

Melody of Dharma

☸ **Parting from the Four Attachments**
A teaching by H.H. the Sakya Trizin

☸ **Mahamudra**
A teaching by Ven. Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa

☸ **Remembering Great Masters**
Milarepa

☸ **Ground-breaking Ceremony in Bodh Gaya**



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HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN

CONTENTS



- 1* **From the Editors**
- 2* **2014 Programmes**
- 4* **A Tribute to Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa**
- 7* **Bodh Gaya**
- 16* **Remembering Great Masters**
 - 16* • Milarepa
 - 19* • The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa
- 20* **Parting from the Four Attachments**
 - A teaching by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin
- 31* **Oral Instructions on the Practice of Guru Yoga**
 - A teaching by H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche
- 38* **Mahamudra**
 - A teaching by Ven. Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa
- 47* **The Importance of Retreat**
 - An Interview with Chiwang Tulku
- 52* **Accomplishment of Immortality**
 - by Mahasiddha Virupa
- 56* **Prayer to the King of the Sakyas**
 - by Sakya Pandita
- 58* **Dharma Activities**
 - 58* • Annual Vajrakilaya Puja at the Sakya Centre
 - 62* • On Pilgrimage with Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche
 - 64* • Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in Singapore
 - 68* • Cham Dance at the Sakya Centre
 - 73* • Ground-breaking Ceremony in Bodh Gaya

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From The Editors

Firstly, we would like to extend our hearty -though belated- wishes to all for a happy, prosperous and fruitful Year of the Wooden Horse, and we hope that it has already brought many good things to each one of our readers.

Much has happened since we last went to print, with His Holiness the Sakya Trizin performing a six-month strict retreat at the Sakya Dolma Phodrang for the benefit of all beings and with Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche performing many important outward Dharma activities, both in India and abroad.

An event very special to the Sakya School took place in March, shortly after His Holiness came out of His retreat: the ground-breaking ceremony in Bodh Gaya for what is to become a Sakya Monastery in the holy land of the Lord Buddha's enlightenment.

Many joyful happenings have blessed the Sakya School over the past months. But, sadly, the passing on the 14th of April of Venerable Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa not only left his many disciples in deep mourning, but also divested the Sakya School of one of its strongest proponents and pillars. He will be sorely missed by all.

And now, our teachers have left their residence in India for their summer teaching schedules. His Holiness the Sakya Trizin has nearly completed a two-month US-Canada tour, and is soon embarking on a European tour, including a unique one-month Hevajra teaching in Spain that will prepare students to sit an extended Hevajra retreat. Several students will be completing a one-month retreat, while some are set to sit the entire eight-month one. We wish them every success.

While Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche is due to accompany His Holiness during parts of His European trip, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche will be visiting Russia, the UK, Europe, Taiwan and Mongolia.

Our teachers will be returning to India in August, on time for the Annual Vajrakilaya Ritual and for the celebrations surrounding the Golden Jubilee of the Sakya Centre, His Holiness' main monastery in India.

Until then, we wish you a very happy summer, filled with light, auspiciousness and excellent deeds.

The Editing Team

HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN

2014 EUROPEAN TEACHING PROGRAMME

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	TEACHING
May 24-25	Madrid	Fundación Sakya	Medicine Buddha initiation and teaching on sadhana
May 31 -Jun16	Pedreguer, Spain	Fundación Sakya	Hevajra Teachings
Jun 28-29	Denia, Spain	Sakya Drogon Ling	Black Ekajati Jenang Red Tara in the Sakya Lineage
Jun 19-26	Barcelona	Sakya Gephel Ling	Chakrasamvara and Vajrayogini initiations and teachings
Jun 28-29	Paris	Sakya Kunga Ling	Chenrezig initiation and teaching on sadhana Public talk: "How to be a Good Buddhist in the Modern World" Long-Life Initiation
Jul 1-Jul 3	Arosio, Swit- zerland	Sakya Changchub Ling	Teaching on Samatha, Vipassana and the Four Noble Truths Medicine Buddha initiaiton
Jul 5-6	Antwerp, Bel- gium	Tibetan Community	Teaching on Bodhisattva Vows and Genera- tion of the Enlightened Mind Introduction to Buddhism Long-life initiation
July 8-12	Kuttolsheim, France	Sakya Tsechen Ling	Thuwang Tamzin Sumgo initiation Kadam Lhashi initiation and teachings Tenshug
July 14-16	Clergy, France	Terre de Bodhisattvas	Guru Rinpoche Initiation Three Long-Life Deities Initiation Teaching on Sakya Pandita's 'Sakya Lekshey'
July 18-28	Chanteloube, France	Ct. d'Etudes Chante- loube	Vajrayana Cycle of Teachings
July 30 -Aug 2	Montpellier, France	Lerab Ling	Elaborate empowerment of Vajrakilaya from the Khön lineage Empowerment of Chime Phakme Nyingtik Heart teaching on ' <i>Parting from the Four At- tachments</i> ' Consecration of Stupa for Khandro Tsering Chodron

RATNA VAJRA RINPOCHE 2014 SUMMER TEACHING PROGRAMME

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	TEACHING
May 2	Moscow	Sakya Centre	Thirteen Golden Dharmas
May 10	London	Thinley Rinchen Ling Buddhist Centre	+Initiation of Hayagriva/Vajrapani/Garuda +Teaching on Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen - ' <i>Short Melody of the Eight Dream-Like Experiences</i> '
May 13	Bournemouth	Sakya Thubten Ling	+16 Arhat Puja (Vesak day) +Welcome reception and celebration of 10 th anniversary of centre +Talk on Sakya history and modern day growth of the Sakya School +Refuge ceremony +1000 Arm Chenrezig initiation
May 17	Bristol	Sakya Buddhist Centre	+Chakrasamvara Wangchen - Luipa tradition
May 19	Reading	Sakya Ling	+Medicine Buddha initiation +Teaching on Bardo
May 21	Biarritz	Sakya Thukje Ling	+Teaching on the Triple Vision +Conference on " <i>Ecology, Interdependence and Buddhism</i> " +Vajrapani Butadhamara empowerment
May 25	Frankfurt	Sakya Kalden Ling	+Vajrasattva Jelung +Vajrapani Bhutadamara empowerment +Teaching on the sadhana
	Frankfurt	Tibethaus	Introduction to Madhyamika
May 28	Stuttgart	Sakya Dechen Ling	+Practising the Mahayana Path +Chenrezig empowerment (Gyalpo tradition)
May 30	Zurich	To be confirmed	To be confirmed
June 2	Budapest	Sakya Tashi Choling	+Chenrezig empowerment in the King's Tradition +Common Kurukulle jenang +Dharma Talk
June 6	Berlin	Siddhartha's Intent	Introduction to Triple Vision
June 11	Ulaan Baatar	Sakya Pandita Dharmachakra Monastery	Saka Dawa Puja Hevajra empowerment Three Red Deities empowerment Long-life initiation
July 3	Leh, Ladakh		Kalachakra
July 17	Taiwan	Sakya Vajrayana Manjushri Center	Hevajra teachings Thirteen Golden Dharmas
Aug 30	New Delhi		

A Tribute to Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa

(1931-2014)



On the morning of the 14th of April 2014, at the age of 83, Venerable Khenchen Geshe Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa left his body in Zurich, Switzerland, where he had spent nearly half a century giving root to the Sakya Buddhadharma in Europe and contributing to its dissemination in several of its countries. Ven. Khenchen Sherab Amipa left behind numerous disci-

ples who looked to him as a loving father and whose devotion to their teacher was truly heartwarming.

A pillar of the Sakya School, Khenchen Sherab Amipa's Dharma activities throughout his life were relentless. Among his many other works, he was instrumental in the creation of Sakya Dharma centres in Switzerland, France, Germany, Austria, Italy, Sweden

and the Netherlands, and made it his duty to give teaching in each of these centres with assiduous regularity through the years and to ensure that they would periodically be visited by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and by His sons.

A scholar and an experienced tantric practitioner, his biography reads as an encyclopedia of scriptures learned and taught, books



Khenchen Sherab Amipa at Kuttolsheim with Lama Dakpa Woesser and Lama Tashi Sangpo

read and written, initiations received and conferred, and retreats undertaken.

Born in 1931 to a religious and well-to-do family in Sakya, Tibet, Lama Sherab Amipa joined Lhakang Chenmo, the main monastery at Sakya, when he was



seven years old. A devout monk and avid student, Lama Sherab Amipa received his full Gelong vows at the age of 20 and, shortly afterwards, was awarded his Geshe Rabjampa degree, equivalent to a PhD in Buddhist Philosophy.

Forced to join the diaspora of Tibetans from their homeland in 1959, Lama Sherab Amipa fled to India, where he continued his studies, now supplemented with those

of English and Hindi. In 1967, he was chosen by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan government in exile to be one of five learned monks to represent their respective schools of Tibetan Buddhism at the Tibet Institute in Rikon, Switzerland. The Tibet Institute had been created in order to tend to the cultural and spiritual needs of the substantial Tibetan community that had established



Lamdre at Kuttolsheim 2010



Mandala offering to Khenchen Sherab Amipa on behalf of the Sakya Dolma Phodrang on the occasion of his enthronement

itself there. Another function of the Tibet Institute was to provide an opportunity for interested Westerners to learn about the Buddhist-dharma.

From that moment on, Lama Sherab Amipa began giving teachings on Buddhist philosophy and

meditation, first at the Institute and gradually to groups in different European cities, eventually creating several Sakya centres that are active to this day. One of these, Sakya Tsechen Ling in Kuttolsheim, France has been blessed on three occasions with the be-



Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche performing the Mahavairocana ritual

stowal of the Holy Lamdre by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

On the third of these auspicious events, a Long-life ceremony was held in honour of Ven. Lama Sherab Amipa, during which he was enthroned and conferred the title of Khenchen by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, in recognition of his incomparable contribution to the preservation and dissemination of the Sakya Buddhist-dharma over the span of his life.

It was fortuitous that, at the time of Khenchen Sherab Amipa's passing, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche was at hand to celebrate his last rites and to give spiritual support to his sangha. Over the ensuing days, Gyana Vajra Rinpoche performed the Mahavairocana puja and, on 17th April, Khenchen Geshe Sherab Amipa's faithful disciples gathered to bid their farewell to their beloved teacher as his bodily remains were committed to the flames, while Mahavairocana pujas were held in Sakya monasteries in Tibet, India, Nepal, Europe and the U.S.A. His passing is a great loss to the Sakya School and he will be sorely missed not only by his students, but also by all those who were familiar with his warmth, kindness and tireless efforts to serve the Dharma and to benefit beings.

May their prayers for his swift rebirth be answered.

BODH GAYA

Enlightenment of the Buddha



“Even if my body dries up and my skin, bones and flesh fall away, I shall not move from this seat until I have reached enlightenment.”

(Nidanakatha, Jakata)

Thus spoke Gautama as He took His place on the Diamond Throne at Bodh Gaya, pledging that He would not arise from it until He had attained Supreme Enlightenment.

Six years had gone by since the Buddha-to-be had settled in the Dungeshwari Hills on the banks of the Nairanjana River to a life of extreme austerity in His indomitable determination to reach full Buddhahood, surviving on a diet of roots and one grain of rice per day.

But now, He had come to the realisation that such self-chastisement would not win Him the final attain-



Cave in the Dungeshwari Hills where the Bodhisattva practised austerities

ment, and that His body had to regain strength and vitality in order to act as a suitable vehicle to spiritual victory. With this new resolution, the Bodhisattva bathed in the river waters, covered Himself with the shroud of a young girl whose body was awaiting cremation nearby, and accepted His first meal of milk rice from the maiden Sujata. Feeling betrayed by what they saw as self-indulgence on the part of Gautama, His fellow ascetics left in disgust and headed for Benares to pursue their path of self-punishment.



Sujata making a food offering to the Bodhisattva

Gautama was now ready for His final struggle as he set upon searching for His Seat of Enlightenment. He visited several places, but each time He set his mind on one, the earth shook, telling Him that He must continue His quest. Finally, the Bodhisattva's path took Him to a grove in Uruvela, where He sat at the foot of a tall pipal tree. He immediately recognised where He was.

This was the Vajrasana, the diamond throne where all past Buddhas had reached Enlightenment, the only place that was able to withstand the cosmic energy created by the Enlightenment of a Buddha. The Vajrasana is believed to be the last place to disappear at the end of a kalpa, and the first one to appear at the beginning of a new one.

As He was pondering upon His undertaking, a grass-cutter by the name of Swastika happened by and, in response to Gautama's request, offered Him fresh bundles of kusha grass to serve Him as a cushion. The Bodhisattva thanked Him and took His place on the Diamond Throne, pledging as He did, that He would not arise until full Enlightenment had been reached.

Alarmed, Kamadva, King of the Maras, rushed to defend his kingdom of desire, hatred and delusion. He sent his armies to hurl their evil weapons at the Bodhisattva, only to see them transformed into flowers by the power of Siddhartha's loving kindness; Kamadva then sent his enticing daughters to seduce the Wise One, but their allures were powerless to disrupt the Bodhisattva's meditative concentration.

The King of the Maras then boldly challenged the Holy One: "Siddhartha, arise from this seat! It belongs to me, not to you!" As a rejoinder, the Bodhisattva touched the earth with His right hand, bearing her witness to His countless lifetimes of practising the Ten Perfections. The earth roared its acquiescence. As the sun set, Kamadva and his cohorts abandoned the battlefield, thoroughly defeated and utterly dejected. In their stead, innumerable celestial beings appeared and in their thrones paid homage to the Bodhisattva.

Padhana Sutta

The Great Struggle



"When, near the river Nerañjara, I exerted myself in meditation for attaining to security from bondage,[1] there came Namuci [2] speaking words of compassion:

"You are emaciated and ill-looking, you are near to death! A thousand parts of you belong to death and only a fraction of you is alive. Live, good Sir! It is better to live. Living you may perform meritorious deeds. From practicing celibacy

and tending the sacrificial fire much merit is made, but what is obtained from striving? It is difficult to enter the path of exertion, it is difficult to do, difficult to maintain."

Mara spoke these words whilst standing in the presence of the Awakened One. To Mara speaking thus, the Lord replied:

"You who are the friend of the negligent, O Evil One, for what reason have you come here?"

Those who still have use for merit Mara may consider worthwhile addressing. I have faith and energy and wisdom. Being thus bent on striving why do you ask me to live? This wind will wither the currents of the rivers, why should not my exertion dry up even the blood? When the blood dries up, the bile and phlegm wither. On the wasting away of the flesh the mind becomes more and more serene and my mindfulness, wisdom and concentration are established more firmly. In me, who abides enduring such an extreme experience, the mind does not long for sensual pleasures. See the purity of a being!

"Sensual desire is your first army, the second is called discontent, the third is hunger and thirst, the fourth craving, the fifth sluggishness and laziness, the sixth fear, the seventh indecision, and the eighth disparagement of others and stubbornness: gain, fame, honor, prestige wrongly acquired and whoever praises himself and despises others -- these, Namuci, are your armies, the Dark One's[3] striking forces. A lazy, cowardly person cannot overcome them, but by conquering them one gains bliss.

"I wear muñja-grass![4] Shame on life here in this world! It is better for me to die in battle than to live defeated. Some recluses and brahmanas are not seen (*exerting themselves*) here, so immersed are they in worldliness. They are not aware of that path by which those of perfect conduct walk.

"Seeing the surrounding army ready and Mara mounted (*on his elephant*), I am going out to fight so that he may not shift me from my position. This army of yours which the world together with the devas is unable to subdue, that I will destroy with wisdom, like an unbaked clay-bowl with a stone. Having mastered the mind and firmly established mindfulness I shall wander from country to country

guiding many disciples. And they will be diligent and energetic in practicing my teaching, the teaching of one without sensual desire, and they will go where, having gone, one does not grieve."

Mara: "For seven years I followed the Lord step by step but did not find an opportunity to defeat that mindful Awakened One. A crow flew around a stone having the color of fat: 'Can we find even here something tender? May it be something to eat?'

"Not finding anything edible the crow left that place. As with the crow and the stone, we leave Gotama, having approached and become disheartened."

Overcome by sorrow his lute fell from his arm and thereupon the unhappy spirit disappeared from that place.

1. *Yogakkhema, a name for Nibbána.*

2. *Namuci, meaning "He who does not let go" (his hold over beings easily) is a name for Mara, the Evil One.*

3. *The "Dark One" or Kanha (Sanskrit: Krishna), is another name for Mara. He is the Indian Cupid (Kamadeva) and personifies sensual passions. He carries a lute (vina), mentioned at the close, with which he captivates beings by his playing. His other equipment includes a bow, arrows, a noose and a hook.*

4. *Indian warriors used to wear a tuft of a certain grass, called muñja, on their head or headgear, indicating that they were prepared to die in battle and determined not to retreat.*

Translated from the Pali by John D. Ireland

With gratitude to John D. Ireland for making this text freely available

And so it was that during the first watch of the night, the Buddha-to-Be attained the Knowledge of Previous Existences; in the middle watch, He attained Divine Vision; and in the third watch, He attained the Knowledge of Dependent Origination. The Holy One had become a fully Enlightened Buddha. As day broke, the Tathagata uttered the words that all previous Buddhas had spoken at the time of their Enlightenment:

*“Through countless lifetimes I
have wandered
Vainly seeking the builder of this
house.
To be born again and again is pure
suffering.*

*Architect, I know you! You will
never build another house!
All your rafters are shattered.
Your ridgepoles are in fragments.*

*My mind has reached the Uncon-
trived.
It will never crave again.”*

(Sutta Nipatha)

The Buddha spent a further forty-nine days in the grove at Uruvela, pondering upon His Accomplishment. The scriptures vary slightly in their description of His movements during this time, but they generally concur along the lines that follow.



Bodhi Tree at Uruvela

Over the first seven days following His Enlightenment, the Holy One sat motionless under the Bodhi Tree, experiencing the Bliss of Deliverance and reflecting on the Truth that He had discovered.

The second week the Buddha spent gazing at the Bodhi Tree without blinking a single time, in gratitude for the shelter that it had offered Him during His Struggle. This site is now marked by the An-



Animesh Lochan Chaitya



Chankramana

imesh Lochan Chaitya.

During the third week, the Tathagata visited the countless realms of the universe and examined the state of sentient beings, as He performed perambulations along what is now called the Chankramana, or Jewelled Walk.

During the fourth week, the Buddha meditated at the Ratnaghara Chaitya, reflecting on the essence of the Higher Doctrine, as radiant rays of six colours emanated from His body and illuminated the depth of space.

The Buddha spent the fifth

week enjoying the Bliss of Awakening under the Ajapala Nigrodha tree. This is also where the Holy One remonstrated against an arrogant Brahman by telling him that only by one's deeds does one become a Brahman, rather than by birth.



Ratnaghara Chaitya



Ajapala Nigrodha tree



Mucilinda Lake

Throughout the sixth week following the Buddha's enlightenment, the region was tormented by ferocious rainstorms. Emerging from the depths of his subterranean realm, Mucilinda, King of the Nagas, reverently wrapped the Tathagata with his coils and spread his hood wide over His head, shielding Him from the elements.

During the seventh week, the Buddha stayed in a grove of datura trees, where He met the merchants Trapusa and Ballika and accepted their offering of food, the first He

had tasted since His Enlightenment. The merchants took refuge in the Buddha and became His first disciples.

The Tathagatha then returned to the Nigrodha tree to ponder on what He should do next. Here, Mara once again came to entice Him to pass into Parinirvana, instilling doubt into the Buddha's mind as to the wisdom of preaching a religion so profound and difficult that ordinary beings would not be able to comprehend it. Perceiving this, the lord Brahma rushed to the Buddha's presence, beseeching Him to teach the supreme Truth that He had discovered, lest the world be condemned to darkness. Filled with compassion, the Buddha acceded to Brahma's request. In boundless gratitude, Brahma offered the Buddha a thousand-spoked golden Dharma wheel and a right-swirling conch shell, now



Rajayatna Tree

looked upon as symbols of His teachings.

And now, the Buddha pondered upon whom He should take as His next disciples. He first thought of His former teachers Alara-Kalama and Udraka, but they had by then both passed away. And so His mind turned to His five fellow mendicants, and set out for the Deer Park, near Varanasi, where He knew He would find them.

Upon catching sight of the Buddha, the five ascetics decided to ignore Him, recalling His previous 'betrayal'. But as the Holy One approached, they found themselves overwhelmed by His radiance and threw themselves at His feet, supplicating Him to teach them what He had discovered. And thus it came to be that, one evening, the Buddha delivered His first sermon to these five disciples, which was to be known as "The First Turning of the Wheel of Dharma".

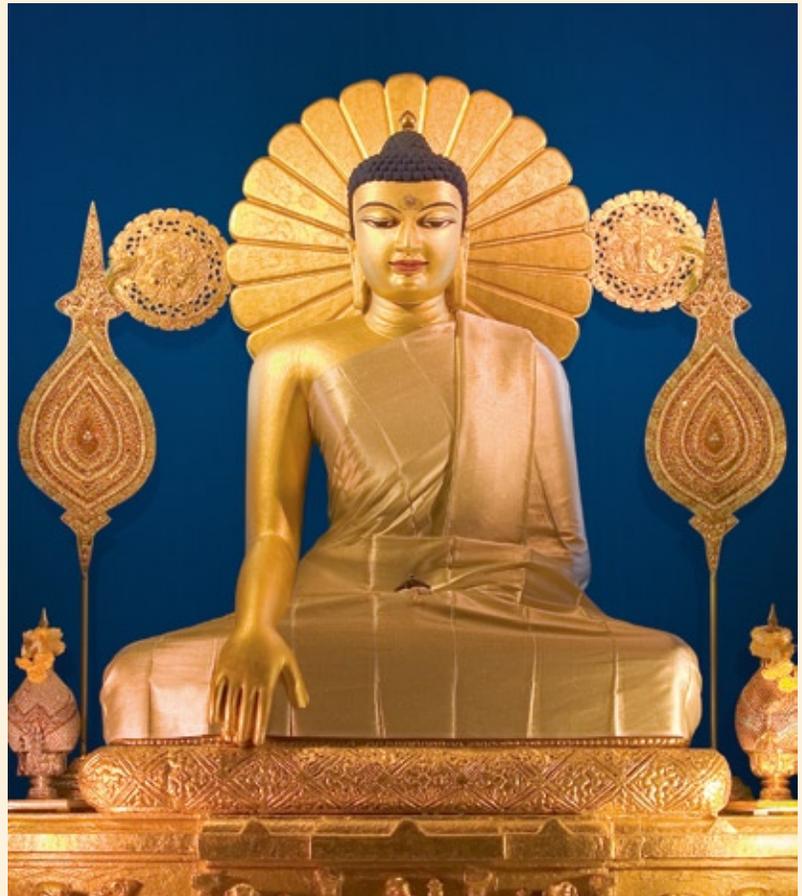
And so a religion was born that was to transform the world, enriching it with a wisdom that would bring solace and deep realisation to countless beings throughout the centuries and continues to do so in our time. The Bodhi Tree became a symbol of this new religion and Uruvela came to be known as 'Bodh Gaya' the 'Land of Enlightenment', one of the holiest places on earth. It has, throughout the ages, been a central focus of pilgrimage for devotees not only from

India but also from faraway lands, including a great number of saints and Mahasiddhas.

The tree that now stands at Bodh Gaya is said to be a fifth-generation descendent of the one that sheltered the Buddha during His Enlightenment. It is reputed to have extraordinary powers of regeneration, with several tales of it springing back to life after being maliciously cut down. Emperor Ashoka, for one, chopped it down as symbol of a religion that he opposed, only to see it miraculously grow back, thus having the effect of changing his mind. From that moment on, the Emperor became

a stalwart supporter of the Buddhist faith in India and beyond. Among his many contributions to the Buddhist religion, he is said to be responsible for the construction of the original Mahabodhi Temple that adjoins the Bodhi tree and houses the Diamond Throne, and is part of the trinity of the holiest Buddhist focal points. In its main shrine is a 10th century gilded stone statue that is of incomparable beauty and attracts the same reverence as do the Bodhi Tree and the Vajrasana.

Many other statues of paramount beauty grace the temple's interior and exterior, depicting the



Buddha and the great Bodhisattvas, while rosaries of votive stupas built by devotees throughout the centuries bestrew the grounds surrounding it. The spaces that mark the movements of the Buddha following His Enlightenment also attract the devotion of the thousands of pilgrims that visit the site daily. Among the many who, like Ashoka, have contributed to the protection of the Bodhi Tree, is Nagarjuna who built a wall to protect it against the elements and the onslaught of heedless elephants. Remnants of this wall are said to form part of the granite wall now encircling Mahabodhi.

The temple has had its vicissitudes throughout its history, not the least of which was the devastating setback suffered by the Buddhist religion and everything related to it at the hands of the conquering Turks in the 12th century. As the invaders approached, resident devotees fled, mostly to Nepal and Tibet. Notably, a group of Sri Lankan monks sent in the 4th century by their king to establish a monastery to shelter pilgrims from Ceylon, remained steadfast at the compound through the centuries and protected it as best they could. The most prominent among these was Anagarika Dharmapala, a Buddhist writer and Dharma teacher from Sri Lanka, who was hugely instrumental in the revival of Buddhism in 19th century India. In

1891, Anagarika Dharmapala created the Mahabodhi Society, whose principal aim was the recuperation by Buddhist adherents of the Mahabodhi temple from the hands of the Brahmin priests who had installed themselves there centuries earlier.

Today, Mahabodhi is a UNESCO World Heritage site, managed jointly by the Bihar state government and the Bodhi Gaya Temple Management Committee, consisting of an equal number of Buddhist and Hindu representatives. An advisory committee, half of whose members come from foreign Bud-

dhist countries, overlooks the project. As in the other main Buddhist sites, temples are being built near Mahabodhi by different countries in their traditional styles.

Following the unfortunate events of the summer of 2013, security measures are being put in place that will hamper easy entry into the compound, with baggage scanners as well as a ban on cellphones, cameras and shoes. Notwithstanding, Mahabodhi has lost none of its sacred character and continues to be the main pilgrimage site for Buddhists worldwide.



Remembering Great Masters

MILAREPA

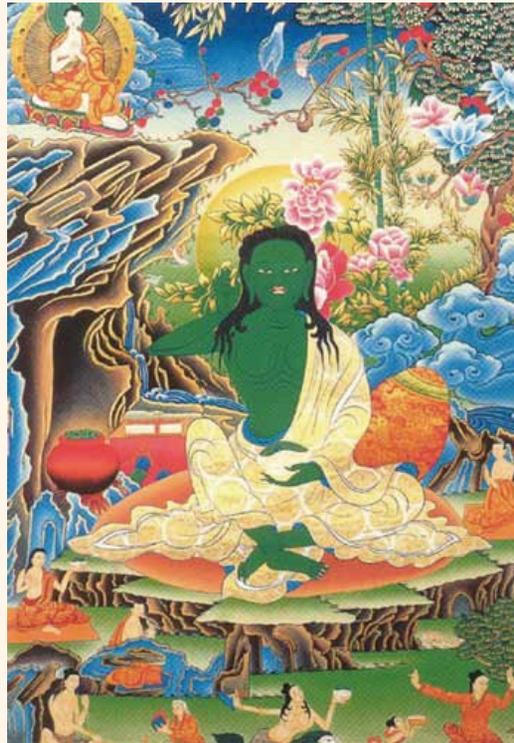
The Yogic Saint of Tibet

Jetsun Milarepa was born in the year 1040 to a noble and well-to-do family of Nyang, Tibet. His father was called Mila Shirab Jhantsan, and his mother Nyantsa Karjan.

Sadly, when the boy Milarepa was seven years old and his sister three, their father passed away. Some time before his passing, the latter made a will bequeathing all his worldly possessions to Milarepa, bearing as witnesses the latter's uncle and aunt Yungdrup Gyaltzen and Khyung Tsha Pedon.

But no sooner had the last rites been performed, did the aunt and uncle reveal their true character and usurp the entire inheritance, reducing Milarepa, his mother and his sister to the position of lowly servants and treating them with the most abject cruelty.

The following years were ones of wretchedness and humiliation for the cheated mother and her children, with no one to champion their cause. And so, on Milarepa's fifteenth birthday, in the hope of reversing fate, Nyabtsa Karjan invited the entire village to the family home to mark his passage into adulthood. With everyone present, she exposed her relatives' trickery



and publicly lay claim to her son's rightful inheritance, only to see herself and her children struck to the ground by the irate uncle.

This was the last straw: Milarepa's mother resolved to seek revenge. She dispatched Milarepa to study under a monk known for his magical powers, exhorting him to learn well from him the art of black magic. Milarepa did what he was told, and before too long, he had become adept at the casting of magic spells. Armed

with his new skills, Milarepa weaved an incantation that brought down the roof of the family house over the thirty-five guests attending his cousin's wedding. The only two people spared were the uncle and aunt, leading Nyabtsa Karjan to rejoice that her nemeses should have been witnesses to the devastation that her son's powers had fetched.

Appalled by her blatant display of jubilation over the catastrophe that had befallen her victims, the villagers now conspired to kill her. Coming to know of this, she appealed to Milarepa to once again spin his magic. This time, Milarepa sent a hailstorm upon the village that destroyed its entire harvest. Milarepa and

his family were vindicated, and his mother satisfied.

But now Milarepa began to feel the weight of his actions. He became ridden with guilt, and desperately yearned to cleanse himself of his evil deeds and learn how to eradicate his own suffering and that of others. In his search for a teacher who could introduce him to the true way, he was told that he should seek a master called Marpa the Translator, chief disciple of the great master Naropa. As soon as Milarepa heard Marpa's name, he became filled with ineffable joy, with his body trembling from head to toe and a cascade of tears gushing from his eyes. Thus did Milarepa enter the Path, as he set out to find his Teacher.

It did not take long before he did encounter Marpa, to whom he unreservedly offered his body, speech and mind. But Milarepa's apprenticeship under his new master was to be one of grueling hardship, as Marpa submitted him to one ordeal after another, while ignoring his earnest supplications for teachings. In reality, Marpa's apparent ruthlessness to Milarepa was a skillful means to extinguish the negative karma that the latter had accumulated through his evil actions; but his treatment of Milarepa was so harsh that the latter finally found no other issue but to run away. With the compassionate complicity of Marpa's wife Dagmena, Milarepa fled Marpa's house and found his way to a renowned teacher called Lama Ngokpa, armed with a forged letter of introduction from Marpa, as well as precious objects that Dagmena had absconded from her husband, now purported to be the latter's gift to Ngokpa.

After putting the Great Magician, as he called him, through a series of tests, Lama Ngokpa initiated him into the mandala of Hevajra, and sent him to his cell to meditate. But, however much he applied himself, Milarepa's meditation didn't produce the slightest hint of an experience or realisation.

As Milarepa persevered and continued to exert himself, a letter came from Marpa requesting Ngokpa's presence before him. In acquiescence to the great

master's bidding, Ngokpa gathered all his possessions as offerings to Marpa, except for the precious objects that Milarepa had brought him and a lame goat that would not have survived the journey; he set out, with Milarepa in tow. As soon as they reached Marpa's house and paid their respects, Marpa chastised Ngokpa for not offering him the totality of his possessions - he was to bring him the lame goat. And so Ngokpa went home to fetch the goat and returned to the master, who now spoke kind words to him and granted him a rare secret teaching.

But a few days later, as the truth emerged regarding Marpa's absconded jewels and rosary, Milarepa found himself forced to confess his forgery and Dagmena's collusion, bringing upon himself the full onslaught of Marpa's crushing rage.

Such was Milarepa's despair at this new tribulation that he resolved to take his own life right then and there. But as Marpa's anger abated, he curbed Milarepa's intent and finally opened up to him, embracing him as his spiritual son and revealing that from their very first encounter, he had known that he would become his foremost disciple. Milarepa had now cleansed most of the negative karma accumulated by his evil actions and was ready to set upon the Path.

Marpa passed on to Milarepa all the teachings that Naropa had conferred upon him, along with the instruction to give them in turn to a worthy disciple that would in time be chosen by the dakinis. He then gave Milarepa a list of caves wherein he should meditate on the teachings he had received. Equipped with ample provisions, Milarepa set out, never to meet with his teacher again.

His ascetic wanderings first took him to his mother's house, where he scoured the debris in search of her remains. As he discovered what he knew were her bones, he instantly understood the nature of impermanence and the suffering of samsara. He became filled with such agonising sorrow that he swore at that very moment that he would thoroughly abandon all worldly

pursuits and would dedicate himself single-mindedly to meditation without respite for the rest of his days.

And thus did the great Milarepa begin his life as a yogic saint. From that moment on, he lived in secluded caves, removed from all human contact, with wild animals as his only living company, and with mountain nettles as his only sustenance. As the years passed, he would occasionally receive offerings of food and clothing, but his body eventually became emaciated and as green as the nettles that nurtured him.

Milarepa was undaunted. His spiritual realisations were infinitely more nourishing sustenance to him than the most sumptuous of feasts might have been. He had attained a state of perfect awareness; he realised the simple nature of the Dharmakaya and the non-differentiation of Samsara and Nirvana. He understood that Nirvana is pure awareness of reality, whereas Samsara is a mistaken perception of it. He also realised that both Nirvana and Samsara lay in an empty and luminous awareness.

Having attained complete control of his mind, he could now also control his body. He could fly through space, travel through the entire universe, visit all the Buddha fields and perform miracles.

After many years of shunning human presence, Milarepa now began to teach the Truth that he had discovered. From then on, he performed ceaseless activities to benefit beings. Beginning with his sister and his former betrothed, and then his aunt who had so wickedly wronged them, he eventually gathered numerous disciples and brought the invaluable gift of Dharma to countless beings, including humans, gods and demons. He gave each of them an understanding of reality according to their dispositions and needs, setting them upon the path of no more suffering.

And so Milarepa lived many years, never ceasing to help beings, until a jealous geshe bribed a maiden with a precious turquoise in exchange for offering Milarepa a poisoned cup of curdled milk. Full knowing

what the drink contained, Milarepa swallowed the potion so that the maid could get her turquoise. He also felt that his time had come to leave this earth.

And so, well into his eighties, Milarepa left human dwellings and headed to Chuwar, where he would spend his last days in his mountain retreat. There, he encouraged all those who wanted his parting advice to gather around him. He exhorted those who came to leave all worldly concerns behind them and dedicate themselves single-mindedly to the pursuit of Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. "Now that you have heard my words, do as I have done". As he spoke these words, he entered a deep state of meditation and passed into Parinirvana.

His passing was accompanied by many wondrous signs. Dakinis and gods filled the firmament with precious offerings, while rainbows crossed the sky and showers of diaphanous petals fell from the clouds. Celestial music filled the spheres and the most heavenly incense pervaded the air. For all to see, his funeral pyre was transformed into a celestial mansion, with the corpse as its reigning deity, the flames taking the form of the eight auspicious symbols and the sparks that of offering goddesses. The crackling of the fire was transmuted into celestial melodies and the smoke into fragrant perfume.

Even his relics were so precious that the dakinis claimed them for themselves. As they disappeared into the sky with their precious load, they admonished protesting disciples, rejoicing that Milarepa had left them with the most sacred relic of all - the direct awakening of their consciousness into its Dharmakaya state.

And so, merely by the example that he set, the great saint Milarepa left us with the keys to the Kingdom of Ultimate Liberation. His passion for enlightenment and unyielding renunciation of worldly matters offer themselves as the paradigm for all who aspire to free themselves and other beings from the suffering of samsara. His spirit lives on, an inspiration to all those who choose to follow his example.

The Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa



Jetsun Milarepa was known for his sweet and melodious voice, which he put to good use by singing Dharma songs. His Hundred Thousand Songs have passed into Tibetan folklore as a trove of Dharma advice, colourful stories and insights into Tibetan culture. In their majority, though, they bear a moral tone and are essentially didactic in nature.

In this song, a yogi of Gu Tang who has great faith in the Jetsun, has requested meditation instructions. After receiving them, he says to Milarepa: “To help ignorant men like us, pray now, instruct us in the practice of the Six Paramitas,” Milarepa sings in reply:

Property and wealth are like dew on grass;
Knowing this, gladly should one give them away.
(*charity*)

It is most precious to be born a leisured and
Worthy human being,
Knowing this, one should with care observe the pre-
cepts
As if protecting one’s own eyes. (*moral discipline*)

Anger is the cause of falling to the Realms Below;
Knowing this, one should refrain from wrath,
Even at the risk of life. (*patience*)

Benefit to oneself and to others
Can never be achieved through sloth;
Strive, therefore, to do good deeds. (*diligence*)

A perturbed, wandering mind
Never sees the truth of Mahayana;
Practise, therefore, concentration. (*meditation*)

The Buddha cannot be found through searching;
So contemplate your own mind. (*wisdom*)

Until the autumn mists dissolve into the sky,
Strive on with faith and determination.

From ‘Sixty Songs of Milarepa’, translated by Garma C.C. Chang

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Parting from the Four Attachments: A Basic Teaching

by His Holiness Sakya Trizin



History of the Teaching

We begin with a brief history of this teaching. When the great yogi, the Lama Sakyapa, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, was twelve years old, one of his Gurus, Bari Lotsawa, advised him, “Since you are the son of a great spiritual teacher, it is necessary to study the Dharma, and to study the Dharma requires wisdom. The best way to acquire wisdom is to practise Manjushri.”

So, Bari Lotsawa gave Sachen Kunga Nyingpo the empowerment of Manjushri with all its relevant “lungs.” Then Sachen Kunga Nyingpo undertook a six-month retreat on Manjushri. At the beginning,

there were some signs of obstacles, which he managed to purify through the practice of the wrathful Deity, Achala.

He continued his meditation and at one time, in his pure vision, he saw Arya Manjushri in the preaching mudra, sitting on a jewelled throne with two attendants.

At that very moment, he received a stream of insight-wisdom, as Manjushri bestowed this four-line teaching directly to him:

**If you desire the worldly aims of this life,
you are not a spiritual person;
If you desire further worldly existence,
you don't have the spirit of renunciation;
If you desire liberation for your own sake,
you don't have the enlightened attitude;
If you grasp at the view of ultimate reality,
you don't have the right view.**

This four-line teaching includes the whole path of the Mahayana. After receiving this teaching, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo received a tremendous amount of insight-wisdom. He no longer needed to study everything that came to him. He became a truly great yogi.

Later in life, he bestowed this teaching upon his sons, Sonam Tsemo and Dragpa Gyaltzen, and they in turn bestowed it upon Sakya Pandita and so on. Even to this day, its transmission has never been broken,

so therefore, it bears special blessings. Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen, the son of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, wrote a commentary in verse to these four lines, and today still, this text serves as the root text for all these teachings.

“Parting from the Four Desires” is very similar to the preliminary teachings of the other Tibetan Buddhist traditions. For example, the Nyingma and the Kagyu traditions have a teaching on “Turning the Mind,” which also explains these four lines.

By meditating on this precious human life and on impermanence, you will be liberated from the sufferings that are inherent in this life. The suffering of samsara and the law of karma will turn you away from clinging to the round of existence. Love, compassion, and Bodhicitta will turn you away from clinging to this life as real.

We Sakyapas call it “The Parting from the Four Desires,” and Kagyu and Nyingma traditions call it “Turning the Mind Away from Clinging.” The name is different, but the teaching is the same.

According to the Gelugpa tradition, the preliminary teaching is divided into “The Paths of the Three Persons.” The first line explains the “small” person’s path, - a person who realises the lower realms are full of suffering and wishes to be born in the higher realms, such as that of the devas or humans. The middle person’s path is one that seeks self-liberation. This person is described in the second verse - they realise that the whole realm of existence is full of suffering, and therefore naturally seek self-liberation. The third line explains the great person’s path. This person realises that every sentient being has the same goal, and that instead of working for oneself, one should strive for the sake of all sentient beings to attain ultimate enlightenment. While the wording is different, the Gelugpa teaching is, nevertheless, the same as this four-line teaching of “Parting from the Four Desires.”

Refuge

All Buddhist practices begin with taking refuge. In this teaching, one takes the Mahayana refuge. Mahayana refuge has special characteristics. There are four reasons why Mahayana refuge is somewhat different from general refuge - in terms of the object, the time, the person and the purpose.

1. The Object

Common to all kinds of Buddhist refuges are the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. However, the explanation of these three differs between Mahayana and general Buddhism. In Mahayana, the Buddha is the one who has unimaginable qualities and who has departed from all the faults. He is the one who possesses the three kayas, or the three bodies: the Dharmakaya, the Sambhogakaya, and the Nirmanakaya.

Dharmakaya means that His mind, which is completely purified, has become one with the ultimate truth. Where subject and object become one is “Dharmakaya.” The Sambhogakaya comes from accumulating enormous amounts of merit while still on the Path. This produces the highest form of the physical body, one that has all the qualities, and remains permanently in the highest Buddha field, known as Akanishtha, and bestows teachings to the great Bodhisattvas.

In order to help ordinary sentient beings, whenever and wherever needed, the Buddhas appear in whatever form is required. These forms are the Nirmanakaya, or in other words, emanations. The historical Shakyamuni Buddha is among the Nirmanakayas. He is called “The Excellent Nirmanakaya” because even ordinary beings can see him as a Buddha. All the Buddhas who appear in the world are Nirmanakaya forms. In this practice we take refuge in the Buddha who possesses the three kayas. This is the particular Mahayana explanation of refuge.

The Dharma, or Teaching, is the great experience

that the Buddha and all the higher Bodhisattvas have achieved. Their great realisation is the Dharma. When what the Buddhas have achieved is put into words to benefit ordinary sentient beings, this is also called the Dharma.

The ones who are following the enlightenment path and who have already reached the irreversible state are the true Sangha. According to the Mahayana, this Sangha is formed by the Bodhisattvas.

The true Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the “Triple Gem”, are the Buddhas who possess the three bodies, the Dharma which expresses their realisations and teachings, and the Sangha of Bodhisattvas. The Triple Gem is symbolically represented in the images of the Buddhas, all the books of teachings, and the ordinary Sangha of monks. Although the names of the objects of refuge are the same in the Mahayana and in the general refuge, their qualities are explained somewhat differently in the Mahayana.

2. The Time

The second distinction between the general and the Mahayana refuge has to do with time. In the general refuge, one takes the refuge for the immediate future. In the Mahayana refuge, one takes refuge from the present, extending up until the attainment of ultimate enlightenment.

3. The Person

In the general refuge, one takes refuge for oneself. In the Mahayana refuge, one takes refuge both for oneself and for all sentient beings. One imagines that all sentient beings have at one time, in previous lifetimes, been our own parents or very dear ones. One seeks refuge for the benefit of limitless sentient beings.

4. The Purpose

In the general refuge, one takes refuge to gain self-liberation. In the Mahayana, one takes refuge to

attain enlightenment both for oneself and for the sake of all sentient beings.

If one understands the object, time, person, and purpose as we have described, one accomplishes the Mahayana refuge. With these qualities in mind, one should recite the refuge prayer as well as the request to the objects of refuge for them to bestow their blessings.

In addition, when actually practicing the teachings, the great Acharya Vasubandhu said that if one wants to practice Dharma, there are four requisites. These are: moral conduct, study, contemplation and meditation.

Line One of the Text

Line 1 of the text is: **“If you desire the worldly aims of this life, you are not a spiritual person.”**

The great Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltsen explained the first line in the following way. Whatever practice you do, if your aim is for the sake of this life, it is not religion; it is not Dharma. No matter what vows you receive, no matter how much you study, no matter how much meditation you do, if it’s all for the sake of this life, it is not Dharma.

If one wishes to practice Dharma, one must begin by lessening attachment to this life. This life is temporal, it is like a mirage. Even if you think that a mirage is real water, it still will not slack your thirst. Whatever sort of moral conduct, study or meditation you undertake, if it is for the sake of this life, it will not ultimately benefit you.

To change your intention from not practising Dharma to practising Dharma, you should begin by meditating on the difficulty of obtaining this precious human life. Human life is rare compared to other forms of sentient life, because one human being’s body can contain millions of other sentient beings.

This rareness is explained in many different ways

- for example from the point of view of “cause,” “numbers,” “example” and “nature.”

The Cause.

To receive a human life at all, and especially to receive a human life, which appears in a favourable place and with the right conditions, one must have a good cause. Such a cause must be an exceptionally virtuous one in order to lead to human birth with all the right conditions. In the three worlds, there are very few that practice the virtuous things, while there are enormous numbers of sentient beings who indulge in non-virtuous acts. So therefore, from the cause point-of-view, human life that has all the right conditions and is free from all the wrong places of birth, is very rare.

Number.

From the point-of-view of numbers, sentient beings in the hells, in the hungry-ghost realm, and in the animal kingdom are countless. Beings in the lower realms are as numerous as all the atoms and dust particles of this world. Compared to these, human lives are very few, especially those that have the right conditions.

Example.

The example of point-of-view is explained in the Sutras with the following illustration. Suppose the whole world is a great ocean and over this ocean floats a golden yoke, which has a small hole in it. Underneath the ocean is a blind tortoise that comes up to the surface only once every hundred years. The golden yoke floats on the surface, going wherever the wind blows it. When the wind comes from the east, it goes to the west. When the wind comes from the west it goes to the east. It clearly would be very difficult for the neck of the blind tortoise to enter the hole in the yoke under these circumstances. The chance of this

happening is very rare. Human life, especially one free of all the wrong places of birth and which has all the right conditions is even more rare than this example. So from the example of point-of-view, human life is very rare.

Nature.

The human birth in which one can hear and practice the teachings requires a number of particular conditions. The “nature” of this human rebirth is explained in terms of avoiding rebirth in the “eight wrong places” and being born with the “five conditions.” The “eight wrong places” in which it is unfavourable to be reborn are the states of the hells, pre-tas, animals and long-life gods, as well as existence among the barbarians, or persons with wrong views. Likewise, one cannot be born where the Buddhist teachings have not been given, or with impaired faculties -- such as being dumb, or mentally retarded. There are five favourable conditions for rebirth. They are, to be born in a place where the teachings have been given, and where monks and lay-precept holders are still living, not to have indulged in the five limitless sins, and to live where there is full faith in the teachings in general, and the Vinaya in particular.

One also has to be born in a time in which a Buddha has come and in which He has turned the Wheel of Dharma. The teaching must still be going on, and where there are still many people following the path, and where there are people who are readily helping you to find your right livelihood.

These circumstances all depend on and must be obtained from others. So altogether, to be free from the eight unfavourable conditions and to obtain these ten favourable circumstances is extremely rare by nature. This is not only rare, but also very precious, because through such a life -- not an ordinary life, but a human life that has all the right conditions -- one must be able to be free from all the sufferings of samsara.

Not only that, even the most difficult and the highest aim we could aspire to, ultimate enlightenment, is also achieved through human life. Therefore, human life is extremely precious.

Not only is human life rare and precious, but even this is not enough!

We have to practise. Without practice, just obtaining this very precious opportunity will not be enough. In our past lives, it is likely that we had many, many such opportunities to practise, but which we wasted and did not reach any significant states. So, from now on, unless we practice, we will still remain in samsara. Therefore, when we have such a good opportunity and a precious life, it is very important to practice the Dharma.

The Buddha taught that everything is impermanent. The whole three worlds are like a cloud in autumn and the birth and death of sentient beings is like a dancer's movement. A person's life is like a light in the sky, or like a steep waterfall, which isn't still for a single moment, but is constantly rushing down.

Even the Buddhas who have attained a permanent body must also leave their bodies in order to show impermanence to sentient beings. Therefore, there is not a single place where death will not occur. There are many more causes for death than there are causes for life. It is a common wish that death will leave us alone, but of course, all beings eventually have to face death. Everything is changing. Lives in this particular realm (*our lives on the continent of "Jambudvīpa"*) have no fixed length. Some people die even before they are born, some die as soon as they are born, some die as babies, some die at a very young age.

Although we may have no major problems today, we never know what will happen, even within an hour. Anything can happen. Unless we practise now, if we think, "For the time being I will work on some other things, then when I get older I will practise Dharma," we will never know whether we will get this opportu-

nity or not. Therefore, it is very important to practise now!

At the time of death, nothing can help you, no matter how powerful one is, no matter how clever, no matter how rich one is, no matter how brave you are, nothing can help you. Even one's body, which we have had with us right from the day we were conceived, and which we have looked after as a very precious thing, and we take great care of, and for whose sake we do all kinds of things -- even this we have to leave behind. Our own continuity of mind then has to go without any choice of freedom. The only thing that can help you at the moment of death is the Dharma practices you have learned.

If you practise Dharma, the best thing is that at the time of death, you will know the path and without any hesitation and as a matter of fact, with full confidence, you will leave your body. The person who practises Dharma has no hesitation to die, because they will have no regret of not having practised.

This precious human body and this precious human life are impermanent. The first line, "If you desire for the worldly aims of this life, you are not a spiritual person," explains directly that whatever spiritual practice you do, if it is aimed for this life, then it is not Dharma and it will not benefit you. That's the direct explanation. Indirectly, it explains about the difficulties of obtaining the precious human life and impermanence.

When you have the clear understanding from inside of these two things, then you will be firmly set on the path. In this sense, even if someone attempts to keep you from practising Dharma, it will not be possible for you to stop.

Line Two of the Text

Line two is: "If you desire further worldly existence, you haven't the spirit of renunciation."

If one continues to desire to be born in the human or deva realms (*of course, no one wants to be born in the lower realms because the lower realms are full of suffering*), the second line cuts that out. It explains that not only should the teaching that you practice not involve attachment to this present life, but also to be free from the desire for future births in the round of existence.

Not only are the lower realms full of suffering; in the higher realms also, it's all suffering. In the three lower realms (*which are the hells, hungry ghosts, and the animal kingdom*), what they have is called "the suffering of suffering." The hells have many divisions, like the hot hells, the semi-hot hells, etc. Whenever one is born among the hells, one has an unimaginable amount of suffering. Thus, what the hell beings experience is called "the suffering of suffering."

In the hungry-ghost realm, also the beings have a tremendous amount of suffering in not finding food. They have great hunger and thirst for hundreds and hundreds of years. Even if they should find food, instead of helping their bodies, it creates more suffering.

In the animal kingdom, as we all see, animals have to suffer many things. Most animals have not a single moment of relaxation because they have so many enemies among the animals themselves. In addition, human beings are hunting and fishing and bringing all kinds of suffering to them. Generally, all animals suffer great ignorance because they don't have any way of knowing Dharma. It is very easy for us to realise that the three lower realms are full of suffering.

The three higher realms are sometimes understood as having a mixture of happiness and suffering. However, when we carefully think about it, we can see that there is not any real happiness in the higher realms. Even in the Deva's realm, where it appears that these beings have a wonderful life, everything is impermanent. The Devas have so much luxury in their lives that they don't even think of practising the Dharma.

All their lives are spent in enjoyment of worldly pleasures, so when they near the time of their death, they experience a particular kind of suffering. For example, they have enough intelligence to be able to see where they will be reborn. And, as they have spent all their lives in enjoyment, many of them will be reborn in the lower realms. Since they can know these things, the Devas experience mental suffering greater than the physical suffering of the lower realms. Even the very great Devas, like Indra, the lord of the Devas, may be reborn as a very ordinary servant. And even the great Devas whose bodies can illuminate the whole world, after death, will be reborn in complete darkness in which they won't be able to see their own hand before their face.

In the human realm, as we have seen, everything is changing. Great emperors become very ordinary people and the very rich find themselves very poor. Generally, everyone is bound to encounter the four great mountains of suffering: death, old age, sickness, and birth. There are many, many sufferings, like always having fear of meeting enemies and always the fear of departing from your friends. Things you wish not to happen come true and things you don't want come to you. There are unimaginable amounts of suffering which are mostly of the kind called "the suffering of change."

We suffer for the very reason that everything is constantly changing. In the asuras' or demi-gods' realm, since they experience great hate and jealousy towards the heaven realm, they meet with great suffering in their life. So the devas, the humans, and the asuras all experience the suffering of change.

Next is "the suffering of aggregates," which covers the whole universe. Each of us will undertake work that we will never finish. Our lives are full of continuous effort. Our actions are never finished. In this great, busy, worldly life of activities, one day we have to die without finishing this work.

Everybody has to die in the midst of life. Therefore, no matter where one is reborn, whether in the lower realms or in the higher realms, both are full of suffering. For example, if poison is mixed with food -- whether it is good food or bad food makes no difference -- one cannot eat it. In the same way, no matter where one is born, either in the higher realms or in the lower realms, as long as it is within the round of existence, one will experience suffering.

Related to this is the explanation of the law of karma. We are forced to ask why the sufferings we experience happen in the first place. Each thing must have an associated cause. All kinds of suffering are created by non-virtuous actions. A non-virtuous action is any action that is created by desire, hatred, or ignorance. Killing, sexual misconduct, and stealing are the three bodily actions which are non-virtuous.

Then also, there is lying, schism, harsh words, and idle talk, which are the four non-virtuous actions of voice. One commits these non-virtuous deeds through one's own speech.

Envy, hatred, and wrong view are the three non-virtuous actions of mind.

Roughly speaking, all the non-virtuous actions are included in these ten actions. When one indulges in the ten non-virtuous actions, not only will one have to face terrible consequences, but even after facing the consequences, one will have continuous bad results. In other words, all the bad things that are happening in this life are also created by our own non-virtuous actions, which we have committed in our previous lives.

The ten virtuous actions (*freedom from hatred, desire, and ignorance*) are the opposite of the ten non-virtuous deeds. Not only do the ten virtuous actions give wonderful results temporarily, they do so as well for many future lifetimes. In other words, all the good things that are happening in our life are created by our own virtuous deeds that we have carried out in our previous lives. Finally, by practising continuous virtu-

ous deeds, self-liberation, or even the ultimate enlightenment, may be attained. There are also indifferent or neutral actions, such as walking and sleeping.

Although neutral actions do not produce any suffering (*and from that point of view, they are very good*), since they do not produce any virtuous result, they are a sort of waste. It is important to transform these indifferent actions into virtuous deeds. For example, when you are walking you should think, "May all gain from the path of liberation." When you meet people, you should think, "May all sentient beings meet virtuous friends." And when you are eating, you should have the intent of feeding the enormous amount of germs that live in your body.

All our indifferent actions should thus be transformed into virtuous deeds.

The sufferings of samsara and the suffering of the round of existence and the law or karma, or law of cause and effect, is explained by the second line of this teaching, "If you desire further worldly existence, you haven't got the spirit of renunciation."

By meditating on two things -- concentrating on the suffering of the round of existence and the law of karma - you will both turn away from clinging to the round of existence, and come to the realisation that the round of existence is full of suffering. In order to be free from suffering, one must consider this world as if it were a great fire, or like a nest of poisonous snakes.

As we meditate on this teaching we will begin to develop a real inner urge to put these principles into practice. For example, many yogis concentrate on the sufferings of samsara until they have the same feeling as a prisoner has. Namely, they develop the single thought: "When can I escape?" Until you have developed this attitude, you should meditate on the suffering of samsara.

Unless we really understand the sufferings of samsara, we will not practise Dharma. In this sense, suffering is a great help in the practice of the path.

When Lord Buddha first turned the wheel of Dharma in Sarnath, one of the first things He said was that one must know suffering. The first Noble Truth is that one must know suffering. If you think carefully about this, you won't be able to waste time for very long.

This concludes the explanation of the sufferings of samsara and the law of karma.

Line Three of the Text

Line three is: "If you desire liberation for the sake of yourself, you haven't the enlightened attitude."

If we truly understand that the world is full of suffering, and believe that we are able to free ourselves by practising virtuous deeds, we can actually attain self-liberation. However, self-liberation does not fully accomplish one's own purpose, and it cannot help other sentient beings. As a matter of fact, self-liberation is a great obstacle to attaining ultimate enlightenment because it delays the actual ultimate enlightenment. It is very important right from the beginning to set out to achieve the highest aim, which is to attain ultimate enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. This ultimate enlightenment must arise from the right causes and conditions. The main cause is great compassion, the root is Bodhicitta, and the condition is skillful means.

Although every sentient being wishes to be free from suffering and wants to have happiness, due to ignorance, they can never have these. In this sense it is wrong to aim to be free from suffering for oneself. We have to think of all other sentient beings. But we are unable to help them at this moment because our defilements and delusions bind us. So, the only thing that can help is to attain ultimate enlightenment - so that we will actually be able to help others.

To attain ultimate enlightenment, one has to have the right causes. The first is to meditate on love and

compassion. "Love" means that you wish every sentient being to be happy and to have the cause of happiness. This wish must be directed to all sentient beings without any discrimination.

Since we cannot produce these thoughts toward all sentient beings at the beginning of our practice, we proceed gradually. We begin by meditating on love and compassion towards whomever is dearest to us, for example, our own mother. One begins by visualizing in front of you, your own mother or anyone who is dear to you. Then, remember all the kindness they have done for you.

For example, if it is your own mother, consider that she gave birth to you, brought you up in life with a kind, loving eye, gave you so much love and took care of you. Although now she is aiming for happiness herself, due to ignorance, she cannot have happiness. She is in the midst of suffering and she is even causing more suffering. Therefore, you should wish that she be free and be happy and have the cause of happiness. And so you pray, "May she be happy and have the cause of happiness of the Guru and Triple Gem."

Later, you should gradually increase this visualization to include your relatives and so forth. Finally, include more difficult individual, such as people you dislike and your enemies. You visualize your enemy right in front of you and think that, although in this life he appears in the form of the enemy, in actual fact, in many lifetimes he has been my very kind mother and father, as well as relatives and friends. He has given so much love and compassion and so much care has been given to me. But now we have changed our lives and since I did not repay his own kindness to him, today he comes in the form of my enemy to take all the kindness he has given. Today we have changed our lives; we do not recognize each other, so therefore, we must create the thought, "May he be happy and have the cause of happiness." And then gradually you expand this meditation until you can have the same

thought towards all sentient beings.

When one is well trained in this meditation of love, one can also use it to increase feelings of compassion. First, whoever is dearest to you, you visualize and think, “Although this person wants happiness, due to ignorance, he is in the midst of suffering. Due to ignorance, he is making more suffering for himself. May he now be free from suffering and may he be free from the cause of suffering.”

And in the same way, later you should try to extend this meditation to the point that you have the same thought for all beings without discrimination.

When you are well advanced in this meditation, it is important to practice “Tong Len.” In this practice we visualize that all the happiness and the causes of happiness (*that is, the virtuous deeds one has*), are given, without hesitation, to all sentient beings. And the suffering of all sentient beings as well as their cause of sufferings, come to oneself, visualized like a great mass of dirt. This “exchanging meditation” is, of course, of great benefit.

When one is well versed in this, then one practices the Six Paramitas and the four collecting things which we have in the main path of a Bodhisattva.

With this we have completed the first three lines, which explains the method side of all the different paths.

Line Four of the Text

Line four is: “If you grasp at the view of ultimate reality, you haven’t got the right view.”

The fourth line deals with view. Even if relative Bodhicitta, the relative enlightenment-thought has arisen well within your mind, if one still has clinging to all things as reality, then one will fall into the error of the permanent and the impermanent. Therefore, one will fall into the extremes of existence and non-existence. Due to this, one will not be free from the

sufferings of samsara. To really be free, it is very important to keep away from clinging to the belief that this life is real. The antidote for this deluded belief is concentration and insight-wisdom.

Concentration is necessary because our minds are focused on distractions and outer objects. It is really important to do concentration meditations, because without proper concentration, one will not be able to attain insight-wisdom. Before one can meditate on insight-wisdom a strong base first must be built. The base for insight wisdom is concentration.

Concentration should be done in a secluded place, away from distractions, sitting in full-lotus position, or half-lotus position. First, you do recite the refuge prayer and create the enlightenment thought. Then you should assume the full meditation position, sitting straight. One should concentrate first on any outer object, preferably an image of Buddha. In this way you are remembering the Buddha, which in itself has a tremendous amount of power.

You visualize the Buddha’s image in front of you on a jewelled throne, golden colored with his right hand in the earth-touching mudra, and his left hand in his lap in the meditation position. He is wearing the full robes and sitting in the full-lotus position. Concentrate on this general image of the Buddha and the specific parts of the body as well. Or, you can meditate on some other Buddha form, like Buddha Amitabha or other deities. Try to concentrate on this.

In the beginning, it will seem that you have many thoughts, but in fact this is actually what is happening all the time. Normally, since you follow your thoughts, you don’t notice it. In the meantime, when thoughts come, instead of going after the thoughts, you just concentrate. You turn back and concentrate on the image for a long period of time. As you develop, your thoughts will decrease, and you will be able to remain on the same object for a long period of time. Then, after a while, you will be able to concentrate on the

image for a very long period of time. When that happens, it is a sign that your concentration is now strong enough to be able to meditate on insight-wisdom.

Concentration alone will not do anything, apart from keeping away distractions. It will not take away the deep roots of the defilements.

To take away the deep root of the defilements, insight-wisdom is necessary. In Tibetan, the word for insight-wisdom is “lhag-tong” (*lhag mthong*). This means that, when you examine the outer and inner dharmas -- the true nature of all things - through wisdom, then, you are able to see something completely different. Lhag means “extra” and tong is “to see.” So, it means to see something extraordinary. You see completely beyond existing and non-existing; you have completely gone beyond the two extremes.

The concentration was method and the actual thing was insight-wisdom. When you managed to meditate on the insight-wisdom instead of concentrating on an outer object, you concentrate on the actual thing.

Before one meditates, of course, it is necessary to explain a lot of things. First of all, all the different visions that we see, in other words, animate and inanimate -- all the things that we see. Ordinary people don't think, “Why do all these things appear?” or, “Why must we have these?” They simply just accept things as they are. A person with greater intelligence will try to concentrate on these ideas. Through their intelligence, they are able to examine the true nature of all things: For example, questions such as “why we are born like this”, or “why do we see all these different visions”, “why do people have different visions, why do people have different feelings”, and so forth.

In the past, when meditators examined these questions and tried to discover the true nature of all things, they all came to different conclusions. For example, that all of existence is created by Brahma or so forth and so on, according to the different schools of Indian

philosophy.

Briefly speaking, there are four different Buddhist schools: two of the Hinayana and two of the Mahayana. Beginning with the Hinayana schools, the first is the Sarvastivadins or Vaibhashikas. When they examined these questions, they came to the conclusion that everything that we see is not existing as we take it to be, but the atoms of these are existing.

For instance, for them, a table is a relative truth. They assert that a table is made of huge numbers of atoms put together in a particular shape and named “table.” So the table is relative, because when you examine it, you don't find “table” anywhere -- it is just hundreds of atoms. But, when they examined the atom itself, the tiniest atom they could not divide anymore, they held it to existing absolutely. Thus, the belief of the Vaibhashika, or lowest Hinayana school, is that the table is relative truth and the atoms of the table are absolute truth.

Higher than this is the view of the Hinayana school called the Sautrantika. They think that all the outer visions are the same as held by the Sarvastivadins. In addition, they hold that the outer object, the organ of the eye, and the consciousness of the eye -- these three things meet together. Then in the second moment, the eye, so to speak, takes a picture of that outer object. Finally, all you can see is the picture which has been taken by your mind. They held that as the truth.

Then, as thinking about these questions developed further in the Mahayana, there emerged two schools, the Vijñānavada and the Madhyamika. In the Vijñānavada, it is held that all this is not true -- that all this is not existing outside, but is all our own projection: It is all projected by our mind. Everything is mind. Nobody has created what we perceive, only our own mind has created these things. For that reason, for sentient beings, a certain place is a very happy place, while for certain people, it is a very miserable place.

So, it is all our own projection -- there is nothing of the outer object -- it is all projected (*in other words, manifested*) from our own mind. All this is the relative truth, but the mind exists absolutely.

Even higher than this view is the Madhyamika, which was founded by the great Guru, Nagarjuna. The Lord Buddha himself prophesied that after his passing away, there would be a bhikshu named Naga, and only he would be able to find the hidden meaning of all the Prajnaparamita Sutras. As Buddha prophesied, Nagarjuna came, and when he examined things, he could not find anything, because to hold that the mind itself is existing is not right:

The mind is subject and things are object. Subject and object are depending on each other. If there is no object, there cannot be a subject. So the mind, also, is not existing. But, he accepts everything relatively -- without examining things -- the way ordinary people take them to be, as in the form of illusions. But in reality, the Madhyamikas' view is that you cannot find any conclusion such as "Mind is existing." He could not say anything. The true nature of everything is completely removed from the dual vision. For example, it is just like a dream. In the dream, we see many happy things or we see many sufferings, but when you awake from your dream, you don't find them anymore. All the things you saw in your dream are gone, and you don't know where it came from and where it has gone or where it is staying. In the same way, the present vision is like a very long dream. Only this dream has very firm propensities, so therefore, we think of it in terms of being very real. In reality, all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas see that this is just like a dream. When you attain enlightenment, it is just like awakening from your dream. Therefore, all the visions that you see are just like reflections in a mirror.

Until you have a real firm understanding, you should try to think that all things are not real. This is what we call the vision and the void seen non-dually.

Relatively, with all the things that you see, the vision doesn't cease -- you can see all the time. When you try to examine with the sharp reasoning of absolute truth, then you cannot find anything which is independently existing. You should try to meditate until you attain a definite understanding of this.

Finally, you mix together concentration and insight-wisdom, and try to think that all the things that were explained are realized as shunyata.

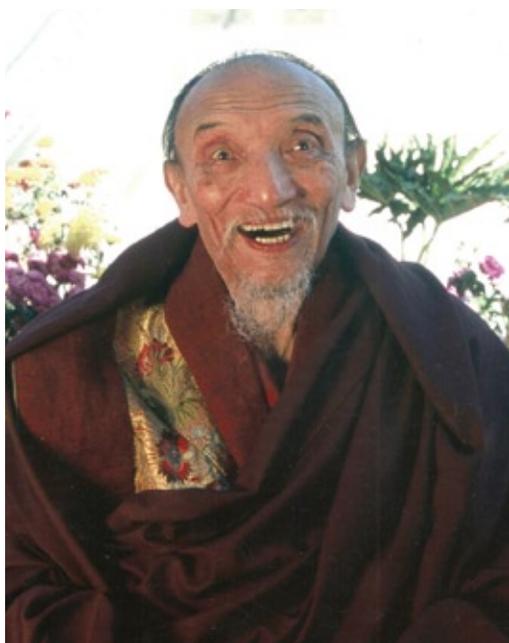
Inreality, there is no object "shunyata" and no subject "mind" which realized shunyata. The true nature of all things is completely merged, just as water is merged with water and completely becomes one. By doing meditation in this way, your mind will completely turn away from the clinging to the present vision as real and realize that this is all illusion. All these illusions will gradually turn away. And then, as you go on, you will be able to realize the real ultimate truth. By realizing the ultimate truth, then, of course, you depart from all the defilements and are awakened from all illusions.

At the off-time of meditation, due to your understanding of shunyata, you understand that sentient beings who do not realize this shunyata have to suffer a great deal. With that in mind, you are able to generate great compassion. Through the practice of great compassion and the understanding of shunyata, -- "just as the bird in the sky needs two wings" --, with the method, compassion, and the wisdom (*shunyata*), one will be able to cross the suffering of samsara. One will be able to attain ultimate enlightenment. In the ultimate enlightenment, through wisdom you attain the dharmakaya, which accomplishes your tasks, and through the practice of compassion you will be able to liberate others. In that way, you attain the Rupakaya and benefit countless sentient beings forever. So with this, we have completed the whole four lines of the Zhenpa Zhidel.

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Oral Instructions on the Practice of Guru Yoga

A teaching by H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche
(Part 5)



The View: The Single Essence

The final result or fruition (*drebu*; 'bras bu) of the View within all the schools of secret mantra (*sang ngak*), whether we call it the Indivisibility of Samsara and Nirvana, Mahamudra, or Dzogchen, is the same; they are of one single essence (*ngowo chig*; *ngo bog cig*). If they were not of the same essence, we would have to speak of Sakyapa realization, of Kagyupa realization, and so forth. Then if we took Sakya empowerment, we would not get the Kagyu result. But it

really is not like this.

The names of the Views are different, but the meaning behind them is not different. This is because the final result of all the vehicles of secret mantra (*drebu sang ngak kyi thegpa*; *bras bug sang sngags kyi theg pa*) is to realize the nature of one's own mind. One who realizes this may express it in different ways, as Mahamudra or Dzogpa Chenpo, and so on.

The only real difference is that the different schools have different methods, such as methods of introducing the nature of mind, methods of practicing

the path, and so on. Once you know the real meaning (*don*) of the View (*tawa; Ita ba*), they are the same in essence (*ngowo chig*).

For this reason, I can teach according to the Nyingma tradition, according to the Sakya, or by one of the other ways of explanation. From the master's experience in practice, he has found that once the real meaning is known, these teachings are not really very different.

I do feel that Sakya Pandita's words are truly wonderful when he says, "My Mahamudra is the experience of the descent of primordial wisdom at the time of empowerment." Sakya Pandita means that Mahamudra is not a doctrine or tenet belonging to the Sakya, Kagyu, or Gelug. "Mahamudra" refers to the one who recognizes the true nature of mind. This Mahamudra is introduced through the power of the lineage of experiential realization (*thugdam nyam zhay kyi gyupa; thugs dam nyams bzhes kyi brgyud pa*), through the power of the ultimate blessing lineage (*jinalab don gyi gyupa; byin rlabs don gyi brgyud pa*).

Whether we speak of the Inseparability of Samsara and Nirvana (*tawa khordey yermey*), or of naked awareness (*rig pa jen pa*); or whether we refer to Mahamudra (*chagya chenpo*), or to recognizing awareness (*rigpa rang ngo shepa*), the meaning is the same for them all, they are of a single essence (*ngowo chig*).

Some traditions may introduce more generally with few words, some may introduce very nakedly with many explanations, but their intention is the same. All of these teachings are speaking of the same point, to recognize the true nature of mind. The words are different, but if you really know the meaning, it is the same.

For example, sometimes Dampa Rinpoche meditated on the View of the Inseparability of Samsara and Nirvana (*tawa khordey yermey*), sometimes he meditated according to the View of Dzogchen. For him, the result of these was the same realization of the View.

The introductions to the nature of mind (*ngotro*) and sustaining the View (*tawa kyongwa; Ita ba skyong ba*), which I received from Khyentse Chokyi Lodro according to the Dzogchen teachings, were the same in essence as the introductions and instructions I received from Dampa Rinpoche when he would explain these teachings according to the Sakya tradition. There was no real difference between them.

Different traditions may emphasize different stages of meditation (*gom rim*). Some put more emphasis on the earlier stages, some on the later stages of meditation practice, according to the needs of beings. The methods of introducing and of explanation may differ in some ways, but once you understand it, they all introduce the same fundamental Buddha nature (*zhi desheg nyingpo; gzhi bde gshegs snying po*).

In the philosophical schools of Buddhism, the Views of the different traditions are debated. Students of philosophy try to distinguish their View from that of other schools. But, it is not like that in the practice lineage (*drub gyu*). All schools of the practice lineage arrive at the same essence (*ngowo chig*), and express it in very similar ways.

Sakya Pandita said that he had a special way of understanding the ground (*zhi*), the path (*lam*), and the fruition or result (*drebu*). In the Sakya tradition of explaining the View, it is said that the ground, the path, and the result are inseparable (*yermay*), meaning that they share the same essence (*ngowo chig*).

However, these special words of Sakya Pandita are not based on theoretical understanding or written treatises. They can only be understood through one's own experience of meditation practice. This is because the ground, path, and result (*zhi lam dre sum*) are only the same for one who has recognized emptiness, the true nature of mind (*sem nyid*).

Practicing Guru Yoga Throughout the Day and the Night

**KYAB NAY KUN DU LA MA RIN PO CHE
DRIN CHEN CHO KYI JE LA SOL WA DEB
NYAM MAY KA DRIN CHEN GYI LHUG JE ZIG
DI CHI BAR DO KUN TU JIN GYI LOB
RANG SEM RANG NGO SHAY PAR JIN GYI LOB**

**Precious Guru, embodiment of all refuges,
Greatly kind lord of Dharma, to you I pray.
Unequaled in your kindness, look upon me with compassion,
Bless me in this life, at death, and in the bardo.
Bless me to recognize the essence of my own mind.**

This is a traditional four-line prayer often chanted during Guru Yoga practice. I have included a fifth line for those who wish to pray for blessings to be able to recognize the true nature of mind. It is a prayer one can add to one's practice of Guru Yoga at any time. It is very short, and has all the key points within it so, night and day, you can rely on this prayer for your practice of Guru Yoga.

When we chant this praise, as it belongs to the Vajrayogini tradition, we visualize the Guru in the form of Buddha Vajradharma, red in color. If one is practicing the Hevajra tradition, one visualizes the Guru as Buddha Vajradhara, blue in color. One may visualize the Guru in whatever form is appropriate to one's practice. Visualize the Guru while you supplicate, and then dissolve the Guru into light, which is absorbed into your heart. Through this, you merge your mind with the mind of the Guru. Having dissolved the Guru into you, the Guru no longer has any form, but you are merging with his wisdom mind (*thug gong; thugs dgongs*).

This prayer includes all the sources of refuge, the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and

the three roots of Guru, Deity, and Dharmapala. Everything included in the Guru, the jewel that embodies all.

This four-line prayer is very profound. I have added a fifth line in order for practitioners of to pray to the Guru for wisdom. Really, it is a prayer that may be used by followers of any tradition of secret mantra (*sang ngak*). If you wish to pray elaborately, you can just change one line of the prayer slightly, in order to pray to each of the sources of refuge individually,

leaving the other three lines the same. In that way, you can pray to the Three Jewels and the Three Roots one by one.

If you wish to do so, then, following from the verse as it is written here, you recite the verse again, praying "YI DAM KUN DU LA MA RIN PO CHE", "Precious Guru, embodiment of all deities"; then, thirdly, you would pray "CHO KYONG KUN DU LA MA RIN PO CHE", "Precious Guru, embodiment of all Dharmapalas", and so on. This is how to pray to the Guru as embodying the three roots one by one. In the same way, you can add the word "SUNG MA" for the guardian deities, and then "KHAN DRO" for the Dakinis, and so on.

Similarly, for the Three Jewels, you can say "SANG GYE KUN DU LA MA RIN PO CHE", "Precious Guru, embodiment of all Buddhas"; then the same with "CHOS KUN DU..." for the "Dharma" and "GEN DUN KUN DU..." for the "Sangha". When you chant each verse, call to mind the spiritual qualities of each of the sources of refuge, and consider how these qualities are embodied in the Guru. This is the elaborate way to meditate on the qualities of our Gurus with

a single verse.

There is another a very famous four-line prayer of Guru Yoga that may also be used day and night for the practice of Guru Yoga. The verse below is generally chanted at the beginning of a session of meditation, while the verse above that we have already discussed comes from the section on Guru Yoga. Both may be chanted at any time throughout the day and the night.

It is said that you may visualize the Guru above your head in the daytime, or in your heart at night, such as at the time of going to sleep. This is a special instruction. Either of these visualizations is also appropriate at any time. In connection with this visualization, you may recite the four-line prayer of Guru Yoga.

Supplicate the Guru with heartfelt longing and devotion. Generate faith in the immeasurable qualities of the Guru and the Enlightened Ones. If you wish to gain more benefit from Guru Yoga, recite a short supplication prayer and do the prescribed practice as often as you can. Receiving the blessings of the Guru and remembering the true nature of mind are practices that can be performed continually, day and night.

**Glorious root-Guru, precious master,
Please be seated on the lotus throne above my head.
Accept me through your immense kindness,
And bestow the siddhis of your body, voice**

During the practice of Guru Yoga, first generate faith (*depa; dad pa*) and devotion (*mogu; mos gus*) while offering prayers and supplications. The best way to receive the blessings that introduce the true nature of mind is to give rise to faith in the Guru. Through faith, you can have an experience of emptiness, the true nature of mind. Pray again and again to the Guru with intense, fervent devotion (*mogu dragpo*). Then

dissolve the Guru and lineage Gurus into your heart. As you do this, merge your body, speech, and mind with those of the Guru and lineage masters.

Now rest your mind in emptiness, remaining without grasping. Within emptiness, clear luminosity (*osal*) arises through the power of blessings. As it arises, you are able to apply the Guru's introduction, recognize it, and continue on with the sustaining of the View (*tawa kyongwa; Ita ba skyong ba*). This is the essence of the practice of Guru Yoga.

All Experience is the Play of the Guru

For your practice of Guru Yoga, it will be a great enhancement for sustaining the View (*tawa kyongwa*) if you are able to regard everything you see and experience as the display of the Guru's body, speech, and mind. Understanding all experience to be the play of the Guru allows us to take Guru Yoga as the path. As we unite with the Guru's body, speech, and mind in Guru Yoga, all that we see and experience is included within our View, within the recognition of the empty essence (*ngowo tongpa*).

The most precious teaching of the Dharma is the introduction to the View of the true nature of mind. This teaching is not something that we can grasp or comprehend through making great efforts. Once we receive the teaching, its meaning will naturally occur through our practice of Guru Yoga, just as cream naturally rises to the top of milk. The pure essence (*dangma; dwangs ma*) of your mind, clear luminosity (*osal*), will naturally emerge from your Guru Yoga practice of mingling with the Guru's mind, as a pure essence naturally separates from an impure sediment.

While the View does arise naturally, we need to induce or assist this process by purifying our minds and practicing pure vision. In Guru Yoga, the practice

of pure vision (*dag nang*) means to regard everything we experience as the play of the Guru. Everywhere we look we are seeing the face of the Guru, everything we feel is the heart of the Guru, everything we touch is the Guru's body, everything we hear is the Guru's speech, and so on.

When we join this way of experiencing everything with the practice of merging with the Guru's awareness wisdom (*rigpai yeshe*) within the recognition of the View, this is the way to practice Guru Yoga throughout the day and the night. As we learn to remain with the View, everything will begin to arise as the play of the Guru's wisdom. This has similarities with the creation stage, where everything is a manifestation of the deity.

**As Tilopa said to Naropa,
"If you can understand everything you experience
To be the play of the Guru,
This is the practice of Guru Yoga."**

In practicing Guru Yoga, some may chant the Guru's mantra, and some may chant verses of praise such as the one we have just described. If you do not wish to supplicate the Guru in the elaborate way just described, simply recite the five lines by way of supplication. Then dissolve the Guru into your heart, and merge your body, speech, and mind with those of the Guru.

Dissolving the blessings of the Gurus into yourself, now unify with the Guru's mind. Your mind and the Guru's mind merge indistinguishably, so that they are non-dual with one another. Let the View be sustained (*tawa kyong; Ita ba skyong*) for as long as you are able to remain with it. This is the most important point of Guru Yoga. Once you have learned this point well, you are on the right path. It is difficult to get on

the right path, but once we do find the right path, everything will go very smoothly. This is known as taking the Guru's blessings as the path (*jinlab lama'i lam khyer; byin rlabs bla ma'i lam khyer*)

Summary of the Practice of Guru Yoga

In brief, we should understand our root Guru to embody the four Kayas of the Buddha's enlightened body, speech, mind, and wisdom. The Guru is the Nirmanakaya, Sambhogakaya, Dharmakaya of the Buddha. While we were not able to meet the Buddha in person, we have met the root Guru. Thus his kindness toward us personally is even greater than that of the Buddha. As explained, the Guru embodies every object of refuge, every enlightened quality. It is said that if a disciple supplicates the Guru constantly in this way, realization will definitely be born in his or her mind.

After supplicating the Guru, all phenomena dissolve into the Guru and the Guru dissolves into you. Merge your body, speech, and mind inseparably with the enlightened body, speech, and mind of the Guru. This is like pouring water into water.

Continue to mingle your body, speech, and mind with the Guru and rest in the recognition of awareness. Merge your recognition of awareness with the Guru's enlightened awareness. Just as there is the ultimate taking of refuge, where we dissolve the refuge objects into our heart and rest without grasping, so the practice of uniting with the Guru's wisdom mind in the View is called the ultimate Guru Yoga (*don gyi lama'i naljor*).

If you practice Guru Yoga in this way, you will be able to recognize and sustain the recognition of clear luminosity. In the beginning, our recognition of clear luminosity may only last for a brief moment. We need to recognize again and again, hundreds or even thou-

sands of times a day, while continuing to endeavor in supplicating the Guru and merging with his awareness.

Through the practice of Guru Yoga, our moments of recognition will gradually become more and more sustained. Through practice, the clear luminosity that is present in between two thoughts will arise spontaneously and begin to be naturally sustained. In this way, the practice of Guru Yoga will enhance our recognition of awareness, and our recognition of awareness will enhance in turn the blessings of the practice of Guru Yoga. The two practices will support and complement one another.

The practice of Guru Yoga is the most important means to be able to continue beyond our initial recognition of the View. Through blessings, and by uniting with the Guru's mind, we mix our practice of sustaining the view (*tawa kyongwa; Ita ba skyong ba*) with all that we experience. By doing this, our recognition of awareness will last longer and become more stable. This is the key point.

Practicing this way, we will come to be more at ease. Everything will seem effortless, without hardship.

Final Advice

We must remember to be mindful of whatever teachings and precepts we have received and taken. This is *drenpa*, meaning mindfulness or remembering.

Maintaining mindfulness is extremely important. One important meaning of mindfulness is that whatever instructions have been given to us by the Guru must be kept clearly in mind.

Shezhin, which means watchfulness or noticing, takes note of whether we are conducting ourselves properly or improperly. Whatever the Guru has taught us must be tested, checked and verified through our own experience. This is *shezhin*, observing carefully.

Another extremely important point is the question of the lineage one receives and practices, as Milarepa emphasizes in his teachings. In the presence of a true lineage, there is the continuity of blessings passed down through the lineage. And of course, the blessing also depends on oneself, on the practitioner. If one has pure conviction and pure devotion, then one is certain to receive the blessings of the lineage. Receiving the blessings depends on one's own faith and pure vision, rather than simply depending on the teacher. Even if the master is a great Buddha, if the disciple lacks faith, what benefit is there?

One must resolve with certainty that all of our Gurus and all of the Enlightened Ones are condensed into (*chig dril*) a single one, appearing in the form of the Guru as described in our practice, and do the visualization of the Guru Yoga.

Also, from time to time, remember to dedicate the merit of your practice. This will prevent all the merit and blessings you have received from being destroyed, and will help you to progress in the practice.

Ultimately, although we have the true nature of mind within us, some of us may resemble burnt seeds; without enough faith, it is difficult to accept the nature of mind and to recognize it. It is quite simple, but some people have a hard time accepting it because it seems too simple! Lacking faith, we do not accept and recognize the nature of mind, our own awareness wisdom (*rang rigpai yeshe*) within us, even if it is pointed out to us. Once we have faith, we are like a seed which will bear fruit; all the spiritual qualities can unfold from within.

The pure meditators first learn and gain knowledge, and then they clarify all their doubts and all their accepting and rejecting, progressing through contemplation and reflection, until they come to understand the words and oral instructions of their teacher through their own experience. This is the traditional way in the Sakya tradition. Finally, the yogi will find

all the qualities of the teacher arising within him or herself, and these qualities will just go on increasing and increasing.

My principal Gurus for the teaching of the lineage of ultimate meaning (*don gyu*; *don brgyud*) are: Dampa Rinpoche, Zhenpen Nyingpo; Zimog Dorje Chang; Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodro; Lama Ngaglo Rinpoche; and Shugseb Jetsunma. Among all of them, the most detailed teachings I received were from Dampa Rinpoche. There was no contradiction, nor any major difference, between what I received from any one of them. Their introductions to recognizing the true nature of mind and how to sustain this recognition shared the same single essence (*ngowo chig*). While the methods of introducing varied somewhat, once you recognized the View they were introducing, you would see that it is the same.

The final advice that I received from all of these great masters was also the same: “You must be very diligent. If you are not diligent in your practice, not so much will happen. If you are diligent, you will definitely receive blessings and get results.” The final advice of my Gurus was to put a lot of energy and attention into practice.

As the great yogi Drukpa Kunleg said before the Jowo Shakyamuni statue in Lhasa, “Before, you and I were the same. You were very diligent at your practice, and became a Buddha. I have not been diligent, and I am still an ordinary sentient being. Therefore, I prostrate to you.” It is also like the final instruction of Jetsun Milarepa to his disciple

Gampopa. Milarepa told Gampopa that he had one final instruction to impart to him. They went to a high mountain place, with a vast view. When they reached there and Gampopa supplicated respectfully, Milarepa lifted his cotton skirt and showed Gampopa his bottom. It was callused like leather, from his years of sitting day and night in meditation on the stone floors of caves. Milarepa told Gampopa, “This is my

final teaching. You must be diligent, just as I have been.”

As this was the final teaching of my Gurus to me, I feel that it is sufficient for my disciples. Now you have received all of the oral instructions (*men ngag*). It is up to you to apply them. I have asked my disciples to translate my oral instructions of the teachings on Parting from the Four Attachments, as well as those regarding the Vajrayogini practices.

You have the teachings, but it is up to your practice whether they will bear fruit. Try to remain mindful of the Guru’s oral instructions (*men ngag*). Study them and apply them at all times. Samaya, the sacred commitment we share with our Gurus, is maintained through faith in the Guru, and by purifying obscurations and receiving blessings. Realization is gained through uniting this with practice.

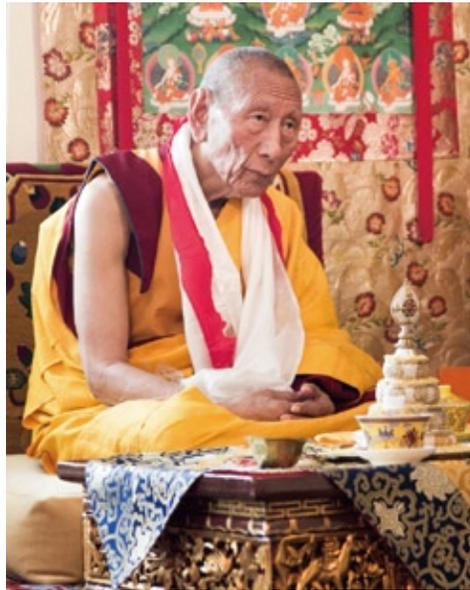
I myself have nothing personally to be proud of, though I do feel very fortunate that I have received this kind of lineage from such highly realized masters. These are very powerful, unbroken blessing lineages that have produced realization down to the present time. I do feel quite wealthy when it comes to lineages.

I also feel that we are all very fortunate. Although I am an ordinary being, I have had Gurus such as Dampa Rinpoche, Zhenpen Nyingpo, Khyentse Chokyi Lodro, and Zimog Rinpoche. I feel we are all very fortunate, which is why I am always saying to you that when Dampa Rinpoche gave the empowerments of the Collection of Tantras (*gyude kuntu*), during the descent of blessings (*jinbab*; *byin babs*), I definitely experienced the stream of the lineages of blessing. This stream of blessings is with us, and this is why we are fortunate and have reached the path.

Translated by John Dewese and Guru Rinchen Chodar. According to the wishes of Chogye Trichen Rinpoche, this was compiled and edited by John Dewese. Boudhanath, Nepal, March, 2007

MAHAMUDRA

by The Great Path to Enlightenment
A teaching by Ven. Khenchen Sherab Gyaltzen Amipa
(Part 1)



1. INTRODUCTION

The essence of Buddha's teaching is loving compassion, for Buddha's nature is loving compassion. Wisdom develops from loving compassion and leads to enlightenment. This particular Mahamudra practice comes from the Lam Dre. Maha means "great" and mudra means "spiritual posture". In this case, mudra signifies love, compassion and wisdom as the path to enlightenment.

Lam means "way", Dre means "fruitful", "leading to completion or success", so Lam Dre signifies the fruitful path, by which is meant the path leading to the fruit of enlightenment.

The Lam Dre goes back to the Mahasiddha Virupa and from him through Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, it was transmitted to the Sakya Order, where it represents a root practice. Primarily, it is concerned with the development of Mahamudra and Mahakaruna. The goal, which is enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, is reached through a series of practices. A more exact description follows later.

The Lam Dre has two parts: Sutra and Tantra. The Mahamudra practice consists of a preparation and three parts, namely, foundation, path and goal. In the preliminary exercises the aim is to accumulate merit. The foundation lays the groundwork for the training of the mind, that is, the development of relative and ab-

solute Bodhicitta. The path consists of the six paramittas, samatha: uncommon or extraordinary concentration (*Tibetan: shiney*) and vipashyana: uncommon or extraordinary insight (*Tibetan: lhag- tong*). The goal is enlightenment or Mahamudra of which two different expressions refer to one and the same state.

2. PREPARATION

The accumulation of merit is obtained through:

1. Taking refuge 2. Prostrations 3. Meditation and the practice of Bodhicitta 4. Mandala offering 5. The purification practice of Vajrasattva 6. Guru yoga

TAKING REFUGE

In Mahayana Buddhism taking refuge is of great importance, since it opens up to us the possibility of following the right path. Whether we are meditating on loving compassion and bodhicitta, or on samadhi and vipashyana, we always take refuge at the beginning of any meditation session.

In common ordinary refuge, the object of refuge is what we call the Three Jewels (*Sanskrit: triratna*): Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.

The first object is Buddha, the fully enlightened one. Though there is more than one Buddha, we have a special connection with Buddha Shakyamuni. He had already reached enlightenment a long time before but because of our good karmic relationship with him he re-incarnated yet again. He left the Pure Land of Tushita and was reborn in Lumbini. On the night of his conception his mother dreamed of a white elephant. Immediately after his birth Buddha took seven steps and at each step a lotus blossomed. He had chosen a royal family in which to be reborn, and to begin with, he lived in great luxury in his father's royal palace. On his excursions outside the palace, which he undertook without his family's knowledge, he saw people who were old, sick and dying. This suffering affected him so much that he left his family and

the palace, withdrew into solitude and exercised great renunciation.

Although he was already enlightened, he followed the path of human life, so as to serve as an example. This too is a form of renunciation. There are many different kinds of renunciation, the most important being to renounce suffering. The Buddha became a hermit and meditated for six years during which time he accumulated many virtues. One night, sitting in deep meditation under a tree in Bodhgaya, he vanquished all the maras. By maras we mean the five non-virtues. They are not external to us, but come from within ourselves. During this meditation Buddha reached full enlightenment. He then travelled to Sarnath where he gave his first teaching on the Four Noble Truths, the basis of our practice.

Buddha Shakyamuni gave many other teachings pertaining to Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana. In this way he gave everyone a possible path to enlightenment corresponding to their varied aptitudes, outlook and station in life.

When we take refuge we think of the explanations Buddha Shakyamuni gave, his compassionate nature and his activities for the benefit of all living beings. We then develop a deep yearning to realise these qualities in ourselves.

The second object of refuge is the Dharma. "Dharma" is Buddha-nature, that is, Buddha's wisdom and knowledge. "Dharma" is also the path. As we come to a deeper understanding we realize that "Dharma" is also our own innate wisdom. At the beginning of our practice we take refuge in the Dharma. When we have developed our consciousness and reached the state of Mahamudra, we take refuge in our own original mind, for the Dharma is our own original mind, the opposite being ignorance and non-virtue. In order to deepen our understanding of the Dharma we need to study the scriptures and to hear teachings, then to reflect upon and practise what we have read and heard.

The third object of refuge is the Sangha, the holy

community of Bodhisattvas. All those who practise correctly and fervently also belong to the Sangha. Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are the three objects in common ordinary refuge. When we focus our attention on them we take the Buddha as our doctor, the Dharma as the medicine and the Sangha as our helpful carers. The person who takes refuge is like someone who is sick. We need a great deal of patience in order to get well as our ignorance is a severe illness. We need a good doctor, the right medicine and someone who can take good care of us. If we follow the exact prescriptions of our doctor, take the right medicine and recover our health, we may also one day become doctors ourselves. However, as long as we suffer from our illness we must do as the doctor says. Not to follow the holy Dharma is to be like a sick person who does not listen to the doctor or take the prescribed medicine. The Dharma demands correct and virtuous behaviour of us, and this is our medicine. Our aim is to obtain peace and happiness, but if we behave non-virtuously and without kindness, we will achieve the exact opposite.

It is also possible to take refuge in four, five, even six objects, that is, in the Guru, Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, Dharmapalas and Yidam. If we take refuge in four objects, then the fourth object, the Guru, is put first. We can also take refuge in five objects. The fifth object specifies the Dharmapalas or Protectors (*Guardians*). They have received a mission from the Buddha to protect those who are seriously practising the Dharma. The sixth object is the Yidam. A Yidam is a divinity given to us by our guru and with whom we build up a personal meditation practice.

Taking refuge is not only important for beginners in the Buddhist practice but it continues to be necessary until we reach enlightenment.

PROSTRATIONS

We carry out prostrations with the “three gates”: body, speech and mind. Before beginning we take

refuge and should generate the enlightenment thought, that is Bodhicitta. We should then stand upright and put the palms of our hands together at the level of our heart. The right hand symbolises wisdom, the left hand method, the two elements which are fundamental to the conduct of all Mahayana practices. We then raise the folded hands so that the wrists touch the top of our head. This signifies the desire to be reborn in a peaceful Buddha-land. Next we hold the hands in turn in front of the forehead, throat and heart. This purifies any faults of body, speech and mind. We separate our hands as a sign of the activity of the Samboghakaya and kneel down with the feet close together. In this way we express the gradual steps towards the completion of the five paths and the ten Bodhisattva-bhumis. We bow down and touch the ground with the forehead to symbolise the wish to reach the eleventh Bodhisattva-bhumi.

Prostrations stretch the energy channels along the spine. In this way blockages are loosened and energy flows unhindered. On rising we are symbolically released from the sufferings of samsara. We should take care to keep the back straight so that air flows freely through the main channel, the kundalini.

To obtain the full blessing of this practice we should follow the instructions very precisely and control our mental and bodily attitude carefully throughout.

MEDITATION AND PRACTICE OF BODHICITTA

If we have developed our mind through correct and continuous practice to the point where no ignorance remains, we produce a deep wish within us to reach enlightenment for the sake of all living beings. To achieve this, we practise giving and taking which is part of the Bodhicitta practice (*Tibetan: tong len*).

With clear consciousness and free from ignorance, we visualise in front of us someone who suffers from ignorance or other problems. At the same time we ex-

perience the deep wish to free them from their suffering through our meditation. Our compassion then is as pure as the sun or moonlight. If we have chosen someone who is sick, then this light goes exactly to the seat of their pain. At this point, the power of our virtue is so great that it purifies the illness. This method is also helpful in cases where conventional medicine is no longer effective.

Giving and taking means transmitting our happiness and peace to others and taking all their sufferings and difficulties upon ourselves, thereby freeing them. Many people are afraid that they will lose their peace and themselves incur the sufferings of others, but if our serenity is strong enough, nothing can happen to us. We will have developed so much strength through practice and meditation that we can give our own serenity to the person who is suffering.

A further meditation practice consists of imagining that our nature is full of happiness and peacefulness and then we give these qualities to all those who are suffering. This exchange encourages the development of Bodhicitta.

Our consciousness can be compared to a jewel or to gold. When the precious jewel is taken from the earth, it needs to be cleaned and cut. On the spiritual level, this is accomplished through the training of the mind. Our original consciousness is a precious jewel; our ignorance is the dirt covering it. Through the development of the mind we experience a deep desire to find more effective ways of helping others. For this we need the right practice which leads to absolute Bodhicitta and so to the best way of helping other living beings.

MANDALA OFFERING

The mandala offering helps to transform body, speech and mind into the form of the universe. We then offer this universe, and in so doing we accumulate virtue. The study of Buddhist philosophy is not enough in itself if we wish to understand shunyata, we

also need an accumulation of virtue.

VAJRASATTVA PURIFICATION PRACTICE

There are two kinds of purification:

1. Common or ordinary purification through which incorrect attitudes of body, speech and mind are purified. We can also purify negative karmas and non-virtues in this way. The practice can also help us to relieve many spiritual, mental or bodily illnesses for which there is no suitable medicine, since they arise out of negative karmic connections.
2. Uncommon or extraordinary purification through the Vajrasattva meditation: through the blessing of Vajrasattva, our body, speech and mind can take on his qualities. An initiation is required for this purification.

GURU YOGA

Guru yoga plays a special role in Mahayana since many practices such as the path by which enlightenment can be reached in one lifetime, are not possible without the help of a qualified guru. In addition, the guru watches over our mental training and oversees our development. The guru's energy helps us to make more rapid progress.

The Guru yoga practice gives us a very special blessing.

If we wish to have more information about Guru yoga, we need more precise instructions from a qualified guru.

3. THE FOUNDATION

TRAINING OF THE MIND

The aim of training the mind is to transform it. We can reach this goal by learning to behave virtuously, that is, by being free from all doubt and by developing respect, faith, love and compassion.

If we earnestly wish to practise the Dharma, the

teaching of the Buddha, we should harm no living being, but on the contrary, strive to help all beings. However, if we desire to help, we must first learn what help is needed. This means that we must first of all reflect on the innumerable sufferings of samsara so that we can recognize them. Nevertheless, true clarity can only be achieved through the development of deep compassion as well as intellectual understanding.

On this path, above all, we must learn to abandon our way of looking at life exclusively from our self-centred point of view. Ego and attachment generate the greatest sufferings of samsara, while at the same time they are the very cause of samsara.

At Sarnath in his first teaching after his enlightenment, Buddha showed us the way to liberation from samsara. We call this teaching the sermon of the Four Noble Truths.

THE FOUR NOBLE TRUTHS

The first noble truth is the truth of suffering. It says all life in samsara is suffering. Even when we feel happy momentarily, we do not know how long this happiness will last. We are all subject to the sufferings of illness, birth and death and we are not able to protect ourselves from them.

The second noble truth is the truth concerning the cause of suffering. Here Buddha points to the fact that we are the cause of our own suffering created by the false view that ego and attachment impose upon us.

The third noble truth is the truth of the cessation of suffering. This means that our suffering will end when we have recognized that our false view and ignorance are the root of evil, and have renounced them.

The fourth noble truth is the truth of the path of release from suffering. In order to end our suffering, we must put aside the erroneous belief that our own self and all other phenomena exist of themselves, independently of cause and effect.

SAMSARA

If we observe our lives, we note that this or that annoys us or that something is not proceeding as we would like. We lose people and things we love and cannot protect ourselves from those whom we do not love. Time robs us of the attraction of what we desire. We are constantly under the threat of mental and physical illness, catastrophes and unpleasant incidents. Old age reduces our strength and dulls our senses. We become weaker, sometimes apathetic and severely limited mentally. In the end, we die.

This is samsara. By definition, it implies difficulties, worry and relentless suffering.

EGO AND ATTACHMENT

However the misery of samsara is not produced by any higher being but by ourselves.

The greatest evil and chief cause is our ego. Ego means “only me”, “me alone and no-one else”. The ego considers itself to be the centre of the world and thinks all else should be at its service. It only recognizes itself and has no room for others. It snatches all that appears desirable and defends itself against anything which feels threatening. This is how attachment and hatred arise. Such narrowing of the mind inevitably results in insecurity, because those who are blind to all but themselves, without feeling, live in a strange menacing world. These people cannot even trust themselves. The result is constant, tormenting doubt and lack of inner peace.

Ego, attachment and ignorance are thus the three root illnesses from which we all suffer. Though it seems to us that we suffer many ills, in reality, they are all merely effects of the ego. In order to free ourselves from them, we must give up false representations and recognize that we are subject to the law of cause and effect. The first step towards this is to think less of self and more of others. There is no difference between them and us. We are all striving towards happiness and wish to avoid suffering. When we consider how many other people there are in comparison to one

person, we realise that others are more important than us. This kind of attitude helps us to open the prison of our self-centredness. We discover a world inhabited by others like ourselves and recognize in ourselves unlimited freeing thoughts. For this reason it is a fundamental principle in Mahayana never to practise for oneself alone but always for the benefit of all living beings.

The ego and the “I” are not identical. The ego or “me alone” can be defined as egocentricity or self-love. The “I” is neutral. The “I” is what is active in us. Sometimes it only takes care of itself, imprisoned in the representation of the ego or it may endeavour to help others. This “I” seeks enlightenment. It is this “I” which expresses the wish to practise at the beginning of every sadhana.

IGNORANCE

Ignorance is the opposite of wisdom. Ignorance has two aspects, a common or ordinary aspect and an uncommon or extraordinary one. Ordinary ignorance accompanies us in our daily lives. It produces innumerable sufferings and difficulties. By extraordinary ignorance we mean that our consciousness is not sufficiently clear. We have not studied enough and do not know the different aspects of the Dharma. We are unable to observe and control our own mind. Our thoughts are confused and we find it difficult to distinguish right from wrong.

Ignorance is purified when the mind no longer depends on samsara. We will then have achieved the nature of a Bodhisattva, fully released from ignorance.

KARMA

Buddha himself designated karma as the result of earlier deliberate actions. Intentionally carried out, these actions are the source of happiness and suffering both in the present and in future lives, and the cause of rebirth in the samsaric cycle.

There are two types of karma, non-virtuous and

virtuous. If, for example, in one life we impose suffering on another apparently separate being, then inevitably this will have negative effects on us as well, for all living beings are united. Only our ignorance leads us to believe that we can gain from harmful behaviour towards others. If we think that at the end of our life everything we have done is wiped out and forgotten, we are still succumbing to our ignorance. We will experience in our next life discord and pain because of it. If, on the contrary, we have helped someone to the best of our ability, then our karmic connections will help make one of our next lives a peaceful one.

We can also alter our karma. Buddha’s teachings show us ways and means by which we can produce the cause of positive effects and avoid the cause of negative results. We can purify non-virtuous karma through renunciation, accumulation of virtue, and above all through purification practices, such as the Buddha Vajrasattva practice.

LOVING COMPASSION

Through his teaching on the Four Noble Truths, Buddha shows us how to change our state of involvement. Anyone who is suffering mentally can alleviate both their own suffering and that of others through the development of loving compassion.

This means that we must first of all feel love towards ourselves. As long as we do not accept ourselves we have nothing with which to produce loving compassion or Bodhicitta. This present precious human body and precious mind are all that we have to reach enlightenment. It is only as human beings that we have this possibility. Nor can we alter anything that goes wrong in our lives without first accepting ourselves.

BUDDHA NATURE

If we find it difficult to accept ourselves and others, we should call to mind that we all have Buddha-nature already within us. It is just that we are not

aware of this in our present ignorant condition. Ignorance is indeed the reason why we are subject to the sufferings of samsara. If, however, we give the right care to the seed of our Buddha-nature, it will grow into a plant and unfold itself. We will develop the ability to turn towards all beings with love and be able to protect them, for Buddha-nature, as it grows, awakens in us the desire also to liberate all those who like us suffer in samsara.

THE PRACTICE OF LOVING COMPASSION

There is a particular practice directed towards the development of loving compassion. We visualise in meditation someone who is close to us. Usually our own mother is taken as the object of contemplation. We can also visualise anyone who has been particularly good to us. We feel their suffering and develop the sincere desire to free them from it. In order to be really capable of this we must first develop a rich warm feeling of loving compassion towards ourselves, and feel it within our own body. Only then can we direct it towards others.

After we have thought of our mother or some other person who has been good to us, we can develop loving compassion towards those who are our enemies. Someone who always treats others with respect may have only a few enemies. However, since enmity in this life also goes back to karmic connections, an individual may not be well disposed towards us. The cause may be negative actions that we have done to that person in an earlier life. This is how false views in our present life arise and for this reason enemies are extremely helpful in our practice; meeting them gives us the opportunity to free ourselves of these false opinions.

This is why we treat our enemies with respect and we strive to practise loving compassion, steadfast in our belief in karma and the Dharma. In our mind and in meditation, we give our enemies all our accu-

mulated virtues, all our merit. We have the desire to make friends with them and the wish that they may be freed from all their suffering. If we succeed in purifying all our negative feelings of anger and rage, then, even though the whole world turns against us, we have no enemies. Our own anger is our worst enemy. However, it would be useless to repress our anger out of fear of the negative effects on our accumulation of virtue. If we feel anger arising in us, we should try to recognize its root. If this is not possible at the time because we are too angry, at least we should attempt to develop loving compassion as an antidote. It is only when anger no longer arises, when our nature has become entirely gentle and kind, that we can help those who need our help.

MAHAKARUNA

Mahakaruna links our loving compassion with the desire to liberate other living beings from their suffering whether bodily or mental.

“Maha” means great and “karuna” is compassion. Mahakaruna is the most important prerequisite for the practice of Bodhicitta.

MAHAKARUNA PRACTICES

There are three possibilities:

1. THE FIRST MAHAKARUNA MEDITATION PRACTICE:

We visualise someone who is in great difficulty. We then reflect on the source of these difficulties: non-virtue. Non-virtue has its source in ignorance. In order to protect ourselves, we practise the ten virtuous actions daily, with a clear understanding of non-virtue (*see below: virtue*).

Nobody wishes to experience suffering. Since suffering is produced by non-virtue, we must avoid non-virtue. Just as we do not wish suffering for ourselves, other living beings also wish to be free from it. Through our heart-felt desire to help them realise this

aim, we are able to find real liberation from the sufferings of samsara both for ourselves and for others.

In this way we can meditate for the person whose suffering we have visualised.

2. THE SECOND MAHAKARUNA MEDITATION PRACTICE:

We visualise someone whose ignorance is great. Even such a person can lessen their ignorance, above all by hearing Dharma teachings, reflecting on them and by doing the practices. We meditate with the deep desire that the ignorance of this person, who does not know the Dharma, may be purified.

Consciousness is in itself pure and free from non-virtue. If it is sullied it can be purified through teachings and practice. This is an extremely important point. Wisdom and ignorance are opposite poles. Ignorance diminishes in proportion to the development of wisdom. We therefore meditate for this person in such a way that they may be freed from ignorance.

3. THE THIRD MAHAKARUNA MEDITATION PRACTICE:

This meditation concerns attachment.

Since our life is impermanent and insecure, a desire to possess things or people sooner or later leads to suffering. Attachment goes hand in hand with ignorance. As long as we hold on to something, we cannot be free. This is not the same as holding on to the desire for enlightenment. No suffering can arise from this.

In order to release ourselves from our attachment, we should think about the reason for our re-birth in this universe. The reason is to be found in our strong ego that always gives rise to attachment and self-centredness. Little by little we can undo this greedy craving, which is like a cramp inside us, through the desire to reach enlightenment, through loving compassion and attention to other living beings. We meditate in this way so that the person we wish to help may be

released and freed from attachment.

However, before we can help others through our practice of Bodhicitta and Mahakaruna, we must change our own nature through our daily practice. It is only when our nature has become gentle and our mind free that we can really practise Bodhicitta for the benefit of other beings.

BODHICITTA

Bodhicitta can be relative or absolute. Relative Bodhicitta is the wish to develop the enlightenment thought for the benefit of all living beings. Absolute Bodhicitta is the enlightenment thought itself. It gives rise to our complete liberation from samsara through the recognition that neither phenomena nor we ourselves exist independently, but that everything comes into existence dependent on cause and effect.

BODHICITTA PRACTICE

In order to practise relative Bodhicitta, we take refuge and direct our thought deeply and sincerely to the idea that we must become a Buddha as quickly as possible for only a Buddha has the skills necessary to help liberate all living beings from the sufferings of samsara.

In this way our whole nature is filled with love, compassion and strength. We see the innumerable sufferings of living beings and have the wish to help them. In fact, there are different ways of helping someone who is in difficulty: we can offer relative help, that is, material means of sustaining the body, such as food or clothing or medicine in the case of illness. If the problem is mental, we can offer advice or comfort. In this way, we will only alleviate acute suffering and help to remove the symptoms for a time, while the cause of suffering remains.

We need far-reaching methods in order to help people recognise the cause of suffering. We can help most effectively if we transform our own body, speech and mind through the development of virtue.

VIRTUE

Virtue signifies protection. When we behave correctly, not harming others but lovingly exerting ourselves on their behalf, that is, when we avoid the ten non-virtuous acts, we protect others as well as ourselves.

The ten non-virtuous activities are:

- a) the non-virtuous activities of the body 1. killing
2. stealing 3. sexual misconduct
- b) the non-virtuous activities of speech 1. untrue speech 2. harsh speech 3. slander 4. useless chatter
- c) the non-virtuous activities of the mind 1. greed
2. enmity 3. attachment to wrong views

If we avoid these negative activities we will find ourselves less often in situations where we think we ought to act, yet are not clear as to the consequences of our acts. In this way the consequences of our activities will not come back to us from outside in the form of negative forces, limiting our freedom. Furthermore, we obtain inner and outer peace.

Since all living beings form an entity, we can share this peace with others as soon as we have attained it for ourselves. It is hardly possible to help others as long as we ourselves are lacking in compassion, peacefulness and patience, and are limited by our own suffering.

In the development of relative Bodhicitta we can also practise giving and taking. This means giving to others our good thoughts and the strength of our virtue and taking upon ourselves their troubles and pain. We need not be anxious about doing this or afraid of bringing catastrophe or illness upon ourselves. Our pure loving attitude will protect us while helping others.

For the meditation practice of absolute Bodhicitta we contemplate the Buddhas. We recognize their great compassion, their wisdom and their activities. We be-

sech them to grant all living beings these same abilities. Our mind then enters into Bodhicitta meditation and we experience the development of our nature. Day after day we obtain greater inner clarity, just like the moon growing from a small crescent to a full circle. Contrary to our original state of mind when we began our practice before purification, our mind becomes pure, strong and full of virtue.

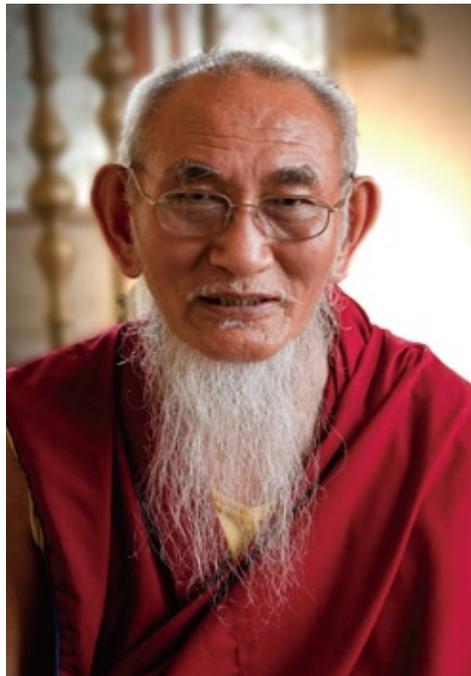
A distinction is made between powerful and powerless virtues. Ordinary virtues can easily change: for example, they may disappear through anger or at least diminish greatly. Bodhicitta virtue on the other hand always keeps its quality. This is like a tree that is stripped bare in harvest-time while the wish-fulfilling Bodhicitta tree bears a richer harvest the more we pluck its fruit.

Someone who does not practise Bodhicitta leads an ordinary life; through the Bodhicitta practice our life is filled with the extraordinary power of virtue. This is also the difference between ordinary people and Buddhas. We all have Buddha-nature within us, but without Bodhicitta practice it is concealed under our ignorance. At the beginning of the practice, our mind is like the sky when clouds cover the sun and moon, we can no longer see them although they are shining. If, however, we allow the teachings to fully penetrate our being and practise regularly with attention, we drive away the clouds of ignorance and gradually Bodhicitta arises in us like the clear light of the sun or the moon. In reality, Bodhicitta is the essence of love, compassion and Mahakaruna, no different from our own unveiled pure mind, Buddha-nature. As soon as Bodhicitta arises in us we feel as though all beings were our children whom we wish to care for like a mother or a father.

Through the Bodhicitta practice our body, speech and mind are transformed, even our name. For those who have reached absolute Bodhicitta there is no more bodily suffering, no more illness. They are called Bodhisattvas.

The Importance of Retreat

An Interview with Chiwang Tulku



Ven. Chiwang Tulku lives at the Sakya Centre in Dehradun. He has spent over twenty-five years of his life in retreat and is looked upon as a realised master by the many people who seek his blessing and advice every day.

Q: Rinpoche, could you kindly tell us what is meant by retreat?

A: Retreat is a means to attain enlightenment. It provides skillful means to obtain ultimate liberation, however its results mostly depend on how much we exert ourselves in its practice. Basically a Vajrayana retreat entails a development stage, during which we visualise ourselves as the deity and, once we have mastered this, a completion stage follows, through which the visualisation dissolves into emptiness. Through the practice of these two stages, we

gradually eliminate all our obscurations and move closer to enlightenment.

There are different kinds of retreat, and these fall into two main categories: recitation practice, or open retreat, and session-wise meditation practice, or closed retreat. In an open retreat, we can leave our meditation cell between sessions and engage in other activities, whilst in a closed retreat, we cannot leave our room, see anyone or be distracted by any other matter.

Ideally, it is preferable to do a closed retreat, but if for one reason or another this proves impossible, then

we can do an open retreat and take advantage of every available moment to do our recitations. Some people actually manage to do their recitation practice while they're at work or while performing their normal activities.

Q: Rinpoche, what kind of obstacles do we meet while we practise retreat?

A: Meditators meet with many kinds of obstacles during retreat. The main ones are drowsiness and agitation. Here drowsiness represents being beset by a foggy mind and continually falling asleep, while agitation means being beleaguered by distracting thoughts. Drowsiness is the worst obstacle for older people like me. If we tend to fall asleep while meditating, there are methods to counter this. We should, for example, reduce our daily intake of meals, wear light clothes, straighten our back, and keep our eyes open while gazing a little bit upwards.

On the other hand, some meditators become so besieged by distractions that they are unable to keep their mind focused during their practice. Even if they try really hard, some practitioners find this very difficult. There is the example of one practitioner whom I know who had so much trouble concentrating that he would punch himself in the head every time he became drowsy, which only served to leave him with a bad headache and several bruises. Thankfully, there are more skillful methods that we can develop to help us steady our mind.

There is a Vajrayogini text called *dpa' bo khrag 'thung*. It is said in the text that obstacles creep into our practice without our knowledge, and that we need to keep a close watch on them so that they don't take root. A long time ago there was a rich family that lived in Kham. Sadly, the entire family was killed by a group of brigands, with the exception of a young child. The brigands brought the child to the central

Tibet with them and abandoned him in Dingri. Because of his good karma, he met with the Dharma and practised meditation. He acquired such powerful meditative skills that he could literally fly from the top of one mountain to another. One day, however, while engaging in meditation on the top of a mountain, he saw a flock of birds swooping down the mountain valley just in front of him. At that moment he thought, "Ah, if these birds were armed, I could finish off all my previous enemies." This thought got stuck in his mind and gradually gave way to pride and anger. So much so that he returned to Kham and took to robbing and killing.

For seasoned practitioners there are two main methods that help to control the discursive mind during the practice of the development and completion stages. These are known as *rnam rtog thog rtzis* and *snagba gdon 'ded*.

Even while we are keeping the pride of the deity, all kinds of thoughts will keep coming into our mind. Nevertheless, if we can manage to steadily maintain the pride of the deity, all these thoughts will eventually disappear. This is called *snangba gdon 'ded*. Here *snangba* refers to thoughts that are relatively short-lived and not too intense. However when these short-lived thoughts linger and gain intensity in spite of the practitioner's efforts, this is known as *rnam rtog*. The way to deal with this is known as *rnam rtog thog rtzis*, which involves meditating on emptiness. This method helps to keep at bay powerful negative thoughts and, if the practitioner perseveres with it, it will eventually eradicate them altogether.

It is crucial to do away with discursive thoughts right from the beginning. Milarepa said that there are three kinds of '*phat*' that we can shout. The first '*phat*' should be shouted when the mind is totally plagued by untamed thoughts and is unable to concentrate. The second '*phat*' should be used when the mind col-

lapses into drowsiness and sleep. The third ‘*phat*’ that Milarepa refers to is used to dissolve our mind into emptiness. Since Milarepa is the master of meditation, we can trust that this third ‘*phat*’ must be very powerful. I don’t have personal experience of this, but I am told that it is very effective. These are the methods to get rid of the main obstacles.

There is a further obstacle that affects modern-day practitioners who enter retreat. Many meditators expect to experience meaningful signs as soon as they begin their retreat. It is very unlikely that such signs will appear within a short period of time, and it is unhealthy to entertain hopes and expectations for them to do so. Rather than achieving merits, these expectations can create serious obstacles to our practice.

Likewise, when and if signs do appear, we must be very careful how we handle them. The great Sakyapa Master Sachen Kunga Nyingpo said that if we tell other people of our signs, these will disappear. Also, we shouldn’t over-analyse our experiences or our dreams, as this will only create obstacles. As Mahasiddha Virupa said, we should treat all experiences with impartiality. Whatever experiences arise, we shouldn’t dwell on them for too long.

Nowadays, it’s very easy for retreatants to become distracted with technical gadgets like laptops and phones. Never touch these things while in retreat! During our break, rather than chatting to our friends, we should strive to keep the pride of the deity, do prostrations, offer mandalas and recite the Hundred Syllable mantra. It’s very important to remember this.

I’ve heard that there is a notice displayed at the Phodrang retreat house that discourages practitioners from engaging in mundane conversations involving politics, sectarianism and other such topics. This is very true. Such distractions should be avoided, as they too create obstacles.

Another serious obstacle is one that appears when

we have finished a session or a retreat. However much effort we may have invested in our meditation, there is the temptation when it ends to act like an unleashed dog. We must be very careful to take post-meditation practice very seriously. Whenever we hear a voice, we should think of it as the voice of the deity. For a Vajrayogini practitioner, all voices should be heard as the Vajrayogini mantra and all objects perceived by the eyes should be seen as the deity herself. All hopes and doubts experienced by the practitioner should be understood as those of the deity. One should at all moments keep the pride of the deity. If one remembers to do this during critical moments, this will be hugely helpful when we face the frightening experiences that we meet during the intermediate stage after death.

Q: Could you offer advice to those who wish to enter retreat?

A: Firstly, if we wish to practise Tantric meditation, we should first receive an initiation and instructions from a qualified master. To enter retreat without doing so could cause us great harm. As is mentioned in the Dum Sum Rab dhye,

*“Like squeezing sand won’t produce butter,
There will be no accomplishment without initiation”.*

Then, we should consult the appropriate texts. There are, for example, manuals called Snyen-thabs that are guides to the recitation practice for specific deities such as Hevajra, Vajrayogini, Sarvavid and so on. If we find this beneficial, we should refer directly to the text relating to the deity that we wish to practise.

But whether we refer to texts or not, the lamas always advise us that the most important thing to bear in mind when we undertake a retreat is to have the cor-

rect motivation. Shaping our motivation from the very beginning is fundamental, whether we are receiving initiations and teachings, or whether we are embarking on a retreat. It would be very wrong to go into retreat with the intention of gaining wealth, long life, luck or health. And so our motivation when we enter retreat should be to bring all sentient beings to Buddhahood. This is extremely important.

Equally important is remembering the four mind-changers, or the four ways of turning our mind away from Samsara. Bearing these in mind helps us to revitalise our meditation and our entire practice of the Dharma. The four mind-changers are: 1) the difficulties of attaining a human life endowed with all the favourable conditions to practise the Dharma; 2) impermanence and the unpredictability of death; 3) the law of causality and 4) the defects of Samsara. Remaining aware of these four mind-changers is of huge benefit, as it automatically makes us more eager to practise the Dharma, more devoted to our teachers, and more passionate about engaging in virtuous deeds.

Regarding the difficulties of obtaining a human life endowed with all the favourable conditions to practise the Dharma, one would think that this is an easy thing to achieve. There are so many human beings in this world, and if we look at the population of a major Indian city, we can think that their numbers are boundless. But if we compare these to the population of insects and animals that occupy the same space, then their numbers become minimal. In relation to animals and insects, human beings are actually quite rare. For instance, this house where I'm living at the moment has three people in it at the moment. But it has countless insects. And so, human life is relatively rare, and a human life endowed with all eighteen favourable conditions to practise the Dharma is extremely difficult to achieve, and therefore very, very precious.

What is more, not only is human life rare and difficult to obtain, it is also very fragile and can be lost in a single instant. The causes of death are numerous and our defenses against it are few. Death is unpredictable and no one knows when it will strike. It can even happen before we are born. And so, knowing that death can happen at any moment, we should strive with all our might to practise the Dharma while we are alive.

Then there is the law of causality. This simply means that virtuous actions bring happiness and unwholesome actions bring suffering. The law of causality is never wrong, never misleading. As His Holiness the Sakya Trizin so vividly explains, if the mere description of the suffering of the hell realms is so frightening, we can well imagine what its actual experience feels like for those who are caught in those realms.

I have never had such experiences, but older lamas used to tell me how they would wake up in a startle in the middle of the night after having deeply pondered on the unpredictability of death and the difficulty of achieving a precious human life. Some described how they would wake up in sorrow, with their pillows soaked in tears.

Of all the factors that help to bring us to enlightenment, the most important one is unconditional devotion to our teacher. As the teacher is the source of all blessings and accomplishment, having utmost faith and respect toward him or her is indispensable. Quoting from the scriptures,

*If the sun of devotion does not arise,
There will be no source of blessing that flows
From the snow mountains of the teachers
Who embody the four bodies of Buddha.
Therefore be relentless in your devotion.*

We can't receive any blessings unless we have

unshakable faith in our teachers. Many disciples claim to possess such a strong faith that they actually see the teachers as the real Buddha. But it is quite difficult to gain such strong faith. Deshung Rinpoche says in his commentary on Lama Nyachopa or 'Gurupanchashika' that at times, our own demerits and obscurations are so deeply entrenched that we see our own teachers as ordinary persons equal to ourselves. We see that the teachers need to eat and live normal lives; they even get sick just like other human beings; and so we find it difficult to have faith in them. But, when our own demerits and obscurations diminish, we are able to perceive our teachers as more than just human beings and we begin to perceive them as Bodhisattvas, or even Buddhas. Actually, it is very difficult to have strong enough faith to see our teacher as a true Buddha. But the more we decrease our demerits and obscurations, the more our faith grows.

Gaining true faith is indeed very difficult. When Dakpo Rinpoche, one of Milarepa's disciples, first heard his teacher's name, he was struck with such overpowering faith that he wanted nothing more in this life than to follow him. He received numerous teachings and pith instructions from Milarepa and practiced these during long periods of retreat. One day, Dakpo Rinpoche asked Milarepa, "When may I gather disciples?" Milarepa replied; "There will come a time when you will reach a level of realisation that is far superior to your present one. At that time you will truly perceive me, this old man, as a real Buddha." Then you will be ready to teach others.

A follower once asked Atisha for a blessing, to which Atisha replied; "Certainly, but you must first become devoted to me." This reminds us that there can be no blessing without devotion.

And finally, it is very important to dedicate our merits. After each session of meditation, we should recite the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra's prayer in

order to dedicate all the merit accumulated during our meditation session for the purpose of helping every sentient to attain Buddhahood. As mentioned in the prayer thus;

Just as the warrior Mañjuśrī attained omniscience,
And Samantabhadra too,
All these merits I now dedicate
To train and follow in their footsteps.
As all the victorious Buddhas of past, present and
future
Praise dedication as supreme,
So now I dedicate all these roots of virtue
For all beings to perfect Good Actions.

If we cannot recite this prayer after each session, then we should at least recite it after our evening session. Dedication forms an integral part of a retreat, and we should always remember to do it.

This is what little advice I have to give to anyone who wishes to practise meditation. It comes not from my own experience, but from what I have heard and read from great teachers. I hope that it may be of some help.

*From an interview conducted by T. Samdup
December 2014, Dehradun*

Accomplishment of Immortality

by Mahasiddha Virupa



In Sanskrit: Amrita siddhi nāma

In Tibetan: ་འཆི་མེད་སྐྱུ་བ་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་

Homage to Sri Vajrayogini

The beautiful bindu is located in the navel.
From stainless reality the light of the sun spreads over
all.

That [bindu] is crucial for those in samsara.
For the sentient beings dwelling in the three realms
there is Dharma and the superior light of Dharma.
Among those, three paths are taught.

The three paths are taken as one,
without beginning and free from an end.

Homage to the form of wisdom,
the special place and object of praise,

Homage to Sri Virupa,
the one who conquers fear of death,
the mudra of yogis and yoginis.
Homage to the lineage holders of the guru,

pacify all negative conditions!
Siddhi will definitely be obtained with this Dharma.
The confused who eat poison and fall asleep,
are given a stream of wisdom to drink,
which becomes supreme healing medicine.
I pay homage to the glorious venerable one.

When this intimate instruction of [Sri Virupa],
who has understanding and realization,
is taught to people,
after realizing the precious characteristics
of the reality of the Accomplishment of Immortality,
there is no proliferation in peace,
there is no nirvana, one abides in the perfect state.
From peace one possess the perfect state.
Wisdom clearly manifests as a variety.
Many qualities are possessed.
The various benefits of others are produced.

Great negativities arise from wisdom.
Great desire is fully enjoyed.^①
Great suffering arises from confusion.
The liberation of faults and qualities is explained by
me.

The meaning of truth is fully explained;
the meanings arise out of certainty
from the wisdom of a special mind,
and are definitively explained by the past masters.

Explore the tastes.
Investigate jewels with jewels,
investigate meanings with meanings,
through investigating the meaning there is a superior
realization.

The tantras divisions are taught in full
through the special kindness of the guru.
From illusory wisdom

migrating beings and so on arose.
Full diligence comes from practice.
The possession of the perfect state comes from dili-
gence
One should be familiar with negative states.
Sever the root of proliferation.

Whoever enters the method,
the profound path is the supreme method
because of entering the meaning of vajra.
The truth of the path is the result.

The perfect state is the possession of one who enters
through activities and special aspirations.
The definitive meanings arise from
those perfect conditions.^②
The yoga gathers the two accumulations.
Through performing the ganacakra
for the Guru, Deva and Dakini,
one comes to possess the supreme accumulation.

The person who purifies negativities and obscurations
through the yoga of body, speech and mind
purifies all of the negativities and obscurations
of the sentient beings of the three realms.

Since many excellent accumulations
have been gathered in ten billions lives,
one possesses excellent karma
and the yogi can travel to the other shore.

Perfect Mahamudra
is best of all meanings;
sentient beings who possess that
are always certain of reality.

The result definitely arises
for individuals of the three capacities
from the supreme qualified speech

of those who possess the meaning of the method

The two kayas are fully taught
to those who definitely follow the path.
The rupakaya has the characteristics of a vajra.
Its non-existent nature is
the dharmakaya with the characteristic of the vajra.

The special demonstration of isolation³
is the body, channels, bindus,
vayu, mind, the moon,
the sun and the different isolations.

The supreme guru said:
“The paths, stages and so on
come from fully freeing the channel knots.
That will accomplish the perfect state.

A person who practices this,
who relies on isolation and is diligent,
will arrive at the state of union in this life
through the yoga of expelling obstructors.

Fully demonstrate the objects to guard,
abandon the faults of body, voice and mind,
abandon non-conductive substances,
and by abandoning those, the critical points will arise.

Rub substances on the whole body;
three locations are shown to be the main ones;⁴
massage everywhere so it absorbs;
that is the yoga of pliability.

Through the power of those three,
cause, condition and consciousness,
the elements arise as five,
the time of their movement and indicative signs,
differentiation and result.

Demonstrate control of the coarse.
The three series of the four elements,
share space in common.
Through control the coarse are subdued.

Fully demonstrate the critical points of the body.
There are thirty six hazards.

Control, main subject,
the channel knots, vajra recitation.

Out of the six inhalations of the breath:
the nature of the breath is the vase,
so one should train in the vase.
The topics of the breath come from that.

The demonstration of the enumeration of the cakras:
mahasukha, jñana, sambhoga, dharma, nirmana and
cintamanicakra. There are six syllables from the seeds.

Strongly pulling the left leg towards the groin
forcefully controls the channels of the foot.

Shake the body and draw the lower vayu up.
Strongly extend the upper body.

Strongly extend the right leg.
Controls the the tip of the foot.

Having strongly pulled the hands in,
place them firmly on the mat.
Strongly draw in the prana.
bend the neck, pressing on the heart.

One should block the nine orifices
with the specific purities of the body.
Strongly subdue the door of the vayus.
Make the visualization clear and stable.
Having generated more and more strength,

balance the prana.

The critical point of effort is mindfulness.

Stabilize on the moon.

The conceptual vayus are fully pacified
through that yoga of balancing.

The great perfect control,

the prana, is the most important thing in the body in
general.

In particular, from definitely controlling [prana]
there will be no disease and the goals will be pro-
duced.

The devi controls the groin,

the deva controls the throat;

Fill and hold a vase.

By engaging in and demonstrating those
the mudra is firmly held.

Without fear, without obstacles,

the secret place is drawn upward,
to be balanced in the nirmanacakra.

Since time is purified,
that is the secret mudra.

From certainty there is one thousand leagues [of light
rays, etc.],

that is the nature of the yoga;
as such, since the body itself is liberated,
this is explained as the path of the siddhas.

The main subject is secret and should be practiced.

Since the topic of the vayus is perfected
the indestructible vajra of vayu is integrated with
space.

A person of extraordinary certainty
who is introduced and devoted to this,

even if he does not possess supreme success,
will produce siddhi by merely hearing of it.

Since he definitely reached perfect strength,
the vayu and mind are non-dual,
and since that is fully realized,
he possesses the meaning of union.

Sri Virupa, granted siddhi by the supreme mother, Yo-
gini,

taught this Accomplishment of Immortality.

May all migrating beings meet
with this intimate instruction.

By the good karma of meeting this
may all migrating beings
possess the strength of the Guide.

The *Accomplishment of Immortality* composed by
Mahacarya Virupa is complete. It is said this was
translated by the Yogesvara Amoghavajra by himself
in Tibet.

lthi

Sarvamangalam

*Translated by Khenpo Migmar Tseten and Acarya Malcolm
Smith on October, 26th, 2012.*

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- ❶ *Without attachment*
 - ❷ *The meeting of guru, instruction and person.*
 - ❸ *vivikta*
 - ❹ *The three main points are the primary wind points on the crown of the head, the chest and the back, and the soles of the feet and palms of the hands*

Prayer to the King of the Shakyas

by Sakya Pandita



I respectfully bow to my guru and to Manjugosha.
You sat right next to the mighty Bodhi tree.

Mara and his armies filled the whole sky.
They covered the earth.

The mighty one manifested miracles
To discourage you from enlightenment.
He attacked you with a rain of vajra spears, fiery
wheels,

Mountains and garlands of glacier peaks.

Your turned his arrows into flowers.
You defeated him with your heart of friendship.

You attained perfect Buddhahood.
I bow to you reverently.

When holy enlightenment was born in your heart
The earth trembled six times.

Your thoughts and actions were perfect.
You wanted to help others.

Your practiced generosity and morality so well.
You were stable in your patience and diligence.
You consummated your meditation and wisdom.
You completed the Perfections, I bow to you.

You were born to be the primary protector of living
beings.

All the wise men on earth were joyous.
The Maras were extremely upset.

The heretics were frightened in every respect.
Your teaching is an arrow of good works.
It resembles the sunshine.

Companion,
You never deceive me,
No matter what happens.
I come to you for refuge.

You say things with a lion's voice.
It frightens the worldly,
Along with their gods.
It stupefies Brahma and Vishnu.
Divine gurus sneak away from you like foxes.

Akshapada the Sage and Valmiki,
The Rishis Vyaasa and Vasishtha
Were famous
But you overcame all of them
With the Dharma.
I bow to you.
After achieving supreme enlightenment
You performed great wonders to help living beings:
You gave your body and your life
For beings who had not escaped their worldly desires.
Your hair stood on end.
You did not look out for your own life or body.
You said: "I must help you."

O Protector,
We have no guardians,
But you take care of us.
I come to you for refuge.

Victorious One,
You have defeated Mara's armies.
You have overcome the heretics
With none exempt.
You have emancipated countless students
Who were Auditors.

You have prophesied [the enlightenment]
Of your holy children.

Those who see just how good you are
Start to care about the wonderful things you do.
I want to be enlightened,
That's why I follow you.
So once again I come to you for refuge.

O Victorious One,
Your child is Manjugosha.
Your student is the son of Sharadvati.
Maitreya is your heir.
Does anyone who know his own mind doubt this?

How can I find words for how awesome you are?
I am awed when I see how wondrous your Children are.
The brilliance of the dawn
Shines as the partner of the lotus [the sun]
When it rises.

You have found out everything there is
About the way things are and how they add up.
You teach in a way that meets our goals.
This is good work.
I bow to you.

Now we see that
The guru of the living
Was born into the Shakya Clan
In the lineage of Ikshvaku.

May this Praise of the Blessed One, the Perfect Buddha,
Help living beings achieve omniscience
Right away.

The Fifteen Verses of Prayer to the Blessed One, the King of the Shakyas, was written by Palden Sakya Pandita in the library of Samye.

Translated by Christopher Wilkinson

Dharma Activities

Annual Vajrakilaya Puja at the Sakya Centre



From the 17th to the 26th of August 2013, the Sakya Centre in Dehradun celebrated its Annual Vajrakilaya Ritual. With Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche as Vajra Master, the ten-day long ritual was presided over by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and was attended by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche as well as Their Eminences Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche, Abhaya

Vajra Rinpoche and Asanga Vajra Rinpoche representing the Sakya Phuntsok Phodrang.

On the 21st of August, it was His Eminence Abhaya Vajra Rinpoche's turn to undergo the Vajrakilaya examination that concludes the preliminary course of studies in Sakya monasteries. His Eminence acquitted himself admirably of this challenging task.



International Buddhist Conference



On the 9th of September 2013, a three-day conference took place in New Delhi that brought together nearly three hundred representatives from nearly forty countries, as well as lineage heads of all traditions of Buddhism. Created in 2012 with a view to consolidate Buddhist values and lend their wisdom to the resolution of global issues, the IBC has as its motto: “Collective Wisdom: United Voice”.

Representing His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and the Sakya School at the conclave, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche was among the illustrious guests whose attendance highlighted its importance. Also gracing the conference with his presence was His Holiness the 17th Gyalwang Karmapa.

Key issues were discussed on how best to preserve the Buddha’s legacy and give it a proactive voice on

the international stage with regards to resolving the critical problems that humanity is facing today.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Hong Kong



On the 13th of September 2013, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Hong Kong for a two-week visit to what translates as the ‘Fragrant Harbour’.

Also dubbed as the ‘Pearl of the Orient’, Hong Kong is a world-city, the financial hub of Asia. Although Buddhism has a leading presence there, the city’s population is tied to its economic growth, with little or no time for religious pursuits. And so it was agreeably surprising that halls should fill to capacity with students eager to receive teachings and initiations from Ratna Vajra Rinpoche. As he approached the teaching halls, Rinpoche was invariably greeted by the exuberant show of appreciation that is characteristic of Chinese culture.

It was Rinpoche’s second visit to Hong Kong - the first one in 2010 - and his renewed presence there generated avid enthusiasm.



As one of the leading Tibetan Buddhist masters of his generation, Khönrig Ratna Vajra Rinpoche is attracting a growing number of followers who look to him as a pure vehicle of the Buddhadharmā.

Rinpoche’s rendition of a flawless speech in Chinese on the occasion of one of his teachings also went a long way in gaining him the admiration and affection of all

those present and in inciting them to place an ardent request for his prompt return.



84000 Conference in Bodh Gaya 'Advice from the Tradition'



On 22nd October 2013, a three-day seminar was held in Bodh Gaya that brought together some of the most prominent scholars among the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism. It was organised by '84,000', a global non-profit initiative to translate the words of the Buddha into modern languages, making them available to students worldwide.

Representing the Sakya Tradition, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche was among the senior participants in this pivotal event. Held at the Shechen Institute in Bodh Gaya, it was the first in a cycle of forums that are set to promote a significant exchange between foremost Tibetan and Western scholars and translators in an effort to provide a reliable trans-

mission of the Buddha's teachings through the vehicle of modern languages. Hosted by H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and Chokyi Nyingma Rinpoche, the conference also included the participation of Ven. Professor Samdhong Rinpoche, former Prime Minister of Tibet-in-Exile, and other eminent representatives of the Buddhist religion and culture.

An ambitious undertaking instigated by H.E. Dzongsar Khy-

entse Rinpoche, '84,000: Translating the Words of the Buddha' saw its beginnings in 2009, when over fifty of the world's most accomplished translators met at the Deer Park Institute in Bir, India with an aim to collectively preserve the Buddhist heritage by translating all the words of the Buddha, in particular the Tibetan Kangyur and Tengyur, first into English and then into other languages.

Thanks to the dedicated efforts of its founder, sponsors, editorial committee and 152 translators worldwide, the project is making dynamic and steady progress in providing serious students of the Dharma with accurate, readable and elegant translations of the words of the Buddha.

May this noble project continue to prosper and benefit beings everywhere!



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche at Pema Ts'al



On the 25th of November 2013, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrived at the Pema Ts'al Sakya Monastic Institute in Pokhara, Nepal, where he was to spend the following two weeks bestowing empowerments and teachings to the hundreds of monks who had gathered there for the occasion.

The major part of Rinpoche's visit was dedicated to the conferral of the Vajrakilaya *Toele* and *Mele* empowerments and teachings to the senior monks of the Pema Ts'al and Lo-Manthang Chosdhe monasteries, whose proficiency in the execution of rare Vajrakilaya rituals that are otherwise only practised in Tibet, make them a valuable repository of the sacred traditions



surrounding this deity.

The end of these teachings was marked by an elaborate celebration of Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche's 40th birthday, beginning with the Three Long-Life Deities puja performed by the entire assembly of monks, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony complete with several hundred voices merging into a hearty rendition of "Happy Birthday to You", and then with the performance of a Tibetan cultural song and dance show and a religious homage offered by Pema

Ts'al monks.

The day closed with the conferral by Ratna Vajra Rinpoche of the Logyama Long-Life initiation to the more than two thousand Tibetans and Nepalis who had come to celebrate this auspicious occasion with their Teacher. Everyone present was able to get an individual blessing from Ratna Vajra Rinpoche.

Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche's visit to Pema Ts'al concluded with a prize-giving ceremony on 9th December, wherein all position winners proudly received their awards from Rinpoche. During the course of the ceremony, Rinpoche addressed the sangha, stressing the vital role that monastics have to play in preserving the Buddha Dharma and in setting an example of good behaviour and academic excellence for their communities to emulate. Rinpoche wholeheartedly accepted the monastery's invitation to return soon.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche on Pilgrimage



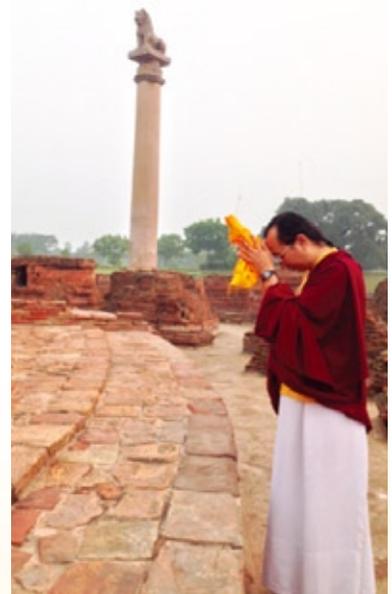
Following the 84000 conference, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche remained in Bodh Gaya

for some days, during which time he presided over a three-day celebration of the Sixteen-Arhat Puja,

with the assistance of a group of monks from the Sakya Centre, Dehradun.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche with his students at Sarnath



Rinpoche paying his respects at Vaishali



Rinpoche at Vulture's Peak



Puja at Nalanda

Over the following days, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche visited several holy Buddhist sites with a group of students from various Asian coun-

tries, conducting pujas in each one of these sacred places. It was a rare and infinitely precious opportunity for all those who were privileged

to accompany Rinpoche on such a journey, and every member of the group felt immensely blessed.

Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Dharamsala

On the 17th of January, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche travelled to Dharamsala to pay his respects to His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the latter's residence. It was a brief visit, during which news were exchanged and important matters were resolved.

Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche returned to Dehradun the following day.



Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in Singapore



On the 9th of December 2013, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Singapore, where he was to spend the following two weeks conducting intensive Dharma activities at the Sakya Tenphel Ling centre, including blessing by his presence the ceremony marking this temple's much-awaited land lease renewal. Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche's visit was crowned by the celebration of a major Vajrakilaya empowerment and of a Vajrakilaya Drupchod ritual. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche was assisted in these ceremonies by a group of Sakya Centre monks, whom Sakya Tenphel Ling had invited to spend several weeks blessing their centre with prayers and rituals.

Initiated by the Guru into the deity's mandala through an initial two-day empowerment, the sangha then engaged in a seven-day Vajrakilaya Drupchod, or 'accomplishment offering'. This intensive group practice is supremely powerful in taming and purifying the body, speech and mind of whom-ever engages in it. In itself already powerful in evoking the presence of the deity, the participation of a highly realised master such as Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in its performance, creates perfect conditions for the deity's blessings to become manifest.

And so, by the time Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche left Singapore on the 23rd of December, Sakya Tenphel Ling and its



members had been endowed with a wealth of blessings that would accompany them until Rinpoche's promised return.

The Great Sakya Monlan



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche presiding over the ceremonies

This year's Great Sakya Prayer Festival for World Peace was held in Lumbini from the 12th to the 21st of December 2013. With His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in retreat, the ceremonies were conducted by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, who also graced the thousands of monks, nuns and lay followers present with the Long-Life Abhishekha empowerment, with English and Chinese translations provided.

Accompanying Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche were his wife, H.E. Dagmo Kalden Dunkyi Sakya and their children, H.E. Dungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche, H.E., Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya and H.E.



Torma offerings



H.E. Dagmo Kushok, Dungsey Rinpoche and H.E. Jetsunma Kunga distributing alms

gathering, ebullient and yet pious, an organisational tour-de-force that never ceases to captivate its participants by the vibrancy and intensity yielded by the combined millions of recitations of the incomparable Aspiration Prayer of Samantabhadra.

Jetsunma Kunga Chimey Wangmo Sakya. In attendance were also H.E. Thartse Rinpoche and other high Sakya Lamas, as well as thousands of monks and nuns from Sakya monasteries in India and Nepal, and Sakyapas from the four corners of the globe.

The Sakya Monlam was, as always, a giant family



The business of feeding thousands



Cham Dance at the Sakya Centre

On 27th February, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche conducted a special Vajrakilaya Cham dance at the Sakya Centre, involving the participation of some thirty of the Centre monks and a month's tuition given by Lama Paljor from Monthang Monastery in Upper Mustang, one of the most experienced Vajra dance masters in the Sakya School.

This was the second such event, with the first one performed last year, to take place at the Sakya Centre as a prelude to the Gutor ceremony. These have been part of an effort by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin to revive ritual traditions that had enriched the Sakya tradition in Tibet and had nearly disappeared with the

exodus of its lamas to India and other countries.

A purification ritual, the Cham dance requires that the monks visualise the deity Vajrakilaya as they perform sets of steps and gestures, each with its specific meaning. It was the first time that the monks were performing this particular Cham dance but, under the approving gaze of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, they gave the impression that it had formed part and parcel of their daily practice for several years. As the ritual gained momentum, the monks became increasingly absorbed in their meditation and effectively transmitted their fervor to a smitten congregation.

Photos: Jamyang Zangpo / P. Chaudhury





Gutor at the Sakya Center

The day following the Cham dance, another special event was held at the Sakya Centre: the annual Gutor ceremony, also known as the Torma-Throwing Ritual.

This year's Gutor was conducted by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, and the leading performer of its characteristic Black Hat Dance was Lama Ngawang Lhundup.

This ritual is performed every year and it never ceases to attract a sizeable flock of Tibetans, for whom this is one of the most important celebrations in their religious calendar. Over and above being deeply sacred in tenor, it is unfailingly a feast for the senses, of colour, movement and music.

Photos: Jamyang Zangpo





Ground-Breaking Ceremony in Bodh Gaya



On the 8th of March 2014, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin arrived at Gaya airport, accompanied by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo, for what was to be an historic moment for the Sakya School of Tibetan Buddhism.

Accompanied by H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche and Their Eminences Luding Khenpo Rinpoche, Thartse Khenpo Rinpoche, Khangsar Shabdrung Rinpoche and Luding Shabdrung Rinpoche, His Holiness had come to Bodh Gaya to conduct a ground-breaking ceremony for the new Sakya Monastery that is to be built there. His Holiness and His entourage were being hosted at Bodh Gaya by the Shechen Monastery, a few steps away from the Mahabodhi Temple.

It had long been an aspiration of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin to have a Sakya presence in this holy land, and so this was a moment



filled with resounding significance for the leaders of the Sakya School and for the 300 monks from dif-

ferent Sakya monasteries who had gathered in Bodh Gaya for this memorable occasion.



Shortly after their arrival, His Holiness and His entourage went to make offerings to the Buddha statue in the Great Stupa and then sat under the Bodhi Tree to conduct a twilight celebration of the Sixteen-Arhat puja, the first among the rituals that would be held in the holy site over the following days.

The morning of 9th March opened with the celebration in an improvised temple of a second Sixteen-Arhat Puja, with the participation of hundreds of faithful giving thanks for the privilege of being present on such a momentous occasion.

And then came the moment that everyone had been waiting for. As flowers were strewn on the ground to welcome His footsteps, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin led the congregation outdoors for the ground-breaking ceremony.

And thus, as His Holiness

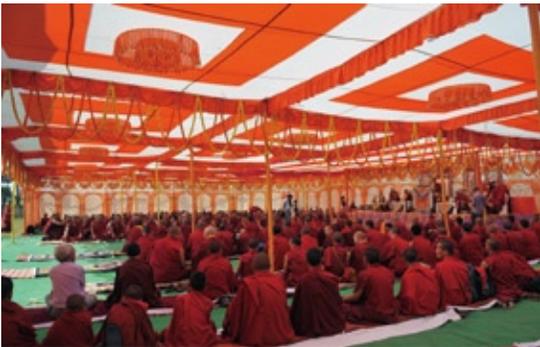
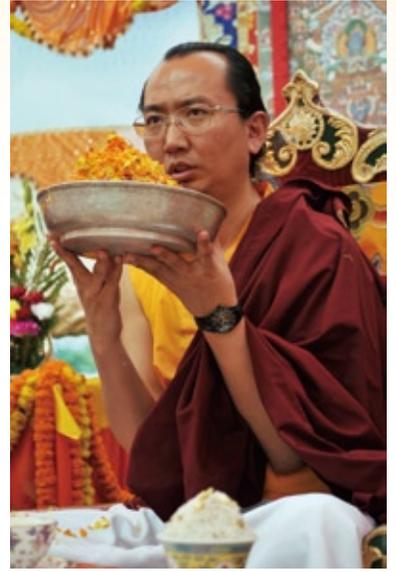


broke the ground, the seed was sown for a Sakya Monastery to take birth in the Holy Land. A long history awaits it wherein Sakyapa pilgrims can pray in their own temple and no longer travel like tourists in the land of the Buddha.

The following day was crowned by the celebration of the Mahakala puja at the Cooling Palm Park, near Bodhgaya, with a short Mahakala reading transmission by

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

On the 11th of March, His Holiness returned to His residence in Dehradun, where He was awaited by a busy schedule of initiations that would go on until His departure for the U.S.A. on 28th March. His Holiness and His entourage, however, did not leave Bodh Gaya before once again paying their respects to the Buddha at Mahabodhi.



It is ardently to be wished that upon His Holiness' next visit to Bodh Gaya, the Sixteen-Arhat puja can be celebrated within the walls of the temple at the new Sakya Monastery.

Photos: Dawa Dolma, Claire Pullinger



His Holiness Give Initiations in Dehradun

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin returned from Bodh Gaya to an intense schedule of religious activities that would fill up His days until His departure for His teaching tour of the U.S.A., Canada and Europe.



Chenrezig initiation at the Sakya Centre



Long-life initiation in Puruwala



Dragpo Sum Dril in Dekyiling



Shoten Festival at the Sakya Centre

Year of the Wooden Calendar of Events

Annual Grand Pujas at the Sakya Centre, Dehradun

Every year the Sakya Centre in Rajpur, Dehradun, holds various grand pujas:

1. Annual Grand Vajrayogini Puja 8 th of the 1 st lunar month for 3 days	7. Dhamtsig Kangso 25 th of the 10 th lunar month for 8 days
2. Annual Grand Vajra Nairatmya Puja 8 th of the 2 nd lunar month for 7 days	8. Annual Grand Cakrasamvara Puja 9 th of the 11 th lunar month for 7 days
3. Annual Grand Mahavairocana Puja 11 th of the 4 th lunar month for 5 days	9. Dochen Puja 23 rd of the 11 th lunar month for 7 days
4. Wrathful Guru Rinpoche Puja 10 th of the 5 th lunar month for 1 day	10. Gu-Tor 23 rd of the 12 th lunar month for 7 days
5. Annual Grand Vajrakilaya Puja 11 th of the 7 th lunar month for 11 days	11. Mahakala Day Each 26 th of every lunar month for 5 days
6. Annual Grand Hevajra Puja 8 th of the 9 th lunar month for 8 days	

Auspicious Dates

Six Auspicious Days

The 8th, 14th, 15th (full moon day), 23rd, 29th & the 30th (new moon day) of every month.

Losar – (March 2nd 2014)

Losar is the Tibetan New Year. It starts on the first day of the first lunar month. It is said that, during this month, the effects of positive and negative actions are magnified 100,000 times, and that therefore the benefits of practice are hugely enhanced.

The Four Great Festivals (düchen)

These days commemorate great deeds performed by the Buddha. On these days, the effects of positive or negative actions are magnified 10 million times.

1. Chotrul Düchen: 1-15 (March 2 - March 16)

Shakyamuni Buddha displayed a different miracle each day for 15 days in order to increase the faith and devotion of disciples. The 15th of the 1st month is called "Day of Miracles".

2. Saga Dawa Düchen: 4-15 (June 13)

The day Shakyamuni Buddha entered His mother's womb, attained Enlightenment and passed into Parinirvana.

3. Chökhör Düchen: 6-4 (July 31)

This celebrates the Buddha's first Turning of the Wheel of Dharma. It was only seven weeks after His Enlightenment that, exhorted by Indra and Brahma, He consented to teach the Four Noble Truths in Sarnath.

4. Lha Bab Düchen: 9-22 (November 13)

The day Shakyamuni Buddha descended from Tushita heaven and taught for three months in the Heaven of Thirty Three, where His mother had been reborn. This was in order to benefit the gods in the desire realm and to repay His mother's kindness by liberating her from Samsara.

✿ NB: Lamp offerings in the monastery or food offerings to the monks are welcome during all important pujas and ceremonies. If you wish to make any offerings, please contact the Sakya Centre in Rajpur Dehradun directly (contact details on the last page)

AUSPICIOUS BIRTHDAYS	TIBETAN (M/D)	WESTERN
H.E. Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo Sakya	1-29	Apr 2
Dhungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche	2-12	Mar 27
Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche	5-10	Jul 5
H.H. the Dalai Lama	-	Jul 6
H.H. the Sakya Trizin	8-1	Sept 7
H.H. Jigdal Dagchen Rinpoche	9-15	Nov 2
H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche	9-14	-
H.E. Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding	9-22	Nov 14
Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche	10-5	Nov 19
H.E. Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya	11-14	Jan 2
H.E. Jetsunma Kunga Chimey Wangmo Sakya	12-13	Jan 24

Holy Days

TIBETAN	WESTERN	HOLY DAYS
1-3	Feb 13	Parinirvana Day of Dagshul Thinley Rinchen (Grand-father of H.H. the 41 st Sakya Trizin)
1-21	Mar 3	Parinirvana Day of Kunkhyen Gorampa Sonam Senge & Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo
2-8	Mar 19	Parinirvana Day of Yabje Kunga Rinchen (Father of H.H. the 41st Sakya Trizin)
2-12	Mar 24	Parinirvana Day of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen & Khangsar Shabrunge Ngawang Lodro Tenzin Nyingpo
2-23	Apr 3	Parinirvana Day of Khenchen Dorje Chang Jampa Jampal Sangpo
2-26	Apr 6	Parinirvana Day of Khuwo Rinpoche Kunga Gyaltsen
2-30	Apr 10	Parinirvana Day of Jamgon Loter Wangpo
3-15	Apr 25	Parinirvana Day of Phende Khenchen Ngawang Khedup Gyatso
3-18	Apr 28	Parinirvana Day of Dezhung Tulku Kunga Tenpei Nyima
3-25	May 4	Parinirvana Day of Gongkhar Dorje Denpa Dzongpa Kunga Namgyal
3-29	May 8	Parinirvana Day of Gaton Ngawang Lekpa, Luding Khenchen Jamyang TUEpten Lundok Gyaltsen
4-12	May 22	Parinirvana Day of Khenchen Dhampa Dorje Chang Ngawang Lodo Shenpen Nyingpo
4-23	Jun 1	Anniversary of Mahasiddha Virupa's attainment of the First Bhumi
4-25	Jun 3	Parinirvana Day of Ngorchen Dorje Chang Kunga Sangpo

TIBETAN	WESTERN	HOLY DAYS
5-2	Jun 10	Parinirvana Day of Sachen Kunga Lodro
5-6	Jun 14	Parinirvana Day of Khyentse Dorje Chang Jamyang Chokyi Lodro
6-20	Jun 27	Parinirvana Day of Ngawang TUEtop Wangchuk
6-29	Aug 5	Parinirvana Day of Dorje Chang Ngawang Lodro Rinchen
7-14	Aug 20	Parinirvana Day of Ngakchang Kunga Rinchen
7-15	Aug 21	Parinirvana Day of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso
7-19	Aug 24	Parinirvana Day of Ngakchang Kunga Tashi
9-14	Nov 16	Parinirvana Day of Bari Lotsawa, Khön Konchok Gyalpo & Sachen Kunga Nyingpo
9-21	Nov 23	Parinirvana Day of Ngorchen Konchok Lhundrup
10-8	Dec 10	Parinirvana Day of Munchen Konchok Gyaltsen Sempa Chenpo
11-10	Jan 10	Parinirvana Day of Jamgon Ameshab
11-11	Jan 11	Parinirvana Day of Lopon Sonam Tsemo
11-14	Jan 14	Parinirvana Day of Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen Pal Sangpo
11-22	Jan 23	Parinirvana Day of Drogon Chogyal Phagpa & Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche
11-23	Jan 24	Parinirvana Day of Khenchen Appye Rinpoche
12-4	Feb 3	Parinirvana Day of Chogye Trichen Dorje Chang Ngawang Khyenrab Lekshey Gyaltso

Melody of Dharma

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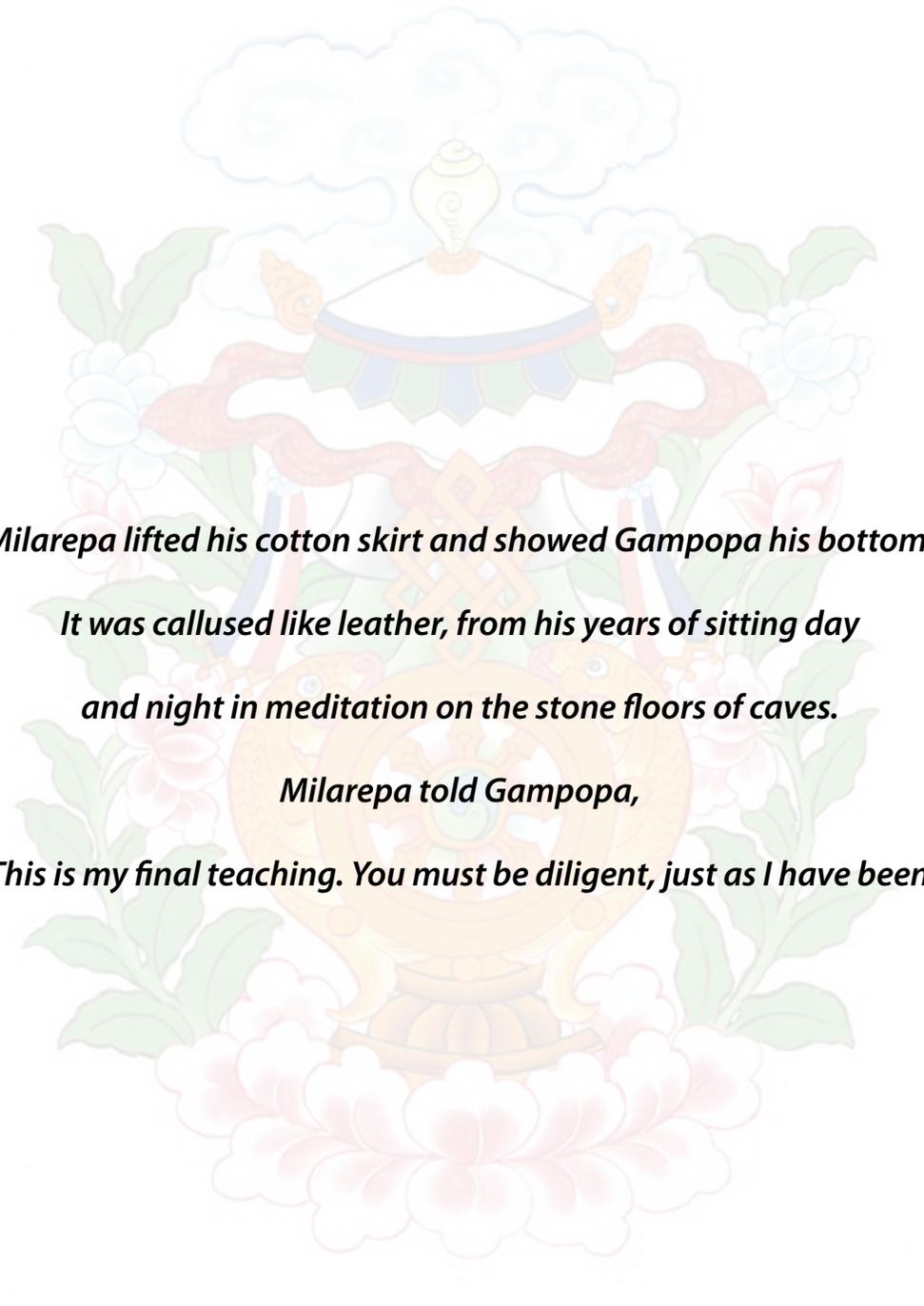
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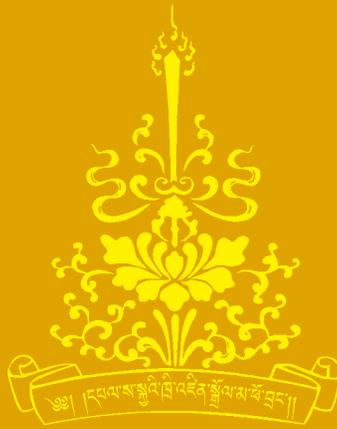
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Milarepa lifted his cotton skirt and showed Gampopa his bottom.

***It was callused like leather, from his years of sitting day
and night in meditation on the stone floors of caves.***

***Milarepa told Gampopa,
"This is my final teaching. You must be diligent, just as I have been."***



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