d *kunzang gongpa zang tal* (*kun bzang dgongs pa zang thal*); Rigdzin Godem.

^e *yeshe tigle* (*ye shes thig le*); Lerab Lingpa.

It is the *Chetsun Nyingtig*, the text that summarizes the key points of Padmasambhava's pith instructions as its essence and follows the teaching system of the great pandita Vimalamitra as its approach.

The origin of the *Chetsun Nyingtig* is as follows. Two hundred eight-two years after Vimalamitra departed in his rainbow body to Mount Wutai, he appeared to Chetsun Senge Wangchuk, personally accepted him as his disciple, and transmitted all his empowerments and instructions to him. The Great Chetsun did not attain ultimate realization until the age of seventy-five; however, after his enlightenment, he did not encounter suitable disciples. Thus, he stayed in this world for a long time until the age of one hundred twenty-five. Eventually, he demonstrated nirvana, his body dissolved into a mass of light, and he transformed into a rainbow body. Through the supplication of Palgyi Lodro and other dakinis, he reappeared in his rainbow light body and gave this *Chetsun Nyingtig* pith instruction to the dakinis. This teaching was then taken by the dakinis to their own realms and temporarily disappeared from the human realm. Later, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, the holder of the seven special qualities of transmission²⁶ in the Land of Tibet, revealed this teaching through recollection of his previous life as Chetsun Senge Wangchuk.

This teaching has three sections of pith instructions. The first section includes the empowerment that can bring those whose minds are not yet tamed to maturity, practice methods of the actual path, and an explanation of the subsidiary aspects of the path. The second section delineates the practice *sadhana* of the complete and authentic



4.11: Chojé gazing upward into space

stages of the path to full awakening, from taking refuge and generating bodhicitta to the dedication of merit and recitation of auspicious

verses at the end. The third section explains in succession the preliminary practice, the actual practice, and the concluding practice. The preliminary practice is further divided into three subdivisions, and so are the actual practice of trekchö and the concluding practice of tögal. This teaching is explained in three sections, each of which has three subdivisions. As such, this teaching cycle is known as the *Great Chetsun's Profound Essence of Vimalamitra in Three Sections*.

Now, I am going to explain this teaching by following the root text. First is to pay homage:

I prostrate to the deity of self-occurring awareness!

This sentence means that the dharmata or the true nature of your mind is not a result generated by a cause, not the buddha arising from the ordinary mind, and not the instruction based on scriptures. These are the three features of the nature of mind. By recognizing the true face of rigpa, you pay homage to the deity of self-occurring awareness.

Among the three sections of the text, the main body of the first has two subdivisions: the history and the pith instructions for actual practice. The first subdivision tells how the Great Chetsun gave this teaching and how Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo would uphold this teaching. As I have already covered this section in great detail during the empowerment this morning, I will not elaborate further on it here.

As for the second subdivision, the pith instructions for actual practice, because the teaching system of this cycle is to impart the oral instructions in the manner of empowerment, I therefore explained the content of this section during the empowerment in the morning. Actually, when it comes to receiving empowerment or practicing pith instructions, there is no difference in terms of the first step. Generally speaking, the first step is to give rise to the genuine mind of renunciation and detach yourself from whatever you are attached to in samsara. To cultivate

such a mindset, there are two teaching approaches, the tradition of Padmasambhava and that of Pandita Vimalamitra, respectively.

According to the tradition of Padmasambhava, a practitioner would contemplate the rarity of a human existence endowed with freedoms and advantages and the impermanence of life to eradicate attachment to this life and reflect deeply on the infallibility of the karmic law of cause and effect and the defects of samsara to uproot attachment to the next life. Only if you have laid a solid foundation through adequate training in these four contemplations that turn the mind away from samsara can you embark on actual practice.

The teaching tradition of Vimalamitra follows the secret intent of the wish-fulfilling jewel of the copper syllables and provides seven methods for training the mind. When interpreting the hidden meaning of this teaching, Omniscient Longchenpa's *Lama Yangtig* takes a slightly different approach from what is expounded in the three sections of this teaching by the Great Chetsun. This time, we will follow the Great Chetsun's teaching to cultivate the mind of renunciation. How did the master teach?

First Mind Training:

All compounded phenomena are impermanent, like water bubbles.

This means that whatever conditioned phenomena arise from causes and conditions, they are without exception of the nature of impermanence.

First of all, think about the outer universe in which sentient beings dwell. Although that which forms our world—Mount Meru, the four great continents, the eight subcontinents, and the ring of iron mountains—appear to be grand, firm, and solid, they will someday be engulfed in seven stages of fire and one of water. In the end, the whole

universe will become an empty space with nothing left. Considering this, the outer universe is impermanent.

When you reflect on sentient beings dwelling in the universe, you will find that they are also impermanent. For example, here in the human world, there were many universal monarchs who had reached the very pinnacle of power and material wealth. Also, in the holy land of India, there appeared many great and influential kings, such as the three Palas, the thirty-seven Chandras, and many others. However, they all disappeared from the world, and now even their names are unheard of. Therefore, the lords of sentient beings are impermanent by nature.

Moreover, think about the fact that the buddhas of the past like Krakucchanda, Kanakamuni, and Kashyapa all entered into parinirvana. Our root teacher Buddha Shakyamuni, who possessed great loving kindness, compassion, and skillful means to benefit sentient beings, and his inconceivably great noble retinue of bodhisattvas, shravakas, and pratyekabuddhas all passed into nirvana one after another, leaving only their teachings for this degenerate time. So, even the noble beings cannot exist forever in this world.

If you ponder on the passing of time, you will see that time is also impermanent. At the beginning of an eon is the Satya Yuga, age of perfection; then there follows the Treta Yuga, age of possessing three, and the Dvapara Yuga, age of possessing two,²⁷ as well as the Kali Yuga, age of strife. None of these ages endures forever, and all of them have gone or will pass one after another. Our current time is also the same, which passes by with the successive alternation of four seasons from summer to autumn, autumn to winter, winter to spring, and spring to summer. So, it is certainly impermanent. To be more specific, the four times of today—this morning, now this afternoon, this evening, and after midnight—will not persist either. If you even subtly observe the passage of time, everything keeps changing moment by moment, and nothing lasts for long.

Similar to the examples of the outer universe and inner inhabitants being impermanent, your own fragile bodies are certainly not long-lasting and indestructible. Such being the case, you must evoke a firm determination and resolve to engage in virtuous practice as soon as possible. To achieve that, it is of particular necessity that you develop a sense of impermanence by reflecting on your own existence. The way of reflecting is to observe that death is certain, that the time of death is uncertain, and that at the time of death, only the dharma can help you. You must train in the sense of impermanence from the perspective of these three points.

Death is certain means that everyone in this world will die in the end and that no one can survive death. Disregarding religious followers or scientists, any normal person knows this simple fact that he or she will die. This point is clear to everyone. Such being the case, what you need to carefully examine is the fact that the time of death is uncertain. *The time of death is uncertain* teaches that all of you present here, no matter who you are, need to develop the idea in your minds that, “I will certainly die, but I don’t know when.” Without this concept, you will never achieve real accomplishment in dharma practice, but will be carried away by all sorts of trivial distractions in this life. Think about all the generations of people who have come into this world; the time of all their deaths was uncertain. Regarding those who were born a hundred years ago, except a few, most have passed away. In the same logic, you are surely not going to survive forever. Generally speaking, all people living in this world, except for a few, will quite possibly depart this life after a hundred years. This includes all of us present here; and nearly all of us will be gone a hundred years from now. If you think about your relatives and friends who were with you when you were young, you will find that the majority of them have entered their next lives. Just like them, you will die too, probably very soon.

Not only that, for those of you present today, it is hard to say whether you will be alive this time next year. It is quite possible that many of

you will die this year, and no one can assure that death will only strike the old; the young and children are also included. The thing is that no one can say that one person will die at a certain time but not another. Taking all factors into consideration, you can see that the next life is not that far away. You are certain to die, and you are not sure whether you can survive next month or even tomorrow. Death is just around the corner.



4.12: The red mala in Chojé's hand

At the time of death, only the dharma can help you means that upon death, all advantages like wealth, possessions, power, status, and good looks are of no use. Think about power and status. Upon death, even great emperors who rule the entire world will have to enter the next life alone by themselves, unable to take anyone to accompany them. The same applies to wealth and possessions. Even if a person owns all the wealth of the world, when death arrives, he or she cannot even take a mouthful of food with them but has to leave everything behind. Likewise, at the time of death, high status, a beautiful appearance, and the like will not accompany you, and you will have to go to the next life only with your positive and negative karma. At that time, what is certainly beneficial is the positive karma you have accumulated,

whereas the negative deeds you have done will certainly bring you harm. Therefore, now that you enjoy the freedom to practice the dharma, you must expend all your efforts to forsake unwholesome deeds and engage in wholesome deeds. It is important that you make such a determination and act accordingly in body and speech.

Second Mind Training:

All states of happiness in samsara, although temporarily appearing to be pleasurable, eventually lead to suffering, like [eating a] poisonous fruit.

This instruction tells us that in the cyclic existence of samsara, all sorts of things that may bring joy and pleasure are temporary. Although they appear to be pleasant, they can only bring you suffering in the end. This is the true reality in samsara. It is as if you eat poisonous food: although it tastes sweet at first, it will take your life instead of bringing you any benefit. Clinging to happiness in samsara is the same as swallowing poison. If you fall prey to temporary pleasure and indulge yourselves in negative deeds in pursuit of it, you are bound to suffer endlessly in the future. Just like swallowing a poisonous fruit, you will only experience suffering when the poison takes effect.

Third Mind Training:

The various circumstances that occur in life never reach a conclusion, like pursuing a mirage.

People spend all their energy to experience some temporary pleasure and do everything possible to avoid suffering. For the purpose of enjoying good food, wearing fine clothes, and owning abundant possessions, they struggle and strive; but all these pursuits are meaningless. People seeking these pleasures are no different from animals who thirst after the water of a mirage and run desperately toward it, finding not a drop of water. This is a crucial point you must understand. All sorts of

things in life—wealth and fame, peace and happiness, reputation and prestige—are impermanent by nature, with no inherent existence at all. Thus, you must cut off all attachment to them.

There are cases of people who had abundant wealth and possessions last year but became a beggar this year. There are also examples of people who suffered untold misery and hardship last year but became quite rich and happy this year. So, there is no need for you to be happy about having wealth or feel sorrow for being poor. Instead, you should recognize that everything is impermanent. For instance, determine if wealth is that useful. Suppose one of you owns several billion dollars while another has only ten thousand dollars. Despite the difference of your assets, the food, clothing, housing, and transportation that you need are really limited, so even if you possess much more money than others, you won't be able to use all of it on yourself. Therefore, the assets you possess that are worth billions of dollars are only a numeric concept that won't bring much meaning to your life. Therefore, it is pointless to crave desperately for wealth.

The pursuit of happiness in samsara will find no end, however hard you try. But sadly, most people in the world struggle day and night only for food, clothing, housing, and transportation. As a matter of fact, if you have accumulated enough merit, you will easily succeed in what you do; if you lack merit, however hard you try, you will not get rid of poverty, and all your effort for gaining wealth will be in vain.

Fourth Mind Training:

The activities of this life are always pointless, like the good and bad dreams in a single night.

Whatever you do in this life, such as fighting with enemies, caring for family members, doing business, or farming, is as pointless as what happens in a dream during sleep.

This tells us the truth that life is like a dream. Some people live happy lives from birth, while some undergo all kinds of hardships and miseries throughout their lives. But if you think about it, all these experiences are no different from what happens in a dream. All the joys and sorrows in last night's dream have now become merely a memory, with nothing tangible to be found. Similarly, the ups and downs that you have experienced since you came into this world have all become the past. From this perspective, the experiences of waking life and those in a dream do not have the slightest difference. In the same manner, all the pleasures and sadness you are going to experience in the future are no different from what will happen in tomorrow night's dream. Although they appear to exist, the moment they have disappeared, they will have become merely a memory of the past, with nothing tangible to be found.



4.13: Chojé's eyes piercing, his voice sonorous and forceful, his words enlightening

Fifth Mind Training:

*The result of sublime liberation is that suffering never returns,
like an individual cured of smallpox.*

Some will probably wonder, “If all kinds of happiness and fame in samsara have no substance, is there anything that has significant meaning that should be put into practice?” If the result of liberation is attained, such as the bodhisattva bhumis or buddhahood, this state of happiness will never decline and is forever free from suffering. For instance, there is an infectious disease called smallpox. Once you are cured of it, you will never get infected again. In the same manner, once you achieve liberation, you will never again experience suffering. Therefore, you must try as soon as you can to apply and practice the skillful means toward attaining liberation.

Sixth Mind Training:

*Oral instructions from a sublime master are the path that
leads to the palace of liberation, like a perfect staircase.*

This mind training means that the way to free yourself from samsara and achieve liberation cannot be accomplished through just your own efforts. It can only be learned and accomplished by relying on the teachings of sublime masters. For instance, if you want to go to the top of a high building, you won’t be able to make it without climbing the stairs or taking an elevator. In the same way, without the instructions from a sacred master, even if you study the scriptures and other dharma texts, you won’t be able to fully understand them with just your own intelligence. Therefore, instructions from a teacher are of vital importance. If there is no qualified teacher to teach you, you will not know how to abstain from negativity and practice virtue. You would be totally at a loss, as ignorant as animals. Only when you are accepted and guided by virtuous teachers will you get to know the extraordinary method that not only brings peace and happiness within

this life, but also leads to joy and happiness life after life. Such a teacher is hard to encounter, and even a hundred thousand wish-fulfilling jewels cannot compare with his or her value.

There are three ways to please a teacher while relying on him or her: To practice virtue and abandon negative deeds, let go of attachment to this life, and focus solely on the pursuit of liberation is the best way of pleasing the teacher. To follow the teacher's instructions and wholeheartedly devote yourself to the activities of the teacher, including being sent on a mission, is the middling way of relying on the teacher. The minimum way to please your teacher is to offer all of what you have to the teacher and the teacher's dharma center and to participate in all kinds of virtuous activities initiated by the teacher, such as building buddha statues. All three ways are indispensable to please and serve your teacher.

Let me reiterate the three ways of following the guru. When encountering a guru who is as precious as a wish-fulfilling jewel, it is best that you follow his or her instructions to forsake negative deeds and engage in virtuous practice. If you are unable to accomplish that, then you should earnestly do whatever the master needs you to do, such as building shrine halls, making statues of buddhas, printing scriptures, erecting stupas, and so on. If this is also beyond your ability, at the very least, you should generously offer all of your possessions to the teacher and his or her dharma center. If you fail to serve the teacher through any of the three ways, the fact that you have obtained the precious human rebirth and encountered a qualified guru will be completely wasted.

For my part, I don't think you should show excessive devotion and reverence to me, a person you've just met for the first time and don't even know if I have faults or merit. The masters you should serve and work for with great veneration are those from your own dharma

centers who always stay with you and can bring you true benefit, or those who reside in this country and are familiar to you.

Seventh Mind Training:

Nonconceptual concentration is the basis for the emergence of all states of samadhi, like a fertile field.

This is to say that if you want to achieve the same state of samadhi as those attained by buddhas and bodhisattvas, you must first have mastery over your own mind and abide in meditative concentration. Thus, you must make an effort to practice meditation.

The instructions on the seven common mind trainings are now complete.

The morning session of empowerment was scheduled to be two hours, but since the last part of the ritual failed to be completed in due time, it was extended for an extra half hour. That was really out of my control. So, please forgive me. Now I will end this session exactly after two hours. There is nothing left. You must be happy about this. Now, it's time to go home and sleep. (Laughs)



4.14: Khenpo Sodargye attending Chojé

TWO PROFOUND PRACTICES

On July 11th, Chojé conferred the empowerments of *Peaceful Manjushri* and *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*. During the empowerments, Rinpoche gave a concise teaching:

Both the *Peaceful Manjushri* and *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* cycles have their own auxiliary teachings, but they are very few in number, not as many as other terma teachings in the Nyingma tradition.



4.15: Chojé speaking with a microphone

In terms of its content, the *Peaceful Manjushri* provides the stage-by-stage instructions for the complete path to full awakening, including the practical and skillful methods for the preliminary and main practices. It can be explained by combining the teachings from the outer aspect, the prophecies from the inner aspect, and the instructions from the secret aspect. It can also be taught according to the tantras, the *Seven-Line Prayer*, or the shastras.

Basically, most of my dharma compositions were completed in my teenage years. In general, they were all composed because of the

requests of others; and once they were done, I'd entrust them to the one who made the request without ever bothering to take care of them. Nonetheless, some of my disciples have collected my works of composition and compiled them into books, which now comprise four volumes. They have been made into wood carvings, a traditional Tibetan handicraft for printing scriptures, while their circulation is mainly through modern printing technologies.

Among my works, some of them, such as the *Peaceful Manjushri* cycle, are classified into "teachings composed in the Han Chinese region." The *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma* cycle includes a series of teachings, such as the ritual for confessing and restoring damaged and broken vows that is used in the extensive practice, as well as others like prayers of subjugating activity and fire offering that were composed at the request of Gyalwa Rinpoche and the Nechung protector. This category of teachings, plus *Accomplishing All Activity: A Daily Practice of the Great and Glorious Dorje Drolo*, a terma that I revealed at Paro Taktsang and the *Quintessence of Oceanic Prayers of Aspiration* that I composed at the Vajra Seat, are all classified into "teachings composed in India."

This time, I have given you the transmission of the *Peaceful Manjushri* and *Vajrakilaya Gurkhukma*, which can be found in the text in your hands. Now that you have received the transmission, when you put them into actual practice, remember that there are three indispensable conditions you must possess. They are faith, compas-

sion, and the view on emptiness. First, it is essential for you to develop the three types of faith, which are vivid faith in the jewel of the Buddha, eager faith in the jewel of the dharma, and confident faith in the jewel of the sangha. Second, you must cultivate loving kindness and compassion toward all sentient beings who are experiencing endless



4.16: A spectacle with western disciples receiving the dharma

suffering and wish them to be free of suffering. Third, whether it comes to the practice of the generation stage, completion stage, or the Great Perfection, you must be equipped with the supreme view on emptiness that transcends all extremes. With these three prerequisites, when you engage in the actual practice, you should abide in the view of primordial purity through the practice of trekchö, elicit the unobstructed power of spontaneous presence through the practice of tögal, and then chant these two liturgies.

The liturgy used for practice should be endowed with the three essentials. What are they? The source of the liturgy should be combined with the tantra; the tantra should be combined with the means of attainment; and the means of attainment should be combined with the guru's pith instructions. Although some guidance originally exists in the tantra, without pith instructions from a sublime guru and by merely referring to the tantra, it is hard to put those teachings into actual practice. That is why you need a complete sadhana for practice.

The means of attainment should follow the tradition of the sublime gurus. Take the Nyingma teachings, for example. Any practice of the Nyingma School should be in accordance with the traditions of Dorje Drag, Mindrolling, and Palri Monasteries in Upper Tibet, or Kathok, Palyul, and Dzogchen Monasteries in Lower Tibet. Moreover, traditions should be followed by the means of the transmission of direct experience with the master, meaning seeing first-hand the guru's entire process of reciting and practicing. Otherwise, to merely go through the procedure by casually following the general principles will fail to grasp the essential meaning.

Or simply speaking, you can chant these two liturgies by following the convention of any school, such as Gelug, Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu, Jonang, and others. Even if you do not understand the exact meaning, you can just chant the liturgy and then recite as much as possible the mantra of Manjushri, *om ah ra pa tsa na dhih* or the mantra of Vajrakilaya,

om benzar kili kilaya hung phat. In the end, make dedication accordingly. Practicing the two liturgies in this way is acceptable.

THE TRIP WAS ALMOST CANCELED

Previously, when we were at Rocky Mountain Dharma Center, Chojé's health was already declining. After we arrived in Napa Valley, he became so sick that he could barely fall asleep at night. As Rinpoche's disciples, we got really worried and had no idea what to do. We discussed the issue many times in private, because there were still a lot of places to visit and many teachings to give, but if we continued, we were afraid that Chojé's health would be compromised. Finally, on the morning of July 12th, we had a meeting with Yidzhin Norbu to see if the rest of the schedule should be canceled.

Learning our concerns, Khenpo Rinpoche did not say anything. He called the organizers of the trip and suggested we discuss this issue together. Some people said that because the itinerary for the world tour had already been publicized globally and the site for each teaching had been booked, the trip should not be canceled. Others said it would be too tiring for Chojé to continue this dharma trip and that his health was much more important than anything else, so it was better to cancel the balance of the schedule.



4.17: Kay Henry now

There were two conflicting opinions, and each side stuck to their own idea without compromise.

Then, we sent for Kay Henry and consulted her opinion, because she was delegated by His Holiness Penor Rinpoche and Gyatrul Rinpoche as our western liaison and organizer. Hearing the issue, she almost fainted, because it had taken her months to contact the different centers and prepare the entire trip, and it had not been easy for her to raise funds for our plane tickets and all other expenses.

She replied from her heart, “The health of His Holiness is our primary concern, and if it is necessary, we can immediately cancel the rest of the itinerary. But I know that hundreds of thousands of people are looking forward to meeting Rinpoche and have made all sorts of preparations for his arrival to teach the dharma. Therefore, if there is anything we can do to improve the quality of the meals or to help improve Rinpoche’s health, please let us know. We will try our best to make any improvement so that the trip can continue and numerous sentient beings and devotees can benefit from Rinpoche’s presence.”

Hearing her words, Yidzhin Norbu fell silent for a while and then discussed the matter with us again. After another ten minutes or so of discussion, he said firmly to us, “I will continue my trip.”

THE SECOND LECTURE ON *CHETSUN NYINGTIG*

That afternoon, during the second session of teaching the *Chetsun Nyingtig*, Yidzhin Norbu taught the following:

The teaching you are receiving right now is the *Great Chetsun’s Profound Essence of Vimalamitra in Three Sections*. The first section has three parts: the empowerment that brings those whose minds are not yet tamed to maturity, the actual path, and the subsidiary aspects of the path.

The Empowerment that Brings the Mind to Maturity

This part has already been completed earlier.

The Actual Path

The actual path is divided into two subsections: the preliminaries and the actual practice.

The Preliminaries

The preliminary practices include the common or outer preliminaries and the uncommon or inner preliminaries.

Among them, the intention of the common preliminaries is to cultivate in the mind of the practitioner the attitude of renunciation to completely let go of attachment to all mundane activities of this life through the aforementioned seven common stages of mind training. Before you can develop the true aspiration to accomplish the benefits for future lifetimes, first and foremost, you must train your mind in this way.

The uncommon preliminaries have two subdivisions: taking refuge and generating bodhicitta.

Taking Refuge

In the empty space in front of you, visualize a mass of light with Vimalamitra in its center, surrounded by a vast assembly of all buddhas and the retinue of the Three Roots. This is the refuge field. Those who take refuge include you and all sentient beings in the world, the great gathering of beings who sit in front of the refuge field with great devotion. The manner of taking refuge is in terms of the body, you respectfully fold your palms; in terms of the speech, you respectfully chant the excellent qualities of the refuge field; and in terms of the mind, you reverently and wholeheartedly evoke faith. Like this, making a special vow or pledge in a reverent manner is called *taking refuge*.



4.18: The scene of Chojé giving the teaching at Lincoln Theater

There are two approaches to taking refuge: the approach in accordance with the general Sutrayana tradition and the approach that is specific only to the extraordinary Dzogchen tradition. The first approach is to think, “I have no root teacher other than the Buddha, and I accept the Buddha as my only teacher; the only dharma I will practice is what the Buddha taught, and I will never engage in other practices; the only companions I will have are the followers of the Buddha, the noble sangha and people who share the same view and conduct as me, and I will not befriend any others nor follow their view and conduct.” Taking refuge in such a way by recognizing the Buddha as the root teacher, the dharma as the path, and the sangha as your companions is called *causal refuge*. When you fully attain ultimate buddhahood through relying on the teachers who instruct you on the path, the dharma that is the path, and the sangha as the companions on the path, at that time, it is called *resultant refuge*. Make such a supreme vow in your mind, and repeat the refuge verse one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand times. This is the practice of taking refuge in accordance with the general Sutrayana tradition.

The second approach specific to the uncommon Dzogchen tradition is to recognize the nature of mind, that its empty essence is dharmakaya,

its luminous nature is sambhogakaya, and their inseparability or unity as compassion is nirmanakaya. In other words, the three kayas abide inseparably, inherently, and primordially in your mind. To maintain this view is the approach to taking refuge by following the tradition of the Great Perfection.

With such recognition, recite:

ah kadak ting sal chökyi ku

***Ah The inner luminous depth of original purity
is dharmakaya,***

lhundrub rigtsal longchod dzok

***The spontaneously present, unobstructed power of
awareness is sambhogakaya,***

yermé tukjé trulpé kur

***And their indivisibility as compassion is
the nirmanakaya.***

rangngo shépé kyab su chi

Recognizing this innate nature, I go for refuge.

If the verse is translated into English or other languages, the power of authentic words carried in its original language will lose its effect. Since this verse was blessed by the Great Chetsun in the Tibetan language, you should recite it with Tibetan phonetics on the basis of understanding its meaning.

Generally speaking, all liturgy verses and aspiration and supplication prayers should be recited in the words and languages blessed by those who have attained the power of authentic words, because only these words carry blessings. For example, if chanting in Tibetan would bestow great blessings, you should chant precisely in the Tibetan language or phonetics. Similarly, if chanting in English would contain great blessings, you should chant in English; if the Sanskrit language is blessed, then chanting in Sanskrit is suggested. Take the hundred

syllable mantra of Vajrasattva as an example. Tibetans need to recite it in Sanskrit; so do the Chinese, the Indians, and the British, because if it is translated into Tibetan, Chinese, or other languages, the original blessings carried in Sanskrit will be lost.

Although the sadhanas in different languages are the same regarding their interpretation of the meaning, since the sadhana of the *Chestun Nyingtig* was composed and blessed in the Tibetan language, you need to recite it in Tibetan or Tibetan phonetics. This is the same for the *Peaceful Manjushri* you received yesterday. The sadhana of *Peaceful Manjushri* should be recited in Tibetan or Tibetan phonetics because it was blessed by Bodhisattva Manjushri with the Tibetan language. As for its practice manual, *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, there is no difference for it to be studied in different languages, and the key is to understand its meaning. If you can understand its meaning in English, then use the English text; if Tibetan helps you better understand it, then read the Tibetan text. As long as you can understand the meaning, there is no need to stick to a specific language. This principle applies to other teachings, sadhanas, and practice manuals.

Then, speaking of the commitments after taking refuge, from the moment of taking refuge in the Buddha, you must pray wholeheartedly to the Buddha and not any other; from the moment you take refuge in the dharma, you must be kind and compassionate to all sentient beings and never harm them; and from the moment you take refuge in the sangha, you must devote yourself to respectfully serving the guru, the sangha, and other supreme objects of veneration.

The merit and benefits of taking refuge are as follows. Anyone who takes refuge in the Three Jewels will neither be propelled by negative karma, nor give in to afflictive emotions, such as desire, hatred, and ignorance, not to speak of being influenced by demonic forces and evil spirits. In this life, you will enjoy longevity and good health, bountiful resources and possessions, and dignified appearance. Everything will go smoothly, whatever you wish will be fulfilled, and you will never

encounter any obstacles. There are many more benefits for this life. In future lives, you will never be born into the lower realms, but will journey forward from happiness to happiness until you attain the great bodhi, the fruition of buddhahood.

Generating Bodhicitta

Contemplate in this way, “How wonderful it would be if all sentient beings who are tormented by karma, afflictive emotions, and suffering could be free from them!” To develop such intensely unbearable compassion is the compassion that focuses on the benefit of others. However, merely having great empathy for them is not enough; you need to make the vow, “I alone shall bring all sentient beings to the result of perfect enlightenment, the state of everlasting liberation and happiness.” This is the wisdom focused on perfect enlightenment. To have the intention with these two qualities of compassion and wisdom is to have generated aspirational bodhicitta. Then, contemplate further, “In order to attain buddhahood, I will train in generosity, discipline, patience, diligence, meditative concentration, and the wisdom that truly realizes selflessness.” With such a commitment, you engage in the six paramitas and myriads of bodhisattva acts, which apply practical bodhicitta. This is the approach to generating bodhicitta in accordance with the general Sutrayana tradition.

In terms of the uncommon Great Perfection, you must think in this way, “All sentient beings innately possess the buddha nature, but failing to recognize it, they miserably wander in samsara. How pitiful! In order to bring forth their innate wisdom, I will meditate on the unsurpassed view of great placement.” Without departing from such intention, enter the meditative concentration of ultimate reality. This is how to generate bodhicitta through the extraordinary approach of the Great Perfection.

While remaining in the state of such an intention, chant the following verse to generate bodhicitta:

ho lo-ur trulpe drowa kun

Ho So that all temporarily confused beings

dodne namdak ying kyi ngang

May self-liberate in the perfectly pure, original dhatu

yeshe rigpe rangdrol chir

Through wisdom awareness,

chokzhak chenpor semkyed do

I shall cultivate the bodhicitta of resting

in great placement.

Chant this verse as much as you can one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand times.

The training of bodhicitta is to engage solely in activities to benefit others with the firm intention of loving others more than yourself. Through such pure intention and conduct, you strive wholeheartedly and constantly to be of benefit to others. This is the training of a bodhisattva.

An extensive elaboration of the benefits of bodhicitta is given in the *Sutra of the Great Bounteousness of the Buddhas*, and through over a hundred analogies, you can gain a comprehensive understanding of its benefits. For a moderate introduction, you should study the first chapter of *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life*. Even if you cannot fully comprehend the value of bodhicitta delineated in these two texts, you should always remember its three advantages mentioned in the *Aspiration of Maitreya*:^a Once bodhicitta arises in your mind, all the entranceways of taking rebirth in the lower realms of hell beings, hungry ghosts, and animals are blocked; you will effortlessly experience happiness, renown, and peace in the higher realms of humans and celestial beings; and the ultimate buddhahood that is beyond aging and death is readily attainable.

^a *jampa'i mon lam (byams pa'i smon lam)*; Maitreya.



4.19: Chojé's contagious smile

At the conclusion of a meditation session, whether taking refuge or generating bodhicitta, visualize that all the noble beings in the field of refuge melt into light, which dissolves into you, completely purifying all your karmic obscurations and downfalls. Rest single-pointedly in this state, and then dedicate the merit.

The Actual Practice

The guru yoga practice mentioned in the *Chetsun Nyingtig* has an extraordinary feature that makes it far superior to any other guru yoga. This guru yoga practice alone is endowed with the content of the generation stage and all the pith instructions of the completion stage and also clearly presents the guidelines of Dzogchen practice regarding the ground, path, and result of the Great Perfection.

Regarding taking refuge and generating bodhicitta, I talked about them yesterday during the empowerment, and today I reiterated with a more elaborate and clearer explanation. For these topics, you male and female lay Buddhists and monastics in particular, should study

and contemplate carefully. If there is anything unclear, you can ask me afterward, and I will explain further.

Now, I will give the teaching on the actual path. I will read the text and explain part by part, along with a simultaneous interpretation.

Then, the guru's blessings must be brought onto the path. Stay in strict retreat in an extremely secluded place and purify your being by means of the preliminaries.

When practicing guru yoga, the first step is to engage in the practice of taking refuge and generating bodhicitta in a quiet and secluded place so that your mind can be purified.

Expel the stale wind and allow the mind to relax.

By expelling stale wind three times, visualize that all disease and karmic obscurations are purified. Settle your mind single-pointedly, and let it rest or abide in a relaxed manner in its natural state.

Within original purity, visualize oneself as Guru Singhe Shora, whose nature is the inseparability of the innate deity and the master.

Resting in the realization that all phenomena are empty and primordially pure by nature, visualize yourself as Singhe Shora, inseparable from the innate deity and the guru.

In the aspect of a yogic practitioner, one sits upon a lion throne, lotus, and sun disc, is semi-wrathful and attractive, reddish-brown in color, and rests in the mudra of evenness in the full-lotus posture.

Then, visualize in this way: Upon a lion throne, in its center of a sun disc on a lotus seat, Singhe Shora appears in the yogi's clothing. He has both a wrathful and charismatic demeanor, displaying a wrathful expression with a scowl and a charming manner with a smile. His entire body is reddish-brown, his hands are in the mudra of evenness, and he sits cross-legged in the full-lotus posture.

He is adorned with silks, jewels, and bone ornaments.

Besides having the long scarf, one of the ornaments of sambhogakaya, his body is bare, adorned with bone ornaments. He wears a bone crown on his head, encircled by thirty-two strings of bone ornaments, with hair knotted in the middle. Around his throat, he wears sixteen strings of bone ornaments, corresponding to the number of petals at the throat chakra, ornamented by tassels and lotus flowers. The bone ornaments at the heart form the shape of a vajra at the front of his body and a lotus at the back. At the heart, there are eight strings of bone ornaments that equal the number of petals at the heart chakra, weaved together through strings of bone beads. The middle part of the upper body wears a scarf from shoulder to armpit, adorned by jewels and silks. At the navel, there are sixty-four strings of bone ornaments that correspond to the number of petals at the navel chakra, each of which forms the shape of a crossed vajra. He wears an anrak^a on the lower part of his body. Visualize Singhe Shora in a red form like this.

From each pore of the body, miniature wrathful ones with vajra wisdom fire emanate to incinerate all maras and obstacle creators.

Visualize that from each pore of his body, vajra wisdom fire and tiny wrathful deities emanate. Saying *vajra* or *indestructible*, it means being able to destroy everything but not being destroyed by anything.

^a *ang rag*; yogi skirt.

Visualize that through this emanation, all the demonic forces and hindrances are completely incinerated.

*The assembly of the masters of the three lineages, the dakas,
and the dakinis encircle one.*

Visualize surrounding him are the gurus of the three lineages of transmission, the direct mind transmission of the buddhas, the symbolic indication transmission of the vidyadharas, and the oral transmission of spiritual masters, as well as dakas and dakinis.

*A swirl of joy spins rapidly within the dharmodaya^a between
his eyebrows.*

Visualize that in the middle of his eyebrows is the source of dharma in the shape of a tetrahedron, with one corner pointing upward and the other two pointing left and right. Its base comes to a subtle point where it joins the central channel. Within the source of dharma is a swirl of joy that spins rapidly in a counterclockwise direction.

*In the sky before him, is Vimalamitra, joyfully seated as the
lord of the family.*

Visualize in the space in front, about a foot in distance, directly before Singhe Shora's eyebrows is Vimalamitra, pure white in color, with one face, two arms, and his hands in the mudra of evenness, holding a kapala filled with ambrosia. He wears three pieces of monastic robes, and a blue, silken upper garment, or a blue pandita-style secret robe. There is a white syllable *ah* close to the tip of his nose.

*Imagine the universe filled with undulating rainbows, light
rays, and bindus.*

^a *chö jung* (chos 'byung), Skt. *dharmodaya*; source of dharma.

Visualize that the entire world of appearance and existence, animate and inanimate, is filled with rainbows, light rays, bindus, and so forth. Vimalamitra sits in the center of this brilliant rainbow light.

Invite and dissolve the wisdom beings.

Invite all wisdom deities, buddhas, and bodhisattvas dwelling in the dharmadhatu to come forth. Especially, invoke countless Vimalamitra's in white, yellow, red, green, and blue to come from Mount Wutai and countless Chetsun's in white, yellow, red, green, and blue to come from the dakini pure realms. Then, all the Vimalamitra's descend and dissolve into the Vimalamitra visualized in the space in front, and all the Chetsun's descend and dissolve into yourself.



4.20: The mala hung on Chojé's ear when he wasn't using it

Then make this supplication to the master before you:

Now, you need to pray to Vimalamitra seated in the space in front of you.

odsal nangzhi tarchin ne

Having perfected the four visions of clear light,

rigpa migyur ku ngar zheng

Your awareness arose as the unchanging five kayas.

jalu phochen dangme zuk

Pure form of the great transference rainbow kaya,

chimé bimamitra kye

O deathless Vimalamitra,

dak la tukje tser gong ne

Look upon me with loving kindness and compassion

ngon sum jinlab deng tsol chik

And immediately bestow blessings of direct realization.

Recite this prayer one hundred, one thousand, ten thousand, or one hundred thousand times. As emphasized earlier, please recite in Tibetan phonetics.

om ah hung guru bimalamitra hung hung

Om ah hung means being inseparable from the body, speech, and mind of all buddhas. *Guru bimalamitra* is Sanskrit and means “guru, immaculate friend.”²⁸ *Hung hung* is to entreat Vimalamitra to bestow upon you both the common and uncommon siddhis. This mantra needs to be chanted hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of times.

When meditative experience dawns, receive the four empowerments. At the end, imagine that he melts into light and [...]

When concluding a meditation session or when unexcelled faith and respect for the guru arise, receive the four empowerments. The method of visualization to receive the four empowerments is as follows.

Visualize that from the syllable *om* in the guru's forehead, white light rays like moonlight radiate and dissolve into your forehead. Thereby, the obscurations of your body and the channels are purified, and you are authorized to practice the stage of generation. You receive the elaborate vase empowerment, so the ability to realize the state of fruition as the nirmanakaya has been placed in your mind stream.

Then visualize that from the syllable *ah* in the guru's throat, infinite red light rays and strings of vowels and consonants of *ah li ka li* radiate and dissolve into your throat. Thereby, the obscurations of your speech and winds are purified, and you are authorized to recite the secret mantra. You receive the unelaborate secret empowerment, so the ability to realize the state of fruition as the sambhogakaya has been placed in your mind stream.

Next, visualize that from the syllable *hung* in the heart center of the guru, infinite blue light rays and boundless clear blue *ah* syllables radiate and dissolve into your heart center. Thereby, the obscurations of your mind and bindus are purified, and you are authorized to meditate upon the bindu. You receive the extremely unelaborate wisdom empowerment, so the ability to realize the state of fruition as the dharmakaya is placed in your mind stream.

Finally, visualize that from the guru's three places and the precious enclosure within his heart, a five-colored light sphere about one inch in diameter radiates and dissolves into your three places and heart center. Thereby, the hindrances that obscure wisdom are purified. You receive the ultimately unelaborate precious word empowerment, so the ability

to realize the state of fruition as the ultimate svabhavikakaya is placed in your mind stream.

[...] dissolves into the center of swirl of joy between the eyebrows, becoming a pea-sized white bindu with the syllable “ah.”

After receiving the four empowerments, visualize that Vimalamitra in the sky in front turns into light and dissolves into the swirl of joy that spins rapidly in a counterclockwise direction in the center of the bindu between your eyebrows. Here, you need to visualize the white syllable *ah* that represents Vimalamitra to be as tiny and clear as being drawn by a single hair. Continue visualizing yourself as Singhe Shora, imagine Vimalamitra in the space in front, and supplicate him.



4.21: Chojé on a well-adorned throne with fine offering objects

The entire method of visualization to receive the four empowerments is the meditation of the generation stage regarding praying to the guru.

If you are fond of elaborations, make offerings, praise, and so forth.

If you prefer elaborate practices, after receiving the empowerments, you can visualize the guru at the point between your eyebrows and make offerings, sing praises, and so forth to him.

Meditate for a long time on the rainbow-like vivid presence of the deity.

Maintain meditative concentration in the nature of reality, where the deity appears like a rainbow without true, inherent existence.

Afterward, focus your awareness on the bindu. If you are conducting an elaborate practice, then with a melodious voice or in a casual manner, chant “om ah hung benzar guru singhe shora siddhi hung hung hung.”

Visualize yourself as Singhe Shora and direct your awareness at the bindu adorned with the syllable *ah* at the point between the eyebrows.

Om ah hung benzar guru refers to Guru Singhe Shora or Chetsun Senge Wangchuk, who is inseparable from all buddhas of the three times in terms of body, speech, and mind. *Singhe shora siddhi hung hung hung* is to invoke the guru to bestow the sublime siddhis, both common and uncommon. This mantra needs to be recited hundreds, thousands, tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands of times.

For the above meditation, as you place your concentration on Vimalamitra in front of you and pray, this is the in-front visualization. From *visualize yourself as Singhe Shora* to *recite wholeheartedly in the state of realization that all appearances, sound, and thoughts are by nature the deity, mantra, and dharmata, respectively* is the self-visualization. These are the primary meditation instructions for the generation stage. These two stages of meditation, self-visualization and in-front visualization, can be accomplished by only practicing guru yoga.

If you prefer an elaborate practice, you use the *sadhana*^a on Singhe Shora as the basis, in which prayers of guru yoga are chanted. During the practice, you can engage diligently in the intensive practice on the stages of approach and accomplishment according to the content described in the second section of the text.

^a *kunzang don gyi triné trik su deb pa yeshe lam zang* (*kun bzang don gyi phrin las khrigs su bsdebs pa ye shes lam bzang*); also known as the Excellent Path of Wisdom, *yeshe lam zang* (*ye she lam bzang*) and more often as simply *Döntrin* (*don phrin*).

Finally, focus your mind on gentle vajra recitation.

Do the vajra recitation slowly and focus your mind on it. When you inhale, visualize that the breath transforms into a white syllable *om*. As you hold the breath inside your body, it transforms into a red syllable *ah* and abides in the nature of sound and syllable. As you exhale, the breath becomes a blue syllable *hung* and is expelled with the sound of your recitation. Visualize in this way continuously with the exhalation and inhalation; this is called *vajra recitation*.

When feeling weary, imagine that light rays radiate from the bindu between your eyebrows, filling all the infinite pure lands. Invoke blessings from the oceanic objects of refuge residing there, especially the masters of the clear light Heart Essence tradition. Imagine that their kayas, syllables, and hand emblems blessed by their three secrets descend like pouring rain, dissolving into the bindu and filling your entire body.

Visualize that light rays shine from the bindu in between your eyebrows and invite all buddhas and bodhisattvas who dwell in the countless pure lands of the ten directions, especially the lineage masters of the secret Nyingtig lineage, from Dharmakaya Samantabhadra to the present root guru. They shower down like rain in the forms of mudras in terms of body, syllables in terms of speech, and hand emblems in terms of mind and dissolve into the bindu between your eyebrows, blessing your being.

Again, light radiates out to fill all the infinite impure realms in their entirety. Imagine that the animate and inanimate, the universe and inhabitants, become all-pervasive pure lands.

Then, visualize that light rays again radiate to all impure six realms, both the outer worlds and the beings within. In this way, all defiled

worlds and the deluded beings within are purified and transformed into the display of pure kayas and wisdoms.

Imagine that the entire universe and inhabitants gather, dissolving into your body. The body then dissolves into the bindu between the eyebrows, becoming extremely luminous. Resting the mind there for an extended period of time gives rise to a limitless samadhi that pacifies the waves of conceptual thoughts. Finally, the bindu disappears like a rainbow in space. Rest in nonconceptual awareness.

The above is meditation guidance for the stage of completion. Specifically, the visualization of the bindu radiating light rays to make offerings to the buddhas and bodhisattvas and to purify the obscurations of sentient beings in the six realms are *the completion stage with signs*. The visualization of the bindu dissolving like a rainbow fading in the sky and the practitioner abiding in the non-referential meditative concentration are *the completion stage without signs*.

These are the instructions for a concise practice, which summarizes all the essential points of meditation for the generation and completion stages in all tantras and the sadhana category into one pith instruction. Next, I am going to cover all the key points of the view, meditation, conduct, and result of the Great Perfection practice of trekchö, which reveals primordial purity. That will be the teaching for tomorrow.

HIS POWER TO SHIFT OTHERS' MINDS

Very early on the morning of July 13th, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche and entourage rode by car to the French Consulate in San Francisco to straighten out visa issues for entering France. Although the consulate officials had received our passports, our letters of invitation, and other relevant materials, they still requested that all six of us Tibetans come in person to apply for the visas.

What happened that day was somewhat unbelievable. Even after all these years, Kay Henry can still vividly recollect what happened, as she narrates here:

I had been working on getting those visas for months, and the consulate seemed determined not to grant them. On that day, when the consulate personnel had to unlock the door when we arrived, the look on everyone's faces was priceless when they saw six Tibetans in robes.

I went over everything with the person at the window, and he seemed quite determined to make the whole process impossible or, at best, very difficult. At one point, I looked back at Khenpo Rinpoche, and he made eye contact with me.

At the very same time, the difficult Frenchman handling the documents said that everything was in order, and he quickly issued the visas.

THE THIRD LECTURE ON *CHETSUN NYINGTIG*

That afternoon, Chojé continued the teaching on *Chetsun Nyingtig*.



4.22: Chojé, always smiling and at ease

If summarized, the three sections of the *Chetsun Nyingtig* are the empowerment that brings the mind to maturity and the oral instructions that grant liberation. Right now, I am teaching the instructions that grant liberation, which are further divided into the introduction, the actual path, and the subsidiary aspects of the

path. I am now discussing the actual path, which is the practice of guru yoga and includes the three stages of practice that correspond respectively to the generation stage, the completion stage, and the

Great Perfection. I have completed the instructions on the first two stages.

Today, I am going to explain the last stage, the Great Perfection. This includes ascertaining the view of primordial purity through trekchö and elaborating on the meditation of spontaneous presence through tögal. This time, I will focus mainly on ascertaining the view of primordial purity through trekchö. It can be divided into four steps: determining through the view, internalizing through meditation, enhancing through conduct, and maintaining the stable ground through the result. First, let's talk about ascertaining the view:

Now, understand this: all phenomena are created by the mind.

You should first understand that all the external objects, whether they are rocks, soil, mountains, ground, fences, houses, and so forth, appear because of your mind. All phenomena are an illusory manifestation projected by the mind.

For instance, when you dream of towering mountains, turbulent rivers, treacherous passes, steep cliffs, or whatever else, none of these dream images truly exist externally, neither the mountains, rivers, nor perilous situations. Similarly, horses, elephants, men, and women that appear in your dreams do not exist in reality either. All of these are merely the illusory display of your own mind, and this is easily understood by everyone. Just like this analogy, all the appearances you perceive right now are but a projection of the mind. Although external phenomena appear so vividly and real, all these various appearances manifest merely as a result of the habitual tendencies in the mind, and their essence is insubstantial. In other words, they are merely the manifestations of your own mind, and there is nothing substantial that exists externally.

Take water as an example. It is perceived as molten iron to hell beings, pus to hungry ghosts, water to human beings, amrita endowed with

eight qualities to gods, and the female Buddha Mamaki in the eyes of bodhisattvas. What different beings perceive is merely the display of their own karma and minds. Outside of the mind, there is neither water nor pus, let alone molten iron. So, there is nothing truly existent. Moreover, imagine that we who are sitting here or certain land animals jump into water; at the point where our eyes and noses are submerged under water, it will be difficult for us to see colors or shapes, and we may even drown. However, fish, whales, and other aquatic animals can live and see things clearly in the water, and such an environment actually boosts their strength and makes them more competent. All these differences are no more than the effects of the different karma of sentient beings, and as for water, it has no substantial existence at all.

Take fire as another example. Most human beings and animals will be severely burned and feel great pain when getting too close to fire. But there is a form of life called fire rats who actually live in the fire and draw nourishment from it. Also, there is a type of beast called Purified by Fire. When it jumps into the fire, it not only will not get incinerated, but its fur gets brightened by the fire. All these phenomena only illustrate that fire is merely the manifestation of karma and mind, and there is no fire that substantially exists in the external world.

Let's analyze further if you still have trouble understanding this and insist that the world is real. For instance, other religions and many scientists have explained the facts regarding the phenomenal world, such as the rising and setting of the sun and moon and the progression of the four seasons. However, these explanations are reasonable to some beings while unreasonable to other types of beings. While it is true for one group of beings, it may be the opposite for another group of beings. So, it is hard to say which is right and which is wrong. Buddhism claims that everything appears according to habitual tendencies carried in the mind, and anything can possibly appear from emptiness in which nothing inherently exists. Therefore, since different living beings experience different karmic results, no matter how different the objects

may appear to different sentient beings, there are no contradictions at all.

I have explained that all phenomena are merely the work of the mind through both analogies and logical analysis. If you refer to the teachings of the Middle Way and the Mind Only Schools, there will be much more to elaborate. However, if I explain in too much detail, it might be difficult for you to grasp, so I am only providing a brief overview.

In the *Chetsun Nyingtig*, there are only a few sentences teaching trekchö, but these are pith instructions as crucial as the heart and eyes, in which all the key points of tantra, transmission, and upadesha are condensed. Initially, I planned to explain it in great detail similar to the method in the earlier teaching. However, if I were to expound too much, the teaching may run overtime since the schedule is fixed. On the other hand, I am afraid that would hinder you real practitioners from grasping the essential meaning, and many others may get weary and doze off. For these reasons, I will only introduce the actual practice of trekchö in a concise way at this time. You might already feel that the way I taught in the previous teaching was too detailed, but to be honest, that was the most concise way among all the ways of extensive elaboration.

The above explains that all appearances are created by the mind.

The mind's impressions are clearly present, yet non-existent.

Some people may ask, "What is it about the mind that brings about all outside phenomena?" It does not exist but makes all phenomena appear vividly, just like reflections in a mirror.

So, regarding this mind that is *non-existent* yet clearly present, how can it be non-existent? It has no shape like being square or oval or any color like red, yellow, or blue that can be perceived by the eyes. Similarly, it has no sound, either melodious, discordant, or neutral that

can be heard by the ears; it has no smell, either fragrant, malodorous, or neutral that can be sensed by the nose; it has no sour, sweet, bitter, spicy, or salty taste that can be experienced by the tongue; and it has no texture of soft, hard, light, or heavy that can be felt by body. It is the same if you observe from the aspect of mental objects. For instance, when afflictive emotion, such as desire, hatred, or ignorance, arises, if you try to find its essence, it is unattainable. Its nature is not to be established whether inside or outside of your body or in between. That is why it can be said that the mind is non-existent.

Clearly present indicates that although the mind is devoid of any existence, conceptual thoughts that are complicated and constant never cease. These two qualities coexist without contradicting each other. Thus, the dualistic mind is clearly present while not existing.

This aspect of the dhatu is beyond the domain of thought.

What is the dhatu in which neither object nor subject is existent? If you say it is existent, obviously there isn't an actual entity that can be proved to exist. If you say it is non-existent, or a state of nothingness, since existence cannot be established, non-existence that is dependent on existence cannot be verified either. For instance, if a vase does not even exist, the non-existence of the vase, which is a concept that depends on existence of the vase, has no basis to be established either. So, again, non-existence is also excluded. If you say it is both existent and non-existent, this is impossible because existence and non-existence are exclusively incompatible. If you say it is neither existent nor non-existent, unfortunately, this combination has never been found in any knowable context.

Therefore, dhatu transcends existence, nonexistence, both, and neither. From the perspective of the valid cognition of conventional viewpoints, there are no other intellectual approaches besides these four possibilities. As a result, you can conclude that the dhatu transcends the extent of concepts.

To see with your individually self-cognizant wakefulness that it has no basis, that is the fundamental natural state of all phenomena, the uncompounded, radiant depth of original purity.

Some people may ask, “Then, is it something that can never be perceived, just like the primal substance described in non-Buddhist religions?” The answer is “no.” Although object and subject do not exist inherently, the nature can be clearly seen through individual, self-cognizant wakefulness in a manner devoid of both the perceived and the perceiver. It is like a person with good eyesight seeing visible forms during the daytime.

This genuine wisdom of the union of awareness and emptiness is the natural state of all phenomena. *Original purity* means that neither object nor subject can be established. The dhatu is beyond all words and thoughts, so it is primordially pure. However, individual, self-cognizant wakefulness can perceive everything, yet it has no basis, which is why it is the radiant depth of original purity. It is not contrived through causes and conditions and is, therefore, uncompounded.

This completes the determination of the view.

Having internalized this, practice the yoga of space.

This is the method of meditation. There are multiple ways to explain *yoga of space*, but, here, it means that your state of meditation should be like empty space, free from any fixation, conceptual thoughts, and deliberate effort.

Without involving meditation, train in not being separated from this true meaning.

That is to say, there is nothing to be meditated upon. You should not meditate on existence, non-existence, both, or neither. Of course, besides these four, there is nothing else to be meditated on.

This meditation is without distraction and inseparable from the nature of mind. This is not a state of ordinary conceptual thoughts nor a complete void. Work on this uncontrived technique, the meditation without meditation as best as you can.

When the objects of the six sense sources vividly arise, just remain effortlessly within dharmata's self-nature and relax, without analyzing, like a person who has completed their work.

For conduct, if speaking from the perspective of the object, the *six sense sources* refer to visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and mental objects. In terms of the subject, they denote the eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mind consciousness. When any of these external sense objects or sense consciousnesses appear, do not follow your conceptual thoughts of judging them as good or bad or get involved in any refutation or affirmation. Just relax and abide in the natural state as if you have just finished a big project, totally at ease, unperturbable, and perfectly composed. Do not refute or affirm and expend no deliberate effort, just train in the unobstructed power. This completes the teaching on conduct.

At that time, the indication of having seized the wind-mind will effortlessly occur. The luminosity of vipashyana and actual shamatha are accomplished together.

With the mind abiding single-pointedly, signs of empty form will effortlessly manifest. Thereby, you will recognize the true face of the essence of self-awareness and perfect and stabilize its unobstructed

power. Thus, all qualities of the fruition will fully manifest. This is the result of shamatha and vipashyana.

This completes a clear explanation of the view, meditation, conduct, and result through the Dzogchen practice of trekchö that reveals primordial purity.

Next, let's talk about the benefits of the guru yoga practice, which is endowed with all the essential points of actual practices in the generation stage, the completion stage, and the Great Perfection.



4.23: Chojé with deep eyes

To engage in this sadhana practice for even one week without distraction will surely bring blessings from Vimalamitra, the mahasiddha who achieved the wisdom kaya, and myself, Singhe Shora, in actuality, in visions or in dreams. At that time, practitioners will come to know many profound words and meanings that were previously unknown to them. There is no doubt that they will discover the gateway to samadhi.

One thing that needs to be clearly understood here is that if you meditate for seven days without any distraction, you will be cared for by Vimalamitra and Singhe Shora in person. Nowadays, there are some people who have not understood the essential meaning of the Buddhadharma and are constantly and hopelessly propelled by their discursive thoughts. These people may wonder, "Needless to mention seven days, I have done a one-month retreat on guru yoga but have not had even a good dream!" As a matter of fact, what the root text says is to meditate for one week without any distraction. *Without any distraction* means that whether you are practicing the meditation on the generation stage, the completion stage, the Great Perfection, or the three of them together, you need to abide in the corresponding meditative state without being distracted from it, not even for one instant or the time it takes for the snap of a finger. You need to practice this way for seven days. A day has twenty-four hours, and after meditating for seven full days in whatever way, it is impossible that you will not be accepted and cared for by Vimalamitra in your dreams.

If you fail to meet this requirement and each day you can only meditate single-pointedly for as short a time as reciting the hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva once, then how long would it take for you to meet the requirement of meditating for seven full days with no distraction? For some people, even if they finish a three-year retreat, I'm afraid they would not amass seven days of single-pointed meditation.

Nowadays, after entering the door of Buddhism, some people say that practicing the Buddhadharma brings about no accomplishment. The fact is that many such people have entered this path but withdrawn later. This situation is worthy of your consideration. If it is not valid and cannot bring the result of what is taught in his teachings, the dharma spoken by the Buddha would be deceptive. However, if you practice according to what is taught in the scriptures, as a result, for sure, you will achieve the corresponding accomplishment.

If you insist that, “It’s impossible to attain accomplishment in seven days,” you should understand that *seven days* are calculated precisely by hours. In other words, if you can meditate without any forms of distraction within one hundred sixty-eight hours over seven days, you will definitely achieve accomplishment. Is there anyone really able to practice in this way? Of course, yes! Most excellent masters can meditate for seven days without giving rise to any ordinary thoughts and thereby achieve supreme attainments. To attain such results, some spend fourteen days, twenty-one days, a couple of years, or even longer; so, it is not completely out of your reach. However, be aware that such meditation is measured by hours. If you can meditate for one hundred sixty-eight hours completely devoid of conceptual thoughts, you will surely accomplish the result through such meditation.

Now, I have completed the teaching on the actual path.

Subsidiary Aspects of the Path

These are the subsidiary aspects of the path: As a prelude, at the level of four fingers below your navel visualize Bhagavan Vajrasattva and imagine that the recitation of the mantra causes the fire of wisdom to blaze forth whereby it pervades all the places of the four chakras, burning away the four obscurations.

This is the instruction for the meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva. Four fingerbreadths below the navel, visualize a red Bhagavan Vajrasattva. Holding the breath below the navel, imagine the wisdom fire blazes from Vajrasattva and purifies completely all demonic forces of disease, karmic obscurations, and the negativity of winds, channels, and bindus in the body. At the same time, recite the hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva.

At the end, it touches the syllable “hang” at the crown of your head, whereby the stream of nectar that embodies the

wisdom of all buddhas flows down, replenishing the places of the four chakras and delights the sublime mandala of the four kayas of the guru. Imagining this, recite “maha sukha benzar sato ah hang.”

This is the instruction on the mandala practice. Visualize that the body of Guru Vajrasattva below your navel blazes up with wisdom fire, which ascends and ignites the syllable *hang* at your crown, the mere recollection of which brings forth the nondual experience of emptiness and bliss. From this syllable, a stream of nectar that is the embodiment of all buddhas' wisdom descends and fills the four chakras that lie at the crown, throat, heart, and navel along the central channel of the body. As a result, the enlightened body vajra guru, enlightened speech vajra guru, enlightened mind vajra guru, and wisdom vajra guru who abide respectively in these four chakras are delighted, and the four wisdom of joys and four wisdoms of emptiness arise in your mind. Then, recite *maha sukha benzar sato ah hang*. Here, *maha* means great, *sukha* means bliss, *benzar sato* refers to Vajrasattva, and *ah hang* means the wisdom of great bliss.

Visualize that this wisdom of great bliss has arisen in your mind. This is the mandala instruction of inner blazing and melting. When you do the actual meditation, you can refer to the *Chetsun Nyingtig Liturgy* to make the visualization easier.

Next is the practice of the four times of union with buddha, that is, the four meditation techniques applied respectively during the daytime, in the evening, at dawn, and at dusk.

First is the instruction of sealing appearances in the daytime:

During the day, in reliance upon the key points of the gateway, field, wind, and awareness, insert the wind-mind into the matrix of the vajra chain while meditating in spontaneous presence.

During the daytime, with your body in the three postures, your speech abandoning all chatter, and your mind resting single-pointedly, you focus wholeheartedly on the practice of the key points of tōgal.

Second is the pith instruction of bringing all that can be known into the vase during the first portion of night:

During the night, hold the mind single-pointedly upon a bindu marked with “ah” in the center of the heart or between the eyebrows. Then, meditate on clear light awareness.

If you wish to have lucid dreams at night, focus your attention on the white *ah* between your eyebrows and fall asleep. If you wish to sustain clear light, focus your attention on the shimmering white *ah* at your heart and fall asleep. This is the instruction of bringing all knowable things into the vase at night.

Third is the pith instruction of allowing awareness to return to its natural place at dawn:

In the early morning, clear the breath by uttering “ha ha.” Then, imagine that in the center of the sky there appears a great, self-emergent, white, radiant, secret syllable “ah.” Keep the mind, eyes, and wind directly focused upon that to let awareness return to its natural place.

Before dawn, expel the stale breath three times by chanting *ha ha ha*. Then, visualize that the syllable *ah* at your heart center moves into the space in front. It is white, luminous, standing straight, and radiating light rays. Gazing upward, your mind will no longer be lethargic or drowsy but, instead, clear and lucid.

There are also instructions on the path of emptiness and bliss through “withdrawing the senses at the time of dusk.” This practice could be substituted for the meditation and recitation of Vajrasattva that was previously explained with no need to supplement anything else.

By maintaining instantaneous self-awareness during all times and situations, allow confused concepts to vanish, like clouds in space. Train in this self-liberation.

If you maintain an on-going awareness of the view of primordial purity through trekchö in your daily life, all thoughts will dissolve into the dhatu, like clouds vanishing into the sky.

This completes the pith instructions that bring liberation in this very lifetime.

Now, I will teach the two pith instructions that grant liberation at the time of death.

First, the pith instruction of threefold space:

Not realizing the peerless state in this life, then one must accomplish the state of transcendence through the threefold practice of mingling with space.

If you fail to attain buddhahood in the present life, then at the time of death, focus your mind single-pointedly on the outer space of the sky, the inner space of the empty channels connected to the eyes, and the secret space of awareness. Abide in this state to take rebirth. This is the pith instruction of threefold space.

Second is the pith instruction of transferring your consciousness:

Or focus your attention single-pointedly upon the wind-mind bindu marked with the syllable “ah” as it ascends the path of the crown aperture to enter and dissolve into the heart of the guru, and departs for the pure realms, such as the Blazing Fire Mountain.

At the time of death, visualize your mind as the white syllable *ah*. Through the compelling power of praying to the guru above your head, the *ah* at your heart center passes out the crown aperture and rises to finally dissolve into the heart of the guru. Then, the guru ascends higher and higher and departs for a pure realm, such as Blazing Fire Mountain.



4.24: Chojé showing the spot of crown aperture to the audience

Next is the pith instruction on liberation in the dharmata bardo.

No matter what dawns in the bardo, awareness never changes or wavers from its own mode of being. Bring to mind the key point of the upadesha that is like a steady golden scalpel.

In the bardo, no matter what sound, light, or forms of deities manifest in front of you, remain single-pointed and unwavering in the natural abode of awareness through the practice of trekchö. This is called *the instruction of the steady golden scalpel*.

Those who prefer some degree of elaboration should offer the ganachakra and enjoy whatever is suitable for that occasion.

In addition, those who conduct an elaborate practice generally need to perform the ganachakra feast. An authentic ganachakra can only be conducted by yogis with supreme realization, and ordinary individuals are unable to accomplish it. However, even if you cannot accomplish an authentic ganachakra, as long as you make feast offerings each month on the tenth day of the waxing moon and the tenth day of the waning moon, you can accumulate immense merit. There are reasons why it is necessary to hold extensive feast offerings on a regular basis.

All right, this completes our teaching today.

VISITED THE VALLEJO ZOO

On the morning of July 14th, Chojé visited Marine World in Vallejo, California. Many local Buddhists and Tibetans recommended this place because unlike a normal zoo where animals were caged, Marine World accommodated and treated all the animals in the park quite humanely. The animals could move around freely in an open space, engaging with their trainers or even visitors.

It was a nice day as the sun was shining brightly in a cloudless sky. From his wheelchair, Yidzhin Norbu used a cute little telescope to look at everything. The park was full of lush greenery, with birds chirping and flowers smelling fragrant. There were many kinds of animals leisurely resting and walking here and there, being away from the dangers of their natural enemies. They seemed to be well looked after by the park employees, and the scenery was beautiful, so this made Chojé very happy.

Even though it was called Marine World, there were also many land animals, and we even saw yaks that, of course, we were most familiar with. Going around the park, it was interesting to see so many animals that we had never seen before but had just heard their names. We also went to an outdoor theater and saw a fabulous dolphin show. Through long-term training, the dolphin could



4.25: Chojé watching animals through the small telescope

perform many maneuvers and also interact with its trainer, such as having a swimming competition with its trainer or standing on its tail above water, which won frequent cheers from the audience.

In the beginning, Rinpoche also showed interest in the dolphin performance. But after a short while, he started to frown and sigh, feeling kind of sad and saying, “These animals are too unfortunate! They are trained again and again to become tools for people’s amusement. If people have no idea about the karmic law of cause and effect and strive only for food and drink and all kinds of worldly pleasures, they are no different from the animals.”



4.26: Chojé, Chagdud Rinpoche (the second from the left in the back row), and the entourage visiting the Marine World



4.27: Chojé watching the dolphin show through the small telescope



4.28: In sadness, Chojé reciting mantras to bless the animals

During the balance of the tour, particularly when he saw some animals that were locked up in steel cages like prisoners in jail for life, Chojé became even more serious. He didn't talk too much, just kept reciting mantras for those animals, sending them his blessings. Witnessing this, I truly felt that these animals were really fortunate because they were able to receive blessings directly from Rinpoche in person.

I've heard that just a few years later, Marine World was taken over by the city of Vallejo for having defaulted on its debts. The city officials handed over opera-

tions to a company that switched the park theme to rides and roller coasters. Gradually, there were not so many animals left, either on land or in the water.

THE FOURTH LECTURE ON *CHETSUN NYINGTIG*

On the afternoon of the same day, Yidzhin Norbu gave the final teaching on *Chetsun Nyingtig*.

Today, I will continue to teach the Great Perfection.

Regarding the clear light teaching of Dzogpachenpo in the Earlier Translation School of Ngagyur Nyingma, there is the tradition of those ancestral vidyadharas who achieved the accomplishment of rainbow body and left teachings to their disciples after their parinirvana. After their physical body turned into light in the form of a rainbow body, they would assemble all the essential, profound instructions from their lives and impart them to their disciples. It was an exceptional sign of accomplished Dzogchen practitioners that their physical bodies of flesh and blood completely turned into light when they entered into parinirvana. After that, their body of light would reappear within a mass of light to impart the essential teachings and instructions to their fortunate disciples. Such transmission is specific only to the Dzogchen tradition and cannot be found in any other religions or even Buddhist schools.

Garab Dorje was the first human master who brought the Dzogchen teachings to the human world. At the time of his parinirvana, he dissolved into rainbow light and gave his last testament, *Three Vital Statements that Strike the Crucial Point*, to his disciple Jampal Shenyen. When Jampal Shenyen manifested in the form of the rainbow body after his parinirvana, he conferred upon his Han disciple Shri Singha his last testament, the *Six Meditative Experiences*. When Shri Singha transferred into the rainbow body, he conferred his last testament of *Nailing Down the Seven Points* upon Jnanasutra. When Jnanasutra reappeared in the form of the rainbow body after his parinirvana, he conferred upon Vimalamitra his last testament, the *Four Modes of Placement*.



4.29: Chojé looking at everyone with a gentle smile

After these transmissions, in the successive lineage, both Vimalamitra and Padmasambhava have not yet left any final testaments because both masters are still residing in their great rainbow transference kayas and appear just like they did when in the body in the human realm but now as a rainbow body. Vimalamitra still resides at Mount Wutai in China, and those who have sufficiently purified their perceptions and karma can actually see him. Guru Rinpoche went directly to Ngayab Ling, and now turns the wheel of dharma to guide rakshasas in that realm. Instead of entering into parinirvana, these two great masters will continue their dharma activities of benefiting and enlightening living beings in the forms of their original bodies as long as empty space remains.

As teacher and disciples, we can follow them in the same way. If we attain the ultimate accomplishment of the Great Perfection, we no longer need to enter the cyclic existence of birth and death. At the end of this life, if our present form can be used to continue the activities of benefiting sentient beings, we can choose to stay in this world with this form as long as the empty space remains, just like Vimalamitra and

Padmasambhava. If our present form can no longer benefit sentient beings, we can dissolve into rainbow light and then manifest various illusory bodies to benefit beings.

All in all, you should be clear that this tradition is not an ancient legend. In history, it truly happened that those previous vidyadharas reappeared as wisdom light kayas to impart teachings to their disciples following their parinirvanas. Their words and instructions were put into the collection called the *Four Testaments of the Vidyadharas*,^a which encompasses all the essential points of Dzogchen that were explained in the categories of tantra, transmission, and upadesha. This collection was later included in many important texts, such as the *Vima Nyingtig* and *Lama Gongdu*.

Later, when Chetsun Senge Wangchuk, the disciple of Vimalamitra, entered into parinirvana, he manifested the supreme magical wisdom body in a mass of light in front of a hundred thousand dakinis led by Dakini Palgyi Lodro. He then conferred upon them his final testament that was composed of three sections and called *Chetsun Nyingtig*. Palgyi Lodro and the other dakinis condensed these profound instructions of *Chetsun Nyingtig* into the syllables that represent the fivefold expanse and sealed them with the dharani of not-forgetting. The syllables of the fivefold expanse are *a ah, ha, sha, sa, ma*. When Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo was about to reveal the *Chetsun Nyingtig*, there were one billion dakinis in his experience of pure luminosity who were chanting *a ah ha sha sa ma* melodiously with one voice. At that time, he clearly recalled how Vimalamitra bestowed the quintessence of the *Vima Nyingtig* teachings upon him in his previous life as the Great Chetsun. Therefore, it can be said that all the essential points of *Chetsun Nyingtig* are perfectly encoded in the five syllables of *a ah ha sha sa ma*.

You may wonder, “Why would you say *five syllables*? There should be six syllables.” Indeed, it can be counted as six syllables because there are sentient beings to be tamed in the six realms. Such situations can

^a *rigdzin nam zhi'i dé jé (rig 'dzin rnam bzhi'i 'das rjes)*.

be found in the tantras of the Great Perfection. Nevertheless, *Chetsun Nyingtig* asserts the use of the term *five syllables* because although in Tibetan, *a* and *ah* are two syllables, in Sanskrit when speaking of the dharmadhatu wisdom, they are the same syllable with the only difference of short and long pronunciation. When they are combined, they represent the dharmadhatu wisdom, and therefore, this mantra has five syllables.

Regarding this question, those with only a smattering of knowledge or who are misguided would insist that *a* is just a Tibetan syllable and not Sanskrit and that the entire Dzogchen teachings were originally taught in Tibetan, without any of them having appeared in India before. As a matter of fact, the teaching of the Great Perfection is expressed by the uncommon symbolic language of the dakinis and vidyadharas. Such language is not necessarily Tibetan or Sanskrit. For instance, the root *Kalachakra Tantra* was initially written in the language of Shambhala rather than Tibetan or Sanskrit, although now a Tibetan version is available in the Kangyur. The linguistic modes of the Shambhala language are completely different from those of Sanskrit and certainly cannot follow Sanskrit grammar. Likewise, the secret mantra *a ah ha sha sa ma* is not necessarily Sanskrit either.

Some others may also think, “The Dzogchen teachings were so profound that they did not flourish in India. How then could the Tibetan people possibly teach and propagate them?”

In history, when the peerless Lord Atisha, the intentional manifestation of Buddha Amitabha, came to Tibet, he saw all the Sanskrit scriptures collected at Samye Monastery, and his pride was completely shattered. He reflected, “Previously, I thought that I would have mastered all the tantras preserved at Samye Monastery because I have read not only all the scriptures that are stored in the god realms, naga palaces, and the human world, but also all those revealed by the dakinis who opened the door to the sky treasures. I’m familiar with all of them. But the moment I saw the Sanskrit manuscripts of tantras preserved

at Samye Monastery, I realized that there are many more tantras that I have not seen before.” As he read through all the tantric teachings brought from the god realms, naga palaces, and the human world, as well as the residential places of yakshas or gandharvas, by great masters including Padmasambhava and Vimalamitra through their miraculous power, the venerable Atisha deeply praised, “It appears that the teachings have been propagated in the time of King Trisong Detsen as they have not been even in India.”

That history is about the final testaments of the Dzogchen masters, through which you can have a glimpse of the supreme status of the *Chetsun Nyingtig*. I have also clarified certain wrong views about the secret mantra *a ah ha sha sa ma*. All of you are studying and practicing Dzogchen, and in the future, you will also guide those who have karmic connections with you or tame those who are not so connected. Considering this, I gave you this comprehensive teaching today. Other than these words, I don’t have any more to say. Please bear in mind that the six syllables of the secret mantra *a ah ha sha sa ma* encompass all the essential points elaborated in the six million four-hundred thousand tantras of the Great Perfection. So, you must engrave it into your hearts and chant it frequently. By doing so, you will gain inconceivable benefit and merit.

When some of you translate the *Chetsun Nyingtig* into other languages, such as English, in your translation, you should preserve the original Tibetan forms of *a ah ha sha sa ma*, instead of simply replacing them with a transliteration of other alphabets. Because they are symbolic language, they should remain unchanged.

Now, I will continue with the root tantra. This part can be divided into two parts, the favorable condition to receive the teaching and the explanation of the real teaching.

First, the favorable condition to receive the teaching:

In particular, to supplicate the master respectfully and assiduously with intense and uncontrived devotion is the most supreme method among all means of dispelling obstacles and enhancing practice.

As you engage in dharma practice, there are many special pith instructions for dispelling obstacles to overcome demonic forces, as well as many special upadeshas to enhance your practice. However, in Dzogchen practice, you only need to develop extraordinary faith and respect toward your guru and thus supplicate him or her with intense devotion. This is the only pith instruction you need to conquer obstacles on the path and to enhance your practice.

Here is a key point for you to understand and bear in mind: among so many Buddhist traditions, particularly all those schools thriving in the Land of Tibet, including Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu, Gelug, and Jonang, which one is the best to follow? Generally speaking, no matter which tradition you follow and which practice you engage in, first, you will have to rely on a teacher of great wisdom for many years. During this period, spend at least five or six years repeatedly listening to and contemplating dharma teachings. Without this perseverance to solve your questions one after another, it will be impossible to completely uproot all your doubts and confusion. At the same time, you need to follow a gradual path to proceed with your practice, which sometimes requires many pith instructions for dispelling obstacles and for enhancing your realization. As an ordinary practitioner, it is not easy to attain the final accomplishment along such a path.

On the contrary, Dzogchen practice has many advantages concerning this matter. Instead of many years, you only need to rely on a qualified teacher for a short period of time. Instead of learning and contemplating the dharma meticulously, you only need to recognize the nature of mind. Instead of many other instructions to dispel negativity and

bring forth enhancement, you only need the very specific instruction of supplicating your teacher with great faith and devotion and to have confidence in the teaching that you are practicing. Therefore, given all these advantages, it is essential for each of you to practice the Great Perfection.



4.30: Chojé tirelessly teaching the dharma

Take renunciation to heart.

A Dzogchen practitioner must possess the genuine mind of renunciation. That is, solely wish for liberation from samsara in all future lives, without any worldly attachment in this life, such as destroying enemies and protecting relatives, farming, or doing business for profit. Cultivate the mind of renunciation in order to embark on the path of the Great Perfection.

Bring forth the power of devotion and conviction.

You should also focus on the training of devotion and certainty toward the teaching and the teacher. You embrace a firm conviction in your

hearts and show your respect and devotion through your behavior. It is not enough to simply have a negligible devotion and conviction. Instead, they should be strong and long-lasting.

Bring about unbearable compassion.

Compassion is the intention of wishing all sentient beings to be free from suffering. Such compassion is not ordinary or slight and trivial but is hundreds or thousands of times stronger than the love a mother feels for her only child. You should give rise by all means to such a great compassion so that you cherish others much more than yourself.

Rely upon the ambrosia of the object.

All external phenomena of visible forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures have the nature of emptiness, while they appear in various ways. Once you recognize that they are none other than the adornment of rigpa, intrinsic awareness, you will attain the qualities of meditative experience and realization. At that moment, the external environment is just like the ambrosia of the object that you can rely on.

Harness elaboration from within.

Do not indulge yourself in all kinds of trivial things, such as harming your enemies or taking care of your relatives and friends. Just lead a simple life with enough food and clothes. In the best case, relinquish the nine types of activity explained in the Dzogchen teachings. At least, avoid all meaningless, trivial matters and single-pointedly practice Dzogchen.

Let wind rest freely.

When engaging in the practice of the completion stage, such as the yogas based on the channels, wind, and bindus, you need to practice with effort to develop the required visualizations during inhalation

or exhalation. However, such effort is not needed in Great Perfection practice.

Instead, breathe slowly to the point where you barely notice the movement of the winds. Abiding in such a way is the path without effort. Because Dzogchen practice does not need any pith instruction to dispel obstacles or to bring forth enhancement, simply leave the breath uncontrolled and let the wind move naturally.

Never separate from the key point of the postures.

When practicing trekchö, thoroughly cutting through to original purity, beginners should maintain the seven-point posture of Vairochana. Do not depart from this correct posture, because lying down or leaning on something will make a beginner fall into lethargy, being dazed and muddled, or being numb. Certainly, accomplished practitioners who have reached an absolutely unchanging state of realization can assume whatever posture they want during their practice.

When practicing tögal, crossing over to spontaneous presence, the key point of the body is to maintain one of the three postures, the postures of dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, and nirmanakaya. Again, do not depart from these correct postures. Otherwise, you will not be able to experience the luminosity of the dhatu of awareness, the luminosity of the empty bindu, as well as the vajra chain of awareness.

Let the supreme faculties pierce the dhatu.

During the practice, your mind, eyes, and wind should be merged with the sun, moon, or a butter lamp. Like dissolving into empty space, single-pointedly abide in the dhatu of awareness.

Sometimes, hold a gentle vase.

Here, *hold a gentle vase* means that after inhaling, you retain a small amount of air inside the belly. *Sometimes* indicates that when wholesome, conceptual thoughts, such as devotion, compassion, or bodhicitta arise, continue to hold a gentle breath. *Gentle* suggests that you need not hold the breath vigorously like the instructions required in the channels and wind practice.^a Holding the breath gently is adequate in this practice.



4.31: Several great Tibetan lamas gathering together

*Always sustain the continuity of empty, naked awareness
and focus on that as the vital point.*

During the practice of trekchö, do not think of nothing at all. Rather, recognize clearly and vividly the original nature of the mind, which is the perfect union of emptiness and awareness. During the practice of tögal, also maintain the natural state of empty awareness, neither being attracted by the external environment nor imagining a complete void inwardly.

^a *tsa lung* (*rtsa rlung*).

This was condensed to the essentials.

This completes a brief summary and explanation of all the essential points in the practice.

Resolve your questions by relying upon the Nyingtig teachings. Receive the subtle details from your master.

If you have more questions due to misconceptions or the lack of understanding, consult the one hundred nineteen instructions found in the *Vima Nyingtig* that can uproot all confusion and doubts. The more profound and subtle meanings can only be understood by directly listening to the guru's upadeshas in person. The pith instructions that a guru gives a disciple would be concise, maybe just a couple of sentences, and are enough to introduce the disciple to the recognition of empty awareness.

Having strived on the path, a practitioner dissolves the contaminated body into light in these ways: for the superior after six months, for the middling after three years, and for the inferior after twelve years.

By practicing this Great Perfection teaching of *Chetsun Nyingtig* according to your capacity of being superior, middling, or inferior, you will achieve liberation in six months, in three years, or at most twelve years. This is such a swift path.

Words and sounds vanish in the central channel, and various thoughts dissolve into inner luminosity.

As a result, your speech and words will dissolve into the central channel and become the words of a buddha, and conceptual thoughts will dissolve into the dhatu and become the enlightened mind of a buddha.

If these goals are desired, then body, speech, and mind all attain supreme siddhi.

You will be able to manifest various illusory forms that conform to different sentient beings' elements, capacities, inclinations, and intentions. This is the accomplishment of the most supreme result of body, speech, and mind.

Therefore, exert yourself in nothing but this. In the future, when the five degenerations are rampant, barbarians invade the Land of Tibet, and the doctrine declines, a practitioner with great devotion to the Heart Essence tradition will appear in this world. His external behavior may seem completely ordinary, so no one will fathom the depth of his secret realization. Having seen that all phenomena are magical in nature, he will master appearances, and his realization will be unrivaled. The sign of the dakas will mark his forehead. His mind, having been blessed by Acharya Manjushrimitra, will overflow with prajna awareness. In particular, having discovered the certainty of definitive truth, he will have genuine, unassailable devotion to me and my lineage. Known as Odsal Trulpa'i Dorje, he will appear at a future time far from now. This has been spoken for him. For the time being, you dakinis of the space of wisdom must personally guard this within the syllables of the fivefold expanse. When the time arrives, bless this individual's mind and awaken him so that he will benefit those fortunate disciples who are instantaneous realizers.

The meaning of this conclusion was explained in detail when I taught the history of Chetsun Nyingtig empowerment. So, I won't elaborate on it again. Simply speaking, at the end of this teaching, the great Chetsun prophesied that in the future, his teaching would be revealed by Odsal Trulpa'i Dorje, the secret name of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who

would rely on this teaching and benefit those who are endowed with superior faculties and fortunately connected with the Great Perfection. The word-by-word meaning of this paragraph was offered to you when I gave you the *Chetsun Nyingtig* empowerment.

Now, I want to share with you a few words from the bottom of my heart. In terms of spiritual practice, it can be said that here in this country of the US, there are two types of people due to their different interests, intentions, intelligence, and ethnic backgrounds. There are those non-believers who follow no religious or spiritual traditions at all, and those believers who follow a certain religious or spiritual tradition. Given these two types of people, which one is preferable? This question is worthy of your deep thought, and you shouldn't remain indifferent on this issue. You are not material things, nor are you insane or losing the ability of rational thinking. So, please give this deep thought: is it good to believe in nothing at all or is having a religious belief indeed better?

Non-believers seldom think about or seek a path that ensures happiness and avoids suffering in their present and all future lives. They are fully occupied with basic needs, such as food and clothing in this life, and have almost no difference from animals in regard to their spiritual pursuits. This morning we went to Marine World, and I truly felt pity for those animals there. Being animals, they have no ability to improve themselves and are only controlled by their karma. They have no ability or intelligence to determine where they will be born and what will happen to them in their future lives. How sad that is! Therefore, from my perspective, I do believe that everyone needs to follow a religious tradition for their well-being in their present and future lives.

Among all the different religious traditions, some of them are only concerned with their own peace and happiness; and in order to satisfy their needs, they would rather harm others. Such a tradition is also pitiful, and it is certain that their followers will suffer from misfortune

in this life and undergo more pain in their future lives. Except for Buddhism, it can be said that Christianity is the best of all religions because it promotes the concept of compassion and brotherhood toward all human beings. Still, I do not think it is comparable with Buddhism. Why? Because all its doctrines that advocate virtue and goodness can be found in the Buddhist teachings, while many doctrines provided in Buddhism to bring yourself and all other sentient beings happiness and ease in this and future lives are completely missing in Christianity.

In Buddhism, there are not only doctrines like this, but many authentic scriptures, logical references, personal experiences, and instructions that are available and can be trusted. *Authentic scriptures* refers to the noble teachings given by Buddha Shakyamuni and the great bodhisattvas like Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara several thousand years ago. They were all noble beings of extraordinary wisdom. *Logical references* refers to all the valid reasonings and analyses that have been established in the past few thousand years that have ascertained that the Buddha's words are free from fault or self-contradiction. *Personal experiences* refers to what hundreds of millions of people have experienced after putting the Buddhadharma into their practices and actualizing the Buddha's teaching. Having achieved the temporary happiness and the ultimate fruition of buddhahood, they themselves proved the Buddha's words and also passed on their pith instructions of practice to their followers. Therefore, you should have a firm conviction in the Buddhadharma because it is not just mouthing words, but has been verified by authentic scriptures, logical references, personal experiences, and instructions.

There are many dharma teachings in Buddhism, but I believe the Great Perfection teachings are the most excellent among all of them. Any practitioner who follows the Dzogchen path, regardless of whether they have a superior, middling, or inferior capacity, will be capable of understanding its meaning. All of them will comprehend the teaching

in a short period of time; and if their faith and devotion are very strong, it is even possible for them to attain buddhahood within six months. Such an extremely swift and easy path is very rare in any Buddhist text.

I am sharing with you my conclusion obtained through my in-depth research over a long term. Honestly speaking, I was born with a keen intellect and have been studying and investigating Buddhist and non-Buddhist doctrines since the age of fourteen. Now, I am sixty years old, and I am confident to share my result. I do not dislike other religions while holding a blind love for Buddhism. Instead, I am just telling you the truth with an objective attitude. Also, I am not reporting my research to every rinpoche present here, nor to other gurus or tulkus who are now in Nepal or India. I mainly want to share my thoughts with you western devotees, virtuous men and women. I'm afraid that you might not understand the difference between Buddhism and non-Buddhism even after decades of study, so I truly want to share my research that is free from any biased or prejudiced view. From now on, if you can make an unwavering determination to solely practice the Great Perfection with no more hesitation or doubt, I am sure that your present life and all future lives will become better and better.

However, if you still have any concerns about whether the clear light teaching of Dzogpachenpo really surpasses other teachings or suspect that this tradition is no different from other religions or Buddhist schools, you may come and bring your questions to me. I can provide you with a good answer. Or if I am too busy, you are welcome to ask Khenpo Namdrol or Khenpo Sodargye, and they will do the same thing for you. Like this, if you work hard to resolve your questions over a long period of time, you will eventually give rise to an uncommon faith and devotion in the Great Perfection.

What I have given you is a detailed explanation on the first section of the *Chetsun Nyingtig*. The second section is the sadhana for the practice, and the third is an outline of all the pith instructions, or upadeshas.

This time I will not elaborate on those two sections. However, I will now read the entire text of the *Chetsun Nyingtig* and give to you the complete oral transmission of the three sections without missing a single word.



4.32: Chojé attentively listening to others

There are two types of commentaries on the *Chetsun Nyingtig*, the vast and the profound. The vast type of commentary includes Adzom Drukpa Rinpoche's *Words of the Vidyadhara: A Commentary on the Preliminary Practices*^a and *The Excellent Path of the Heart of Wisdom: A Special Commentary*,^b in which you may find the teaching manuals and instructions from the perspective of the vast category. In the profound category, the most profound is Tertön Lerab Lingpa's *Wisdom Bindu: A Commentary Summarizing the Heart Essence*.^c There is also the commentary composed by Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thayé, *Heart*

^a *ngondro'i tri yig rigdzin zhal lung* (sngon 'gro'i khrid yig rig 'dzin zhal lung); Adzom Drukpa.

^b *tri yig lam zang yeshe nyingpo* (khrid yig lam bzang ye shes snying po); Adzom Drukpa.

^c *tri yig yeshe tiglé* (khrid yig ye shes thig le); Lerab Lingpa.

Essence of Chetsun: The Perfect Secret Bindu,^a which combines all the key points of the vast and the profound. It would be best if in the future you can carefully read and contemplate all these teaching manuals and commentaries. But if you don't have time, what I have been teaching in these three or four days encompasses all the essential points of their ultimate intent. I have offered them to you without any omissions.

As for the particular circumstances that brought about this teaching, Chagdud Rinpoche and other great masters requested me on behalf of their disciples to explain the cycle of *Chetsun Nyingtig*. All of them are authentic Dzogchen practitioners, and they say exactly what they think. They requested me with great faith and eagerness, "Please give us a detailed explanation this time!" Therefore, following their request, I have given you all the pith instructions and guidance for the *Chetsun Nyingtig* without any reservation or omission. It is my sincere wish that all of you put these teachings into your actual practices. I have not taught the *Chetsun Nyingtig* like this in the Tibetan region, and it is only for you this time. The reason was explained yesterday, so now I will stop here. May you enjoy auspiciousness and happiness! Tashi Delek! (Applause)

^a *chetsun nyingtig tiglé sang dzok (lce btsun snying thig thig le gsang rdzogs)*; Jamgon Kongtrul Lodro Thayé.

RODE IN A HOT AIR BALLOON FOR THE FIRST TIME

On the morning of July 15th, some American disciples strongly recommended that Yidzhin Norbu take a hot air balloon ride to view the landscape of the mountains and rivers in Napa Valley. As it turned out, people with heart disease or high blood pressure were not supposed to ride in a hot air balloon, so he didn't go; but the rest of us went to experience this unique ride.



4.33: The entourage riding in a hot air balloon

Before the invention of the airplane, hot air balloons were the primary mode of transport that allowed people to travel by air. A hot air balloon consists of a large bag, called an *envelope*, with a basket suspended underneath. A gas burner sits in the basket and is used to heat the air inside the balloon above, generating lift. The best time for a hot air balloon ride is a couple of hours before sunrise or sunset because at that time the wind conditions are calmer, making for a more pleasant ride.

The day was sunny and cloudless at nine o'clock in the morning, and we stood by the balloon, watching it being inflated more and more until it was finally ready for lift-off. The basket was set upright, and we got in together with the pilot. The balloon soon started to lift off the ground. With the speed getting faster and faster, it



4.34: The hot air balloon in the sky

reached a height of one thousand feet very quickly. The whole process was so amazing to us!

Then, the balloon started to fly level in the sky, passing over densely populated city areas, farms, and forests, as well as mountains. It was such an awesome view with a variety of beautiful scenery clearly appearing before us, as if we were traveling above a magnificent painting. Soaring in the sky and watching the endless world, I felt such a joy of freedom. Every time we flew over a mountain, the wind was much stronger, and the basket swayed quite a bit. Such turbulence seemed to be even stronger than in an airplane. However, I was not nervous at all, feeling quite at ease during the whole ride, which took about an hour.

This was an amazing journey and provided me with a unique perspective of the world. It made me feel like I saw the entire world and truly realized the smallness of humankind. Although I had seen photos of hot air balloons flying in the sky, such a personal experience far surpassed any photographs.

WHY DOES SECRET MANTRA NEED TO BE KEPT SECRET

On the afternoon of the same day, Choje gave the empowerment for the Dzogchen practice of *Peaceful Manjushri* and corresponding teachings.

This empowerment is the heart blood of one hundred thousand dakinis, and it is equivalent to my heart essence. I have now offered it to all of you without any reservation. *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* is the practice manual for the terma cycle of *Peaceful Manjushri*. I believe this profound instruction is unprecedented and unique in the world, and it contains extremely powerful blessings. I will also give that to you tomorrow. Meanwhile, there is one thing I want to make clear: because it is such a profound and supreme teaching, it may also put you at risk. That is to say, by relying on this teaching, some will gain immense benefit, while some may encounter disastrous misfortune.

If a Dzogchen practitioner with genuine, pure, and devoted faith in his or her teacher practices wholeheartedly with diligence and guards the profound secret while never disclosing it to others, he or she will certainly attain buddhahood in this short human life. Even in this degenerate age, there is no need to undergo long-term hardship in practice, and such practitioners will attain inconceivably great benefit that surpasses even that of obtaining one hundred thousand wish-fulfilling jewels. On the contrary, if a Dzogchen practitioner holds no faith in the teacher, and, even worse, is two-faced, offering praise face-to-face but disparaging behind the back, this person not only creates no merit but also the cause that will take him or her to the lower realms.

Therefore, since all of you have entered the door of this profound path, you must engage in the actual practice with utmost faith and devotion. Otherwise, if you maintain that this teaching is not beneficial or pure, make a presumptuous judgment and criticize it, or cast it aside after a couple of years and search for another path while harboring wrong view toward Buddhism, then it is certain you will fall to the lower realms. As you can see, if you follow the Dzogchen path with a lack of mindfulness, you may put yourself at risk.



4.35: Chojé ready to bless the audience after the empowerment

One more crucial point is that you must not disclose this teaching to those who are not qualified and who have never received a Dzogchen empowerment. Except with your guru and a very few close vajra brothers and sisters who observe the same inner vows with you, how could you possibly speak of the view and meditation of the Great Perfection to anyone else? Even discussing its terms with unqualified individuals will force you to fall to the lower realms. Such is the danger of the Dzogchen path. So, please never disclose this teaching to others, but rather keep it a secret. Do you understand what I mean?

Some may wonder, “Is there any hidden fault in the Dzogchen teaching that it has to remain secret?”

Absolutely not. The reason is that keeping it secret is a favorable condition for us to easily attain all common and supreme accomplishments, while disclosing it, proclaiming it everywhere, and telling everyone about it are the exact causes for rebirth in the lower realms. Therefore, keeping the secret is solely for the sake of our own benefit, not because the Dzogchen teaching has any faults.

As for myself, I traveled thousands of miles to reach America in the west all the way from an Asian country in the east. All of you disciples have gathered here to see me and receive my teachings. I believe this is a result of our previous karma together with the shared aspirations that we made many lifetimes ago. However, it is impossible for us to meet again and again in this temporary human life, and I’m pretty sure that I will not return to the US. Probably, this is the only time for me to travel to the West. As I think of all of you, I truly love you and also feel deep compassion for you, which is why I have given you so many precious teachings that I have not taught frequently or extensively in the Land of Tibet. However, if this is an incorrect decision and in the future you broadcast these secret teachings everywhere, then such actions will bring about harmful consequences to both you as disciples and me as the teacher. Therefore, if you remain ignorant or careless, the profound empowerments and instructions of Secret Mantrayana will

cause serious harm to you. On the contrary, if you follow the guidelines exactly, they will undoubtedly bring you tremendous benefit.

Here is something I need to repeat. Each one of you should develop sincere devotion toward your teacher. Such devotion has to be sincere and uncontrived. Do not show your respect in front while having nothing behind. Meanwhile, you should cultivate a consistent, confident faith in the teachings, and do not be either too loose or too tight in your dharma practice. If you show enthusiasm for the dharma at the beginning while losing interest and enthusiasm over time, this is what I mean by “being too loose or too tight.”

The Secret Mantra teaching of the Great Perfection is so profound and unique that if you engrave it in your heart and persevere in its practice, never divulging any relevant information to anyone else, you will achieve buddhahood in this very life. Such is the extraordinarily distinctive and supreme teaching of Dzogchen. Please keep this in mind.

The Essential Points of Actual Practice

Today, it seems I cannot give you a word-by-word explanation on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* by following its original text because some of you will not be here tomorrow and there will be many newcomers for tomorrow’s teaching. So, I’d like to take this short time to talk about the essential points covered in this practice manual. Generally speaking, there are three essential points in terms of the beginning, the middle, and the end in *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*.

The essential point in the beginning is that a practitioner must rid him or herself of attachment to anything in samsara, because everything in cyclic existence is trivial and insignificant. Only by doing so can you give rise to a genuine intention of following the authentic path to liberation and accomplishing its fruition. To achieve this goal, deeply contemplate the freedoms and advantages of human existence, as well as the impermanence of human life, in order to dispel the attachment

to this present life. Also, contemplate repeatedly the karmic law of cause and effect, as well as the faults of samsara in order to dispel the attachment to all future lives. Continue these contemplations until you are able to completely cut off any attachment to samsara.



4.36: Chojé with a loving smile

The essential point in the middle is to accomplish vast benefit for yourself and others. What are the expedient methods to do that? They are to take refuge in the Three Jewels and to arouse bodhicitta in your mind. How do you take refuge? First, be committed to being a pure Buddhist by taking the vows, and

second, be engaged in dharma study and practice. The Buddhadharma can be categorized into two types, the common teaching of the common vehicles and the uncommon teaching of Mahayana. All followers of the common vehicles should promise not to harm other living beings even at the risk of losing their own lives. This is included in the precepts for both monastics and lay practitioners, and you must abide by this discipline. Of course, simply not harming others is not enough. You must take the vow of never harming any other beings, and only by having such a resolve can you become a qualified Buddhist. Material things like rocks and mountains have no intention of hurting others either, but they cannot be Buddhists. Therefore, taking refuge vows in front of the Three Jewels is a necessity, and only by relying on these vows can you commit yourself to never harming others. This is the significant meaning of taking refuge in the Three Jewels.

Now, it is known that the prerequisite for not harming others is to take the Buddhist vows. These days, the Buddhist tradition of receiving pure precepts has been maintained very well in many countries in southeast Asia. In the Tibetan regions, India, Sri Lanka, and other countries, there are many people who have taken the novice precepts

or the bhikshu precepts meaning to become fully ordained. As far as I know, this is not an easy thing to do in the western world, but still you can take the five precepts or the eight one-day precepts for lay practitioners.

What are the five precepts for lay practitioners? They are to refrain during one's lifetime from taking the life of a human being, lying or speaking in a way that is seriously deceptive or will cause great harm to others, sexual misconduct with a married person based on desire, stealing other's possession, and drinking any alcohol. It is best for a lay practitioner to take all five vows because this will enhance their spiritual practice. If you truly have difficulty taking all of them, you should promise to observe at least one or two of them in this lifetime. Only after taking some or all five precepts can you embody the true meaning of being a lay practitioner of Buddhism.

No killing, no stealing, no sexual misconduct, and no lying are called the four root precepts. If you promise to observe four of them from today's sunrise to tomorrow's sunrise, this is the practice of Sojong. In the worst case of being incapable of observing any of these disciplines, you may engage in some regular practices, such as circumambulating the representatives of the Three Jewels, making prostrations, chanting sutras or mantras like the Mani mantra, Manjushri's mantra, Guru Rinpoche's mantra, and so on. Chant these mantras as many times as you can.

We Tibetans have a custom of shouting and cheering when encouraging others to take a big step forward. Now, I am also going to cheer you on toward virtuous practice. A cheer is meant to inspire an individual's ability in a competition. How can I inspire you? As you know, in our Land of Tibet, the population is sparse, the economy is backward, and the overall education level is not the best. Even so, not only all lamas, almost every Tibetan man or woman has been reciting the Mani mantra or Manjushri's mantra over one hundred million times during the course of their lives. By contrast, in your country where there is a

large population, strong economy, and a high standard of living and a wide range of modern education, it seems that many of you have not chanted mantras very often. You just hold onto your arms without using them to accumulate merit. Then, in front of all us Tibetan lamas, do you feel a little bit embarrassed? (Laughs) Please do your best to chant mantras!



4.37: Chojé blessing devotees with khatas

It is not enough for you to just refrain from harming others. You need to further benefit them with a compassionate and altruistic mind. This is the very foundation of Dzogchen practice. The ultimate heart essence of the Buddhadharma is entirely about great compassion. Abandoning the selfish concern for your own benefit and constantly having kind thoughts and doing wholesome deeds for all sentient beings is the cultivation of supreme bodhicitta. Such altruistic practice is indispensable in your spiritual path.

The essential point at the end is to rely on an excellent method to achieve buddhahood. Such a method needs to be free from any fault,

trustworthy, and qualified through the examination of valid cognition. What is this method? It is the Vajrayana path of Secret Mantra, or in particular, the ultimate clear light teaching of the Great Perfection, which is the pinnacle of all vehicles. Diligently engaging solely in Dzogchen practice is the final essential point that can accomplish everything. As such, all Buddhadharma can be summarized into three key points: refraining from harming others, benefiting all living beings, and seeking the path that enables you to benefit beings easily and swiftly in a vast way.

The above are the three crucial points in the practice manual *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. Anyone who wants to receive more on this teaching, please come on time tomorrow on Friday afternoon. That's all for today.



4.38: Khenpo Sodargye serving Choje

BLESSING, ENTRUSTMENT, AND SEALING

On the morning of July 16th, Yidzhin Norbu explained *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* from its beginning until the completion stage, and then simply gave the oral transmission for the part of the Great Perfection. During his teaching, he made the following remarks when talking about the entrustment and sealing of this practice manual.

I have finished the instruction of the virtue in the beginning that belongs to the common vehicles and the instruction of the virtue in the middle that is common to both Sutrayana and Tantrayana. Now, I will continue with the instruction of the virtue in the end that is uncommon and specific only to the Dzogchen path. This has three parts: the preliminary practice, the actual practice, and the concluding practice.

The instructions for the preliminaries mainly focus on the skillful methods to destroy the delusions of the three doors so that body, speech, and mind are completely purified. The instructions for the actual practice are the teachings on trekchö, which reveals the view of original purity, so that you can directly and unmistakably perceive the genuine nature of the mind. The instructions for the concluding part are the teachings on tögal that bring the realization of spontaneous presence so that the practitioner can effortlessly witness the natural unobstructed power of kayas and wisdoms.

The best way of practicing these upadeshas is, first, your actual practice must be guided and instructed by a qualified teacher in person, which is the transmission of direct experience with the master; second, you must have gained a certain level of personal experience on the previous stage of the instructions before you can continue with the next stage. After I've left, you may ask the present Tibetan lamas for the guidance on your actual practice and meditative experience, and they will provide you with detailed instructions. Even if you fail to find any

qualified Dzogchen teachers, if you are able to perfectly practice those preliminaries that I have taught, such a solid and stable practice will enable you to actualize the rest of the teachings with no difficulty at all. I am now blessing you, entrusting, and sealing this precious and secret teaching to all of you.



4.39: Chojé with a mighty look

With my blessing, entrustment, and sealing, I not only wish each of you the ability to actualize this Great Perfection teaching in your mind, but also entrust this enlightened activity to you in the presence of the Three Roots and dharma protectors as my witness with the seal of entrustment that this precious upadesha will flourish when the time is right. By doing so, you will gain the realization of the Great Perfection, and everything will be naturally accomplished.

Other than this, if I give you a detailed explanation on the balance of *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* at this time, I don't think it would be of great benefit. It is like a house that has a flight of eighteen steps at its entrance; you cannot directly fly to the eighteenth step without walking up the first one, the second one, and so on. In the same way, if you do not practice and personally experience all the previous stages

of the instructions, you will never understand the final upadesha even if I teach you day after day and month after month.

Do not be frustrated because you feel the actual practice is difficult to understand. Just exert yourself in the practice of the four thoughts of renouncing samsara, taking refuge, generating bodhicitta, and guru yoga. When you truly actualize all these preliminary teachings in your mind, I can guarantee that you will gain genuine, personal realization of the Great Perfection even if you just read *Placing Buddhahood within Reach* by yourself.

In order to carry on the transmission of the practice manual *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*, I'll read it in Tibetan and give you its entire oral transmission. Please listen carefully with your sincere devotion.

Personally, I feel these remarks given by Chojé at that time are actually an indirect entrustment to all future fortunate beings. For most of you, although you may not have seen the supreme appearance of Yidzhin Norbu in person nor have heard the teachings and instructions directly from him, as long as you finish the entire five hundred thousand preliminary practices conscientiously and hold pure faith in the teaching and your teacher, it will not be too hard for you to understand the Dzogchen teaching by relying on *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. By doing so, you will eventually realize the true reality of the Great Perfection.

THE TEACHING THAT BROUGHT ME CLOSEST TO MANJUSHRI

Jaime Kalfas attended Rinpoche's teachings in Napa Valley, and he related the following words:

In Napa Valley, Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche gave us the empowerment, transmission, and instruction of *Peaceful Manjushri*, a terma revealed by him at Mount Wutai in 1987, only six years before he transmitted it to us; so it was very fresh.

Rinpoche taught in a special way. For me, the teaching on this occasion was not overly polished or overly formal. Occasionally, he would put his mala on his ear. All of us felt he was a really down-to-earth teacher with no pretensions at all.

During that visit, another teaching he had given was *Chetsun Nyingtig*. Some students prefer *Peaceful Manjushri*, some like *Chetsun Nyingtig*. Personally, I related in a deeper way to the *Peaceful Manjushri*. For a very long time, I practiced it daily, but recently I got a little bit sluggish. I think I should pick it up again as my daily practice. At our retreat center, we've done group practice on it once every week.



4.40: Jaime Kalfas now

Sometimes, I feel you cannot get closer to Manjushri than doing this practice! I really like it. When I travel, I may or may not take the practice text with me, but I am sure my recitation of this mantra has never been interrupted.

Later he started to sing the prayer to His Holiness. Then, he stopped and said, "This makes me want to cry. The feeling of his presence is here. Obviously, his blessing is here."

FLYING ON A PRIVATE JET

On the afternoon of July 16th, a patron of Yidzhin Norbu's dharma activities invited him to take an airplane tour on his private jet and to also bless it. He agreed.



4.41: Chojé ready to take an airplane tour on the private jet owned by Mike Feigenberg (first on the left)

When we arrived at the Napa County Airport, we found that there were many private jets parked on the tarmac. Apparently, the number of Americans who own private jets was relatively high. For us, however, even owning a car was unimaginable at that time, not to mention a private jet.

Because of the limited seating, only Chojé, Ani Medron, Lama Mumtso, and the translator boarded the jet. The rest of us waited at the airport. As the jet flew higher and higher, it became increasingly smaller in the sky, finally disappearing out of sight.



4.42: Chojé and the entourage by the private jet



4.43: Chojé at the airport

Since the wind was strong that day, I was a little worried about their safety and kept watching in the direction where the jet disappeared. It turned out that the jet returned very late from another direction! Anyway, as the jet landed safely on the ground, my uneasiness was finally relieved.

Rinpoche appeared to be in a very good mood, saying that the airplane trip was very interesting. As to where exactly they went and what happened during the flight, none of us waiting at the airport ever found out.

THE YANG ZAB NYINGPO

On the afternoon of July 17th, Yidzhin Norbu conferred the *Yang Zab Nyingpo* empowerment, a Vajrakilaya terma revealed by the great tertön Lerab Lingpa. Before the empowerment, Rinpoche gave the following history:



4.44: Western disciples holding khatas, lining up to welcome Chojé

In ancient times, when the eight vidyadharas of India gathered at the Shankarakuta Stupa, each received a casket that contained a particular division of the *Drubpa Kagyad*,^a the *Eight Great Sadhana Teachings*. By practicing the corresponding teaching that each of them received, they became the respective lineage holders of each division of the *Drubpa Kagyad*. At the time they received the caskets, there was one additional casket containing teachings of all eight divisions, which they were not able to open. So, it was placed back inside the Shankarakuta Stupa and buried once again.

At a later time, Guru Padmasambhava revealed this casket that contained all eight divisions from the center of the Shankarakuta Stupa.

^a *sgrub pa bka' brgyad*.

Then in the Red Rock Cave at Chimphu, the solitary place near the glorious Samye Monastery, Guru Rinpoche conferred the complete empowerments of the *Gathering of the Sugatas of the Eight Transmitted Precepts*^a to his nine heart spiritual sons, including the king and ministers. The Eight Great Deities include five wisdom deities, which are Yamantaka, enlightened body; Hayagriva, enlightened speech; Yangdak Heruka, enlightened mind; Chemchok Heruka, enlightened qualities; and Vajrakilaya, enlightened activity; as well as three worldly deities.

During the empowerment, Guru Padmasambhava entrusted the transmission of Vajrakilaya to his consort Yeshe Tsogyal. Then, one of King Trisong Detsen's foremost ministers, the accomplished Mantra practitioner Nanam Dorje Dudjom, the Indestructible Subduer of Mara, repeatedly implored the great Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal to transmit the teachings of Vajrakilaya to him. Yeshe Tsogyal hesitated and sent a message to him, saying, "The time has not yet come for me to transmit the Vajrakilaya teachings. You should prepare extensive offerings for a ganachakra feast and directly request it from Guru Rinpoche."

Following Yeshe Tsogyal's advice, Nanam Dorje Dudjom gathered together fine and excellent offerings for the tsok feast that amazed all the neighboring districts, and he requested the Vajrakilaya teachings from Guru Rinpoche. Successfully, he received the transmission of the entire cycle of Vajrakilaya. When Nanam Dorje Dudjom cast his flower into the mandala during the empowerment, the flower fell upon the deity Vajrakilaya, just as it had happened when Yeshe Tsogyal originally received the empowerment from Guru Padmasambhava. From then on, in the Land of Snows, Nanam Dorje Dudjom's power and proficiency became unrivalled, and he was appointed to be the head of those Secret Mantra practitioners using drums and phurbas.

^a *deshek dupa ka gyad (bde gshegs 'dus pa bka' brgyad).*



4.45: Chojé holding a phurba at the level of his heart



4.46: Chojé with a phurba in his hand

Because of such an auspicious interdependence, all the successive tertons who were reincarnations of Nanam Dorje Dudjom would reveal cycles of hidden treasure teachings of Vajrakilaya. Prior reincarnations of Nanam Dorje Dudjom include Rigdzin Godem, the vidyadhara Vulture Feathers, Rigdzin Pema Trinley, the main holder of the Northern Treasures tradition, and more. The most recent reincarnation of Nanam Dorje Dudjom was the great terton Sogyal Lerab Lingpa, also known as Nyala Sogyal, who was born in Upper Nyarong in Kham. Being a learned and highly accomplished mahasiddha, Terton Sogyal was particularly noted for his complete mastery over the process of revealing terma doctrines and terma objects without any confusion or complication.

Of all termas that Terton Sogyal revealed, the most essential ones are the cycles concerning Vajrakilaya practices. There are three main Vajrakilaya terma cycles revealed by Terton Sogyal: The most extensive cycle, *Yang Sang Tropa, The Quintessential Secret Wrathful Vajrakilaya*; the middle-length cycle, *Yang Nying Pudri, The Razor of the Innermost Essence*; and the most concise or the shortest cycle, *Yang Zab Nyingpo, The Profound Quintessential Heart Essence of Vajrakilaya*. From the time they were revealed, these terma cycles have been continuously transmitted to this day.

Yang Sang Tropa, the most extensive cycle, is an extremely secret practice, as well as extremely complicated and difficult to practice. It is only accessible to those of pure samaya. If others practice it without proper permission and qualification, they will be punished by the dakinis and dharma protectors who guard this teaching. On the contrary, the *Yang Zab Nyingpo*, the most concise cycle of Vajrakilaya, carries immense powerful blessings and is open and accessible to anyone who has faith in it.

Because of the different attributes of these cycles, today in the Land of Tibet, the *Yang Sang Tropa* is not widely disseminated. It is only practiced by some individual practitioners who stay in remote areas

and spend their entire lives in diligent dharma practice. In the case of *Yang Zab Nyingpo*, however, it is widely practiced even by ordinary householders. They take it as a practice to dispel counterproductive circumstances and obstacles to their families and frequently recite it in their own homes.

Generally speaking, if an individual receives the empowerment of any of these three cycles of Vajrakilaya, they can practice all three. On this particular occasion, I will confer the *Yang Zab Nyingpo* empowerment, gathering the essential points of the vast cycle of Vajrakilaya.

THE QUALITIES OF THE *THIRTY-SEVEN PRECEPTS OF THE BODHISATTVAS*

When the empowerment was complete, Choje gave the oral transmission of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas* to all participants. He briefly introduced this text as follows:

During the past nine days, I have given you the empowerments and instructions of the Great Perfection that can ripen your mind stream and bring you to liberation. As I mentioned earlier, it is important for you to focus entirely on the practice of Dzogchen.

For those who are not able to practice or who don't know how to practice Dzogchen, or those who also want to study and practice the dharma stage-by-stage as well as practice Dzogchen, they should follow the bodhisattva path. The core teaching of the bodhisattva path lies in the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas*. Now I will give you the oral transmission for this text.

The author of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas* is Tokme Zangpo, an emanation of Avalokiteshvara. In the place where he lived, even the animals who were natural enemies of each other, such as sheep, wolves, hawks, and sparrows, did not prey upon one another,

but rather cared for each other, behaved in harmony, and played together. He was such a remarkable bodhisattva that the signs of his perfection of bodhicitta were expressed in the external environment.

Regarding the merit of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas*, there is no need to mention the benefits and advantages of putting it into actual practice; just hearing its words alone can plant the seed of liberation in the mind stream. The words of the text are fairly easy to understand, and its practice is not difficult to implement. Even without a teacher to explain the meaning, you would find it easy to understand simply by reading each verse.

If you are to practice the Great Perfection or the Vajrayana practices in general, it is required that you first rely upon a qualified teacher and then receive the corresponding empowerment, oral transmission, and instructions from the teacher. Only after you comprehend the meaning completely will you be allowed to engage in the actual practice. Otherwise, if you attempt to read and practice certain tantric teachings only through the intellect without following a teacher and receiving the corresponding empowerment and instructions, such behavior will only cause great harm to you rather than bringing any benefit. However, in terms of the *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas*, even if you don't have access to a teacher who can grant empowerment and instructions, you are able to do this practice by yourself. It is such a straightforward teaching that it is convenient to implement.

As I mentioned yesterday, the teachings of the Secret Mantrayana must be kept secret. Except for those who have received empowerment and maintained the same samaya vows as you, you must not share what you have received with others. This *Thirty-Seven Precepts of the Bodhisattvas*, however, is open to all sentient beings regardless of their faculties. There is nothing that you should reserve in terms of the content of this text. The wider it is spread, the far greater benefit it will bring. Wherever it is flourishing, all kinds of negative circumstances, such as hunger, warfare, and conflicts, will be eliminated, and people's

longevity, wealth, and well-being will increase and prosper. So, this text provides a necessary method that can bring benefit and happiness in the widest possible sense.



4.47: With loving care, Chojé looking at people around

This time, the four dharma centers or any of the listeners in this gathering did not come to me to request this transmission. However, out of a purely altruistic intention to bring you benefit, I decided to give you the transmission of this text, which is a teaching that grants liberation upon hearing. Because of its surpassing profundity, I have taken it as my primary practice since a very young age. I have received this teaching repeatedly from over one hundred great masters, and without any exaggeration, I have taught it one thousand times to hundreds of thousands of people who have karmic connections with me. I do believe offering this transmission to you today can bring you benefit as well.

If you intend to rely on me and act as a truthful disciple, you should commit the text to memory. While you may not be able to practice the instructions of the entire text on a daily basis, please aspire to practice at least one stanza every day. This is my requirement of you.



4.48: Chojé joining his palms with a phurba

Three Pieces of Earnest Advice

This time, due to the great efforts of some lamas, we have been able to establish a closer connection through dharma teachings. You have shown strong faith and interest in the dharma and are doing very well in many aspects. Now that we are about to separate, I would like to leave you with three pieces of earnest advice.

The first piece of advice is because all of you are followers of Buddhism, it is best to use the Buddhadharma to benefit your families, friends, and whoever is connected with you. It will be even greater to guide them onto the path of Buddhism. I have explained the reason a few times. For me personally, I came to the West not for my personal fame or wealth, but with a sincere wish to benefit westerners through the dharma. I hope that you will accomplish the same wish together with me.

The nature of the Buddhadharma is such that it stands up to any rigorous examination with reasoning and logic, all of which can prove its authenticity. Besides, all the great masters of the past proved its validity through their personal experience and realization. Even if you were to examine it for a hundred years, you would just become increasingly impressed by the dharma, generating great delight and affection toward it. Never will you come to a point where you think that it is false or unreliable.

All of you possess the precious human existence, but there is no guarantee that you will obtain it again in your future lifetimes. While enjoying the extraordinarily fortunate circumstances in this life, you should employ this precious human body to practice authentic dharma. If you fail to do so, this life will be of no meaning. It will be like a body without a heart or as if you went to a land of gold but returned empty-handed without taking any riches. In that case, you would be laughed at by others for wasting such a valuable opportunity.

If you intend to traverse the correct path in this life, following the path of Buddhism is a perfect choice. When we say *following the path of Buddhism*, it is not enough to simply attend a refuge ceremony. You should constantly supplicate the Buddha, venerate the guru, the sangha, and other objects deserving our veneration, and have a strong conviction in the law of cause and effect. You must be fully aware that positive actions lead to pleasure, and negative actions lead to suffering. Only when you commit yourself to the Three Jewels like this will you become authentic Buddhist practitioners.

The second piece of advice is that the very essence of Buddhism lies in loving kindness and compassion. It is important that all of you constantly exert every effort to cultivate loving kindness and compassion toward all sentient beings, wishing them to be free from suffering and attain happiness. Once these two great qualities have arisen in you, whatever virtuous wish you have, whether it is worldly or transcendental, will be fulfilled without any obstacles. Ultimately, you will attain the omniscient state of buddhahood. Therefore, being aware of the enormous benefits of loving kindness and compassion, please contemplate and practice them repeatedly as much as you can.

The third piece of advice is to please single-pointedly focus on the practice of the clear light Great Perfection. The reason that I emphasize this is that other teachings are more or less subject to decline in this degenerate age, but generally speaking, the Great Perfection is flourishing and now is the right time for the Dzogchen teachings to guide and enlighten beings. In the case of the US in particular, I personally have a strong feeling that the Great Perfection is the single most beneficial path for dharma practitioners to follow. Other teachings are truly difficult to bring great benefit to beings in this modern age.

In terms of the auspicious interdependent origination in the past and present, I think you are very connected with Dzogchen. When Tibetan Buddhism first came to America less than four decades ago,

its dissemination began with Dzogchen. Now, if you want to actually practice the dharma, Dzogchen is still the best choice. The reason is that the primary practice of your lamas is Dzogchen, and they are not only well-trained in the teachings, but also very experienced in personal practice. So, you can receive all the necessary instructions from them. Besides, you have maintained deep faith and devotion in the Great Perfection. Hence, with all these favorable conditions, practicing this path will bring you enormous benefit.



4.49: Western disciples happily taking photos with Chojé

In the Land of Tibet, I never have explained the Dzogchen teachings as extensively as I am doing here at this time. Tens of thousands of my students have never received such a detailed explanation from me, not even my disciples who are as precious to me as my heart. However, this very first time that we have met, I have given you all these teachings without any reservation. Considering the great benefits these teachings will bring to Americans now and in the future, I believe it is necessary for me to give such extensive teachings. So please exert every effort to

practice the Dzogchen teachings I have transmitted to you. This is my sincere hope.

UNFORGETTABLE DEPARTURE

On the afternoon of July 18th, the last day of the gathering in Napa Valley, Yidzhin Norbu conferred a longevity empowerment called *Cloudbank of Amrita*^a revealed by Tertön Lerab Lingpa.



4.50: Chojé conferring the longevity empowerment

^a *dudtsi trin pung (bdud rtsi'i sprin phung).*

To celebrate the successful completion of the dharma activities in Napa Valley, Chojé led the participants in a grand ganachakra feast. During the tsok feast, the lamas offered a precious mandala and a splendid tormo to Rinpoche. There were five female American practitioners wearing five-buddha crowns and dressed like the dakinis of the five families. They performed the vajra dance with five-colored khatas, supplicating for the long life of Yidzhin Norbu. On behalf of the four dharma centers who sponsored the event, Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche expressed gratitude to Rinpoche.



4.51: Five female American practitioners performing vajra dance, supplicating Chojé's long life

When the tsok offering ceremony was over, amidst the reluctance of the crowd, Chojé waved his hand and departed. With tears in their eyes, everyone kept applauding enthusiastically for a long time. By and large, westerners tend to be rational and calm; however, that day they showed their feelings for Rinpoche because he had given them the profound pith instructions and brought incredible benefit to them. So, amid their gratitude, these students felt particularly sad to part from Yidzhin Norbu.



4.52: Chojé joyfully waving goodbye to everyone

The schedule in Napa Valley had been very tight. Every day, except for Khenpo Rinpoche giving empowerments or teachings, the balance of the time was arranged for the dharma teachings and empowerments by other members of the entourage. Either Lama Mumtso conferred empowerments, or Khenpo Namdrol or I taught and answered questions. The schedule for the entire event was full in both mornings and afternoons. Here, I will not go into the details of all these activities.



4.53: Lama Mumtso conferring empowerment





4.54: Khenpo Namdrol giving teaching



4.55: Khenpo Sodargye answering questions from western Buddhists

For me, being able to accompany Chojé for his overseas dharma trip and to experience various customs and cultures was truly a blessing. On top of that, I also received so many rare and precious empowerments, instructions, and transmissions, especially the extraordinary pith instructions of the *Chetsun Nyingtig* and *Placing Buddhahood within Reach*. For a dharma practitioner, nothing was more important than these. Even if I had died at that moment, I would have had no regret.

MEMORY THAT TRANSCENDS TIME

During the ten days of teachings and empowerments in Napa Valley, many American practitioners gained various levels of realization on the nature of mind and received inconceivable blessings from Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche. These experiences were so profound that even after thirty years, their faith in him is still vibrant when they remember him.

Lon Hill, the man who had served Chojé breakfast told us the following:

Knowing just a little about the dharma, I was quite new to Buddhism when Khenpo Rinpoche came. However, I was assigned to serve breakfast for him, along with two other Buddhists. Honestly, I was very nervous, but also felt very honored.



4.56: Lon Hill now

I loved Rinpoche's teachings, particularly his instruction on the four thoughts that turn the mind onto the path. They were crystal-clear, straightforward, and penetrating. Every time I practice, I feel that the meaning of living in this world is nothing other than practicing the dharma.

Also, I've found the guru yoga practice of *Peaceful Manjushri* has been so special, and every time I practice it, I feel I can see Rinpoche in person.

Another man, John Swearingen, one of the videographers for Chojé's teachings at Napa Valley, also shared his personal experience:

Initially, I knew very little about Rinpoche, but later I realized a person did not need to know his background at all, because what you experienced in his presence was so different. Although our generation especially relies

on logic, the blessing of accomplished masters like him similar to the power of guru yoga is hard to explain rationally.

As the cameraman for that event, I had the privilege to look at Rinpoche very closely right off the stage while he was blessing every participant after giving an empowerment. I stood by the camera and looked at him. Sometimes, I looked at him through the lense, sometimes directly. Although people



4.57: John Swearingen now

blocked my view while walking in front of the camera, nobody disturbed me or asked me to leave. So, each time for about thirty minutes, I felt like the entire world was nothing except Rinpoche. The blessing I had was so powerful that it is obviously still here within my heart.

The practice manual of *Peaceful Manjushri* is not part of my daily practice, but I always have this small text with me. Sometimes, I take it out to review and practice a little bit. I am very sure that some of the lamas from our gompa who received this teaching from Rinpoche have been practicing it regularly for years.

John also mentioned a rare experience in His Holiness' presence:

On the last day of Rinpoche's stay at Ati Ling, he was requested to give an animal blessing. So many people brought their pets to the center. My wife and I also brought our dog there. Like water and fire, our dog has been a sworn enemy of Robert's cat. When they got together, they started to fight. Other dogs and cats were also busy fighting and making loud noises. We tried to calm them down, but nothing worked.

While we were so worried this might be too much for Rinpoche, he arrived. After he chanted some sounds, immediately all the dogs and cats became as quiet as rabbits and acted as if nothing had happened a short time ago.

Our dog and Robert's cat were cuddling together with their noses almost touching each other. We were so amazed.

Since it is so incredible, even today, many people still remember it. You might hear other people mention this to you.

SET OUT FOR RIGDZIN LING



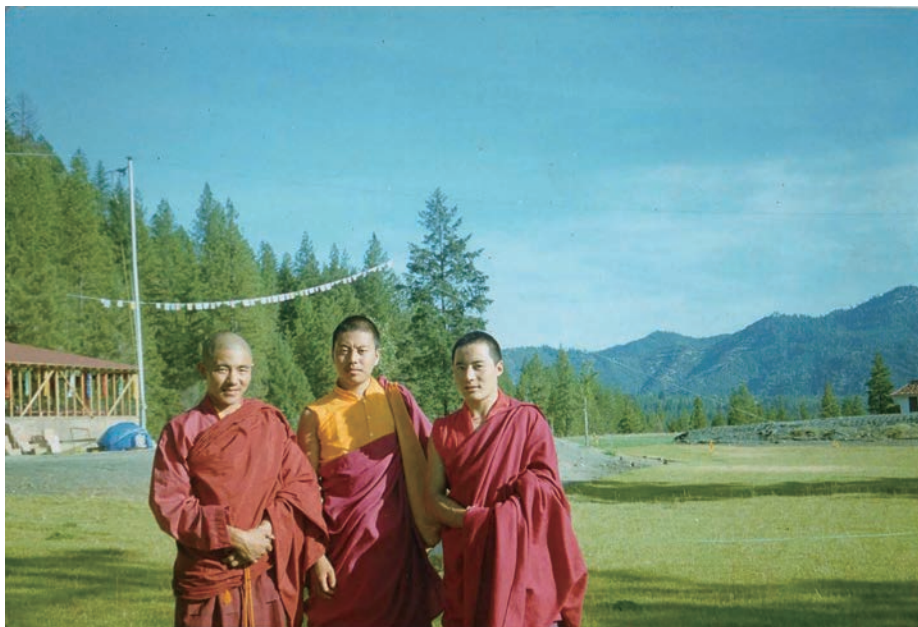
4.58: Rigdzin Ling

Since all the dharma activities at Napa Valley were complete, we left there and drove three hours to Rigdzin Ling on the morning of July 19th. It was a dharma center established by Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, built in a peaceful and pleasant environment, and surrounded by dense, tall forests. It was an ideal place for dharma practice. On the hill behind the center, many retreat houses were scattered among the woods.

In the afternoon, Chojé took a rest at the center. With some lamas from Qinghai as my guides, I toured this sacred place, chatting with them on the grass and taking some photos as well. In the evening, Khenpo Rinpoche conferred the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment.



4.59: A rainbow appearing at the center



4.60: Khenpo Sodargye and the two lamas from Qinghai



4.61: Chojé conferring the *Tendrel Nyesel* empowerment

As scheduled, we would leave the center the next morning. Before leaving, many people took their pets, such as cats, dogs, and birds, to Chojé, asking for his blessing. This was not originally scheduled but many people had already come and waited. Even some who lived far away had brought their pets to the center quite early in the day.

Wednesday
July 21, 1993

137th Year, Number 29



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2 Sections

BUDGET: Approve tax or take big

By SALLY MORRIS

Trinity Journal Reporter

Trinity County supervisors are continuing their deliberations with county department heads and the public this week regarding budget reductions for the 1993-94 fiscal year.

They hope to approve a final budget this Friday.

Expenditure totals have been adjusted daily as tentative decisions are made regarding services and personnel, and the board has taken action to restore some of the 20 positions targeted for layoff in the preliminary budget adopted at the end of June.

Since that time, general fund revenue projections have been increased

by action taken by the board to levy a half-cent utility tax on electricity consumption and telephone use at least until November, when voters will decide whether to react to it or not. Some other revenue projections have also increased, including the timber yield tax, which is estimated to be up \$100,000 from the original estimate of \$400,000 in the preliminary budget.

At this point, proposed cutbacks still include some reduced hours for general fund employees to equal eight days off in the year instead of the 26 days off proposed in the preliminary budget. The eight days off equals a four percent pay cut for the employees affected instead of a 10 percent cut.

A decision is pending regarding the proposed elimination of a two percent salary increase scheduled in December for miscellaneous employees.

Some Funding Restored

The board of supervisors has taken tentative action to restore some of the funding that had been proposed for reduction in parks maintenance, libraries, animal control and the sheriff's department based on the presumption of additional revenue to be provided by voter approval of the utility tax. Should the tax be voted down in November, additional cuts will be required.

The other unknown is whether voters will approve a statewide half-cent sales tax increase that has been ex-

tended by Governor Pete Wilson until November. The county's proposed budget includes the estimated sales tax revenue for the time the tax has been extended, but another \$143,000 will be available if the voters accept the tax beyond November.

During deliberations last week, the board gave tentative approval to an \$85,000 budget increase over last year's level for the data processing department to purchase computer equipment and fill a vacant programmer analyst position.

By moving forward with the computer upgrade, it is the county's goal to increase automation, primarily in the auditor, treasurer, collector and as-

essor functions. The equipment to be purchased is intended to eventually replace the main frame system for a completely open system accessible to all departments. The equipment purchased this year can be added to later as the funding tentatively approved for the acquisition still falls about \$70,000 short of what was requested.

"The objective is to speed up processes, simplify them and concentrate on the three offices mentioned to get them working together—less paper pushing and better use of the people you have. We will get more done with less people, more timeliness and greater accuracy," said County Administrative Officer Don Benedetti.

"It requires approval of voters that we hope that the community will support," commented Leffler.

"The county does more work than the equipment said."

Supervisors he admits is right now, but the elimination of the pre-

(Con-

Libraries

By MIKE WENNINGER

Trinity Journal Editor

In the end, everybody agreed that the Trinity County libraries should be open at least 40 hours a week and should provide basic library services.

But so far, there isn't agreement on how to pay for that.

The Board of Supervisors last Thursday restored the library system's fiscal 1993-94 budget to the requested sum of \$146,546. This amount is 4.5 percent less than the \$153,507 the libraries spent last year.

The county's preliminary budget would have cut the county libraries from 40 hours to 24 hours, or three days a week, meaning a 40 percent

salary loss for the library clerks.

The supervisors unanimously approved restoring the budget to the higher level. Board member Rosa Burgess, who made the motion, remarked that if utility tax revenue does not materialize, "get a library parcel tax."

(A parcel tax is a property tax collected in the form of a special assessment.)

Supervisor Arnold Whitridge commented that ideally operation of the library should not be tied to passage of a utility tax.

Board Chairman Matt Leffler responded, "If the utility tax doesn't pass,

(Continued on page 8)

Parks

The public hearings on the Trinity County budget showed that parks are something citizens feel shouldn't be messed with—just like police protection, libraries and animal control.

Parks came up last Wednesday when John Whittaker, county superintendent of buildings and grounds, was discussing his department's budget with the board of supervisors. It was revealed that Lowden Park in Weaverville and Hayfork Park would get little maintenance and restricted use under the proposed budget.

In fact, the groundskeeper for Hayfork Park, Bill Lancaster, had been removed from the payroll July 1, and it was pointed out that the Lowden Park budget would not even permit electric power during winter months.

Several Hayfork residents spoke to the supervisors during the hearing. Betty Felch commented, "Mr. Lancaster's extraordinary efforts have made both our park and cemetery places of which Trinity County can be proud; being laid off seems rather poor pay for being a dedicated employee to this county."

Felch also cited tourism and remarked, "Our park provides the only public restroom facilities between Douglas City and Forest Glen."

The Hayfork Garden Club sent a letter of protest.

Several Weaverville residents expressed concern about very restricted use of Lowden Park for up to half the

year. A spokesman for the Weaver City Street Rodders said the group's annual August show at the park attracted several hundred visitors to this area. He said good parks are an economic boost for Trinity County.

Supervisor Rosa Burgess insisted that Lancaster should be rehired. Supervisor Arnold Whitridge remarked, "This (parks) is one thing that people want."

Burgess said he could support a one percent increase in the transient occupancy tax (TOT) to help the parks. This caused a discussion of whether the TOT should be diverted from its chief use of funding promotion of tourism in the county.

Burgess retorted, "It's fine to advertise and ask people to come to your home, but when they get there and see that it's dry and brown and dirty, they're not likely to stay and spend money."

The proposed budget had allocated nothing to the Hayfork Park, compared with the Building and Grounds Department's request of \$18,229. Lowden Park's allotment was \$44,460, compared with a request of \$68,952.

Whittaker said a combined budget of \$78,000 for both parks would suffice and would permit rehiring Lancaster. The board approved that sum, but stipulated that it would depend on getting new revenue, either from a TOT increase or from a tax on utilities if that eventually is approved by county voters.



On his first trip to the United States, His Holiness Jigmed Phuntsog Jungnay from Tibet visited the Chagadori Corps Foundation's facilities in Junction City Monday. Here he speaks to a group assembled at the facility that helps to preserve Tibetan Buddhism. At right is Chagadori Tulku Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama who lives at the foundation's headquarters in Junction City. (Photo by Phil Nelson)

Supervisors split 3-2 on imposing utility tax now

By SALLY MORRIS

Trinity Journal Reporter

Trinity County residents will soon be paying a half-cent utility tax on electricity and telephone use following the Board of Supervisors' action last week imposing the tax to help balance the county budget and restore some services and personnel proposed to be eliminated in the preliminary budget.

The board split 3-2 in support of collecting the tax as soon as possible. And in three days, an ordinance implementing the tax was drafted and approved, effective immediately. The board unanimously agreed to put the matter to the voters on the November 2

so.

It is estimated that the tax will generate approximately \$400,000 in additional annual revenue. However, even if county voters support the tax measure, the revenue generated will not be enough to eliminate the entire budget deficit of about \$600,000. The board is continuing in final budget hearings this week to determine what cuts still need to be made.

Costs \$3 a Month

County Administrative Officer Don Benedetti has estimated that the average monthly cost of the tax or electricity will be \$3 per household based on the average use of 400 kilowatt hours. His

telephone service users in the county, but includes a provision allowing the board to exempt any class of persons or utility service users from paying the tax. There has been discussion about exempting customers outside the Trinity County Public Utility District from paying the tax, but the ordinance at this time does not include such an exemption.

Other provisions of the ordinance reserve the revenue entirely for local county programs and services, and prohibit the board of supervisors from increasing the rate of the tax in the future without the vote of the electorate. This provision was included for reference to

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The Trinity supervisors took legal action against the county employees of public at regular bus

A motion Rosa Burgess Huddleston recently made the employer that such a county's pe- ing while t being some motion fails advice to it County's not present- ed in May and board's motion indi gal counsel action they recent ruling

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Courthouse

This was the second time that Chojé bestowed blessings on pets, after he had done so at Ati Ling. American people loved animals, they treated them as their family, and would take them wherever they went. Some dogs were physically large and appeared aggressive, so for safety reasons, we didn't want them to go near Rinpoche. But out of love and compassion, he recited the name of Buddha Ratnashikhin (Rinchen Tsuktor), the Mani mantra, and more for them, delighting everyone. Although thirty years have passed, that scene is still vivid to many of those who were present, and that moment remains heartwarming and noteworthy in their memory.

ARRIVED AT TASHI CHOLING



4.63: Chojé and his entourage arriving at Tashi Choling

On the morning of July 20th, we left Rigdzin Ling and set off for Tashi Choling in southern Oregon. On the road trip, we enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the West Coast. Its rich forests and mountains along the way were quite similar to those from the Land of Tibet, which refreshed all of us along the way.

The scenery that impressed me the most was Mount Shasta, a snow-capped, dormant volcano with an elevation of 14,163 feet. According to the record of eruptions over the last ten thousand years, at least one eruption occurs every eight hundred to six hundred years at Mount Shasta. Native Americans in the area believe it to be the center of the world, and it is as holy to them as Kang Rinpoche to Tibetans. In recent decades, being connected to a mystical power that emanates peace and harmony, it has attracted a lot of followers of spirituality, such as yoga practition-



4.64: Mount Shasta

ers. It has become a site of meditation, holy temples, and shrines, and is also known as a destination that houses many spiritual retreats throughout the year. Practitioners there believe this sacred mountain is endowed with inexpressible magical power, which enables them to sustain their inner peace. When we took a break at the foot of the mountain, Chojé got out of the car and enjoyed the mountain view. He also listened to some locals talking about the mysteries of Mount Shasta.



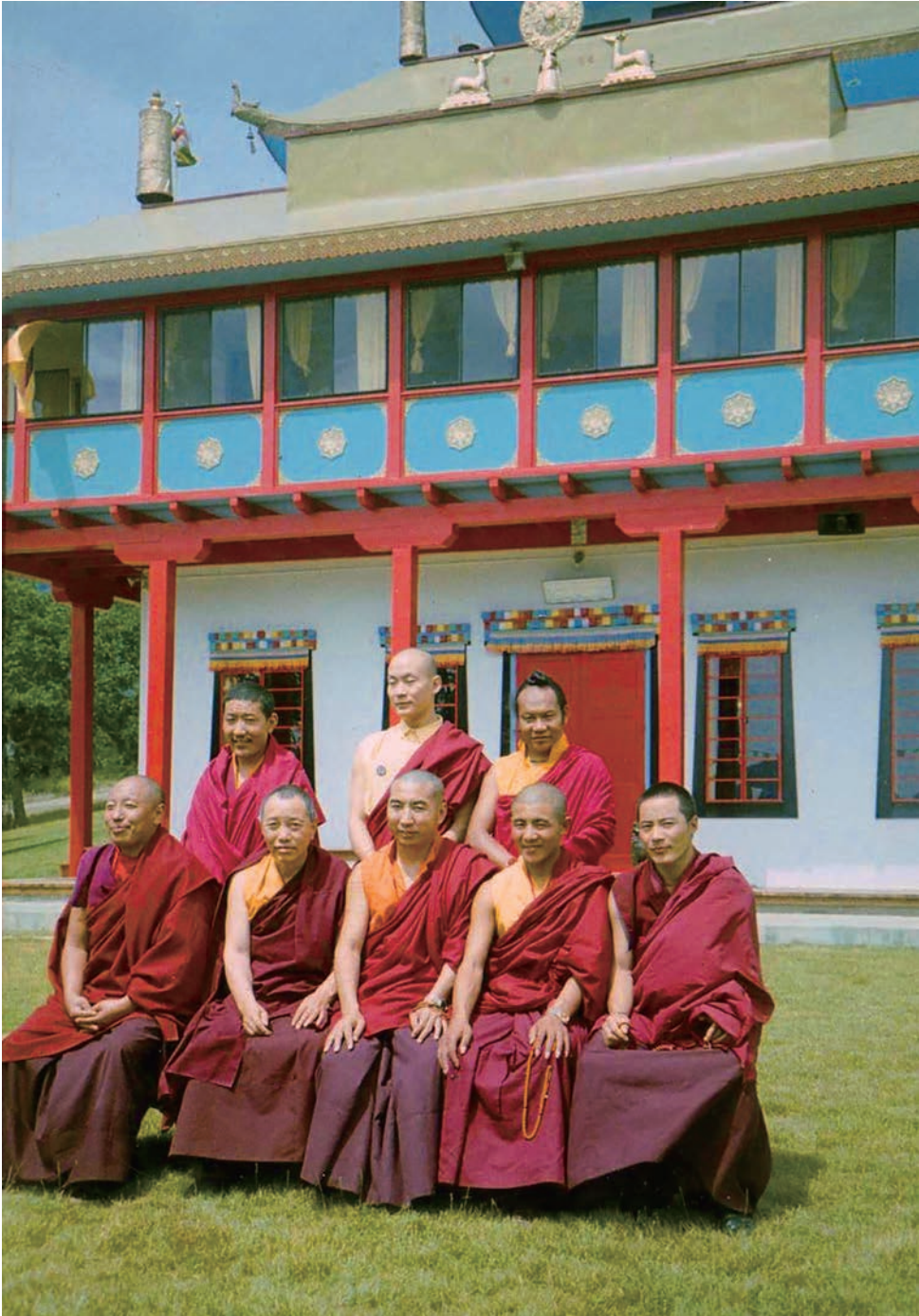
4.65: Chojé, Lama Mumtso, and other lamas consecrating the shrine hall and buddha statues inside

After two- or three-hours' drive, we arrived at Tashi Choling, the main temple of Gyatrul Rinpoche located to the south of Ashland, Oregon. People at the temple greeted Yidzhin Norbu with a grand reception ceremony in accordance with the Tibetan Buddhist tradition and made offerings to him with the representatives of the Three Jewels and other materials. They also invited Rinpoche to consecrate the main shrine hall of Tashi Choling and the buddha statues inside. In the afternoon, he gave some teachings to the local Buddhists.



4.66: Chojé in the middle of a dharma teaching

In the evening in the temple, Chojé watched a video of Dudjom Rinpoche conferring a Vajrasattva empowerment. He said to us, "I was eager to meet Dudjom Rinpoche; unfortunately, however, I don't have this opportunity in this life since he has already passed into parinirvana. In order to build a connection with him, we can watch this video recording and recite the liturgy when it needs to be recited during the empowerment, as if we were receiving the empowerment in front of Dudjom Rinpoche in person."



4.67: Front row: Lingtrul Rinpoche, Gyatrul Rinpoche, Khenpo Namdrol, Khenpo Sodargye, and Rigdzin Nyima; back row: Jigme Rangdrol, Ngodrup Dorje, and Sonam Tsering

This empowerment was given in Sikkim or India, and the video was of high quality. After watching the video, Khenpo Rinpoche seemed to have truly received the empowerment from Dudjom Rinpoche. For ordinary practitioners, empowerments and transmissions received through videos cannot be considered genuine transmissions, so they cannot be transmitted forward to others. However, in terms of personal practice, you can receive special blessings through the video and audio recordings of great masters.

LAUGHTER INSIDE THE TENT

On the morning of July 21st, Gyatrul Rinpoche offered a red, outdoor camping tent to Yidzhin Norbu, which was already put up on the grass. Rinpoche seemed to like it a lot and said it could be used in the summer when we were back in the Land of Tibet.



4.68: The tent offered to Chojé by Gyatrul Rinpoche

The tent looked small, but unexpectedly all thirteen of us managed to sit inside, and it didn't look crowded at all. To bless this tent, Chojé first led us in chanting *Wangdu* and the mantra of the nine principal magnetizing deities. Then,

he started to chant the mantra of the Yellow Dzambhala. During the chanting, he suddenly stopped and said, “Why I am chanting the Yellow Dzambhala mantra? It seems this is a special interdependent origination! I have been a poor and content monk these past sixty years, and now as I am older than sixty, my wealth will gradually increase.” Indeed, as Chojé predicted, his wealth and possessions increased more and more from then on.

Rinpoche jokingly continued this topic and said, “It is very good to be wealthy. A monk from my hometown named Jamyang always says that all phenomena arise from possessions. In the Tibetan language, *cause* and *possession* are the same syllable, because the Buddha taught that all phenomena arise from causes and conditions, that monk misunderstands it as all phenomena arise from possessions. So, he frequently says that getting rich is very essential in practicing the dharma and that all dharma practitioners must be wealthy!” Chojé mimicked Jamyang’s tone of voice, and we all burst out with laughter, our bodies shaking back and forth.



4.69: Chojé in the tent

Then, a student offered yogurt to Chojé. Seeing it, he said, “Yogurt was my basic food when I studied at Changma Hermitage in Sershul. To create an auspicious interdependence today, instead of using bowls, I will give each one of you some yogurt in your hands.” We all joyfully held our hands to receive the yogurt given by Rinpoche.



4.70: To create an auspicious interdependence, Chojé giving yogurt to everyone in their hands

While eating the yogurt, Chojé talked about Dudjom Rinpoche, “I heard that some of you would like to follow Dudjom Rinpoche and aspire to take rebirth in Guru Rinpoche’s Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain, but I aspire to be reborn in Sukhavati. As long as I am born there, I can easily and swiftly go to the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain at any time I wish. As Chakme Rinpoche said in his *An Aspiration for Birth in the Pure Realm of Sukhavati*:^a

*In Potala, Alakavati,
Chamaradvipa, and Oddiyana;
In a billion nirmanakaya realms,*

^a *nam dag dechen zhing gi monlam (rnam dag bde chen zhing gi smon lam).*

*May I meet a billion Avalokiteshvaras, Taras,
Vajrapanis, and Padmakaras.
May I present oceans of offerings to them
And receive empowerment and profound instructions.
May I quickly then return unimpeded to my own residence in
Sukhavati.*

However, once you are born in the Copper-Colored Mountain, it may not be that easy if you want to visit Sukhavati and then return to your abode. Khenpo Namdrol, Gyatrul Rinpoche, do you aspire to take rebirth in the Glorious Copper-Colored Mountain? I think all the others will follow me to be born in Sukhavati.” Hearing these words, we all laughed heartily.

Yidzhin Norbu continued, “When I was in the Land of Tibet, I truly wished to have an opportunity to meet Dudjom Rinpoche in this life. One day, I had a dream where a person told me, ‘The mind of His Holiness Dudjom Rinpoche is now concentrating on the pure realms. You two will not have the chance to meet in this lifetime.’ Later, I learned that Dudjom Rinpoche rarely spoke for two or three years, and his mind seemed to be outside the human world. Just as the dream indicated, I didn’t have the chance to meet him.”

Suddenly Rinpoche remembered something and asked, “Who revealed the sadhana that Dudjom Rinpoche used for the empowerment, the one that we watched in the video last night?” Gyatrul Rinpoche answered, “It must be a terma revealed by Dudjom Rinpoche himself.”

For some time, Chojé and all of us talked about many topics, and the sound of our laughter continued to emanate from the tent. As I listened to the conversation, I looked at the tent and thought about how to take it back home; because it was a double-layered tent, it was very heavy.



4.71: Hearty laughter keeping emanating from the tent

THE SITE WHERE A TREASURE VASE WAS BURIED

Later, Gyatrul Rinpoche invited Yidzhin Norbu to go to a sacred place nearby by car. It was a smooth hillside covered by grass and surrounded by trees. Gyatrul Rinpoche pointed to a particular tree and said to Khenpo Rinpoche:

On the tenth day of the sixth Tibetan lunar month in 1980, Dudjom Rinpoche came to Ashland from San Francisco. It was the same day that you founded Larung Gar Buddhist Academy. He took a helicopter and landed on this mountain top with his wife Rigdzin Wangmo, his son Shenphen Dawa and Tulku Pema Wangyal. Back then, there was no road, only this flat area.



4.72: The area where the helicopter Dudjom Rinpoche rode landed

I held a treasure vase and waited here in advance to receive them. When Dudjom Rinpoche arrived, he picked a spot and buried the treasure vase. He then snapped off a twig, planted it in the spot where the treasure vase was buried and hung a white silk scarf on it, saying, “Those who practice here sincerely will have the opportunity to obtain the rainbow body.” Dudjom Rinpoche then performed the Earth Ritual and recited prayers for about two hours, after which he and his retinue took the helicopter back to the airport. Amazingly, after a few years, the twig Dudjom Rinpoche planted has grown into this big tree.



4.73: The spot where the treasure vase was buried

Then, His Holiness recited many prayers and blessed the place.

CONSECRATION OF THE VAJRASATTVA STATUE



4.74: Chojé and the entourage beside the Vajrasattva statue

In the afternoon, Gyatrul Rinpoche and the students at Tashi Choling invited Chojé to consecrate the large Vajrasattva statue. At the request of H.H. Dudjom Rinpoche and to purify all obscurations and remove obstacles for establishing the dharma at Tashi Choling, the first activity Gyatrul Rinpoche performed on this sacred land was to build a 35-foot-



4.75: The outdoor Vajrasattva statue at Tashi Choling

high statue of Vajrasattva, with the help of Chagdud Tulku Rinpoche, the artist Ngodrup Rongé, and many devoted students. Also, because Gyatrul

Rinpoche was entrusted by Tertön Kunzang Nyima to be the treasure owner of a Vajrasattva practice, the statue was built to enhance this auspicious connection. It is the only large outdoor Vajrasattva statue in the US and is now accompanied by a 20-foot-high statue of White Tara on one side and Green Tara on the other. In front of the Vajrasattva statue, there are prayer wheels filled with the hundred syllable mantra of Vajrasattva, and behind is a Mani prayer wheel room filled with millions of mantras, including Amitabha and Amitayus, as well as Guru Rinpoche and Avalokiteshvara.



4.76: Chojé consecrating the Vajrasattva statue

Yidzhin Norbu circumambulated the statues, made aspirations in front of them, and then performed a consecration ritual for a long time. It was a bright, sunny day, and the white daisies clustered around the statues were in full bloom. Rinpoche seemed very happy, feeling that it was fortunate to have these excellent representatives of the Three Jewels in the US and that they would certainly bring great benefit to numerous sentient beings.



4.77: Chojé in the clusters of white daisies and the warmth of the sunshine

PITH INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE LIVING AND DYING

In the evening, according to the request of the lamas and students, Khenpo Rinpoche gave a teaching on phowa, bestowed a longevity empowerment, and gave the transmission of the longevity sadhana at the Unitarian Church in Ashland. I assume most readers of this book know how to practice phowa and have received longevity empowerments, but in order to make Chojé's special teachings on these two topics accessible to everyone, I decided to compile them in their entirety into this book.

Now, you have obtained the precious human rebirth that is very difficult to obtain. Not only have you obtained the precious human rebirth, you have also met a qualified spiritual teacher. Not only have you met a qualified spiritual teacher, you also have the precious opportunity to receive the vast teachings of the Buddhadharma from

the teacher. However, the precious human life does not last forever, and it is unpredictable. You are certain to die, but how and when you are going to die, as well as the causes of your death, cannot be predicted.



4.78: Chojé on the dharma throne inside the church

Contemplating the uncertainty of this human life, you need to train your mind repeatedly through dharma practice and try your best to renounce the worldly activities of this life because at the time of death, wealth and possessions, power and status, fame and popularity, status and beauty are of no use at all. Neither can any of your friends and family members accompany you on the way to death, nor is there any way for you to take even a mouthful of food with you; you will have to leave empty-handed for an unknown place. The only thing of any use at the moment of death is the supreme dharma, while the things that are harmful for sure are the negative deeds that you previously committed. So, no matter who you are, now is the time for you to determine what is beneficial from what is harmful and engage in virtuous activity while you still have the freedom to do so.

Most of you may work for five days a week and only have two days to rest, and you probably spend the two-day weekend on entertainment,

such as drinking, singing, and dancing. Like that, if you have a strong attachment to this life and do not engage in virtuous activity, at the moment of death, you will beat your breast and weep with great remorse. If you haven't accumulated any virtuous karma but dream to obtain a good rebirth, you are truly cheating yourself and others. Therefore, do not indulge in ordinary concerns, such as acquiring wealth and property. You should be your own master on the path of liberation and try your best to persevere in practicing pure dharma.

Many religious traditions are of benefit to both the present life and future lifetimes, and among them, Buddhism is the most supreme. This can be validated by Buddhist scriptural sources and logical reasoning. It also has been proved by the personal realization of numerous dharma practitioners. There are a great number of methods of spiritual practice in Buddhism, and among them, there is one method that is very easy to apply and is of great benefit. What is it? It is the practice of praying to Buddha Amitabha single-pointedly for taking rebirth in Sukhavati immediately after death. This is the essence of Buddhism.

If practitioners of other religious traditions can perform this practice, whether Hindu, Christian, or any other religious followers, instead of incurring any fault, they will gain immense benefit, including all accomplishments declared in their own doctrines. This practice is a marvelous method to fulfill good wishes all at once, so please do not

hold a sectarian attitude and neglect it. Everyone should pray to Buddha Amitabha and aspire to be reborn in Sukhavati. It is indispensable for you because of its great benefit, no matter which religious tradition you follow.



4.79: Chojé conferring phowa and the longevity empowerment at the Unitarian Church

Phowa

Therefore, I would like to teach you the virtuous path of praying to Lord Buddha Amitabha for taking rebirth in Sukhavati. First reflect, “From now until I reach the ultimate state of buddhahood, I take refuge in Buddha Amitabha and the bodhisattvas surrounding him, and I dedicate all merit that I accumulate to all sentient beings, wishing them to take rebirth in Sukhavati at the end of their present life.” Now, recite after me the verse of taking refuge and generating bodhicitta:

*In the supreme Buddha, the dharma, and the sangha,
I take refuge until I attain enlightenment.
Through the merit of practicing generosity and so on,
May I attain buddhahood for the benefit of all beings.*

Then, visualize that this is not an ordinary place, but you are in Amitabha’s pure realm of Sukhavati. Your body is not an ordinary corporeal body but visualize that in essence you are Khandro Yeshe Tsogyal, yet you appear in the form of Vajrayogini. She is red with one face and two arms, with the right hand holding a curved knife and the left a kapala, and she is standing with her right leg extended and the left slightly bent. This should be clearly visualized.

In the center of your body, visualize the central channel, which is luminously empty and clear, and is very straight and the size of a bamboo arrow. It runs straight up the center of your body to the crown aperture where it is wide open, while its lower end is closed off below the navel. At the core of your heart, visualize a joint in the central channel, like that found in a bamboo shaft. Slightly above this joint, visualize a pale green bindu of wind, in which is the essence of your mind-consciousness in the form of a buoyant red syllable *hrih*. It is vibrating up and down, shimmering with energy, seeming to fly and seeming to disappear. In the space of a forearm’s length above the crown of your head is Buddha Amitabha surrounded by bodhisattvas, and they abide vividly and distinctively.



4.80: Chojé hanging his red mala on his left ear

That is the explanation for the Tibetan verses that I will now recite:

Emaho!

*Self-appearances are spontaneously present as a realm of
infinite purity,
The realm of Great Bliss, arrayed in complete and perfect
detail.*

*My corporeal body is Vajrayogini,
With one face and two hands, brilliant red, and holding a
curved knife and kapala.
My two feet are gracefully poised, and my three eyes gaze
into the sky.*

*In the middle of my body is the central channel
The size of a hollow bamboo arrow,
Empty and clear like a shaft of light.
Its upper end is open at the crown aperture,
And its lower end is just below the navel center.
Upon the joint at the heart center,
In the center of a pale green bindu of wind,
Awareness clearly appears as a red syllable "hrih."
A forearm's length above the crown of my head
Appears Buddha Amitabha,
Complete with all the major and minor marks.*

Then, with total faith and trust, focus on Lord Buddha Amitabha directly above the crown of your head, give rise to single-pointed devotion, and pray to him so your own mind can be transferred into the heart of Buddha Amitabha to merge with his mind.

I will recite the names of Amitabha to you, and you need to sincerely pray to Amitabha while listening to me.

*Tathagata Amitabha, Arhat, Omniscient One, Perfect in
Illumination and Conduct, Thus Gone One, Knower of the*

*World, Supreme Tamer of Men, Teacher of Gods and Humans,
Buddha, Bhagavat, to you, I pay homage! To you, I make
offerings! In you, I take refuge!*

Emaho!

*Within the self-appearing realm of the ultimate Akanishtha
Is an expanse of interweaving rainbow light of intense
devotion.*

*Here, the embodiment of all objects of refuge, one's own root
guru,*

*In an extraordinary form and with a radiant body,
Abides as the essence of Buddha Amitabha.*

With intense devotion, we pray.

Inspire us to accomplish the path of transference!

Inspire us to reach the realm of Akanishtha!

May we capture the domain of dharmakaya expanse!

Next, I will repeat the syllables *hrih*, *hrih*, *hrih*, *hrih*, *hik* three times. The first time, visualize that at your heart center, there is the light green bindu of wind marked with the red syllable *hrih* that represents the essence of your mind-consciousness. When I recite *hrih* five times, the red syllable *hrih* ascends upward by the force of the wind and ascends higher and higher. As it reaches the top of your head, I will shout out *hik*, and at the same time you visualize the red syllable *hrih* shoots up and out and dissolves into the heart of Buddha Amitabha.

The second time, again visualize that the pale green bindu of wind reappears at your heart, like a bubble emerging from the water. The rest of the visualization is the same as above. As I recite *hrih*, visualize your mind-consciousness ascends upward and rises higher and higher, and with *hik*, visualize it shoots up and out and dissolves into Buddha Amitabha's heart.

Visualize the same way when I recite the syllables for the third time.



4.81: Chojé guiding the audience to visualize as he taught phowa

hrih, hrih, hrih, hrih, hrih hik (three times)

I will recite *phat* five times, which will seal you in the expanse of the five kayas of Buddha Amitabha—dharmakaya, sambhogakaya, nirmanakaya, vajrakaya of the unchanging natural state, and the perfect kaya of complete awakening—and you will be indivisible from Buddha Amitabha forever. Visualize in this way, and listen to me:

phat, phat, phat, phat, phat

Then, visualize that the Buddha Amitabha above your head dissolves into light and then into you.

The Longevity Empowerment

In an instant, visualize yourself as Bhagavan Amitayus, ruby red in color, adorned with the sambhogakaya attire and ornaments. The hands rest in the gesture of meditation, holding a vase brimming with ambrosia of deathlessness. He is seated in the full-lotus posture.

Hung Hrih

*Lord Bhagavan Amitayus,
Red, in sambhogakaya form,
Holding a long-life vase,
From the enclosure of your wisdom mind,
You bestow the secret mantra “ayu.”
May those to be protected achieve vajra life!*

Kye!

*Essence of all buddhas of the three times,
Supreme captain of all wanderers without exception,
Orgyen Protector, Vidyadhara Amitayus,
Bequeath the vajra siddhi of immortality
To the body, speech, and mind of those to be protected.*

*om namo bhagawate | aparimita ayur jnana subinish chitta tejo
rajaya | tathagataya arhate samyaksam buddhaya | tadyatha om
punye punye maha punye | aparimita punye aparimita punya
jnana sambharo pachite | om sarwa samskara parishuddhe dhar-
mate gagana samudgate swabhava vishuddhe mahanaya parivare
soha |*

*om namo bhagavate aparimitāyur-jñāna-suviniścita-tejo-
rājāya tathāgatāya arhate samyak sambuddhāya | tadyathā
| om punye punye mahā-punye 'parimita-punye 'parimita-
punya-jñāna-sambhāropacite | om sarva-saṃskāra-pariśud-
dhe dharmate gagana-samudgate svabhāva-viśuddhe mahā-
naya-parivāre svāhā |*

Hung

*Deities of the mandala of approach and accomplishment,
You of great compassion and mighty power,
Your hand emblems change into light rays that radiate and
reabsorb.*

When my vitality diminishes, drifts, or is deprived,

*May the essence of life throughout samsara, nirvana, worlds,
and beings,
Be summoned in the form of the seed syllable within a bindu
of light,
Which then dissolves into me.
May magnificent brilliance increase,
And may I accomplish the supreme, deathless vajra life.*

*om benzar ayu ché hung dza tsé bhrum yu bhrum yu tsé apana
yé bhrum*

*om namo bhagavate | aparimita ayur jnana subinish chitta tejo
rajaya | tathagataya arhate samyaksam buddhaya | tadyatha om
punye punye maha punye | aparimita punye aparimita punya
jnana sambharo pachite | om sarwa samskara parishuddhe dhar-
mate gagana samudgate swabhava vishuddhe mahanaya parivare
soha |*

*om namo bhagavate aparimitāyur-jñāna-suviniścita-tejo-
rājāya tathāgatāya arhate samyak saṃbuddhāya | tadyathā
| om punye punye mahā-punye 'parimita-punye 'parimita-
punya-jñāna-saṃbhāropacite | om sarva-saṃskāra-pariśud-
dhe dharmate gagana-samudgate svabhāva-viśuddhe mahā-
naya-parivāre svāhā |*

Later, you will receive long-life pills and long-life nectar. When you take them, visualize that you have accomplished the siddhi of deathlessness equal to that of Lord Buddha Amitayus.

*Om
The body of the body dissolves into the body,
Abiding thoroughly in the five aggregates.*

*Ah
The speech of the speech dissolves into the speech,
Merging into the supreme faculty of tongue.*



4.82: Western disciples receiving blessing from Chojé

Hung

*The mind of the mind dissolves into the mind,
Merging with the self-occurring wisdom mind.*

*Auspicious days! Auspicious nights!
Auspiciousness eternal, day and night!
Auspicious fortune to the fortunate!
Essence lucid as sun and moon!*

Emaho!

*By the force of the blessings of Buddha Amitayus
And the power of perfecting the stages of approach and
accomplishment,
May the four hundred and four types of diseases,
Eighty thousand demonic influences,
Ninety-one conditions that cause sudden death,
Eight types of untimely death,
All harm and obstacles to longevity
Be dispelled completely, without exception.*

*In the cave of Maratika,
Where you accomplished immortal vidyadharahood,
Lord Amitayus blessed you, and
You attained the deathless vajra body, free from birth and
death:
Deathless Padmakara, grant me auspiciousness!*

om ah hung benzar guru pema siddhi hung

Now, the instructions for phowa, the way to buddhahood without meditation, and the longevity empowerment of Buddha Amitayus that dispels all untimely death are complete.



4.83: Chojé's coral mala

Next, we will dedicate all merit accumulated throughout the three times, represented by the merit gathered from tonight's teaching, to all sentient beings so they may obtain the omniscient state of buddhahood. Please recite with me:

*By this accumulation of merit, may I obtain all-seeing
omniscience,
And may all faults be defeated.
The whirling, turbulent waves of birth, aging, sickness,
And death—from this ocean of samsara, may I liberate beings.*

*om yé dharma hetu prabhawa hetun te khen tatagato haya
wadat te khen tsa yo nirodha ewam badi maha shramanra
soha*

*May auspiciousness exist day and night.
May auspiciousness exist at noon.
May auspiciousness prevail all days and nights.
Three Jewels, today bestow auspiciousness!*

*Qualified teachers, today bestow auspiciousness!
All deities, today bestow auspiciousness!
All dharma protectors, today bestow auspiciousness!
All earth spirits, today bestow auspiciousness!*

*May all the spirits gathered in this place,
Be it on the earth, in the water, or in the sky,
Always show goodwill and kindness to all beings,
And practice dharma day and night.*

*Relying upon the power of buddhas' authentic words, which
can overcome enemies
And which is extremely true and free from deception,
May all be auspicious
And free from great fear at all times!*

Again, may teacher and disciples who are yogis and yoginis, the patrons, and the retinues completely conquer all demonic forces, all harm, and all obstacles, just like the sun and moon free from eclipses. May all be auspicious! Dzaya dzaya su dzaya, dzaya dzaya su dzaya, dzaya dzaya su dzaya! Victorious, victorious, may all be victorious!



4.84: Chojé blessing disciples with a longevity arrow

THE MAGICAL PHAT

It was not unusual for Chojé to lead his students in the practice of phowa, the transference of consciousness, so originally we didn't expect the dharma teaching on July 21st to be a special one. However, after interviewing several people who were among the audience, I realized that when Rinpoche shouted *phat* during the phowa practice that night, this became so deeply rooted in their memories that they can still clearly recall the sound many years later.

Kay Henry recollected as follows:

Even though the advertising and promotion for Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok's public event at the Unitarian Church came together at the last minute, he attracted so many people that there was standing room only in a venue

that seats two hundred fifty people. That night Rinpoche gave a long-life blessing and a teaching on phowa, the transference of consciousness.

At the end of the phowa teaching, he practiced phowa for all of us, and especially his shouting of *phat* was incredibly powerful and haunting. During the next twenty years, from time to time, people would come up to me and say, “Remember that lama who came to the Unitarian Church in 1993? I’ll never forget that amazing sound he made!”



4.85: Chojé leading the audience to practice phowa

Sven Galambos, a Hawaiian, one of the drivers for Yidzhin Norbu in the US, told me:

I was among the audience when Rinpoche gave the longevity empowerment and phowa teaching in Ashland. Suddenly, he was shouting *phat*, and all my conceptual thoughts were dissolved into dharmata. I don’t know how long I sustained that state, but I promise that I have never had such an experience in my life.

GAVE TEACHING AT YESHE NYINGPO ORGYEN DORJE DEN

On the early morning of July 22nd, we drove for more than six hours from Tashi Choling to Yeshe Nyingpo Orgyen Dorje Den in the San Francisco Bay Area. This center was founded by Dudjom Rinpoche and Gyatrul Rinpoche. All centers founded by Dudjom Rinpoche were given the name Yeshe Nyingpo.



4.86: Chojé receiving devotees

The center was not big, but as we arrived, many American and Asian Buddhists came to receive teachings and blessings from Rinpoche. He gave refuge vows and bestowed the empowerment of *Jampal Yeshe Sempa*.

On July 23rd, Chojé and entourage headed to the San Francisco International Airport. In order to show the high status of Rinpoche and to express their gratitude, some American Buddhists arranged a Rolls Royce limousine to drive us to the airport. It was a luxury car that encompassed an on-board television and telephone and served food and drink.



4.87: Chojé about to ride the Rolls Royce limousine arranged for him



4.88: Khenpo Namdrol and Khenpo Sodargye using the telephone equipped in the limousine

Later, we flew from the West Coast to the East Coast and arrived at Washington, D.C., the capital of the US. At that point, the dharma activities of Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche on the West Coast were complete.

NOTES

1. The International Translation Team is a group of devoted Han Chinese students who mainly work on the translation of Khenpo Sodargye's writings and oral teachings.
2. Throughout this book, the terms Chojé, Khenpo Rinpoche, Rinpoche, His Holiness, and Yidzhin Norbu refer to His Holiness Khenpo Jigme Phuntsok Rinpoche.
3. Lama Mumtso is the niece of His Holiness Jigme Phuntsok and is the reincarnation of Jetsün Mingyur Paldrön, who was an emanation of Yeshe Tsogyal.
4. The abbreviated name of Jigme Phuntsok.
5. Gesar of Ling (Wyl. *gling ge sar*), 1038-1124, is a legendary warrior king who is invoked as a protector of the teachings.
6. *Werma* is a synonym of *drala* and can also sometimes refer to their retinue, as in the expression "dralas and wermas."
7. The first Drubwang Pema Norbu lived from 1679 to 1757 and was the Third Throne Holder of the Nyingma Palyul tradition. The second Drubwang Pema Norbu (1887-1932) was Pema Kunzang Tendzin Norbu, who was the Ninth Throne Holder of the Palyul tradition. The third Drubwang Pema Norbu (1932-2009) was Thubten Lekshed Chökyi Drayang, also known as Do-ngag Shedrub Tendzin Chog-le'i Namgyal, who was the Eleventh Throne Holder of the Palyul tradition. Penor Rinpoche's *yangsi* was born in 2011.
8. A *dhonka* is a shirt with cap sleeves.
9. A *tael* is a unit of weight used in China and East Asia equivalent to approximately 50 grams.
10. The six paramitas are generosity, *jinpa* (*sbyin pa*); discipline, *tsultrim* (*tshul khrims*); patience, *zopa* (*bzod pa*); diligence, *tsondru* (*brtson 'grus*); concentration, *samten* (*bsam gtan*); and wisdom, *sherab* (*shes rab*).
11. He was named "Daughter" because all his father's other sons had died, so when he was born, his father decided to name him Daughter in the hope that this would keep him alive.
12. One *yojana*, *pag tsad* (*dpag tshad*), is approximately 7.5-8 kilometers or 4,000 fathoms.
13. This is a parasol made of cotton cloth.
14. According to Khetsun Zangpo Rinpoche, the contemporary Indian view is that the Sacred Stupa (*mchod rten rnam dag*) was situated near Mankapur in Uttar Pradesh.
15. It is a place in today's Xi'an City of China.

16. The *Two Supreme Ones*, *chog nyi* (*mchog gnyis*), were Gunaprabha and Shakyaprabha.
17. The *Six Ornaments*, *dzamling gyen drug* (*'dzam ling rgyan drug*), were the six famed panditas of India: Vasubandhu, Asanga, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Dignaga, and Dharmakirti.
18. *Chebulic Myrobalan* is one of the ingredients of the Triphala of Ayurveda and is a very important herb to promote fearlessness, feed the brain and nervous system, and bring awareness and wisdom.
19. This stop in Hawaii was requested only two weeks prior to the beginning of the tour. The dharma students did an amazing job with organizing this change on such short notice.
20. It is recorded in the Tibetan document.
21. The *seven patriarchs*, *tanpé tad rab dun* (*bstan pa'i gtad rabs bdun*), were Mahakashyapa, Ananda, Shanavasika, Upagupta, Dhitika, Krishna, and Sudarshana.
22. Rudra (Wyl. *ru dra*) is a demon who embodies the ego.
23. This is reference to David Bolduc.
24. Also known as Jamgon Kongtrul Yonten Gyatso.
25. The four profound scriptures of Vimalamitra, *bimala'i zab pa pod zhi* (*bi ma la'i zab pa pod bzhi*) are the golden syllables, *ser yig chen* (*gser yig can*); copper syllables, *zang yig chen* (*zangs yig can*); conch syllables, *düing yig chen* (*dung yig can*); and turquoise syllables, *yu yig chen* (*gyu yig can*). The variegated syllables, *tra yig chen* (*phra yig can*), category is included within the copper-syllable category.
26. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo possessed the seven qualities of realization in the transmission of the Kama (i.e., canonical) lineage: earth treasures, mind treasures, quintessential treasures, pure vision, total recall, the oral lineage, and the transmission of all teachings in the Old and New Schools.
27. When this says *possessing three and two*, it is referring to the decrease of the ten virtues, which are all complete in the Age of Perfection. Then in the next age, only three-fourths are complete; and for the third, only two-fourths; and finally one-fourths virtues are possessed, and that is the Kali Yuga. At that time, virtue is merely named.
28. *Immaculate friend* refers to Vimalamitra, which is the meaning of Vimalamitra in Sanskrit.





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ཡི་གེ་ཉི་ཤུ་རྩ་བུ་གྲགས་པ་འདི་དཔེ་ཚའི་ནང་དུ་བཞག་ན་དཔེ་ཚད་ཅི་ཅི་འདྲར་
བཞག་མཁས་ཀྱང་ཉེས་པ་མི་འབྱུང་བར་འཇམས་དཔལ་ལྷན་རྒྱུ་ལས་གསུངས་སོ། །