

Melody of Dharma

❁ The Inseparability of Samsara and Nirvana

A Teaching by H.H. the Sakya Trizin

❁ Remembering Great Masters

Shariputra and Moggallana

❁ Khöndung Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche arrives at the Phodrang



*A Publication of the Office of Sakya Dolma Phodrang
Dedicated to the Dharma Activities of*

HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN

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From The Editors

We sincerely hope that these past months have brought many gifts of peace and contentment to each and every one of our readers.

These have been months filled with Dharma activities for our teachers, with teaching trips to the Americas, Europe and Asia. The 19th of March 2014 saw a wonderful event: the birth of H.E. Dungsey Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche, which has brought incalculable joy to his parents, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Dagmo Sonam Palkyi Sakya, to his family, and to all who cherish the Khön lineage. May he have a long and happy life, and may he benefit countless beings.

Among the many happenings that took place over the course of the past months, was the celebration in Bir of the very special Chime Phagme Nyingtig ritual that was held at Tsering Dzong, the residence of Tulku Orgyen Topgyal Rinpoche, and was conducted by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and Vajra Mastered by H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche.

And now, our teachers will very soon be back at the Sakya Dolma Phodrang, with a busy schedule awaiting them. Following its week-long annual Hevajra Puja, the Sakya Centre will be celebrating its 50th Anniversary, with some six hundred guests expected to partake in this auspicious event. The transmission of the Sakya Kabhum will then be conferred by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin over the following six weeks, with a ten-day hiatus in December, during which His Holiness will be presiding over the Sakya Monlam in Lumbini.

The Sakya Monlam Prayer Festival for World Peace will provide an ideal platform for our teachers and for all those who will attend, to bring blessings to our world which, now more than ever, is very much in need of them.

With our best wishes for wellbeing and happiness, we hope that these pages will be of some benefit, and we thank you one and all for your continued support.

We are pleased to announce that we can now follow the Dharma activities of our Teachers on the official 'Sakya Dolma Phodrang' Facebook page.

The Editing Team

HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN TENTATIVE 2015 PROGRAMME

DATE	VENUE
March 19-20	Tsechen Kunchab Ling, Walden
March 21-22	New York City (Chinese Community)
March 23-31	Tsechen Kunchab Ling, Walden
April 4-5	New York City (Sakya Tsechen Tsogpa)
April 7-8	Sakya Phuntsok Ling, Maryland
April 9	Washington, DC (Mongolian Community)
April 11-12	Sakya Institute, Boston
April 18-19	Minnesota Sakya Center, Minneapolis
April 21-22	Denver
April 24-26	Ewam Choden, San Francisco
April 28	Nyingma Ari Bodh Center, Tehachapi
April 30 - May 2	Tsechen Chokhor Ling, Los Angeles
May 3	Chitun Tsokpa, Los Angeles
May 5 -10	Shechen Korea, Seoul
May 12- June 8	Sakya Lungtok Chöling, Kuala Lumpur (Lamdre)
June 10-14	Sakya Tenphel Ling, Singapore
July 1-15	Ladakh
August 26-September 5	Sakya Centre, Rajpur (Annual Vajrakilaya Puja)
September 14-November 28	Sakya Monastery, Kalimpong, WB
December 1-10	Sakya Monlam, Lumbini

SARNATH

The First Turning of the Wheel



*"I performed sixty trillion sacrifices there;
I made offerings to sixty trillion buddhas there.
Varanasi was the preferred place of the previous sages;
This place, exalted by gods and nagas, is ever inspiring for Dharma.*

*"I remember that ninety-one billion previous buddhas
Turned the sublime wheel in that supreme grove named after the sages,
Where peace, tranquility, and concentration are actualized, and deer always dwell.
Thus I too will turn the sublime wheel in the supreme grove named after the sages."*

Lalitavistara Sutra

Thus spoke the fully-enlightened Gautama when questioned by the four gods of the Bodhi tree why He had chosen to first turn the Wheel of Dharma at the Deer Park at Sarnath, some twelve kilometers from the ancient city of Varanasi.

The name Sarnath comes from Saranganatha, which means 'Lord of the Deer'. The Buddha, in one

of His previous lives, had been the chief deer in a herd that roamed this stretch of land. One day, the king went hunting and aimed his arrow at a pregnant doe. Selflessly, the head of the herd offered his own life in exchange for hers. Touched to the core by this noble gesture, the king not only spared both their lives, but declared the park a safe haven for deer.

The Deer Park was also a place of choice for sages to meditate in, and in its heyday harboured a great number of rishis who dwelt here in their search for enlightenment. It is also known as the Place of the Falling Sages, referring to the time when five hundred sages who were deep in meditation at the Deer Park were informed by the Devas of the forthcoming birth of

the Buddha. At this, all five hundred simultaneously rose up to the heavens and entered Nirvana, leaving behind them a shower of relics that fell back onto the consecrated ground.

It was here that the Buddha went in search of His former five companions in order to teach them the ineffable truth that He had discovered under the Bodhi tree. In this First Turning of the Wheel, known as Dharmacakrapravartana, the Buddha taught the five ascetics the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-fold Noble Path and the Twelve Links of Interdependent Origination, placing them in the state of Arhantship. Fifty-five young men of the Varanasi élite followed in their path, the ranks of the enlightened Sangha now swelled to sixty. These the Buddha sent in different directions to preach His Dharma.

As a result of this great deed, Isipatana, another name for Sarnath, became a symbol of the teaching of the Dharma and a major centre of pilgrimage. From the time of King Ashoka, it saw the creation of major Buddhist monasteries, as the rich and powerful subsidised the thousands of monks that these housed and sponsored the building of the superb statues and artifacts that filled them. Numberless stupas, temples and shrines sprouted, that commemo-

rated not only the passage of the historical Buddha but also that of the many Buddhas who had in the past performed enlightened activities in this blessed land. Artifacts discovered in its ruins evidence to the fact that not only was the early form of Buddhism practised here, but so was also Mahayana and Vajrayana.

This awe-inspiring wealth of religious structures thrived until the twelfth century when these were razed by the Turkish Muslim

invasion that swept the region and nearly eradicated Buddhism from the land of its birth. What was once a major centre of pilgrimage that boasted remarkable expressions of religious art, knowledge and activity, today presents itself as a flattened space where one can at best distinguish the outline of their excavated remains.

Dominating the ground is the Dhamek stupa, the only structure to have survived the onslaught of destruction that leveled everything

around it, and the main focus for the thousands of pilgrims that continue to visit Sarnath today. General consensus has it that this monumental structure marks the place where the Buddha first turned the Wheel of Dharma for His five companions. From the small fragments that remain of the intricately carved surface of its base, one can only guess at what might have been its erstwhile splendour.



Dhamek Stupa





Chaukhandi Stupa

As one enters the Sarnath grounds, one is immediately met with the imposing Chaukhandi mound, a vestige of a what was described by the 7th century Chinese pilgrim Hsüang-tsang as a colossal stupa of astonishing beauty, said to commemorate the first meeting of the Buddha with His five companions following His enlighten-

ment. Today, an octagonal tower erected by a Mughal emperor in the sixteenth century replaces the reversed-vase dome that originally crowned it.

Among the ruins that cover the grounds are the remnants of what was an expansive monastery whose main shrine is now one of the focal points of interest for pil-



Main shrine



Ashoka's Pillar

grims. Next to this is what is left of a great pillar erected by Emperor Ashoka, said to mark the spot from where the Buddha sent His first sixty disciples to preach the Dharma. In all likelihood struck down by lightning during the course of its history, it was originally capped by a stunning lion capital that has become the symbol of the Indian nation and, virtually intact from its long and abrupt fall, is now the pride of the Sarnath Archeological Museum collection.



The Lion Capital



Dharmarajika Stupa

Another major point of interest at Sarnath is the Dharmarajika Stupa, which vies with Dhamek Stupa as a possible location for the Buddha's first teaching. In what turned out to be a fortunate twist of fate, it was thanks to the stupa's dismantling for building material that Sarnath was discovered as a site of archeological interest. Built by Emperor Ashoka in the third century, assumedly to enshrine a portion of the Buddha's relics brought from Kushinagar, its destruction was ordered in the late eighteenth century by a ruling lord of Varanasi in order to put its bricks to more practical use. As they were tearing the stupa apart,

the workmen discovered among the rubble a green marble casket encased in a stone coffer. When pried open, it revealed its treasure of pearls, rubies, gold, silver and charred bones; the latter were taken to be the Buddha's and committed to the Ganges, while the rest of the contents were given to a leading archeologist for safekeeping. This, and the unearthing of other artifacts on the site created a stir of curiosity among archeologists that led to the discovery of the fount of treasures laying underground, establishing Sarnath as one of the major sites of Buddhist pilgrimage.

The last, and also the largest,

monastery ever to be constructed at Sarnath was the impressive Dharhachakra-jina Vihara. In an attempt to revive the decaying glory of Sarnath, this monastery was built by Kumaradevi, the pious queen of 12th century Benares King Govindachandra. Among its ruins a stone slab was discovered, displaying a poem versed in six languages praising the incomparable qualities of Queen Kumaradevi; her character is described as being exhaustively devout and moral, her appearance charming to the eye, and her gait that of an elephant. The verses go on to describe her monastery as an ornament to the earth and destined



Dharmachakra-jina Vihara

to last as long as the sun and the moon. Ironically, it was not long after its construction that the Turkish onslaught destroyed it and everything around it.

Following His enlightenment, the Buddha spent His first rainy season retreat at Sarnath, in a monastery called Mulgandha-kuti, whose ruins include votive



Ruins of the original Mulgandha Kuti

stupas of great beauty, which are in remarkably good repair. Nearby is the modern Mulgandha Vihara, built in 1931 by Anagarika Dharmapala, the Sri Lankan founder of the Mahabodhi Society, which is nowadays responsible for its upkeep. The Vihara is a hub of activity, with the daily chanting of the First Sermon by local monks. Its walls are decorated with charming



Modern Mulgandha Vihara



Anagarika Dharmapala



Buddha statue at Mulgandha Vihara

frescoes depicting the life of the Buddha, executed by the Japanese artist Kosetu Notsu. Sitting on its altar is a gilded statue of the Buddha in teaching mudra, a replica of one of the many statues unearthed at the site.

What was salvaged of the many statues and artifacts that survived invaders and treasure hunters are today to be seen at the Sarnath Archeological Museum, sole reliquary for the treasures that once made Sarnath a major cen-

tre of religious art and education.

Many of the works on display date from the Gupta dynasty, which ruled the subcontinent from the 4th to the 6th centuries in a climate of peace and prosperity, leading to incomparable advances in all fields of knowledge and artistic expression, and spawning the creation of Hindu culture as we know it. Some of the statues in the museum, particularly those dating from this period, are of an arresting beauty that is unmarred by the ill fortunes that beset them.

As one wanders through the ruins of Sarnath, it is difficult to remain untouched by the significance and intensity that each brick and stone exudes, and not to wonder whether one might have been among the extraordinarily fortunate beings that were there for the First Turning of the Wheel.



Buddha



Arya Tara



Buddha

The First Turning of the Wheel

Dharmacakrapravartanasutram



"Alas! This truth that I realised and awakened to is profound, peaceful, tranquil, calm, complete, hard to see, hard to comprehend, and impossible to conceptualise since it is inaccessible to the intellect. Only wise noble ones and adepts can understand it. It is the complete and definite apprehension of the abandonment of all aggregates, the end of all sensations, the absolute truth, and freedom from a foundation. It is a state of complete peace, free of clinging, free of grasping, unobserved, undemonstrable, and ineffable. It is indescribable, inexpressible, and incapable of being illustrated. It is unobstructed, beyond all references, a state of interruption through the path of tranquility, and imperceptible like emptiness. It is the exhaustion of craving and it is cessation free of desire. It is nirvana. If I were to teach this truth to others, they would not understand it. Teaching the truth would tire me out and be wrongly contested, and it would be futile. Thus I will remain silent and keep this truth in my heart."

Lalitavistara Sutra

Thus spoke the Buddha shortly after His enlightenment, in response to the Lord Brahma's exhortation to teach His newly-realised Truth. But so intense were Brahma's supplications that the Buddha, generating boundless compassion, finally acquiesced to his request, and determined that He would teach His Dharma to those with little dust in their eyes. As the stage for this historic happening, the Buddha chose the hallowed Deer Park in Varanasi.

Pondering upon whom He would first impart this priceless teaching, His mind settled upon his former

five companions in austerities, who were still pursuing their ascetic practices at Sarnath. And so the Buddha set off for Varanasi, stopping here and there in order to satisfy the many eager invitations to stop and rest at the homes of devotees. As He reached the shores of the Ganges, he was accosted by the local ferryman, who demanded his crossing fee. The Buddha answered that he was carrying no money and, without further ado, flew across the river, leaving the ferry man utterly perplexed and repentant. When he was told of this incident, King Bimbisara then and there abolished the crossing

fee for monks.

As the Buddha approached the Deer Park, his former five companions caught sight of Him and, resentful that He had abandoned them and their abstemious path, resolved to ignore Him. But, as the Holy One came nearer, the five were so mesmerised by His countenance that they couldn't help but throw themselves at His feet and confess their wrong behaviour.

To pay tribute to the Buddha's decision to Turn the Wheel of Dharma, all the gods adorned the universe with wondrous signs and offered the Enlightened One many millions of lion thrones, while numberless bodhisattvas of the past appeared before Him and paid homage, adding their ardent entreaties for the Holy One to blow the great conch of the Dharma.

And so, that very night, the Buddha preached His first sermon to the five adepts, expounding His view of the Middle Way through the teaching of the Four Noble Truths, the Eight-Fold Noble Path and the Twelve Aspects of Interdependent Origination.

In this most profound teaching of the Four Truths, the Buddha described how the very nature of all conditioned existence is suffering, samsara, and proceeded to explain that the cause of our suffering is our false belief that we, and all phenomena, have an inherent, independent existence. The Buddha then added that there is a definitive cure for our suffering and that this cure, nirvana, is to be found in our adherence to the Eight-Fold Noble Path.

"Monks, there are two extremes that you should avoid when you have taken ordination. First do not follow self-indulgence, which is shallow, worldly, ordinary, unworthy of a noble one, and attended by undesired consequences. In the long run it will prevent you from practicing your religion. You will become distracted and unable to develop nonattachment. You will not enter into the state of cessation nor develop higher knowledge, or attain the perfect awakening of nirvana. On the other hand, straying from the middle way, you will not pass beyond suffering. If you mistreat your body so that it suffers and is harmed, you will face dif-

ficulties as can be observed right now, and in the future even further misery will fall on you.

"Monks, the Bliss-Gone One teaches the Dharma by showing the middle way that does not fall into either of the two extremes. The Dharma that he teaches is one of correct view, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.

"Monks, there are also four truths of the noble ones. What are these four? Suffering, the origin of suffering, the cessation of suffering, and the path that leads to the cessation of suffering.

"What is suffering? It is the pain that accompanies birth, growing old, falling sick, and dying. It also includes the suffering of meeting the unpleasant and parting from the pleasant. Not finding what is being sought is also suffering. In short the five perpetuating aggregates are suffering. This is what we call suffering.

"What is the origin of suffering? It is the craving that perpetuates existence, which is attended upon by the passion for enjoyment, and which finds pleasures here and there. This is the origin of suffering.

"What is the cessation of suffering? It is the complete and dispassionate cessation of craving that perpetuates existence, which is attended upon by the passion for enjoyment, and which finds pleasures here and there. This is the cessation of suffering.

"What is the path that leads to the cessation of suffering? It is exclusively the eightfold path of the noble ones. This is the path that starts with correct view and ends with correct concentration. It is called 'the path that leads to the cessation of suffering - a noble truth.

"Monks, these four truths are the truths of the noble ones.

"Monks, this teaching I had not heard previously. I understood it by intensely and introspectively focusing my mind on suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

"Monks, this teaching I had not heard previously. I understood it by focusing intently on the origin of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding,

intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, this teaching I had not heard previously. I understood it by focusing intently on the cessation of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, this teaching I had not heard previously. I understood it by focusing intently on the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, suffering must be known. This I understood by focusing intently on suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, the origin of suffering must be abandoned. This I understood by focusing intently on the origin of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, the cessation of suffering must be actualized. This I understood by focusing intently on the cessation of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, the path that leads to the cessation of suffering must be practiced. This I understood by focusing intently on the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge, and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, I have fully understood suffering. This I

did by focusing intently on suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, I have abandoned the origin of suffering. This I did by focusing intently on the origin of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge and insight became manifest.

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, I have actualized the cessation of suffering. This I did by focusing intently on the cessation of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge and insight became manifest

“Monks, within this teaching that I had not heard previously, I have practiced the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. This I did by focusing intently on the path that leads to the cessation of suffering. In this way my wisdom, vision, understanding, intellect, intelligence, knowledge and insight became manifest.

“Monks, in this way I genuinely contemplated each of the four truths of the noble ones while I recited them three times. Still I did not develop the wisdom that sees their twelve aspects. Monks, therefore I did not make any claims of having awakened to unsurpassable, perfect and complete buddhahood, and I still lacked the insight of wisdom.

“However, monks, once I had recited the four truths of the noble ones three times, I developed the wisdom that sees their twelve aspects. At that point my mind was free and my insight was now free and pure. Monks, at that point I declared that I had awakened to unsurpassable, perfect and complete buddhahood. My wisdom vision had been developed, my births had been exhausted, I had carried out my religious practice, I had done what needed to be done, and I will not have another life.”

Lalitavistara Sutra

Remembering Great Masters

SHARIPUTRA AND MOGGALLANA

Chief Disciples of the Lord Buddha



Two of the greatest saints to have ever existed, Shariputra and Moggallana were by far the most accomplished among the Buddha's disciples, and also those closest to the Holy One. They are to be seen in numberless representations of the Buddha, standing on either side of Him.

Conceived and born on the same day from prominent families who, although from different castes and different villages, had close ties, the boys grew up side by side and gradually became inseparable. This magnetic relationship was to last throughout their entire lives.

Upatissa and Kolita, as they were then known, were model youths. Having received the best education available, they soon both acquired mastery over all the arts and sciences. Each had a following of five hundred youths of the best families, and together all enjoyed the pleasures of youth to the hilt.

One day, as they did each year, the boys and their retinues attended the traditional three-day Hilltop Festival, the main entertainment event of the year at Rajgir. Over the first two days, the boys were utterly

enraptured by the goings-on and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. By the third day, however, the enchantment began to wear out and both youths, simultaneously, began to question the validity of such trivial pursuits and decided there and then to become wandering ascetics, and to seek a deeper meaning to life and a cure to human suffering.

Their spiritual journey began under the tutelage of one Sañjaya, an ascetic Brahmin with a large following, who ordained the pair and taught them everything he knew. When they realised that he could not offer them the wisdom that they sought, they once again took up their path of wandering ascetics, in search of a higher truth that would thoroughly quench their thirst for complete deliverance.

On their quest, they met a good many wise men, with whom they engaged in philosophical discussions but each time, they were disillusioned as they invariably found that they themselves knew more than these teachers. And so, they decided to go different ways in order to double their chances of meeting a true master, with the understanding that as soon as one found the

right teacher, he would immediately inform the other.

This was a time when the Buddha had sent out his first batch of sixty-one disciples to teach His Dharma far and wide. One of these was Assaji, one of the Buddha's first five disciples. Destiny placed him on Upatissa's path, who was so impressed by the former's countenance that he asked him who his teacher was, and what was the essence of his teaching. Assaji replied with these words:

“Of all those things that come from a cause arise,
Tathagata the cause therefore has told;
And how they cease to be, that too he tells,
This is the doctrine of the Great Recluse.”

Upon hearing these verses, Upatissa became established as a stream-winner and likewise, and the same thing happened to Kolita when his friend recited them to him. And so the two, accompanied a group of two hundred and fifty ascetics, set out for the Bamboo Grove to find the Buddha.

When they arrived there, the Buddha was preaching the Dharma to a large crowd and, when He saw them approaching, He announced: “These two friends, Upatissa and Kolita, who are now coming, will be excellent disciples to me, a blessed pair.” And then to them, the Buddha said: “Come, O bhikkhus! Well proclaimed is the Dharma. Now live the life of purity, to make an end of suffering.” In this way did the Buddha ordain His new disciples, giving them the new names of Shariputra and Moggallana.

The Buddha instructed His new disciples, who withdrew into meditation. Within a week of sustained practice, Moggallana attained sainthood and within two weeks, so did Shariputra. The Buddha remarked that although the two had attained awakening through wisdom and meditation, the aspect of wisdom prevailed in Shariputra, while that of meditation did so in Moggallana.

The Buddha declared them His chief disciples, along with Ananda, adding that several Buddhas of the past had likewise been flanked by three principal

disciples. From then on, Shariputra always stood to the Buddha's right whenever the latter gave a teaching, and Moggallana to His left. Ananda acted as His attendant as well as repository of all His teachings - he could remember each one of them.

The Buddha often delegated His chief disciples to teach in His stead, a task of which they acquitted themselves to perfection. One memorable occasion of this occurrence was when the rebel Devadatta tried to split from the Buddha's Sangha, bringing five hundred monks with him to Vulture's Peak, where he was to preach to them. The Buddha sent Shariputra and Moggallana to bring them back and set them once again upon the right path and so, while the renegade was asleep, the pair preached to the Sangha, who attained stream-entry and returned with them to the Buddha.

But the importance of their positions didn't arouse pride in either of the two. Having complete control over their minds, they were no longer subject to negative emotions. On the contrary, they were both of great humility and generosity. Although they were both fully accomplished Bodhisattvas, each one had prevailing qualities. Shariputra was a peerless scholar, who left a body of writing that exposed the Buddha's teachings with incomparable logic and lucidity. On the other hand, Moggallana was known for his magical powers, second only to those of the Buddha Himself.

Shariputra and Moggallana spent many long years at the Buddha's side, dedicating every instant of their lives assisting Him in every way conceivable, as their qualities and accomplishment came closer and closer to His. The Buddha was in His eightieth year when He left His body. Aware that the chief disciples of previous Buddhas had not outlived their master, Shariputra and Moggallana both passed away shortly before the Buddha, within a fortnight of each other.

Such were the qualities of Shariputra and Moggallana that the Buddha remarked after their passing that the Sangha now seemed empty, urging its members to always follow their example and cultivate the qualities that the two had so assiduously made theirs.

The Inseparability of Samsara and Nirvana

by His Holiness Sakya Trizin

This world that we live in has many different races, cultures, religions and philosophies. Among these, one single wish is shared: to be free from suffering. Everybody wishes to be happy. Every individual, every community, every nation dedicates all its efforts to the attainment of happiness. Due to the efforts that we have already made, tremendous progress has been achieved in technology and science. However, have we really achieved the goal that we are seeking - happiness? It is very clear that unless outer material progress is linked with inner spiritual progress, the present progress will bring more suffering, rather than more happiness. There is much that needs to be accomplished; many things need to be done, and many wishes need to be fulfilled in our lives. The most important thing that needs to be accomplished, however, is spiritual development. Only through spiritual development can we make our minds attain real peace and happiness.

And so, the most important thing in our life is spiritual practice. There are many different religions

and many different teachings that preach spiritual practices. Each one of these major teachings has its own beauty and its own way of helping mankind solve its problems. What is lacking, however, is the actual application of these teachings to our daily

lives. Because of this, we are afflicted by a great deal of suffering and a multitude of problems. Therefore, in order to attain individual peace, and to establish peace and happiness not only within our local communities but in the world as a whole, it is very important for every individual to make an effort in their spiritual development. If we exert ourselves, we will find the potential to change the world.

We have access to the same teachings that brought great masters to achieve realisations. These were originally ordinary persons like us, but they made the necessary effort

to achieve the realisation. So if we work hard, there is no reason why we cannot succeed. It is very important for us to understand the teachings. Also whatever practice we learn, we need to apply to our daily life. Following is a general outline of the basic teachings of the Sakya Tradition.



The great Lord Buddha created the enlightenment thought for the benefit of all beings without any exception. His purpose was to remove each and every sentient being from the suffering of samsara and lead them to enlightenment. By the time He meditated under the Bodhi tree in Bodh Gaya, the Buddha had accumulated infinite amounts of wisdom and compassion, and had finally attained perfect enlightenment. He was now free from all forms of obscurations and had acquired every conceivable quality.

After attaining enlightenment, the Buddha performed many great physical activities, voice activities and primordial wisdom activities. Among all the great activities that He performed, the most important activity was the voice activity: the turning of the wheel of Dharma. Through the turning of the wheel of dharma, He taught what He had realised, so that sentient beings could also enter onto the path and eventually attain enlightenment. And so, the Buddha's most important activity was the turning of the wheel of Dharma.

Just as space has no limits, the number of sentient beings that inhabit it has no limits. These numberless sentient beings are all different. We each have different minds, different mentalities, different propensities, different tastes, and so forth. And so, in order to suit every level of mentality and every propensity, the Buddha gave many different teachings, a hugely vast array of teachings. Just as we need different medicines in order to cure different diseases, similarly the Buddha gave many different teachings to help different levels of sentient beings.

There are many different types of teachings. These can be divided according to the time when they were given- the first Dharmachakra, or turning of the wheel, the second Dharmachakra, and the third Dharmachakra. They can also be divided according to subject - the Tripitaka, or Three Baskets of the Buddha's teachings, comprises three kinds of teachings: the Vinaya, the Sutras and the Abhidharma.

The purpose of turning the wheel of Dharma is

to tame our minds, which are so caught up in defilements. Since beings are afflicted by three defilements, the Buddha gave three teachings as their antidote. The Buddha taught the Vinaya in order to establish proper moral conduct - how to lead a virtuous and disciplined life as an antidote to desire, the first defilement.

As an antidote to the second defilement, hatred, the Buddha taught the Sutras in which He explained the different types of meditation that we can use to tame our minds. And finally, as an antidote to ignorance, the Buddha gave teachings on wisdom in the Abhidharma.

Followers can be divided into two types: those who follow the lower path, or the smaller goal, and those who follow the higher path or the great goal. This is why there are two vehicles, the Hinayana and the Mahayana. Mahayana itself is divided into two paths: the cause yana and the result yana. The basic Mahayana is referred to as the cause Mahayana because it requires a long time to work on the cause and to achieve the result. Mantrayana or Vajrayana, on the other hand, is called the result yana because its practice makes it easier and quicker to achieve the result. According to the Mantrayana, the result is present from the very beginning and can be taken into the path. This is why it is called the result yana. Although Buddhism originated in India and spread to many different countries, it would seem that only in Tibet do we have all the different levels of teaching: the Hinayana, the Mahayana, and the Vajrayana. However, the practitioners are all Mahayana and combined with Vajrayana teachings.

And so, all the schools of Tibetan Buddhism belong to the Mahayana vehicle, and their practice integrates Vajrayana's methods and techniques. All the major schools that exist today bear absolutely no difference, from the creation of the enlightenment thought and the view of shunyata or emptiness, to final enlightenment. The only difference that one can point to is in that each school has its particular lin-

eage, whereby the teachings originated in India and then came to Tibet through translators and masters, who created different lineages. Although each lineage places emphasis on different aspects of the teachings, for example some stress philosophical training, others meditation, their goal and achievement are identical.

Today the Sakya school has many different teachings: sutra teachings, mantrayana teachings, and many of the other sciences, but the most important teaching that we have in our tradition is the Lamdre teaching, which means the path that includes the result. The main teachings started in India by the great Virupa, one of the eighty-four mahasiddhas. He was born into a royal family. From a very young age, he had very special qualities and already viewed all samsara as suffering; and so, early in his life, he renounced his station and became a monk. He entered the great monastery of Nalenda where he excelled in the knowledge and practice of the Mantrayana teachings. He became so renowned for his learning that after the passing away of his teacher, he succeeded him as abbot of Nalenda Monastery. During the daytime he gave Mahayana teachings to the monks, taught debate and composed texts; but at night, in the intimacy of his monk's cell, he assiduously practised Mantrayana. Although he practised for a very long period of time, he received no significant signs and eventually became disillusioned.

And so one night, convinced that he didn't have a karmic connection with tantric practice, he threw his rosary into the latrine and vowed to henceforth dedicate himself exclusively to teaching Mahayana. That very night, Vajra Nairatmya appeared to him and remonstrated him. "Noble son, do not act in this way. Pick up your rosary, clean it, and take up your practice again. I am your karmic deity and I will bestow my blessings upon you". The following night, Nairatmya again appeared to him, this time in her mandala of fifteen goddesses, and she bestowed upon him the four initiations, upon which he attained the first bhumi.

From that evening onwards, Virupa attained a new bhumi each night and, on the night of the twenty-ninth day, he became a bodhisattva of the sixth bhumi, a great mahasiddha. He then left his monastery and performed many great miracles, subduing many evil forces and converting those who were on the wrong path. Just by hearing his name, people were cured of their ignorance.

He had many general followers, but Krishnapa and Dombipa were the two main disciples to whom he gave pith instructions. To Krishnapa, he gave the very brief teaching known as the Vajra Verses, which comprises the essence of the entire Tripitaka and Vajrayana. As butter is extracted from milk, the essence of the Buddha's sutras and tantric teachings is condensed into these pith instructions. Krishnapa then passed the teaching on to his closest disciples, five great Indian gurus. One of these was called Gayadhara, who came to Tibet many times, and gave this teaching to the great translator Drogmi Lotsawa. Drogmi Lotsawa was the first Tibetan to receive this Lamdre teaching. He was a highly accomplished master and many of his male and female disciples attained great realisations. To these he gave general tantra explanations and the pith instructions separately. He would not give the general tantric explanations to the disciples who received the pith instructions, and he would not give pith instructions to those who received the general teachings; he would not give both at the same time, to prevent the teachings from becoming distorted.

Among the disciples to whom he gave these teachings was Seton Kunrik, who attained high realisations and in turn passed them on to Zhangton Chobar. The latter was a hidden yogi, who appeared to the public eye as an ordinary labourer, who worked other people's fields. As he could emanate his body to several places, he could work many people's fields at the same time. He transmitted the teachings to the great Lama Sakyapa, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo of the Khön lineage.

The Khön lineage is believed to have descended from celestial beings who came down to the human realm. Of three brothers who came, two returned to their realm, while one stayed and settled in Tibet. With him began a lineage called ‘The Clear Light Race’. One of his descendants, Yapang Kye, subdued local spirits called Rakshas and took a Raksha wife, after which the lineage took the name of Khön, which it maintains until today.

The Khöns were formerly Bön practitioners, but in the eighth century, the great Indian abbot Sangharakshita came to Tibet and gave ordination to eight Tibetans, including a member of the Khön family. Many subsequent generations of the Khöns were henceforth devout Nyingmapa practitioners. But during Khön Konchok’s time, it was felt that the teachings were becoming corrupted and that it was necessary to start a new school. Konchok Gyalpo had the ancient teachings buried and founded the Sakya Order, with the building of the first Sakya Monastery in 1073.

Khön Konchok’s was a disciple of Drogmi Lotsawa and received from him the general tantric teachings. These he subsequently transmitted to his son, the great Lama Sakyapa Sachen Kunga Nyingpo, who also was given the pith instructions by Zhangton Chobar. As he gave them, Zhangton Chobar gave strict instructions to Lama Sakyapa not to disclose them to anyone for eighteen years, not even to speak their name. After eighteen years, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo would be the owner of this great teaching.

So for eighteen years, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo didn’t so much as mention the name of the Lamdre to anyone and kept it completely secret. In the meantime, he studied and mastered the teachings. The great Lama Sakyapa was an emanation of both Manjushri and Avalokiteshvara, a manifestation of all the Buddhas’ wisdom and compassion combined. He was, in reality, a fully enlightened being but he took a human form and followed his human destiny as perceivable by the common eye.

And so it is that, at one point during these eighteen years, he fell ill and forgot most of the precious teachings. As these were strictly oral teachings, and had not been put to writing, he became very worried. His guru had passed away, and the teachings were extremely difficult to find - they were only practised in India, in the secrecy of high mountains or deep forests. Even if he travelled to India, it would prove difficult for him to find the teachings. As he prayed to his guru Zhangton Chobar, the latter appeared to him in a dream and gave him the teachings again, jogging Lama Sakyapa’s memory. Again he prayed, and again his guru appeared to him and gave him the teachings. By now, Sachen Kunga Nyingpo remembered most of the teachings. As he continued praying, the great mahasiddha Virupa, founder of the Lamdre, which he had received directly from the deity, appeared to him in the sky, his body dominating the whole of the Sakya mountain. As he spoke these words:” This earth belongs to me.”, he gave to Lama Sakyapa the full Lamdre teaching, along with many pith instructions and several additional teachings. The great Lama Sakyapa was now the owner of all the Buddha’s teachings. Sachen Kunga Nyingpo gave the teaching to his sons and to many of his disciples, and the Lamdre was passed on from master to disciple in an unbroken lineage that is still alive today.

The Lamdre teaching is very profound and very vast. Although it is a single teaching, it can be practised in many different ways. People who follow the gradual path will begin with the Hinayana path, then the Mahayana, then the Vajrayana. For those people who follow the direct path, it depends upon their individual state of mind and their karmic connections. There are very many different ways to present the Lamdre teachings to disciples. The common way to teach it is by dividing it into two parts: the preliminary part and the main part.

The preliminary part is included in the preliminary teaching known as the Triple Vision. The Triple

Vision refers to the base, the path and the result or, in other words, the impure vision, the vision of experience and the pure vision. The base is contained in sentient beings. Due to their karma and defilements, sentient beings experience the impure vision, the reality that that we, as ordinary beings, perceive. Then there is the vision of experience, as perceived by yogis who have engaged in the path and whose meditation has changed their perception. Finally, after great effort, the practitioner attains the result, which is the pure vision, and finally Buddhahood.

Every tradition has its preliminary part - the initial practice of all the paths, the root of all dharma and the foundation of all vows. As Buddhists, the first thing we do when we enter the path is to take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Our very first meditations are divided into three parts: taking refuge and creating the enlightenment thought, practising the main part of the meditation, and ending with the dedication of merits.

Taking refuge is the same in every school. Normally we divide the refuge into five parts: the cause, the object, the way, the benefit and the rules of refuge.

The cause refers to why we take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, and this can be out of fear, faith or compassion. The object is the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In Mahayana, the Buddha is the one who possesses the three kayas - the dharmakaya, the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya; the Dharma is the teaching that leads us to realisation; and the Sangha refers to the assembly of great bodhisattvas that have already reached the irreversible state. The Buddha is our guide, the Dharma is our path, and the Sangha are our spiritual companions.

The benefit of taking refuge is immense. As it is said in the scriptures regarding the merit of taking refuge, if the latter had a physical form, there wouldn't be enough space in the entire universe to accommodate it. It is boundless.

Then there are rules: general rules and individual

rules. The first general rule is that, no matter what, even at the cost of our life, we should never give up the Triple Gem, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Secondly, whatever happens, we should always seek the guidance and the blessing of the Triple Gem. The third rule is that we should continuously make offering to the Triple Gem, and the fourth is that we should practice refuge diligently, from the bottom of our hearts. The fifth and last rule is that, wherever we are, whatever we do, we should always remember the Triple Gem. The specific rules are that we cannot take refuge in worldly deities, harm any sentient being, taking non-believers as our friends, show disrespect to any representation of the Buddha, Dharma or Sangha.

And so, the first thing we do when we embark on the path, is to take refuge. Next, we need to develop the enlightenment thought (*bodhicitta*). The essence of the enlightenment thought is the altruistic wish to benefit all beings. Like taking refuge, creating the enlightenment thought is an essential part of the preliminary practice. In order to produce the enlightenment thought, we need to develop renunciation.

The next thing we need to do in our preliminary practice is to meditate. For this, there are three steps to follow. The first is to meditate on why we need to develop renunciation; the second is to meditate on the difficulty of obtaining a precious human life; and the third is to meditate on the law of karma.

In order to develop renunciation, the Lamdre gives a detailed explanation of the impure vision. This is in accordance with the first turning of the wheel of Dharma by the Lord Buddha, in which He taught the four noble truths - the truth of suffering, the truth of the cause of suffering, the truth of the cessation of suffering, and the truth of the path to the cessation of suffering.

In order to be free from suffering, we must begin by understanding its nature. Just as when we are sick and need treatment, we must first know the nature of our disease. And so, the first noble truth, the truth of

suffering must be thoroughly understood. The teachings give an extensive explanation of the suffering of samsara. There are three types of suffering: the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change, and the suffering of the conditional nature of all things. The suffering of suffering refers to the tangible suffering that we all experience: physical pain, mental anxiety, and so forth. Beings in the lower realms - the hell realms, the hungry ghost realm and the animal realm - continuously and intensely experience the suffering of suffering, whereas beings in the higher realms - the human realm, the demi-god realm and the god realm, beings experience a mixture of suffering and happiness.

In reality, there is no such mixture. First of all, we experience the suffering of physical pain and mental anxiety. And then, we also experience the suffering of change, which means that everything that is created by causes and conditions is impermanent. Anything that is impermanent causes suffering. This means that the external world as we experience it is subject to change, much like the change in seasons. Change also occurs continually in our own existence, for example with our growing older, with our losing loved ones, and so forth. Everything is in a state of change.

The third kind of suffering is the suffering of the conditional nature of all things. What we normally look upon as being happy feelings or indifferent feelings, we only do so in comparison with other feelings. In reality, there is no real happiness in samsara. Although certain parts of samsara are less painful and others are more so, there is not a single iota of samsara that is worth being attached to. Much like if food is mixed with poison, it doesn't matter whether the food tastes good or bad, it is equally harmful. And so, in order to arouse renunciation, the teaching emphasises meditation on suffering.

And so, in order to fully arouse the renunciation thought, the compelling urge to free ourselves from suffering, we need to meditate extensively on the suf-

fering that is experienced in each realm.

The second part of the preliminary meditations is to reflect on the difficulties of obtaining precious human birth. As ordinary beings, due to our karma and defilements, we perceive the impure vision. This impure vision comes from our own previous actions; in order to be free from this wheel of existence, we need to practise the Holy Dharma. And in order to practise the Holy Dharma, we need to obtain a precious birth as a base to do so.

This precious human birth is very rare and difficult to obtain. The cause of a human birth is the practice of virtuous deeds in previous lives, especially pure moral conduct, generosity and sincere prayers. Such a cause is very rare. If we look at the world today, how many people are there practising the spiritual path? Even among those who appear to be practising the Dharma, many are only practising outwardly and superficially. Since the cause is rare, the result is also very rare. So from the perspective of cause, precious human birth is very rare.

There seems to be so many people in the world; however, if you think about it, there are very few humans in relation to other beings. For example, it is very easy to count how many people live in one house; but it would be impossible to count how many different beings, including insects, there are in that same house. So from the point of view of the number of beings that exist in the universe, human birth is very rare.

If human birth itself is rare, all the more so is one that is endowed with the necessary attributes to practise the Dharma, such as freedom from all the unfavourable states of mind, and right conditions, such as a being born at the time of a Buddha coming to this universe or at a time when a Buddha had given the teaching and the teaching is still a living tradition, and also being born with sound organs and enthusiasm to receive the teaching.

And so, we can see how difficult it is to encounter

the Dharma. Therefore, we must realize how precious human life is, more precious than the wish-fulfilling jewel. The wish-fulfilling jewel is the most precious thing among all material things. It can bestow all our material requirements such as food, medicine, clothing, and so forth. However, it cannot bestow a higher rebirth, self-liberation, or enlightenment. Through this precious body and hard work, we can not only achieve higher rebirth and personal liberation, but even the ultimate enlightenment is within our reach. Therefore, we must not only intellectually understand the precious body, but we must also fully appreciate how precious and very rare it is, more valuable than the wish-fulfilling jewel. With something so precious, we understand that there is no greater loss than losing this very precious opportunity. If we make use of this precious time, we will never know whether or when such an opportunity will present itself again. Therefore, it is very important for us to work when we have all the right conditions and are free from all the unfavourable states. We must fully understand the impermanent nature of our precious human life.

In other teachings, precious human birth and impermanence are treated separately but in this particular one, they are combined. The precious human birth that we have now is impermanent. Everything is impermanent, including our precious human birth. In the Sutras, it is said that the best offering we can offer to the Buddha is to reflect about impermanence, because reflecting about impermanence will turn us away from our attachments. Reflecting about impermanence will speed up our practice and our efforts on the spiritual path. Thinking about impermanence is a powerful antidote to suffering, and it will eventually help us to realise ultimate truth.

In this way, we must be mindful that this human existence that we are enjoying now has no definite lifespan. People can die even before they are born, or soon after birth, or when they are babies, or grown-ups, and so forth. Moreover, even if one is set to have

a long lifespan, there is no guarantee that one will live it out, because anything can happen at any moment. Much the same as a butter lamp that can be blown out at any moment by a gush of wind, so can our precious human life be extinguished at any time. Even if we are young and healthy, anything can happen - inner or outer obstacles - and we can lose our life. And so not only is it important to practise the Dharma, but it is important to practise it with now, not to waste precious time.

The third preliminary meditation is on the law of karma: cause and effect, one of the unique teachings that the Buddha gave in order to show what one must do and what one must reject. Everything that we have now, including the life that we living, who created them? No one creates anything apart from our own actions. This has two parts: illusory vision and karmic vision.

The illusory vision, the dual vision that we perceive, does not exist in actual reality. It is just an illusion, just as in a dream. When we are dreaming, everything feels as real as it does in normal life, and yet when we awake from our dream, there is not a single sign of what we saw and felt while dreaming. Likewise, everything that we perceive during our waking life is an illusion. This is our illusory vision, the dual vision wherein subject and object appear separately. All sentient beings experience the world as the illusory vision.

Karmic vision means that each individual sentient being experiences its particular vision; some beings experience less suffering, some experience more suffering, and so forth. Whatever actions we take, karmic vision will follow, just as our shadow follows us wherever we go. Similarly, a virtuous action or a non-virtuous action is like a seed that we plant. In due course, it will ripen and produce a result. There are non-virtuous deeds, virtuous deeds, and neutral deeds. Non-virtuous deeds are actions created out of ignorance, desire and hatred, the same as if the root of

a tree is poisonous, whatever grows on it, flowers and leaves, will be poisonous. Non-virtuous deeds create suffering in this life and continue through to the lives that follow. There are physical actions, verbal actions and mental actions.

Similarly, virtuous actions are deeds performed without hatred, desire or ignorance. Actions that are based on loving kindness and compassion are called virtuous deeds. For example, if the root of a tree is medicinal, then whatever grows on the tree will also be medicinal. Any action that is performed without defilements is a virtuous deed. Virtuous deeds create happiness in this life and in lives that follow.

Then there are actions that are neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, such as walking, sitting, etc. Since they do not produce any negative results, they are superior to non-virtuous deeds; yet, since they do not produce any positive results, they are inferior to virtuous deeds. It is important to turn them into positive deeds. One must abstain from negative deeds. If one wishes to be free from suffering, one must abstain from its cause. If we continue to indulge in the cause of suffering, we cannot expect to experience happiness. Therefore, we must abstain even from negative deeds, even from tiny ones. It is said that the accumulation of water drops forms the ocean. And we must perform as many virtuous deeds as possible. Even if these are tiny virtuous deeds, we must try to accumulate them. And indifferent actions that are neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, can be transformed into virtuous deeds by changing the motivation behind them and by practising the skillful means of the bodhisattva's way of life.

So, this was a brief explanation of the impure vision.

The second part - the vision of experience - has two parts: the common vision of experience and the uncommon vision of experience. The common vision of experience refers to what the common practitioners, the common yogis and the common Mahayana practitioners experience. The meditation here is on loving

kindness, compassion and the enlightenment thought. By practising these, one will experience the vision of experience. In order to arouse the vision of experience, one must practise loving kindness.

When we see how samsara is full of suffering, we feel loving kindness toward all beings, who so wish to be free from suffering. We feel that we must work to become enlightened for their sake. We might think that the goal we need to aim for is personal nirvana, the extinction of all our aggregates, but this is not a valid goal. We are just a single person. In ordinary life, if we are a kind-hearted person, it doesn't feel right for us to be in a safe place when the members of our family are in trouble. We would rather suffer along with our family than see them suffering on their own.

Although our consciousness has changed since we were born, and the mind that we had as a baby is different from the mind that we have as a grownup, it is still part of the same mind continuum. Throughout our life, it is the same mind that takes different forms and perdures. Whilst our body came from our parents, our consciousness was there before we were born, part of a continuum of many lives and it has continued to be our consciousness until the present time. When we die, our consciousness does not die with our body - it cannot be burnt or buried. It continues in a different form. There is no point in time considered to be the beginning of a mind. We take birth, we die, and then take on another form. And so, every time we have taken birth, we have had a father, a mother, a family, and friends. Because we have lived an uncountable number of lives, every single being has been at some point in time dear father, mother, relative, lover or friend, as dear to us as are our present loved ones. And so, to leave other sentient being behind as we achieve our own salvation is not an acceptable goal. We must think of other sentient beings, and achieve liberation for their sake.

The Sutra of Recollecting the Three Jewels

Prostrations to the Omniscient One.

Thus the Blessed Buddha is the One Gone to Suchness, the Foe Destroyer, the Perfectly Accomplished One, the One Who Possesses Knowledge and Its “Feet,” the One Who Has Gone to Bliss, Knower of the World, the Unsurpassable Charioteer Who Tames Sentient Beings, and Teacher of Gods and Humans.

That Blessed Buddha is the One Gone to Suchness. He arose through corresponding causes of merit, and his root of virtue is inexhaustible. He is adorned with patience and is the foundation of the treasures of merit. His body is adorned with the noble minor marks and decorated with the flower blossoms of the noble major marks. Conforming to the stages of the field of enlightened activities, his appearance is not unpleasant to one’s sight and is delightful to devoted aspirants. His wisdom cannot be overpowered by others, and his powers are invincible. He is the teacher of all sentient beings and the father of all Bodhisattvas. He is the king of all noble beings and the captain who leads others to the City of Nirvana. He is the possessor of transcendental wisdom, inconceivable confidence, perfectly pure speech, a melodious voice, and a matchless body that is endlessly insatiable to behold. He is unaffected by desire, unaffected by form, and unmixed with formless ones. He is completely liberated from all suffering, thoroughly liberated from the aggregates, and unaffected by the elements. Possessing disciplined sensory perceptions, he has thoroughly cut all knots. He is completely liberated from all profound sufferings and freed from the world of existence. He has crossed the river. Having realized perfect wisdom, he is the one who abides in the transcendental wisdom of the past, future, and present Blessed Enlightened Ones. Not abiding in Nirvana, he dwells in the state of perfection that sees all sentient beings. These are all the great attributes that explain the qualities of the Blessed Buddha.

The noble Dharma is virtuous in the beginning, virtuous in the middle, and virtuous in the end. It possesses wholesome meaning, wholesome words, and is unmixed. It is utterly complete, utterly pure, and utterly spotless. This doctrine, well taught by the Blessed One, is perfectly seen, free from sickness, timeless, praiseworthy, meaningful to behold, and understood by the discriminating wisdom of learned ones. It is firmly based on the Blessed One’s teachings of moral discipline and renunciation that lead to the state of perfect Buddhahood. Lacking contradictions, it is complete, reliable, and cuts off going.

The Sangha of the Great Vehicle dwell appropriately, knowledgeably, truthfully, and harmoniously. They are objects worthy of being venerated with joined palms and with prostrations. They are a magnificent merit-field capable of using offerings in a proper way. Being a proper object for receiving gifts, they should be given great offerings in any place or at any time.

[Translated by Jhampa Losal and Jay Goldberg at the International Buddhist Academy under the auspices of the Khenpo Appey Foundation, 2014. Reproduced by their kind permission].

The Sutra of Recollecting the Three Jewels

A commentary by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche



This is the teaching known as *The Sutra Recollecting the Three Jewels*. In this sutra, what does “jewel” mean? The Sanskrit word *ratna* has been translated into the Tibetan language as *dkon.mchog*. The Tibetan translation of the word *ratna* is not a literal translation. The translator at that time thought that if it were translated into Tibetan as “jewel,” there would be the possibility of it being understood as a gem, gold, silver, coral, and the like. So the translator decided to translate the term as *dkon.mchog*, which means “excellent rarity” or “rare excellence.” The translator himself revealed this. In the *Uttara Tantra*, when he was explaining the meaning of “rare excellence,” the Victorious Maitreya said, “Generally, there are six characteristics of something that is very

precious: it is rare, stainless, powerful, attractive, superior to other things, and unchangeable.”

What does “recollecting” mean? Recollecting means keeping in mind whatever any person already knows to be the qualities of the Three Jewels. If someone were to ask, “What are the benefits of recollecting the qualities of the Three Jewels?,” it is said that one of the benefits to arise through recollecting the qualities of the Three Jewels is the production of faith. Examples of this faith in the Buddha are that producing faith in the Buddha who shows the path to temporary and ultimate bliss will lead you to taking refuge in the Buddha; it will lead you to producing the Enlightenment Thought for the sake of other sentient beings that is a cause for

attaining the state of complete Buddhahood; and it will also motivate you to engage in virtuous actions, such as prostrations and making offerings to the Buddhas. Now, producing faith in the Dharma will inspire you to study the Dharma. After understanding what you have studied, you will then desire to put that into practice. Producing faith in the Sangha will cause you yourself to spontaneously aspire to gain the state of a Bodhisattva, and it will also create a desire within you to make offerings to other Bodhisattvas.

In brief, faith will create a desire within you to engage in virtuous actions. It will lead you to take refuge in the Three Jewels. It will also inspire you to perform such practices as the Seven-Limbed Practice, which is dedicated to the objects of refuge who are endowed with infinite qualities. If you do not have faith in the Three Jewels, no Dharma qualities will be able to arise within your mind. In a sutra it is said, “A flower will not arise from a burnt seed.”

There is enormous merit in remembering the qualities of the Three Jewels. Previously, when the Buddha Kashyapa was teaching, a girl walked by that area and heard the Buddha teaching. In her mind she thought that the Buddha Kashyapa had a very pleasing voice, and because of this she produced faith in the qualities of his voice. Due to the merit arising from this, in her next life she obtained rebirth in one of the heavens. So it was said by the Buddha. If you are able to gain such a result from just recollecting a single quality of a Buddha, then there is no question of the merit accrued by studying, contemplating, and meditating on the qualities found in the sutras and their commentaries.

The Sanskrit word sutra is translated in Tibetan as mdo. The sutras are to be understood as the collection of many different topics spoken by the Buddha. This particular sutra is known as The Sutra of Recollecting the Three Jewels. When the translator

began translating this sutra from Sanskrit into Tibetan, he added the words “Prostrations to the Omniscient One.” This sutra is divided into three sections: recollecting the qualities of the Buddha, recollecting the qualities of the Dharma, and recollecting the qualities of the Sangha.

[First, to explain the Recollection of the Buddha:]

There are two sources that explain the first of these, recollecting the qualities of the Blessed Buddha. These are the sutras of the Hinayana school and the sutras of the Mahayana school. According to the first, the Hinayana sutras, his qualities are described in the following manner:

Thus the Blessed One is called the One Gone to Suchness, the Foe Destroyer, the Perfectly Accomplished Buddha, the One Who Possesses Knowledge and Its “Feet,” the One Who Has Gone to Bliss, Knower of the World, the Charioteer Who Tames Sentient Beings, and the Unsurpassable Teacher of Gods and Humans.

The part described here at the beginning of this sutra is the Hinayana version of *The Sutra [of Recollecting the Three Jewels]*. Up to this point, it seems that there are different translations of the qualities of the Buddha. If we explain this in accordance with the word order in the Hinayana sutra, there are some inconsistencies. Since the word “Buddha,” for example, is omitted [in the Hinayana sutra], a person trying to explain it as it is written would have a difficult time. For this reason, the words “Thus” and “the Blessed One” are placed side by side. Further, if someone were to continue explaining those words from the sutra, they would need to explain the nine qualities of the Buddha starting with “the Blessed

One.” In any case, we see that the one who possesses those nine qualities is known as Buddha. This is the meaning of the sutra. Both Asanga and Vasubandhu similarly described it in their two commentaries on the sutra.

Among those nine qualities enumerated in the quote from the sutra, the first one is [that the Buddha is] “the Blessed One” (Tibetan *bchom.lden.’das*; Sanskrit *bhagavan*). The meaning of this first quality is that the Buddha is called “the Blessed One” because he has destroyed the enemy that obstructs the attainment of enlightenment. Someone might ask, “What obstacle did the Buddha have?” Just when the Buddha was about to attain enlightenment [under the Bodhi Tree], the Mara of the Son of the Gods created a lot of obstacles for him. Therefore, the Buddha’s main obstacle was the Mara of the Son of the Gods. So the Buddha is known as “the Blessed One” because he attained enlightenment after having defeated that demon. Furthermore, another meaning of “the Blessed One” is that the Buddha destroyed either the three afflicting emotions [i.e., desire, hatred, and ignorance], as understood from the twelve limbs of Interdependent Origination, or the two obscurations [of the afflicting emotions and knowable things]. Therefore, he is called “the Blessed One.”

Normally, in the Sanskrit language, this term, “the Blessed One,” is known as *bhagavan*. The first part of this word, *bhaga*, means “to destroy,” “fortunate,” or “excellence.” The second part of that word, *van*, means “to possess.” Therefore, it means “the one who possesses the quality of destroying,” or “the one who destroys the things that have to be destroyed.” The second part of the word means “the one who possesses those qualities that need to be possessed.” So a person like this is known as *bhagavan* or *bchom.lden*. He is also known as “the Blessed One” because he possesses all good qualities.

Now, the second part of the word [*bchom.lden.’das*, namely,] ’das, was added on by the Tibetan translator. The reason for this is that the word *leg.lden*. can be substituted for the word *bchom.lden*. The term *leg.lden*. refers to worldly gods. In order that the word *leg.lden*. not be understood to mean “worldly gods or higher beings,” the translator added the word ’das to differentiate it [i.e., *bchom.lden.’das*] from *leg.lden* or *bchom.lden*. The word *bchom* means “defeating the four Maras”: the Mara of the Afflicting Emotions, such as attachment and aversion; the Mara of the Aggregates, such as the impure aggregates arising from ignorance and the like; the Mara of Death, such as the one who dies by the power of his [or her] individual karma while not having any choice over the matter; and the Mara of the Son of the Gods, who is a god within the realm of desire and who creates obstacles to Dharma practitioners. So *bchom.lden* means that the Buddha has already overpowered all four of these Maras.

There is also another connotation of this, known as *leg.pa.gdrup*, which means six excellences or six virtues. What do the “six virtues” mean? First, it can mean six excellent qualities. The first of these six virtues is the excellent quality of power. Here, this denotes that no scholar is able to criticize the Buddha by saying such things as “the logic and reasoning you use in relation to the teaching of the Dharma is incorrect.” The second excellent virtue is the excellent quality of body. The Buddha’s body is very beautiful—even more beautiful than the body of the gods. The third excellent virtue is the excellent quality of glory. The reason for this is that the field of the Buddha’s activities is extraordinarily vast and the Buddha has an infinite number of perfectly trained disciples. The fourth excellent virtue is the excellent quality of fame. His fame has spread to wherever his disciples reside. The fifth excellent virtue is

the excellent quality of transcendental wisdom. Through his wisdom, the Buddha has the realization of knowing all knowable things within the relative and ultimate truths. He knows all things unerringly. The sixth excellent virtue is the excellent quality of diligence. The Buddha can effortlessly and untiringly perform different activities for millions of sentient beings in a single moment.

The second epithet [of the Buddha] is “*the One Gone to Suchness*” (Tibetan *de.zhin.shek.pa*; Sanskrit *Tathagata*). The meaning of this appellation is unmistakably knowing the nature of all things as they are. This quality emphasizes that the Buddha is the perfect teacher. For this reason the Buddha has this title “the One Gone to Suchness.” The main reason for calling him “the One Gone to Suchness” is that no matter what teaching the Buddha might give, it always shows the true nature of all phenomena. It is not otherwise. The Buddha has never taught anything that is a perverted wrong view. For this reason, the Buddha is called “the One Gone to Suchness.”

The third epithet is “*the Foe Destroyer*” (Tibetan *dgra.bchom.pa*; Sanskrit *arhat*). The first syllable of this word in Tibetan, *dgra*, refers to delusional afflicting emotions, such as attachment, hatred, and the like, that arise within our minds. Those afflicting emotions are called “enemies” because they cause obstacles to the practice of virtues. Due to this they also throw us into suffering, and so they are called enemies. Since the Buddha has destroyed all the afflicting emotions, he is called “the Foe Destroyer.” And so it shows that the Buddha has gained the perfection of the abandonment of the afflicting emotions.

The fourth epithet is “*the Perfectly Accomplished One*” (Tibetan *yang.dag.par.dzogs.pa'i.sangs.rgyas*; Sanskrit *samyaksambuddha*). What does “the Perfectly Accomplished One” mean? The one who

has accomplished all the qualities of enlightenment and who has accomplished all knowledge is called “the Perfectly Accomplished Buddha.” The Buddha is one who has realized the wisdom that knows all knowable things in a completely perfect way. This explanation shows that the Blessed Buddha is the one who possesses the perfection of realization. For this reason, it shows that the completely and perfectly enlightened Buddha is the teacher who is superior to other teachers. For example, the Foe Destroyers of the Shravakas possess the quality of a Foe Destroyer because they have abandoned all the afflicting emotions that arise within their own minds. However, they do not have the ability to teach without making some mistakes and they do not know all phenomena as they truly are. Also, the teachers of the heretical schools, such as Hinduism, do not have all these qualities [such as abandonment of the afflicting emotions within their own minds, teaching without fault, and knowing phenomena as they truly are].

The fifth epithet is “*the One Who Possesses Knowledge and Its Feet*” (Tibetan *rig.pa.dang.zhabs.su.ldan.pa*). These two terms show the path to attain Buddhahood. If someone were to ask, “practice of what kind of path will help you attain Buddhahood?,” then this is explained in the following manner. First, to explain “*knowledge*” from the phrase “*knowledge and its feet*”: Suppose, for example, you need to walk to another country. To do this you need both eyes and feet. In this example, knowledge is analogous to eyes, and feet are analogous to the basis on which you stand and by which you move. So when you walk you look through your eyes and you move with your feet. Similarly, to attain the state of Buddhahood you need both knowledge and basic practice. From among the three higher trainings, knowledge refers to the training of wisdom. “*Feet*” refer to the other two higher trainings—the training of moral conduct and

the training of meditation. These last two play the role of being the basis, or foundation, of wisdom. In brief, this shows that through practicing the three higher trainings the state of Buddhahood is attained.

With respect to wisdom, it is the mind that realizes the true nature of phenomena. Moral conduct is to be understood as the mind that is committed to relinquishing non-virtuous actions. With respect to meditation, since at this point we don't have freedom over our own mind, our mind is not able to rest in one place [i.e., it is distracted]. One-pointed concentration is needed to enable the mind to penetrate into the true nature of phenomena. However, during the recitation of *sadhanas* [Vajrayana Deity recitation practices] or the performance of rituals, there are chances for the mind to rest in one place or focus on some virtue. That very state of mind is called meditation.

Here is another way to explain this: “*knowledge*” is understood as the Right View from among the Noble Eightfold Path, while “*feet*” are understood as the seven remaining limbs of the Noble Eightfold Path. So all eight parts of the Noble Eightfold Path are needed to reach the City of Liberation. Yet again, another way to explain this is that “*knowledge*” refers to the three supernatural perfections of direct realization, and “*feet*” refer to other perfections, such as the perfection of moral conduct.

The sixth epithet [for the Buddha, i.e., “*the One Who Has Gone to Bliss*,”] is known in Sanskrit as *sugata* (Tibetan *bde.war. gsheks.pa*). *Su* means “bliss” or “happiness.” *Gata* means “going.” Further, this is explained as: By relying on a pleasant path, you arrive at a pleasant destination. So, understand *sugata* to mean that you use a pleasing path to reach a happy destination. In some other traditions, the path is not pleasing or happy. For example, in the practice of Hinduism, some practitioners will immerse themselves for a long period of time in cold water

during the winter, while others will sit or lie upon a bed of thorns. By these actions, they inflict much pain upon themselves. However, the followers of the Buddha do not practice Dharma in that manner. For them, through a pleasant path and through pleasant Dharma practices, they are able to attain Buddhahood. Thus, *sugata* means “going pleasantly.” Hindu practitioners claim that if you are too inclined toward the happiness of body and mind, then desire will arise. For that reason they believe that one should practice austere penances. However, these types of Hindu spiritual practices are regarded as faulty by Buddhists. Why do we say this? When you are too happy, you become desirous. Similarly, by inflicting pain upon your body and mind, torturing yourself, you will become depressed and that will lead to anger. Therefore, the performance of virtuous activities is the method that will free you from the entrapment of worldly existence. In other words, through these mind-pleasing methods you will attain liberation from the bonds of samsaric existence. Whatever practice you engage in, you should make sure that your action will lead you to the attainment of freedom from worldly existence. Otherwise, just engaging in an action of penance is meaningless and will never lead you to a higher result.

Further, if we look in detail about the meaning of the term *sugata*, then we see that *su* refers to “good,” “never falling back,” and “complete” or “without exception.” *Gata* is to be understood as the Buddha's qualities of relinquishment and realization. If you were to explain the word *good* simply in relation to both the Buddha's quality of relinquishment and his quality of realization, then the first syllable *su* should be understood as “not relapsing” with respect to the quality of relinquishment. Once the Buddha has relinquished the afflicting emotions, they will not return. So the Buddha's quality of relinquishment is

a complete abandonment. For example, once you are cured from the disease of smallpox, this disease will never return for the rest of your life. Similarly, once you relinquish the afflicting emotions, such as self-clinging, then no matter what external or internal conditions may appear, self-clinging will never arise within you again. For that reason the Buddha is called “Sugata.” This means that the Buddha has gained perfect and complete relinquishment.

Next, we will explain the term *sugata* in relation to the Buddha’s realizations. Since the Buddha perfectly realizes all knowable things, we address him as “Sugata.” For example, it is similar to a vase full of water to which not even one more drop can be added. Other teachers who impart the Dharma, such as Arhats, Shravakas, and Pratyekabuddhas, have relinquished the afflicting emotions of obscurations so that these afflicting emotions will not return. However, they do not possess the quality of realizing all knowable things. Therefore, teachers of other schools do not have the dual qualities that are suggested by the term *sugata*. The meaning of the qualities of the Buddha, or Sugata, is explained in great detail in Dharmakirti’s *Pramanavartika* as “good,” “not falling back,” and “without exception” in relation to the Buddha’s qualities of relinquishment and realization. Also, in the words of the sutra, the Buddha’s names and the qualities of his enlightened activities, such as Knower of the World, Tamer of Sentient Beings, Unsurpassable One, Charioteer Who Tames Sentient Beings, etc., are all explained in great detail. However, here we are explaining them briefly.

The seventh epithet is understood as “*Knower of the World*” (Tibetan *'jig.rten.mkhyen.pa*). Since Buddha knows the races and predispositions of all his disciples, he is addressed as “Knower of the World.” The Buddha knows which disciples have faults, which ones are progressing, which ones are about to go to

lower births, and which ones have already arrived in the lower realms. The Buddha has the power to see all this. Further, he has the ability to see which ones need to be placed on the path to higher rebirth from the lower realms and which ones have already been placed on the path to liberation. So, Buddha is an omniscient one and is recognized as the “Knower of the World.”

The eighth epithet is known as “*the Unsurpassable Charioteer Who Tames Sentient Beings*” (Tibetan *skyes.bu.'dul.ba'i.kha.lo.sgyur.ba.bla.na.med.pa*). Why is the Buddha known as “the Unsurpassable Charioteer Who Tames Sentient Beings”? Having seen the movements from birth to birth of sentient beings, the Buddha destroys the afflicting emotions of living beings who are fortunate enough to be able to attain the path leading to the City of liberation. For those beings, the Buddha will steer them along that path.

What does “*charioteer*” mean here? It is similar to one driving a horse cart or some other vehicle. In accordance with the predispositions and abilities of sentient beings, the Buddha leads them onto the path of liberation. For this reason, the Buddha is addressed as “Charioteer” and “Tamer of Beings.”

“Unsurpassable” should be understood to mean that there is no one superior to the Buddha who can lead sentient beings to the state of liberation. In the sutras there are several reasons cited as to why the Buddha is matchless. Sentient beings who are difficult to discipline can be tamed only by the Buddha. Even those whose mental continuum was filled with delusion were able to be tamed by the Buddha. For example, the Buddha’s younger brother, Nanda, had a difficult time being apart from his wife Pundarika due to his attachment to her. Through very skillful means, the Buddha convinced his brother to become a monk. He then led him in the practice of meditation, and

finally Nanda attained the state of Arhatship. Another case involved Angulimala, a frightful and ferocious killer whose mind was filled with anger and hatred. Just hearing his name brought great terror to the hearts of people. Generally speaking, Angulimala was a very famous person due to his renown as a fearsome mass murderer. However, through the Buddha's assistance, he became a monk and entered the path. Even then, he still frightened people. One time he was listening to the Buddha's teaching along with an assembly of others that included King Prasanjit of Sarvasti. During the teaching Angulimala happened to cough, and even this caused the king to tremble. In yet another case, there is the story of a dimwitted Stavira monk. During his studies his teacher asked him to memorize the syllables om and bhu. When he tried to memorize the syllable om, he would forget the syllable bhu. When he memorized bhu, then he would forget om again. Even this person was also trained by the Buddha. In order to purify his obscurations, the Buddha first had him clean the shrine room of the monastery. Through this and other skillful means, the Buddha was able to cause him to purify his afflicting emotions and obscurations. Later, he became a learned monk. Not only that, but the Buddha placed him in meditation practice, and later he attained the state of Arhatship. In a similar way, there was another Stavira monk by the name of brtan.rgya.'od.srung who was a very proud and arrogant person. He possessed many qualities, such as clairvoyance and the ability to display miraculous feats. Due to this, he was very haughty and conceited. In order to discipline him, the Buddha himself displayed many miraculous acts. In his mind, though, even when the Buddha demonstrated so many miraculous feats, this monk continued to believe that he had more special qualities than the Buddha. In order to tame him, the Buddha continued to display even more miracles. Finally, this caused the monk to

produce true faith in the Buddha. He then received teaching from the Buddha and eventually attained the state of Arhatship.

The ninth epithet is "*the One Who is the Teacher of Gods and Humans*" (Tibetan *lha.dang.mi.rnam.kyi.ston.pa*). Generally, the Buddha gives teachings to all sentient beings, without bias and regardless of their race. However, though the Buddha teaches all beings, gods and humans are the only two types of living beings who are capable of practicing the path of liberation. Foe Destroyers (Arhats) are of two kinds: god Foe Destroyers and human Foe Destroyers. There is no such category as animal Foe Destroyer. Therefore, the principal disciples of the Buddha are gods and humans. For this reason, the Buddha is addressed as "the Teacher of Gods and Humans."

These nine phrases in the Hinayanists' rendition of this sutra refer back to the Buddha being known as "the Blessed One." Therefore, this last phrase, "the Teacher of Gods and Humans," completes the enumeration of terms referring to the Buddha who has the nine qualities that have just been explained.

If someone were to ask, "Who is the Buddha?" we would have to say that that unique person who possesses these nine qualities is none other than the Blessed Buddha. The meaning of the Sanskrit term *bhagavan* [usually translated as "the Blessed One," as explained above,] can sometimes also be interpreted as "known as." Therefore, without using the term "Blessed One," it is all right to translate the phrase as follows: the one who possesses the nine qualities is "known as the Buddha."

To be continued...

[The Sutra of Recollecting the Three Jewels and its commentary by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche were translated by Jhampa Losal and Jay Goldberg at the International Buddhist Academy under the auspices of the Khenpo Appey Foundation, 2014. Reproduced with gratitude by their kind permission].

MAHAMUDRA

The Great Path to Enlightenment A teaching by Khenchen Sherab Amipa Rinpoche (Part 2)



4. THE PATH (...continued from Part 1)

The path consists of the practice of the six paramitas as well as samatha practice - extraordinary or uncommon meditative concentration (Tibetan: *shiney*) and vipashyana - extraordinary or uncommon insight (Tibetan: *lhag-tong*).

THE SIX PARAMITAS OR PERFECTIONS

The practice of the paramitas goes back to the Hinayana, the vehicle of the Shravakas, that is, “those who seek solitary self- realisation” and the Pratyeka Buddhas.

Over and above this, but on the same moral basis, Mahayana Buddhism has developed various yoga practices.

GIVING

We can give material things and, in the mental sphere, give help or advice. If someone is ill, we can give medicine and care. If someone is in a difficult situation, it is possible through mind training to help find a solution to their problem. However, we should always give with a pure motivation.

MORALITY OR SILA

Morality means the practice of the ten virtues with which we protect our minds against false ideas.

There are different kinds of morality: that which applies to monks or the Upasaka morality. Upasaka in Sanskrit refers to the precepts for lay people. When we receive an initiation, we are also under an obligation to observe the fourteen Mahayana rules

or precepts. An initiation (or “empowerment”) is an enabling process, giving us the means to transform our body, speech and mind.

The fourteen Mahayana precepts are:

1. Follow the directions of your Mahayana teacher. Cause him no suffering. If we have a spiritual master our respect for him creates a deep bond, especially if we receive empowerments from him. An initiation (empowerment) from our spiritual master means that we receive it with all the instructions of the guru’s lineage.

2. Follow the rules of the tantric texts. As Buddhists we believe in the teachings of the Buddha and the Dharma. Mahayana rules and Hinayana rules are very different. If we have received the Mahayana rules we do not need to follow all the Hinayana rules since the Mahayana rules are more inclusive.

3. Keep a good relationship with your Dharma friends, particularly those with whom you have received initiation. We are all related in the Dharma, we belong to the same initiatory mandala. When we have received the same initiation, a spiritual connection is created through having the same guru. If we do not feel like a family, we have broken the rule.

4. Feel Bodhicitta and compassion for all living beings. We develop compassion towards all living beings and try to trouble no-one’s happiness or peace. If we forget this deep compassion or disturb the peace and happiness of even one single being, the rule is broken.

5. Bodhicitta is the basis of all religions. We cannot practise religion without Bodhicitta. Since the essence of Dharma is Bodhicitta, we must study the meaning of Bodhicitta as closely as possible and imprint it in our mind. Bodhicitta is the truth, the foundation of Dharma practice; we must have complete trust in it, otherwise the mind becomes weak. Without this trust, the rule is broken.

6. Preserve your own tradition, but do not assert that any one school or practice is the only correct path or way to practise the Dharma.

We have respect for Hinayana and Mahayana as well as for other religions, and also for Tantrayana and the Sutras as far as the Buddhist path is concerned. We should not denigrate our own religion or that of others; otherwise, the rule is broken.

7. Do not discuss secret meanings or texts with people who have not had the necessary initiations. We should not explain the Mahayana path to those who have neither faith nor respect. We do not speak about the secret Tantras; otherwise, the tantric rule is broken.

8. Do not disturb someone who is meditating. When we meditate we become the body of the Buddha and should not disturb others or ourselves in the process (for example, by entertaining negative thoughts). In meditation we become the five Dhyani Buddhas and should have deep respect for this practice. We should be very careful to act correctly in this; otherwise, the rule is broken.

9. Do not doubt the Dharma teachings. All Dharma practice is true. Have no doubt about it; otherwise, the rule is broken.

10. Do not have any connection with people who harm other living beings. If someone wittingly disturbs others in any way whatsoever, advise that person to desist. We should always offer good thoughts and explanations because we already have a guru to show us the meaning of the Dharma and of religion. If we behave wrongly, we break the rule.

11. Do not interpret Dharma teachings in your own way.

We must have respect for the purity of the Dharma. We are aware that we obtain happiness through holy religion and Dharma practice. If we do not think in this way, we experience no happiness and the rule is broken.

12. Do not try to convert people who believe in another religion.

We should not wish to convert to our belief anyone who practises a different religion with deep faith. We leave them on their own path; otherwise, the rule is broken.

13. We should not allow people who do not practise the Dharma to see religious symbols such as the vajra (Tibetan: *dorje*) and the bell.

We should not show holy objects to non-practitioners nor should we explain any of their particularities. Once they have been offered, offerings are no longer material things but blessing and nectar. If any offering falls to the ground we should not step on it because it represents a blessing. Thankas should also not be shown to those who have no faith; otherwise, the rule is broken.

14. Do not despise or humiliate women for they are the symbol of wisdom. The dakinis, such as Vajrayogini, symbolise wisdom. We show respect to them; otherwise, the rule is broken.

PATIENCE (FORBEARANCE)

We should exercise patience in our cohabitation with others and in our practice. If we only practise now and then it is not enough. Practice must be regular. The quality of patience is important. The essence of Buddha's teaching is loving compassion. This is what we need to gain first, and for this we need four different kinds of patience, for instance:

If someone speaks harshly to us, we do not speak harshly in return.

If someone slanders us, we do not slander in return, but remain patient and without bitterness.

If someone is angry with us, we should stay calm and be as loving as possible.

Even if some one strikes us, we should not return their blows.

We should also be patient with ourselves when we experience disturbances in our practice. We should accept these disturbances and try to find out their cause.

DILIGENCE

First of all we must be clear about the precious nature of human existence and of the time given us to live. We may think, seeing the immense number of people on this planet, that it is not extraordinary to be re-born as a human. This is not so. There are indeed many people, but in most of them the qualities and skills needed for Dharma practice are not strongly developed. All living beings do have Buddha-nature yet we can only really practise if we have a human body. This is why our life is precious and we should make use of it.

We can all of us reach Buddhahood in a single lifetime. Many people find this hard to believe, yet it depends entirely and solely on good practice and understanding. Therefore, in our daily lives we should act for the benefit of other living beings and should be careful not to harm anybody. We should closely examine who we are, what we do, and whether our mind is following the path of virtue or non-virtue. If we wish to avoid difficulty, we must renounce non-virtuous activities. It may be that we are not clear about what is virtuous and what is not. Many people believe that it is virtuous to pray from morning to night. Though this is not without virtue, it is not what is most important. We achieve the best kind of virtue when the nature of our mind is so completely transformed that it has become gentle and full of compassion. Our actions are then virtuous whether we are sleeping, eating or working. Practice is not meditation alone; it colours all of our daily life. If our mind has acquired this quality, every meditation bears fruit.

With this understanding and practice, we develop diligence.

CONCENTRATION

Concentration is called sam-den in Tibetan; this means unshakeable consciousness and also the capacity to keep an object in mind.

There are two types of concentration: common or ordinary and uncommon or extraordinary.

Common or ordinary concentration is involved when we carry out our work. From time to time other thoughts which have nothing to do with the job in hand may go through our head. Likewise, listening to Dharma teachings requires ordinary concentration. One can compare it to filling a cup. If we are not attentive we may spill the liquid, but if we are attentive, we can fill the cup up to the brim without losing a drop.

Even if we are directing our thoughts on to a holy object, this is still ordinary concentration.

Uncommon or extraordinary concentration means constant, attentive self-observation. In this, no false thoughts arise and we develop extraordinary understanding.

We learn how to observe our mind by first listening carefully to Dharma teachings, meditating on what we have heard, and testing and examining our thoughts. We should ask ourselves if we have any doubts. If so, we must find out where our doubt lies. There are many different possibilities. Doubt is always harmful since it hinders our development. If, for instance, we wish to leave our house but hesitate in the corridor before choosing the door which leads outside, we will never be able to go out, yet we will not be completely in the house either.

In order to put aside doubt it is important to develop wisdom.

Maybe we have doubts about the truth of karma.

If so, we should remember that virtuous deeds result in joy and happiness, whereas non-virtuous deeds lead to discord and suffering. Observations such as these will resolve our doubts.

We can check whether our mind produces virtuous thoughts, and we should also observe whether our thoughts are free from ego (me-only) and attachment.

Often our consciousness is not sufficiently relaxed for this special concentration. The cause lies on the one hand in disturbances due to wrong thoughts, and on the other hand in our uncertainty as to what produces them. Good deep concentration combined with relaxation cannot be forced. But, if in our daily lives we avoid modes of behaviour that are harmful to ourselves and to others, this inner relaxation will come of itself.

In order to develop this extraordinary concentration we must practise shīney.

WISDOM

Uncommon or extraordinary insight (Sanskrit: *vipashyana* or Tibetan: *lhag-tong*) is wisdom. It is also called shunyata, that is, voidness. Shunyata is called tong-pa nyi in Tibetan. This also means emptiness, not complete emptiness but rather the absence of something. By this we mean the absence of disturbances or non-virtue. Shunyata means the correct view untouched by ego, attachment or ignorance. In other words, in this state we understand that our representation of ego is erroneous, that all phenomena are empty of the property of unconditional arising. Everything that exists in samsara arises through the convergence of different conditions which represent the cause of the existence of a living being. Nothing occurs independently, everything is dependent on cause and effect and this decides what the experience or the activity will be. When we reach shunyata it means that we have recognised and understood this

interdependence, and our original mind, free from ignorance, can emerge. We sometimes speak of the inner light of wisdom which clears away the darkness of ignorance.

In order to reach this state, our most important task is to liberate ourselves from the two principal errors, that is, ego and attachment, for these are the greatest obstacles on our way to enlightenment. Those who concentrate on themselves in the erroneous view of the ego are limited in their room or scope. If we think only of ourselves the door to our prison is closed. If we open ourselves up to others we experience light and joy.

SHINEY OR SAMATHA

What is the meaning of shiney? shi means foundation, ney means to remain. Shiney practice means training in the ability to maintain our concentration on the object.

Shiney is the most important exercise if we wish to succeed in any yoga practice or meditation. Our commitment to our daily life, in our normal existence, also comes into play, for meditation alone is not enough. Buddha's teaching always includes both the relative and the absolute path. The relative path is one method and means that we accept things existing outside of ourselves. The absolute path is the practice of Bodhicitta, shunyata and great meditative concentration. It leads to the realisation that all truth is endless.

When a house is being built we begin with the foundation, not the roof. This is what we must do in our practice, except that in this case we are building a mental house, not a material one.

In order to begin constructing this foundation, we must proceed through outer and inner preparation.

Whenever possible we should find a peaceful place with good fresh air and pure water and maintain

a balanced diet. These are conditions which help the mind relax. We should then familiarize ourselves with the five obstacles which can be met in shiney practice and which we have to recognise and overcome.

THE FIVE OBSTACLES TO SHINEY PRACTICE

The first obstacle is laziness.

Laziness here has a special meaning. In daily life, laziness results in not doing what we should do. In this case, however, laziness means that we take no interest in karma, virtue, and Dharma study. This hinders the development of the mind. If we wish to have at our disposal more compassion and wisdom in our next life, we must comply with the corresponding preparations in this one. If we do not reach enlightenment in this life, we will nevertheless be much nearer in the next. So laziness is the first obstacle in *shiney* practice and we try to avoid it.

The second obstacle is forgetfulness.

We need a good memory for *shiney* practice. A good memory is also useful in everyday life, but in our practice it acts as a protection. As long as we keep the teachings firmly in mind, they prevent us from taking a wrong path. Body, speech and mind commit no wrong acts.

If we do not listen attentively we run the risk of wrong practice. It would be as if we wanted to climb a mountain without using our hands. We would not get far. Someone who does not listen carefully cannot meditate properly.

There are several different kinds of teachings, for example, the normal oral teachings for practitioners. The most important kind is direct personal teaching, which is exclusively oral, from an experienced lama. A master has two types of knowledge: theoretical knowledge appropriated through the study of texts and personal experience gained through practice.

The combination of the two enables the lama to give advice that is

appropriate for the individual. We should always keep in mind the counsels we are given.

The third and fourth obstacles are lack of faith and lack of trust.

The Tibetan word for faith is *ded-pa*; this means that faith permeates everything: body as well as speech and mind. Trust is *yi-che* in Tibetan. With faith and trust permanently pervading our whole being, our practice will be powerful. Without these qualities we are like someone who is walking in a park and wishes to take a particular path. However, in spite of their deep-felt desire, if they are blind and cannot see, they may well go in the wrong direction.

Likewise, the result is not the same if we act with faith and trust alone or with the addition of knowledge or with none of these qualities. For knowledge, faith and trust are like the light of our eyes, the vision of the stroller in the park.

Faith depends on reliable knowledge of the quality of a fact or an object, such as, for instance, the Three Jewels when we take refuge. When we recognize the quality of the Guru or the Buddha and understand the meaning of the Dharma and the activity of the Sangha, then faith grows within us quite spontaneously. The better our understanding, the deeper our faith. Faith therefore is not a blind acquiescence in the truth of something that we do not know, but the conviction we have gained through constant trial.

In this sense we can develop faith and trust in ourselves. Thus we gain this faith and trust and a clearer understanding of our own mind.

The fifth obstacle is lack of attention.

Sometimes we can become sleepy during our practice and lose our clarity of mind. When we observe this we need a powerful antidote to re-direct our attention. We can think of three things:

1. We reflect on how important it is for us to practise diligently, otherwise we will lose our precious human life without having made full use of it. Time goes by so quickly and it is not good to use it all up without practising.

2. We must be aware that one day we will die but we do not know exactly when. However, we can prepare ourselves for death already by developing our minds powerfully and virtuously through our practice.

3. We keep in mind that our belief in karma has to be very strong. Karma is true. We are all connected through karma. If at the present time we enjoy a fairly good life, if we are healthy and in a peaceful state, this too has its cause in a former life. Even bodily and mental illnesses derive from karmic connections which we have forged.

When our minds become inattentive, negligent or lazy, we should remember these three things. In this way our practice becomes more profound, we become calmer, and disturbing thoughts disappear.

So, to conclude, *shiney* practice requires diligence, a good memory, faith, trust and attentiveness.

This provides us with the foundation on which we can build our mental house, our mind becomes joyful and ready to begin *shiney* practice.

SHINEY PRACTICE

We should sit in the lotus or semi-lotus position for meditation. If we cannot do this, we should sit in what is for us a comfortable position. Whatever the case we should be careful to keep a straight back so that breath and energy can flow freely. We place our hands in the Buddha Vairocana position, that is, laying them about four centimetres below the navel, with the left hand beneath the right hand. The palms of the hands are turned upward and the thumbs should be just touching.

Once we have settled into the right bodily posture,

we put aside the five obstacles and calm our mind, if necessary, through a breathing exercise: for example, twenty-one deep breaths, in and out. We then choose an object on which to concentrate.

The object may be external or internal. Some examples of external objects are the Three Jewels (Sanskrit: triratna), Buddha, Dharma, Sangha when taking refuge, or the form of the Buddha Avalokiteshvara, the embodiment of love and compassion.

We direct our thoughts towards the object that we have chosen with the deep desire to obtain similar qualities.

Internal objects are our breathing, our chakras which are the energy centres in the body, or our own consciousness.

While directing our attention to one point and keeping it there to the best of our ability, we should be careful at the same time to remain relaxed. If we are tense we will not be able to maintain our concentration on the object. We try to keep out any unnecessary thoughts and above all, any doubts about the Dharma or the truth of karma. Even positive thoughts are disturbances to concentration in their very diversity. So, patiently, we try to be calm and not allow our mind to wander restlessly around.

THE MIND

Buddhist philosophy recognises different manifestations of the mind. However, it is difficult to pin them down to a precise concept in another language. Mind in its ordinary form is called *sem* in Tibetan. In this, our desires and representations change form every few seconds. We cannot see it, but only feel it. It has two states. On the one hand, there is the samsaric state, very unclear and confused. Our thoughts dart here and there and cannot settle. The mind is disturbed but it is still our own mind. On

the other hand, when nirvana is reached there is no obscurity in the mind. Peace and glowing untroubled joy arise in us. This is the original pure nature of our mind, Buddha- nature.

It is possible to say that everything comes from our mind: virtue, love, compassion as well as non-virtue, hatred, suffering and ignorance. *Sem* is the basis, the precious foundation which we always have at our disposal. It is our own clear, original consciousness. *Sem* exists without interruption and consists of a principal mind and fifty-one mental factors. The principal mind could also be called consciousness. The mental factors correspond to our subjective perceptions.

The principal mind perceives the reality of something, for example, a flower. The different mental factors, working through sense impressions, allocate specific, mainly evaluative, attributes. So we say: this flower is beautiful, it smells nice, we would like to have it.

This in turn gives rise to three qualities of mental factors: a feeling of attachment, of non-attachment, or of neutrality. Some of these mental factors act virtuously, others non-virtuously and some again neither virtuously nor non-virtuously. If the feeling involves attachment, then the mental factors belong to the non- virtuous part; if no attachment is involved, then they belong to the virtuous part; if the feeling is neutral, to neither.

Let us take the flower as an example:

The flower is beautiful; we want it for ourselves alone. This involves mental factors which are acting non-virtuously. They always lead to suffering.

The flower is beautiful; we want nothing to happen to it, only that it may flower without disturbance and produce fruit. In this case the mental factors act virtuously. They always lead to joy.

The flower is beautiful. This involves neutral

mental factors.

In the practice of samatha (Tibetan: *shiney*) it is possible to transform all the activities of body, speech and mind into virtuous behaviour.

When *sem* (mind) has developed into higher consciousness, it is called *rigpa* in Tibetan.

In an iconic representation of samatha practice which is very common in Tibet, the mind is shown in the form of an elephant. The elephant is a very powerful animal, its virtuous and non-virtuous qualities are very strong. At the beginning of the path which it is going to follow in *shiney* practice, the elephant is still black, that is, non-virtuous. On the path, its colour changes gradually until it is finally white. Its mind has become clear and is following the path of virtue. A monkey restlessly jumping here and there represents the disturbances in the mind.

In *shiney* practice we try to overcome this restlessness and practise reining in the mind until it loses its monkey-like quality and becomes peaceful.

In order to test the development of the mind we need to observe it carefully. At the beginning of the practice it is very stiff and stubborn, exclusively concerned with itself (me-only). Disturbing thoughts rush through us like a waterfall tumbling from the mountainside. As we progress in the practice the mind resembles a lake, hardly any movement is perceptible across its surface. Wrong thoughts and doubts diminish.

Doubts are particularly perturbing; for a good practice we need to put them aside. If they still torment us, we should ask where they come from. There are two possible causes: doubt arises when we have too little faith or not enough practice and insufficient self-knowledge; or it may come from a lack of knowledge as to how to practise correctly. In order to put aside these doubts, a very precise control over the mind is necessary.

The physical and mental signs of progress in *shiney* are a feeling of lightness and health, and a joyful mind constantly at peace. Our darting thoughts will settle when we have learned how to remain concentrated in observing our mind. Endless pure joy and lasting peace then arise within us. We recognize that the Dharma is in truth no other than the pure original nature of our own mind, Buddha-nature.

Other meanings can be given to the concept of Dharma; holy teachings, for example, may be called Dharma, and the path to enlightenment as well.

In all types of meditation we use wisdom and method. *Shiney* and Bodhicitta are the method, vipashyana - uncommon or extraordinary insight - is wisdom. Without *shiney* and Bodhicitta one cannot practise vipashyana, the mind will be too restless.

VIPASHYANA, UNCOMMON OR EXTRAORDINARY INSIGHT

Vipashyana means wisdom, knowledge free from ego.

If we really desire peace and happiness but remain strongly self-centred, we stand in our own way. This is also true of attachment. As soon as the state of nirvana becomes our goal, it is already within us, but attachment holds us back. The ego's self-centredness and attachment are the two root illnesses. Until we have freed ourselves from them, we suffer from morning to night. All roads are blocked because we are living in duality.

(Courtesy of Sakya Tsechen Ling)

The Wheel of Sharp Weapons

by Dharmarakshita



*Theg-pa chen-po'i blo-sbyong mtshon-cha 'khor-lo) by Dharmarakshita
translated by Alexander Berzin and Sharpa Tulku,
together with Jonathan Landaw and Khamlung Tulku,
based on an oral explanation by Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, 1973*

The name of this work is The Wheel of Sharp Weapons Effectively Striking the Heart of the Foe.

I pay heartfelt homage to you, Yamantaka;
Your wrath is opposed to the Great Lord of Death. (1)

(1) In jungles of poisonous plants strut the peacocks,
Though medicine gardens of beauty lie near.
The masses of peacocks do not find gardens pleasant,
But thrive on the essence of poisonous plants.

(2) In similar fashion, (2) the brave Bodhisattvas
Remain in the jungle of worldly concern.
No matter how joyful this world's pleasure gardens,
These brave ones are never attracted to pleasures,
But thrive in the jungle of suffering and pain.

(3) We spend our whole life in the march for enjoyment,
Yet tremble with fear at the mere thought of pain;

Thus since we are cowards, we are miserable still.
But the brave Bodhisattvas accept suffering gladly
And gain from their courage a true lasting joy.

(4) Now, (3) desire is the jungle of poisonous plants
here. (4)
Only brave ones, like peacocks, can thrive on such
fare,

If cowardly beings, like crows, were to try it,
Because they are greedy, they might lose their lives. (5)

(5) How can someone who cherishes self more than
others
Take lust and such dangerous poisons for food?
If he tried like a crow to use other delusions, (6)
He would probably forfeit his chance for release. (6)

And thus Bodhisattvas are likened to peacocks:
They live on delusions - those poisonous plants.
Transforming them into the essence of practice,
They thrive in the jungle of everyday life.
Whatever is presented they always accept,
While destroying the poison of clinging desire.

(7) Uncontrollable wandering through rounds of
existence
Is caused by our grasping at egos as real.
This ignorant attitude heralds the demon
Of selfish concern for our welfare alone:
We seek some security for our own egos;
We want only pleasure and shun any pain.
But now we must banish all selfish compulsion
And gladly take hardship for all others' sake.

(8) All of our sufferings derive from our habits
Of selfish delusions we heed and act out
As all of us share in this tragic misfortune,
Which stems from our narrow and self-centered ways,
We must take all our sufferings and the miseries of
others
And smother our wishes of selfish concern.

(9) Should the impulse arise now to seek our own
pleasure,
We must turn it aside to please others instead;
For even if loved ones should rise up against us,
We must blame our self-interest and feel it's our due.

(10) When our bodies are aching and racked with great
torment
Of dreadful diseases we cannot endure,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have injured the bodies of others;
Hereafter let's take on what sickness is theirs.

(11) Depressed and forlorn, when we feel mental
anguish,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have deeply disturbed minds of others;
Hereafter let's take on this suffering ourselves.

(12) When hunger or violent thirst overwhelms us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have kept what we had without sharing;
We have plundered and stolen and lured people on.
Hereafter let's take from them hunger and thirst.

(13) When we lack any freedom, but must obey others,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have looked down upon them who were
lowly
And used them as servants for our own selfish needs;
Hereafter let's offer our service to others
With humble devotion of body and life.

(14) When we hear only language that is foul and
abusive,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have said many things without thinking;
We have slandered and caused many friendships to end.
Hereafter let's censure all thoughtless remarks.

(15) When we are born in oppressive and wretched
conditions,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have always had negative outlooks;
We have criticized others, seeing only their flaws.
Hereafter let's cultivate positive feelings
And view our surroundings as stainless and pure.(16)

When we are parted from friends and from those who
can help us,

This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.

Till now we have taken the friends and good servants
Of others away, wanting them for ourselves;
Hereafter let's never cause close friends to part.

(17) When supreme holy Gurus find us displeasing,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have turned from the Gurus and teachings,
Preferring the counsel of misleading friends;
Hereafter let's end our dependent relations
With those who would turn us away from the path.

(18) When unjustly we are blamed for the misdeeds of
others,
And are falsely accused of flaws that we lack,
And are always the object of verbal abuse,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have despised and belittled our Gurus;
Hereafter let's never accuse others falsely,
But give them full credit for virtues they have.

(19) When the things we require for daily consumption
And use, fall apart or are wasted or spoilt,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been careless with others'
possessions;
Hereafter let's give them whatever they need.

(20) When our minds are unclear and our hearts are
unhappy,
We are bored doing virtue but excited by vice,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.

Till now we have led others to acts of non-virtue;
Hereafter let's never provide the conditions
That rouse them to follow their negative traits.

(21) When our minds are disturbed and we feel great
frustration
That things never happen the way that we wish,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have caused interfering disturbance
When others were focused on virtuous acts;
Hereafter let's stop causing such interruption.

(22) When nothing we do ever pleases our gurus,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now with our gurus we have feigned pious
manners,
But out of their presence have reverted to sin.
Hereafter let's try to be less hypocritical
And take all the teachings sincerely to heart.

(23) When others find fault with whatever we are doing
And people seem eager to blame only us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been shameless, not cared about
others,
We have thought that our deeds did not matter at all,
Hereafter let's stop our offensive behavior.(24) When
our servants and friends are annoyed by our habits,
And after a while cannot stay in our homes,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have imposed our bad habits on others;
Hereafter let's change and show only kind ways.

(25) When all who are close turn against us as
enemies,

This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have held grudges inside us with anger
With thoughts of sly methods to cause others pain;
Hereafter let's try to have less affectation,
Not pretend to be kind while we harbour base aims.

(26) When we suffer from sickness and such
interference
Especially when gout has swollen our legs,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now without shame and with no self-control
We have stolen or misused what others have given;
Hereafter let's never take anything offered
To the Three Jewels of Refuge (7) as if it were ours.

(27) When strokes and diseases strike without
warning,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have broken our vowed words of honor; (8)
Hereafter let's shun such nonvirtuous deeds.

(28) When our mind becomes clouded whenever we
study,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have thought that the study of Dharma
Lacked prime importance and could be ignored;
Hereafter let's build up the habits of wisdom
To listen and to think about what Buddha taught.

(29) When sleep overwhelms us while practicing
virtue,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have gathered the causes for obstacles
Hindering our practice of virtuous acts.

(We have lacked all respect for the scriptural
teachings;
We have sat on our books and left texts on the ground.
We have also looked down upon those with deep
insight.)
Hereafter for the sake of our practice of Dharma
Let's gladly endure all the hardships we meet.

(30) When our mind wanders greatly and runs towards
delusion,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have neglected to meditate fully
On defects pervading this transient world;
Hereafter let's work to renounce this existence
(And see the impermanent nature of things).

(31) When all our affairs, both religious and worldly,
Run into trouble and fall into ruin,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have felt cause and effect (9) could be
slighted;
Hereafter let's practice with patience and strength.

(32) When rites we perform never seem to be fruitful,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have relied on the gods of this world
Or on unskillful actions to bring us relief;
Hereafter let's turn in another direction
And leave our nonvirtuous actions behind.

(33) When none of the wishes we make reach
fulfillment,
Although we have made prayers to the Three Precious
Gems,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.

Till now we have had an imperfect commitment
To Buddha whose teachings deserve complete trust;
Hereafter let's place our exclusive reliance
On Buddha, his teachings and those in his fold.

(34) When prejudice, polio or strokes have us crippled
And external forces or harm rise against us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have collected vast stores of nonvirtue
By breaking, our vows and offending protectors
In our practice from guru-devotion to tantra; (10)
Hereafter let's banish all prejudiced views.

(35) When we lack all control over where we must
travel
And always must wander like waifs with no home,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have disturbed holy gurus and others
And forced them to move from their homes or their
seats;
Hereafter let's never cause others disturbance
By evicting them cruelly from where they reside.

(36) When the crops in our fields are continually
plagued
By drought, floods and hailstones, insects and frost,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have failed to honor our pledges;
Hereafter let's keep all our moral vows pure,

(37) When we are poor, yet are filled with much greed
and desire,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been misers, reluctant to share.
The offerings we have made to the Three Jewels were

meager;
Hereafter let's give with a generous heart.

(38) When our bodies are ugly and others torment us
By mocking our flaws, never showing respect,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have made images (11) lacking in beauty,
By venting our anger we have made ugly scenes;
Hereafter let's print books and make pleasing statues,
And not be short-tempered but be of good cheer.

(39) When attachment and anger disturb and upset us
No matter how much we may try to suppress them,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have held on to the improper outlook:
Stubbornly cherishing only ourselves,
Hereafter let's uproot self-interest completely.

(40) When success in our practices always eludes us,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now, deep within, we have clung to our ego,
Fully immersed in self-cherishing ways;
Hereafter let's dedicate all of the virtuous
Actions we do, so that others may thrive.

(41) When our mind is untamed though we act with
great virtue,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have engaged in those worldly ambitions
That aim at success for ourselves in this life;
Hereafter let's work with pure one-pointed effort
To nourish the wish to gain freedom's far shore.

(42) When after we do any virtuous action
We feel deep regret or we doubt its effect,

This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have been fickle and, stirred by base
motives,
Have courted only those who had power or wealth;
Hereafter let's act with complete self-awareness,
Exerting great care in the way we make friends.

(43) When those with ambition repay trusting
friendship
By luring us on with their devious schemes,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now from ambition we have acted with arrogance,
Hereafter let's dampen our self-centered pride.

(44) When the force of attraction or that of repulsion
Colours whatever we hear or we say,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have ignored what has caused all our
troubles:
The mass of delusion that dwells in our heart;
Hereafter let's try to abandon all hindrances:
Note their arising, examine them well.

(45) When no matter how well-meant our actions
towards others,
They always elicit a hostile response,
This is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrongs we have done.
Till now we have repaid loving-kindness with malice;
Hereafter let's always accept others' favors
Both graciously and with most humble respect.

(46) In short then, whenever unfortunate suffering
We haven't desired crash upon us like thunder,
This is the same as the smith who had taken
His life with a sword he had fashioned himself.

Our suffering is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrong we have done. (12)
Hereafter let's always have care and awareness
Never to act in nonvirtuous ways.

(47) All of the sufferings that we have endured
In the lives we have led in the three lower states, (13)
As well as our pains of the present and future,
Are the same as the case of the forger of arrows
Who later was killed by an arrow he had made.
Our suffering is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrong we have done.
Hereafter let's always have care and awareness
Never to act in nonvirtuous ways.

(48) When the troubles and worries of family life
grieve us,
This is the same as the case of a child
Who was cared for with love later killing his parents.
Our suffering is the wheel of sharp weapons returning
Full circle upon us from wrong we have done.
Hereafter it is fitting in all of our lifetimes
For us to live purely as monks or as nuns.

(49) As it's true what I have said about self-centered
interest,
I recognise clearly my enemy now.
I recognise clearly the bandit who plunders,
The liar who lures by pretending he is part of me;
Oh what relief that I have conquered this doubt!

(50) And so Yamantaka, spin round with great power
The wheel of sharp weapons of good actions now.
Three times turn it round, (14) in your wrathful-like
aspect;
Your legs set apart for the two grades of truth,
With your eyes blazing open for wisdom and means.

(51) Baring your fangs of the four great opponents, (15)

Devour the foe - our cruel selfish concern!
With your powerful mantra (16) of cherishing others,
Demolish this enemy lurking within!

(52) Frantically running through life's tangled jungle,
We are chased by sharp weapons of wrongs we have
done

Returning upon us; we are out of control.
This sly, deadly villain - the selfishness in us,
Deceiving ourselves and all others a well-
Capture him, capture him, fierce Yamantaka,
Summon this enemy, bring him forth now!

(53) Batter him, batter him, rip out the heart
Of our grasping for ego, our love for ourselves!
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern!
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release!

(54) Hum! Hum! Show all your powers, O mighty
protector.
Dza! Dza! Tie up this enemy; do not let him loose.
P'at! P'at! {17} Set us free by your might, O great Lord
over Death.
Cut! Cut! Break the knot of self-interest that binds us
inside.

(55) Appear Yamantaka, O wrathful protector;
I have further entreaties to make of you still.
This sack of five poisons, (18) mistakes and delusions
Drags us down in the quicksand of life's daily toil;
Cut it off, cut it off, rip it to shreds!

(56) We are drawn to the sufferings of miserable
rebirths,
Yet mindless of pain, we go after its cause.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(57) We have high expectations of speedy attainments,
Yet do not wish to work at the practice involved.
We have many fine projects we plan to accomplish,
Yet none of them ever are done in the end.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(58) Our wish to be happy is strong at all times,
Yet we do not gather merit to yield this result.
We have little endurance for hardship and suffering,
Yet ruthlessly push for the things we desire.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(59) With comparative ease, we develop new
friendships,
Yet since we are callous, not one of them lasts.
We are filled with desire for food and fine clothing,
Yet failing to earn them, we steal and we scheme.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(60) We are experts as flattering others for favours,
Yet always complaining, we are sad and depressed.
The money we have gathered we cannot bear to part
with;
Like misers we hoard it and feel we are poor.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(61) We have done very little to benefit someone,
Yet always remind him how much we have done.
We have never accomplished a thing in our lifetime,
Yet boasting and bragging, we are filled with conceit.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(62) We have many great masters and teachers to
guide us
Yet shirking our duty, ignore what they teach.
We have many disciples, yet don't ever help them;
We cannot be bothered to give that advice.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(63) We promise to do many glorious deeds,
Yet in practice we give others minimal help.
Our spiritual fame has been spread far and wide,
Yet inwardly all of our thoughts are repulsive
Not only to gods, but to demons and ghosts.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(64) We have read very little, heard only few
teachings,
Yet talk with authority expertly on voidness.
Our knowledge of scriptures is pitifully lacking,
Yet glibly we make up and say what we like.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(65) We have many attendants and people around us,
Yet no one obeys us or heeds what we say.
We feel we have friends in positions of power,
Yet should we need help, we are left on our own.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(66) We have gained lofty status and ranks of prestige.
Yet our knowledge is poorer than that of a ghost.
We are considered great Gurus, yet even the demons
Do not harbour such hatred or clinging desire
Or as closed-minded an outlook as we seem to have.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(67) We talk about theories and the most advanced
teachings,
Yet our everyday conduct is worse than a dog's.
We are learned, intelligent, versed in great knowledge,
Yet cast to the wind wisdom's ethical base.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(68) We have selfish desires and horrible anger
Which fester inside us, we would never admit;
Yet without provocation we criticise others
And self-righteously charge them with faults we
possess.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(69) We wear robes of saffron, yet seek our protection
And refuge in spirits and gods of this world.

We have promised to keep solemn vows of strict
morals,

Yet our actions accord with the demons' foul ways.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(70) Our pleasure and happiness come from the
Buddhas,

The Gurus, the teachings, and those who live by them,

Yet still we make offerings to ghosts and the spirits.

All of our guidance derives from the teachings,

And yet we deceive those who give this advice.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(71) We seek to have homes in monastic seclusion,

Yet dawn by distractions, we venture to town.

Discourses we hear teach us most noble practice,

Yet we spend all our time telling fortunes with dice.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(72) We give up monks' vows, the true path to gain
freedom,

We would rather be married, have children and homes.

We cast to the wind this rare chance to be happy,

And pursue further suffering, more problems and
woes.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(73) Discarding our practice to reach liberation,

We drift about searching for pleasure or trade.

We have obtained bodies with precious endowments,

Yet use them to gain only hellish rebirths.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(74) Ignoring effects that the teachings can bring us,

We travel on business for profit and gain.

Leaving behind all our Gurus' wise lectures,

We tour different places in search of some fun.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(75) We hoard what we have, never willing to use it,

And leech all our food and our clothing from friends.

We leave aside wealth from our father's inheritance,

Taking from others as much as we can.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(76) It's amazing how little endurance we have

To do meditation, and yet we pretend

To have gained special powers so others are fooled.

We never catch up with the paths of deep wisdom,

Yet run here and there in needless great haste.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(77) Someone gives us advice from the depths of his heart,

Which is for our own good, but is harsh to our ears,
And with anger we view him as if he is our foe.

Yet when someone without any true feelings for us
Deceitfully tells us what we like to hear,

Without taste or discernment we are kind in return.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(78) When others consider us close and dear friends

And relate in strict confidence all they know,

We disclose their deep secrets especially to their foes.

When we have a good friend who is constantly with us,

We locate his weak points so we can torment him.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(79) Our jealousy is strong and whatever is said

We are always the skeptic, we doubt what is meant.

We are fussy, bad-tempered and hard to get on with,

Inflicting obnoxious behavior on others.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(80) When someone requests us to do something for him,

We are never obliging, but think up instead

Clever devious methods to do him some harm.

When others concede and agree with our viewpoint,

We do not acquiesce - we argue still more.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(81) We do not pay attention to what others tell us;

We are a trial to be with; we strain others' nerves.

Our feelings are hurt at the slightest remark,

And we hold grudges strongly - we never forgive.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(82) We always are jealous of those of great status;

We feel holy Gurus are threats to avoid

Overwhelmed by attachment and ruled by our passions,

We spend all our time lusting after young loves.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(83) We do not think of friendships as long-term commitments,

We treat old companions with thoughtless neglect.

And when we are making new friends with a stranger,

We try to impress him with grandiose ways.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head

Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,

Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher

Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(84) We lack clairvoyance, yet lie, feigning powers,

And then when proved wrong, we must bear all complaints.

We have little compassion for those who are near us,

Whenever they blunder, we are quick to lash out.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(85) We have poor education and limited knowledge;
Whenever we speak we're unsure of ourselves.
Our learning in scriptural texts is so meagre,
When hearing new teachings we doubt they are true.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(86) By making a habit of anger and passion,
We come to despise everyone that we meet;
And by making a habit of jealous resentment,
We ascribe fruits to others, disclaiming their worth.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(87) We do not follow proper procedures of study;
We say it is needless to read the vast texts.
We feel there is no value learning from gurus;
We slight oral teachings and think we know best.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(88) We fail to explain what the Three Baskets (19)
teach,
But instead dwell on theories we have made up
ourselves.
We lack deep conviction and faith in the teachings,
Whatever we say leaves disciples confused.

Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(89) We do not despise actions unwise and immoral,
Instead we dispute and attempt to pick flaws
In the excellent teachings and great masters' works.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(90) We are never embarrassed when acting
disgracefully,
Only respectable deeds cause us shame.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(91) All the things we should do we do not do even
once,
For improper behavior takes up all our time.
Trample him, trample him, dance on the head
Of this treacherous concept of selfish concern,
Tear out the heart of this self-centered butcher
Who slaughters our chance to gain final release.

(92) O mighty destroyer of selfishness-demons,
With body of wisdom unchained from all bonds,
Yamantaka, come brandish your skull-headed
bludgeon
Of egoless wisdom of voidness and bliss.
Without any misgivings, now wield your fierce weapon
And wrathfully swing it three times (20) round your
head.

(93) With all of your fierceness, come smash this foul

enemy!

Burst ego-concepts with your wisdom's great might!
With your boundless compassion, protect us from
suffering
The miseries caused by our self-centered actions
Destroy our self-cherishing once and for all!

(94) With all the sufferings that others experience,
Smother completely our selfish concern.
The sufferings of others arise from five poisons;
Thus whichever delusion afflicts other beings
Take it to smother delusions of self.

(95) Though we have not a doubt, for we recognise
fully
The cause and the root of mistakes we all make,
If there is still left a part of our minds that would tend
To support this delusion of self that we have,
Then destroy the firm hold of this part of our minds
That, against our true wishes, makes fools of us still.

(96) As all that is wrong can be traced to one source:
Our concern for ourselves, whom we cherish the most,
We must meditate now on the kindness of others.
Accepting the suffering that they never wished for,
We must dedicate fully our virtues to all.

(97) Thus accepting ourselves all deluded nonvirtuous
Actions that others have done in the past,
In the present and future with mind, speech and body,
May delusions of others as well as our own
Be the favoured conditions to gain our Enlightenment
Just as the peacocks eat poison and thrive.

(98) As crows may be cured after swallowing poison
By a powerful antidote given in time,
Let's direct to all others our virtuous merit,
That this may replenish their chances for freedom
May all sentient beings reach Buddhahood soon!

(99) Till the time when all motherly beings and I
Gain the perfect conditions for us to be Buddhas,
Though the force of our actions may cause us to
wander

Through various realms in the six rebirth states
May we always be able to help one another
To keep our aim find on Enlightenment's shore.

(100) Then for even the sake of but one sentient being
May we gladly take birth in the three lower states.
With enlightening conduct that never grows weak
May we lead all the beings in miserable rebirths
Out of their sufferings and causes for pain.

(101) As soon as we have placed ourselves into their
realm
May the guards of the hells come to see us as Gurus,
May the weapons of torture they hold turn to flowers;
May all harm be stilled, peace and happiness grow.

(102) Then may even hell beings develop clairvoyance
And take higher rebirths as men or as gods.
By developing strongly the wish to be Buddhas,
May they pay back our kindness through heeding the
teachings
And regard us as Gurus with confident trust.

(103) Then may all sentient beings of the three higher
rebirths
Perfect meditation on egolessness
In this way may they realise the non-self-existence
Of worldly involvement and freedom as well.
May they place concentration on both of these equally,
Seeing their natures as equally void.

(104) If we practise these methods we shall soon
overcome
Our true enemies: selfish concern and self-love.
If we practise these methods we shall overcome also

False concepts of ego we hold to be real.
Thus by joint meditation on egolessness
And on non-dual wisdom of voidness and bliss,
How can anyone not gain the causes to win
A Buddha's physical body and its fruit, Buddhahood.

(105) O mind, understand that the topics discussed
here

Are interdependent phenomena all;
For things must rely on dependent arising
To have an existence: they cannot stand alone,
The process of change is alluring like magic,
For physical form is but mental appearance,
As a torch whirling round seems a circle of flame.

(106) There is nothing substantial to anyone's life-
force

It crumbles apart like a water-soaked log;
And there is nothing substantial to anyone's life-span:
It bursts in an instant like bubbles of foam.
All the things of this world are but fog-like
appearance;
When closely examined, they fade out of sight.
Like mirages these things at a distance seem lovely,
But when we come closer, they are not to be found.

(107) All things are like images found in a mirror,
And yet we imagine they are real, very real;
All things are like mist or like clouds on a mountain,
And yet we imagine they are stable and firm.
Our foe: our insistence on ego-identities
Truly our own, which we wish were secure,
And our butcher: the selfish concern for ourselves -
Like all things these appear to be truly existent,
Though they never have been truly existent at all.

(108) Although they appear to be concrete and real,
They have never been real, anytime, anywhere.
They are not things we should burden with ultimate

value,

Nor should we deny them their relative truth.
As our grasping for egos and love for ourselves
Lack substantial foundations with true independence,
How can they yield acts that exist by themselves?
And then how can this cruel vicious circle of suffering,
The fruit of these actions, be real from its core?

(109) Although all things thus lack inherent existence,
Yet just as the face of the moon can be seen
In a cup of clear water reflecting its image,
The various aspects of cause and effect
Appear in this relative world as reflections.
So please, in this world of appearances only,
Let's always be sure what we do is of virtue
And shun all those acts that would cause us great pain.

(110) When our bodies are charred in a horrible
nightmare
By the world-ending flames of a stellar explosion,
Although this ordeal is not actually happening
We nevertheless feel great terror and scream.
In similar fashion unfortunate rebirths
In hells or as ghosts are not actually real,
And yet we can fully experience their pain.
Thus fearing such suffering as burning alive,
We must cease all these actions that yield this result.

(111) When our mind are delirious, burning with fever,
Although there is no darkness, we feel we are
plummeting
Further and further inside a black pit
With the walls pressing closer the deeper we fall.
In similar fashion, although our dark ignorance
Lacks self-existence, we nevertheless
Must by all means break out of its strangling
construction
By putting the three kinds of wisdom (21) to use.

(112) When musicians are playing a beautiful melody,
Should we examine the sound they are making
We would see that it does not exist by itself.
But when we are not making our formal analysis,
Still there is a beautiful tune to be heard,
Which is merely a label on notes and on players
That's why lovely music can lighten sad hearts.

(113) When we closely examine effects and their
causes,
We see that they both lack inherent existence
They cannot stand alone, either whole or apart
Yet there seem to exist independently rising
And falling events, which, in fact, are conditioned
By various forces, components and parts.
It is this very level on which we experience
Birth and our death and whatever life brings.
So please, in this world of appearances only,
Let's always be sure what we do is of virtue
And shun all those acts that would cause us great pain.

(114) When a vase has been filled by the dripping of
water,
The first drops themselves did not fill it alone;
Nor was it made full by the last several drops.
It was filled by an interdependent collection
Of causes and forces that came all together -
The water, the pourer, the vase and such things.

(115) It is precisely the same when we come to
experience
Pleasure and pain: the results of our past.
Effects never come from the first causal actions,
Nor do they arise from the last several acts.
Both pleasure and pain come from interdependent
Collections of forces and causes combined.
So please, in this world of appearances only,
Let's always be sure what we do is of virtue
And shun all those acts that would cause us great pain.

(116) When not making formal dissections with logic,
Merely letting life's happening flow freely on,
Although we experience feelings of pleasure,
In ultimate truth the appearance of happiness
Lacks self-existence inherently real.
And yet on the everyday operative level
This seeming appearance has relative truth.
To understand fully this deep profound meaning
For slow-minded persons, alas, will be hard.

(117) And now when we try to do close contemplation
On voidness, how can we have even a feeling
Of conventional truth at the very same time?
Yet what can there be that has true self-existence;
And what can there be that lacks relative truth?
How can anyone anywhere believe in such things?

(118) Just as objects of voidness are non-self-existent,
The voidness of objects itself is the same.
The shunning of vice and the practice of virtue
Are likewise devoid of all mental constructions
That they are independent, self-contained acts.
In fact, on the whole, they are lacking completely
All mental projections and all preconceptions.
Thus if we can focus our clear concentration
On voidness without our mind wandering astray,
Then truly we shall come to be wondrous beings
With a deep understanding of the most profound void.

(119)
By practising this way the two bodhichittas,
Of the ultimate and the conventional truth,
And thus by completing without interference
Collections of insight and merit as well,
May all of us quickly attain full enlightenment
Granting what we and all others have wished.

EPILOGUE

The Wheel of Sharp Weapons Effectively Striking the Heart of the Foe Was composed by the great Yogi Dharmarakshita

In his retreat in the jungle where many fierce animals prey.

What this great yogi, the possessor of vast scriptural knowledge,

The full powers of logic and deep profound insight has written here

Is the essence of the teachings of all his holy gurus.

He always practiced in accordance with this essence

In his fearsome jungle retreat

During the degenerate age in which he lived.

From among his many disciples, Dharmarakshita transmitted these teachings to Atisha; And Atisha practiced them wherever he traveled

In order to tame those who were most wild.

When Atisha developed true insight

Into the two bodhichittas through these teachings,

He composed the following:

I went through much hardship abandoning royalty,

But, by collecting much virtuous merit,

I met my true guru, Dharmarakshita.

By showing me these supreme nectar-like teachings,

He has granted me sovereignty over my mind;

So that now I have attained all the forceful opponents,

Having memorized fully these words he has taught.

Although I don't favour a partisan viewpoint:

Whenever I study the various teachings I always make efforts to broaden my wisdom

To see boundless wonders in every tradition;

Yet I have to admit that these teachings especially

Have been of great help in this age of decay.

From among his many unimaginably great disciples

In both India and Tibet, Atisha transmitted these teachings

To Upasaka Dromtonpa, who had been prophesied to be

His most fitting disciple by many of Atisha's

Meditational deities such as Tara.

Atisha transmitted these teachings to Dromtonpa

In order to pacify the minds of the disciples

Of remote Tibet who were difficult to tame.

This work has been translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan

By the fatherly Atisha himself and his spiritual son Dromtonpa.

NOTES

1

Yamantaka is the wrathful aspect of Manjusri, the emanation of the wisdom of the Buddhas. Yamantaka's wrath is directed against selfishness, self-cherishing attitudes, ego-grasping and grasping for true independent existence. These ignorant attitudes take the life of our chance to gain enlightenment, and thus Yamantaka's wrath is opposed to the Great Lord of Death.

2

Bodhisattvas, or brave ones, the spiritual offspring of the Buddhas, are those beings who have the enlightening attitude (bodhichitta) to work towards the attainment of Buddhahood, that is enlightenment, for the sake of all beings. There are five points of similarity between bodhisattvas and peacocks. Just as the colours of the peacocks' feathers grow more radiantly brilliant when they eat plants that are poisonous to other animals, bodhisattvas shine with blissful happiness by making use of such poisonous delusions as desire and attachment for the benefit of others. Just as peacocks have five crown feathers, bodhisattvas have the attainment of the five graded paths for enlightenment. Just as the sight of a peacock's colourful display gives us great pleasure, the sight of a bodhisattva uplifts our mind because of his bodhichitta. Just as peacocks live mostly on poisonous plants and never eat insects or cause others harm, bodhisattvas never cause even the slightest harm to other sentient beings. Just as peacocks eat poisonous plants with pleasure, when bodhisattvas are offered sensory objects, although they have no attachment for these objects, they accept them with pleasure to allow the donor to gain merit from his offering.

3

There are three levels of training of the mind according to the three levels of motivation outlined in the 'Lam-rim' teaching of the 'Graded Course to Enlightenment'. On the initial level of motivation, we work to attain a better future rebirth. On the intermediate level, we work to attain liberation (nirvana) from the vicious circle of rebirth (samsara) for ourselves alone. On the advanced level, as a follower of the Mahayana path, with bodhichitta motivation we work to attain the full enlightenment of Buddhahood for the benefit of all beings. The word now in the text indicates the importance of practicing the teachings with the advanced level of motivation, having previously trained our mind along the lam-rim graded course.

4

With an advanced level motivation, there are two ways in which we can follow the Mahayana path. By following the Perfection Vehicle (Paramitayana), it may take many life times before we reach our goal of enlightenment. By following the Tantra Vehicle (Vajrayana), however, we may attain Enlightenment within one human lifetime. The word here in the text indicates the immediacy of practicing the tantra path with an especially strong bodhichitta motivation.

5

The tantra system teaches many methods for the speedy attainment of enlightenment. Included among them is the use as a path of the normally poisonous delusions. In order to use delusions, such as lustful desire, as a path, however, we must first be devoid of the self-cherishing attitude, that is the

greedy attachment to our own self-interest. In addition we must have a sound understanding of voidness - the fact that all things, including ourselves, lack a truly independent manner of existence. To use delusions as a path without these two prerequisites is extremely dangerous and, far from achieving our intended goal, we may completely destroy our chance for attaining enlightenment.

6

Any of the delusions may be used in the tantra system as an actual path to enlightenment. In the Perfection Vehicle, the delusions may only be used as a method for directly benefiting others when the circumstances demand it. They may not, however be practiced as an actual path.

7

The Three Jewels of Refuge are Buddha, his teachings (Dharma), and the monastic community (Sangha) of those who understand and practise these teachings. The Three Jewels of Refuge are also referred to as the Three Precious Gems or the Triple Gem.

8

The practice of tantra requires receiving initiations. These entail the taking of vows concerning moral conduct and the giving of your sacred word of honour to follow the tantric practices in the prescribed manner.

9

Cause and effect describes the universal law of karma whereby virtuous actions result in happiness and non-virtuous actions in suffering.

10

The practice from guru-devotion to tantra defines the range of the graded course to enlightenment'; of above, note 3.

11

Images of Buddha and the various meditational deities representing different aspects of the Buddhas' enlightenment have an important use in both the Perfection and Tantra Vehicles. They are used as meditative aids for developing single-minded concentration (samadhi). By using such images as objects of devotion, we collect the merit to attain the physical body of a Buddha.

12

It is never possible for us to experience the consequences of the non-virtuous actions of others. Whatever suffering we have must be the result of non-virtuous actions we ourselves have committed in the past.

13

The six realms of existence are divided into the three higher and the three lower states. The three lower unfortunate states of rebirth are those of the hell creatures, hungry ghosts (pretas) and animals. The three higher fortunate states of rebirth are those of the gods, anti-gods (asuras) and humans.

14

We request Yamantaka to turn the wheel of sharp weapons three times. These three refer to (1) the conventional or relative level of truth on which conventional bodhichitta operates as the means for leading both self and others a enlightenment; (2) the ultimate level of truth on which ultimate bodhichitta functions as the wisdom understanding

voidness and (3) these two levels or grades of truth realized together.

15

The four great opponents eliminate the necessity for us to experience the unfortunate consequences of our previously committed nonvirtuous actions. These four are (1) feeling regret and disgust with our nonvirtue; (2) taking refuge in the Three Jewels of Refuge and meditating on bodhichitta; (3) offering our promise never to commit such nonvirtue again and (4) performing and dedicating the merit of virtuous actions for the benefit of all sentient beings.

16

Mantras are words of power, combinations of Sanskrit syllables used as invocations.

17

Hum, dza and p'at are mantric seed syllables. The first repetition of each is for conventional bodhichitta, the opponent for our self-cherishing attitude. The second repetition is for ultimate bodhichitta, which destroys our ego-grasping.

18

The sack of our body is filled with the five poisonous delusions of longing desire, fearful and angered repulsion, closed-minded ignorance, arrogant pride and jealousy.

19

The Three Baskets (Tripitaka) of Buddha's teachings concern disciplined morality (vinaya), discourses on meditation (sutra), and philosophy and metaphysics (abhidharma).

20

We request Yamantaka to swing three times round his head his skull-headed bludgeon representing both the wisdom of egolessness, common to both the Perfection and Tantra Vehicles, as well the non-dual wisdom of voidness and bliss. The three times he swings this bludgeon destroy (1) ego-grasping, (2) our self-cherishing attitude, and (3) our defiled bodies of delusion produced by these two types of ignorance.

21

The three kinds of wisdom can refer either to the wisdoms of listening, thinking, meditating, or to intellectual, conceptual, and nonconceptual wisdoms.

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Khöndung Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche arrives at the Phodrang



On the first of September 2014, the Sakya Dolma Phodrang stretched its gates open to enfold into its breast Khöndung Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche.

Born to Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and Her Eminence Dagmo Sonam Palkyi on the 19th of March 2014 in Wil, Switzerland, it was the first time that the young Dungsey was crossing these gates. Khöndung Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche takes his place as the youngest heir to the illustrious Khön lineage. From the moment that he saw the light, with eyes wide open to apprehend the new environment that was greeting him, His Eminence's presence already exuded that of a great being, and left no doubt that he was to fulfill his destiny as a Khön

lineage holder and as a great Bodhisattva.

His birth had been swift and smooth, much to the glee of his parents, his elder sister, H.E. Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo, his paternal grandmother, H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo who had travelled from India to welcome him,



H.E. Dungsey Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche, moments after his birth

and his maternal grandparents Mr. Urgen Khamritshang and Mrs. Ashi Sonam Deki.

As he prepared to leave the hospital, a snow flurry of dancing flakes mustered, sprinkling him all the way home, an auspicious sign in Tibetan belief, particularly since it hadn't snowed in quite some time. As he crossed the threshold into his house, he regaled his mother with an ebullient smile, happy to be home.



Dungsey going home on his fourth day

His first months proved him to be an unfailingly calm and care-free child, with a strong affinity for smiles and laughter.



Immediately following Dungsey Rinpoche's birth, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche had performed upon him the time-honoured rituals according to the Khön tradition. Some weeks later, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin was to give him his first purification



Meeting new family members

ritual and Long-life empowerment, while his great-aunt H.E. Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding, who had come to Switzerland with her husband Sey Kushok to meet the new Khön family member, anointed him with holy water. His uncle Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche also blessed him with a visit between teaching engagements in Europe.

Dungsey Rinpoche's paternal

grandmother, Gyalyum Chenmo, had spent a few days after his birth delighting in his presence, before resuming her place at His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's side on His travels. She had brought for Siddharth Rinpoche a golden-coloured *chuba*, traditionally worn by young Khön Lamas, which the week-old Dungsey honoured by performing his first mudras!



Vajra and bell



Folded hands

In his fourth month, Dungsey Rinpoche travelled to Lerab Ling, Sogyal Rinpoche's centre in France, where His Holiness the Sakya Trizin was conferring a series of initiations. Rinpoche, very much at his ease in these new surroundings, showed a sharp interest in sacred images and implements. From a beginning, Dungsey Rinpoche's unfolding as a human being was being amalgamated with essential religious principles that would gradually define him as a person and as a master.

And now, the time had come

for the young Dungsey to rejoin his paternal home. As Sakya Centre monks, resounding ceremonial drums, trumpets and conch shells, ushered H.E. Dungsey Rinpoche's car to the palace doors, an auspicious double rainbow appeared in the sky.

Accompanied by his father and elder sister, H.E. Dungsey Rinpoche was carried in his mother's arms to the family shrine room, to be greeted by his grandfather, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

Also there to greet the new-

est Khön member, were Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, H.E. Asanga Vajra Rinpoche, H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche and H.E. Luding Shabdrung Rinpoche, other tulkus and several friends of the Sakya Dolma Phodrang.

Mandala offerings were made to and by family members, after which all the monks and nuns from the local Sakya monasteries came to pay their respects to the young Dungsey, who remained tranquil and serene throughout, cradled in his mother's arms.

He was now to receive from



Mala and sacred images at Lerab Ling last summer





Mandala offerings were given and received



H.E. Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo with H.E. Luding Shabdrung Rinpoche



Dungsey Rinpoche at the Sakya Centre

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin his first major initiation at the Sakya Centre, the Vajrakilaya Wangchen that His Holiness would bestow on the 16th of September at the Sakya Centre, as well as the oral transmission of Ameshab's lengthy commentary on Vajrakilaya granted by His Holiness at the Sakya Centre to the members of the Sakyapa monastic community.

Khöndung Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche's arrival has filled the palace with joy. For all Sakyapas, a new Khön Dungsey represents an assurance of the continuity of this preeminent lineage, a great master in the making, and a blessing to this world.

This brings to five the number of His Holiness' grandchildren, as this newest generation of Khöns live out their childhood preparing for the responsibilities that await them as soon as they become young adults. Already at this early stage, our future masters are taught to cultivate to the fullest their natural qualities of generosity, joy and discernment, assets that will prove indispensable as they begin to fulfill their roles as spiritual leaders.

Photos: Cristina Vanza; Jamyang Zangpo; Ani Chökyi Drolma

Dharma Activities

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in the U.S.A. and Canada

On the 28th of April 2014, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin left His residence in Dehradun to embark on a three-month teaching tour that would take Him to the U.S.A., Canada and Europe.

His Holiness was to begin His journey with a visit to Tsechen Kunchab Ling, His main monastery in the United States. A member of this centre writes of His visit:

"American students were delighted that His Holiness Sakya Trizin, accompanied by Her Eminence Gyalyum Chenmo-la, had accepted their invitations to undertake a teaching tour of the US from March 29 to May 10, 2014.

His Holiness opened his US visit with three weeks in residence at Tsechen Kunchab Ling, his temple seat in the United States. There, at the request of Venerable Khenpo Kalsang Gyaltsen, abbot of Tsechen Kunchab Ling, he bestowed an extensive and rare collection of Vajrayogini initiations, blessings, and instructions. He also bestowed A Gift of Dharma to Kublai Khan by Drogon Chogyal Phagpa and blessed the opening of a new library and new Tibetan and Himalayan Cultural Center at Tsechen Kunchab Ling.

The first event was a formal Welcome Ceremony and Long-Life Initiation for the general public. Thousands of happy people, including a large number of Tibetan and Himalayan families thronged the temple grounds. The weather reflected the blessings and joyful mood of the people, as it was the first bright and warm day of early spring.

Over the next three days, (April 1-3) His Holiness opened the door of Dharma with Teachings on Drogon Chogyal Phagpa's Gift of Dharma to Kublai Khan. Chogyal Phagpa, (1235-1280) was the fifth of the five great founders of the Sakya Order, and



His Holiness arrives at Tsechen Kunchab Ling



His Holiness bestowing the extensive and rare Vajrayogini initiations and teachings

an ancestor of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin. As a token of the ancient and auspicious connection between the Sakyapa and the Mongolians, many Mongolian lamas, monks, and nuns traveled to Walden to attend His Holiness' teachings. Everyone considered themselves very fortunate to receive this great classic teaching from both a biological and a spiritual descendent of Chogyal Phagpa.

From April 4-23 His Holiness bestowed an Extensive and Rare Cycle of Vajrayogini Initiations, Blessings, and Teachings to over 250 fortunate students, who traveled from 15 different countries and 28 U.S. states to take advantage of this very special opportunity. His Holiness bestowed the teachings in English and they were simultaneously translated into Chinese.

Bestowing of this unique and bountiful banquet of Vajrayogini initiations and blessings was very special, especially in the West. The initiations began with a two-day Vajrayogini major empowerment from the Virupa tradition. Then day after day students rejoiced to receive the following initiations:

- *Indra Tradition Vajrayogini blessing from the Thirteen Golden Dharmas*
- *Maitri Tradition Vajrayogini blessing from the Thirteen Golden Dharmas*
- *Uchedma Vajrayogini blessing from the Virupa tradition*
- *Naropa Tradition Vajrayogini blessing from the Thirteen Golden Dharmas*
- *Vajrayogini teaching cycle based on the eleven yogas of Naropa*

After the initiations, His Holiness bestowed a detailed version of the Vajrayogini teaching cycle based on the eleven yogas of Naropa as well as special related teachings and transmissions including Dharmata Blessing, Mantra Blessing, and Shmashana Adhipati blessings. Many made commitments to undertake the full Vajrayogini retreat.

As a break during the teaching cycle, on April 19-20, 2014 students receiving the Vajrayogini teachings were joined by



Khenpo Kalsang offering the mandala to request the profound Vajrayogini initiations and teachings



Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche and Pema Wangyal Rinpoche receive the Vajrayogini teachings



Ribbon cutting for the new Tsechen Kunchab Ling library



His Holiness and Gyalum Chenmo reviewing books in the library



His Holiness congratulates Khenpo Kalsang at the opening of the Library

hundreds of additional happy people to celebrate His Holiness' opening of the new library and also the new Tibetan and Himalayan Cultural Center at Tsechen Kunchab Ling. The event was attended by officials from the Tibetan government in exile and officials from the Village of Walden.

His Holiness' primary vision for Tsechen Kunchab Ling as his temple seat in the United States is to promote the transmission and teaching of the Dharma to people in the West. In addition, His Holiness vision includes the preservation of Tibetan language, and culture, especially for Tibetan and Himalayan people living in the United States. Building on Tsechen Kunchab Ling's ten-year history of hosting many cultural celebrations by different Tibetan and Himalayan groups, during this period of His Holiness' residence at his U.S. seat, he consecrated and formally opened two new facilities at Tsechen Kunchab Ling: a library to promote the study of Dharma and help to preserve Tibetan language, and second, a Tibetan and Himalayan Cultural Center to help preserve, explain, and transmit Tibetan culture.

Tsechen Kunchab Ling now includes three main centers of activity: a beautiful large shrine hall for the practice of Dharma, a library for the study of Dharma and preservation of Tibetan language, and a Tibetan and Himalayan Cultural Center for the celebration and appreciation of Tibetan and Himalayan culture and its transmission to the next generation of children.

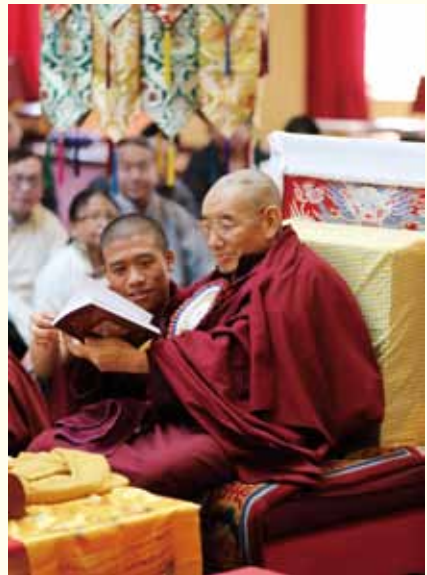
This dream of preserving and transmitting Tibetan religion, language, and culture is shared by many Tibetan and Himalayan associations, of which there are over 30 in the area surrounding Tsechen Kunchab Ling. Eight of those associations have become founding members of the Tibetan and Himalayan Cultural Center at Tsechen Kunchab Ling: Sakya Tsechen Association, Tibetan Ngari Association of New York and New Jersey, Manang Samaj, Mustang Kyidug USA, Walung Community of North America, United Sherpa Association, Dege Kyidug of North America, and Ligdro Dechen Rolmo. Surely many more associations will come.



His Holiness with performers of the Ligdro Dechen Rolmo



His Holiness shares a moment with H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche



Khenpo Kalsang reviewing the newly published Biographies of the Five Founding Masters

The new library is working in partnership with the local Josephine-Louise Public Library in Walden, and also the new Cultural Center has developed joint exhibitions with the Jacques Marchais Museum of Tibetan Art on Staten Island. In this way, the new library and cultural center at Tsechen Kunchab Ling will help to explain Tibetan and Himalayan culture to the wider world."

These three weeks would leave an indelible imprint on the minds of the more than two hundred and fifty students who had the immense privilege to attend these incomparable teachings. As they drew to a close, everyone made ready to return to their respective abodes, with a staunch determination to put into practice the fount of wisdom that they had received.

His Holiness made other stops during His U.S.A. trip, including a weekend at Khenpo Pema Wangdak's centre in New York City and one at Sakya Thupten Dhargye Ling in Minneapolis.



His Holiness at Sakya Thupten Dhargye Ling (Photo: Thor Anderson)



A pious gathering (Photo: Thor Anderson)



Performing for His Holiness (Photo: Thor Anderson)

His Holiness also travelled for the first time to New Mexico, where He inaugurated Tsechen Namdrol Ling, a new Sakya centre in Santa Fe. A centre member writes:



A succulent lunch on arrival

"On May 5, 2014, His Holiness and entourage arrived for their first historic visit to New Mexico. Filled with awe and devotion, the Tibetan and Western congregation celebrated their safe arrival with a warm, traditional welcome at the airport. En route to Santa Fe, His Holiness was received by the Kundeling Family at Corrales, Lama Karma Dorje at the Kagyu Shenpen Kunchab Stupa, and the Seret Family upon arrival.

His Holiness and Gyalyum Kusho-la were paid homage to after prayers were said at the Tibetan Association of Santa Fe, followed by the Tibetan reception at Hotel Santa Fe. Tsewang Tenzin was the keynote speaker, with individual blessings received by the Tibetan community.



Meeting with members of the Tibetan Community

On May 6th, as His Holiness first entered the Santa Fe Convention Center, He was formally greeted by the Potala Dance Troupe in full ceremonial costumes, accompanied by instruments, and the enthusiastic Dharma community in waiting. His Holiness had specifically chosen teachings for Santa Fe. He spoke on "Buddha Dharma in Daily Life", how to live skillfully with love, compassion, tolerance and forgiveness.

This was followed by a Refuge Ceremony, for those wishing to embark on the first step along the Buddhist path. His Holiness bestowed the Rigsum Gonpo Empowerment of the Three Bodhisattvas: Manjusri, Avalokiteshvara and Vajrapani that afternoon to a crowd of about 400 people, offering insight into the nature of reality and the sublime qualities of wisdom, compassion and power. With His Holiness on stage was Ven. Tulku Sangak Rinpoche, Ven. Khenpo Pema Wangdak, Geshe Thubten Sherab and Sangha from all Four Lineages. Mandala offerings were made by the Directors of Tsechen Namdrol Ling and the Santa Fe Dharma Centers.

After the teachings were completed, His Holiness went on to Tsechen Namdrol Ling, the newest Sakya Center in the United States. Having blessed it through His Gentle Presence with Bob White, Dorjee Gyaltsen and April Dolkar as the inaugural directors, it was supported by many close Dharma brothers' and sisters' efforts. A long-time dream was realized in an instant.

At the grand appreciation dinner, the City of Santa Fe's Official Proclamation for His Holiness presented by Mayor Pro Tem Kevin Ives. The great Tibetan momo-makers and Indian chefs created extraordinary, mouth-watering delights, as traditional Tibetan performances of song, instrumental music and dance offered the best respect and cheer to the entire congregation. His Holiness requested one final group photograph with all the Tibetan children and young people, joined by Sonam Tsering, Penpa Tsering and Kalsang Lungtok, the inspiring forces behind of the dance troupe. As the Sakya Buddha Dharma's foundation in the Southwest was laid, a truly remarkable time was had by all!"



His Holiness bestows the Rigsum Gonpo in Santa Fe



His Holiness with members of the Tibetan dance troupe

The last stage in His Holiness' United States tour, before crossing the border into Canada, was a stop at the Sakya Monastery in Seattle, seat of H.H. Dagchen Rinpoche, Head of the Sakya Phuntsok Phodrang. During His short stay there, His Holiness had the occasion not only to enjoy a family reunion, but also to bestow to the public the One-Thousand-Armed Chenrezig initiation and give a teaching on "How to Be a



H.H. the Sakya Trizin with H.H. Dagchen Rinpoche



H.E. Jetsun Kushok with Phuntsok Phodrang Eminences



H.E. Satu Rinpoche



His Holiness teaching in Seattle



His Holiness at the Sakya Monastery, Seattle

Good Buddhist”.

The time had now come to cross the border into Canada, and so His Holiness and entourage were taken by car from Seattle to Vancouver where they were greeted by His Holiness’ sister, H.E. Jetsun Kushok and her husband, Sey Kushok.



At the request of H.E. Jetsun Kushok, His Holiness dedicated two days of His visit to bestowing the Chakrasamvara empowerment to some two hundred people at the University of British Columbia. During His stay, His Holiness also gave a talk at the Public Library to a congregation over three-hundred strong, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist.



H.E. Jetsun Kushok and Sey Kushok receiving the Chakrasamvara empowerment



His Holiness at the Thrangu Monastery

A day was also spent at Thrangu Monastery, a well-appointed Karma Kagyu monastery in Richmond, B.C. It was founded in 2010 by the Very Venerable Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, and is Canada's first traditional Tibetan Buddhist monastery.

The last stretch of His Holiness' journey to North America was to take Him to Toronto and, for the first time, to Montreal. There is a growing population of Buddhists in Canada, many of them Tibetan - Toronto alone boasts a population of some eight thousand Ti-

betans. Community ties are strong, and a great deal of effort is invested in maintaining Tibetan culture, language and religion alive.

His Holiness' visit was organised by Sakya Chokhor Ling, a centre created and maintained by the Toronto Tibetan Community. There, His Holiness gave three initiations and held public audiences for the great number of devotees who sought a blessing or advice.

And finally, His Holiness concluded His North



Awaiting His Holiness' arrival



His Holiness bestowed three empowerments on the Toronto community



Blessings....



Advice....



..... and refuge

Toronto photos: Anthony Lama

American tour with a visit to Montreal. During His brief time in this city, His Holiness conferred the Chenrezig Mahamudra empowerment and its related teaching, as well the Vajrakilaya Torma empowerment. Tibetan Buddhism is relatively new to Montreal, but is slowly taking root. Although it is nowadays mainly lay in its outlook, French Canada was once the under the strict tutelage of the Catholic Church, whose

influence permeated every aspect of its culture. And so, with its deeply entrenched religious heritage, this part of Canada provides fertile soil for the Dharma to take root and grow.

On the 22nd of May, His Holiness and His entourage left for Madrid, from which His Holiness would launch the European part of His teaching tour.



His Holiness bestowing an empowerment upon the Montreal sangha



His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in Europe

On 23rd May, His Holiness arrived at Barajas Airport in Madrid, along with wife H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo and His entourage, on what was to be their first stop on a two-and-a-half month long European visit.

After a short weekend programme in Madrid, His Holiness made His way to the Costa Blanca, where He was to bestow the one-month long Lamdre cycle of teachings and, for the first time in the West, place students into retreat. Of the one hundred and thirty-odd students receiv-

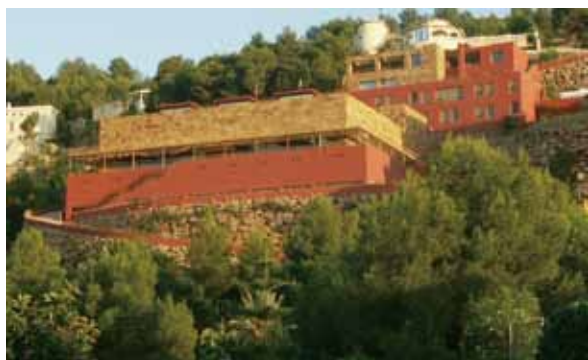


ing the Hevajra Cause and Path Empowerments from His Holiness, forty were to sit the one-month retreat and five the eight-month retreat that followed the teachings.



His Holiness bestowing the precious Lamdre teaching

The setting for this unique occasion was the Fundación Sakya, in Alicante. A monolithic stone structure jutting out of the mount that it was built on, it calls to mind the medieval hillside monasteries that bestrew the European landscape and, like them, promises to withstand the passage of centuries. Of sober beauty, it counts seven storeys, whose daily negotiating kept all participants in stupendous physical form.



Perching on the mountainside

With a wide view to the sea, and soon to be graced by a monumental statue of the Buddha, the vast medi-



The vast meditation hall



With a panoramic view on the sea

tation hall that sits on the second level provided an inspirational cradle for the deep transformative process that the teachings engendered.

Although the majority of the participants were from the Spanish peninsula, several countries were represented, including as faraway ones as Australia, Singapore and Russia. Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche and Pema Wangyal Rinpoche were among those present, along with a group of their respective students.



H.E. Gyalum Chenmo graced the temple with her presence



Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche (right) and Pema Wangyal Rinpoche (left)

These abundant blessings from His Holiness were facilitated by the generous participation of a group of dedicated volunteers, headed by indomitably efficient Yolanda and Manolo, who dotingly catered to each and every participant's needs. Among other things, the team provided succulent food to all, including special meals for the several who required special diets, kept the expansive premises sparkling clean at all times, and saw to it that every aspect of the event went smoothly.

A seamless translation of the teachings was provided by Rafael Ferrer, while Khenpo Pema Wangdak was at hand to provide the afternoon reteaching as well as guidance to the retreatants; and Gelung Lama,



Lama Rinchen Gyaltzen guiding His Holiness into the hall

a senior ritual master from the Sakya Centre in Dehradun, made himself available to teach the retreatants the rituals that formed part of their daily practice. Orchestrating all this was the able direction of Lama Rinchen Gyaltzen, the Fundación's resident lama, who ensured that everything contributed to making this unique opportunity a resounding success.

On 16th June, His Holiness gave final instructions to the forty-five retreatants before these went into solitude, while the rest of the students left for their respective destinations, enriched by the priceless teachings



that they had received.

His Holiness' European tour was then to take Him Barcelona, Paris, Arosio and Antwerp, where He would be joined by Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and his family.



Chakrasambara and Vajrayogini initiations in Barcelona



Lama Tashi Sangpo makes a mandala offering to His Holiness in Arosio



His Holiness with Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and family in Antwerp



His Holiness teaching in Antwerp

His Holiness' next stop was at Sakya Tsechen Ling, Khenchen Sherab Amipa Rinpoche's centre in Kuttolsheim, France. This was the first time that His Holiness was visiting this centre since Khenchen Sherab had left his body earlier this year. His Holiness was now welcomed at the centre by Lama Tashi Sangpo, Khenchen Sherab Rinpoche's nephew and successor, whose weighty responsibility it has now become to sustain the considerable Dharma work that his uncle and mentor had undertaken. Everyone who attended the Kadam Lhashi initiations and teachings that His Holiness imparted over the course of His days at Sakya Tsechen Ling, remarked on how strongly Khenchen Sherab Rinpoche's presence could be felt throughout.

Bernard Altshuch, president of Sakya Tsechen Ling, writes:

"Khenchen Geshe Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche had prepared the visit of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin to SAKYA TSECHEN LING, Kuttolsheim, France, from the 7th to the 13th of July 2014. He had, as always, not only defined the main aspects of this event, but had also organised its each and every detail. But Rinpoche left his body on the 14th of April 2014. He abides in our hearts, filled with an infinite respect and gratitude inspired by the awe-inspiring opus that he had accomplished, especially in Europe, over the past four decades.

Lama Tashi Sangpo Amipa Lag, in response to Khen Rinpoche's last bidding, accepted to take on his burden, a task of which he is acquitting himself with a show of devotion, competence and energy that is a teaching in itself.

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, along with His entourage, arrived at the Institute on the 7th of July 2014, and conferred upon a large gathering of studious and dedicated practitioners, the major initiation of Thub wang dam tshig sum kö and the initiations of the four Ka'a dam lha zhi deities, along with their respective teachings.

All of us, volunteers and participants hailing from different horizons, thus lived a unique moment, out of time, revolving around the four Gems, carried by the breath of the Dharma, our attention drawn by the most noble of all intents, that which is the innermost privilege of all sentient beings.

Our gratefulness to His Holiness matches the incalculable value of the gift of Dharma, which raises our aspirations, brings joy to our hearts and brightens our faces with the radiant smile of compassion.

And now, it is up to each one of us to ensure with single-minded perseverance that these promises for betterment shape our minds to perfection, and allow that design and destiny come together for the good of all beings.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you!"



Lama Tashi Sangpo welcoming His Holiness



His Holiness with Lama Dakpa Woeser



The rest of His Holiness' time in Europe was spent in France, with a short visit to the Centre Culturel de Cergy, Mogchok Rinpoche's centre near Bordeaux, where His Holiness bestowed the Guru Rinpoche and the Three Long-Life Deity initiations, as well as a teaching on Sakya Pandita's *Sakya Lekshey*.



His Holiness arrives at the teaching hall, at the Centre Culturel de Cergy



His Holiness blessing the Stupa at the Anandakara Centre

This was followed by ten intensive days of teachings and initiations at the Centre d'Etudes de Chanteloube, Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche and Rangdröl Rinpoche's centre in the Dordogne.

Founded in 1980 as a Nyingma centre under the tutelage of Kyabje Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Kyabje Dudjom Rinpoche, the Centre d'Etudes de Chanteloube has been active since then in providing teachings from many of the most eminent teachers of all four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.

During His stay at Chanteloube, His Holiness conferred several initiations, including the major empowerment of Chakrasamvara, as well as a weeklong teaching on "Parting from the Four Attachments", to an assembly of several hundred students. So many countries were represented that each day, a translation into a different language was provided to the chanting of the Heart Sutra.



His Holiness conferring an initiation at the Centre d'Etudes de Chanteloube
(Photo by Arne Schelling)



His Holiness teaching at Chanteloube



His Holiness with H.E. Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche
(Photo by Arne Schelling)

An afternoon visit to Sakya Changlochen Ling, Lama Jampa Thaye's nearby centre, provided a hiatus to the Chanteloube programme. A Changlochen Ling member writes of the occasion:



Hundreds of students attended the Chanteloube programme

"On a perfect summer afternoon on the 26th July, His Holiness visited Sakya Changlochen Ling on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. At the request of Lama Jampa Thaye, His Holiness gave the initiation of Manjushri Arapatsana to a gathering of members of the Dechen Community who had all travelled from the UK for the occasion, as well as dignitaries and members of the nearby Karma Kagyu and Nyingma centres. After the initiation, His Holiness blessed the land and was then guest of honour at a reception hosted by Lama Jampa. His Holiness cut the celebratory cake at the garden party that had been organised for this auspicious occasion.

Founded in 1990, Sakya Changlochen Ling is a Dechen Community retreat centre in south-west France. Over the years, the buildings have been developed so that now they incorporate a beautiful gompas, extensive accommodation for visiting Lamas and retreat facilities. The centre is located in several acres of beautiful countryside. A summer course is held every year at which Lama Jampa gives teachings and initiations. Group and individual retreats are now also part of the activities at the centre. With the recent development of Changlochen, Sakya takes its place alongside the great Kagyu and Nyingma traditions already present in the beautiful Dordogne region of France."



Blessing at Sakya Changlochen Ling



Cutting of the celebratory cake



His Holiness bestows an initiation at Changlochen Ling

His Holiness' European trip continued with a three-day visit to Lerab Ling, Sogyal Rinpoche's centre near Montpellier, where he bestowed the Vajrakīlaya and Chigme Phagpa Nyingtig initiations and granted a teaching on *Parting from the Four Attach-*

ments. The last day of His Holiness' stay at Lerab Ling was dedicated to the consecration of Khandro Tsering Chödrön's memorial stupa. A member of Lerab Ling writes:

"Under cloudless blue skies, the consecration of Khandro Tsering Chödrön's memorial stupa took place at Lerab Ling in France. His Holiness Sakya Trizin, the supreme head of the Sakya order of Tibetan Buddhism, and a gathering of eminent masters who have a close connection to Khandro presided over the ceremonies. The consecration took place on Chökhör Düchen, the day that celebrates the Buddha's first turning of the wheel of Dharma—one of the most holy days in the Tibetan Buddhist calendar. There was a joyful atmosphere as one thousand people took part in a full day of practice in the sunshine in front of the stupa, and thousands more joined via video streaming in 26 countries around the world.



Khandro Tsering Chödrön was one of the greatest practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism of recent times. She was the spiritual wife of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö—and she was a true dakini, loved and revered by all the masters, including His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, and an inspiration to Buddhist practitioners everywhere.

Khandro spent the final years of her life at Lerab Ling with her nephew Sogyal Rinpoche and her sister Mayumla Tsering Wangmo. She inspired everyone she met with her exceptional wisdom, grace and compassion, and all were struck by the atmosphere that she created simply through her presence.

As one person said, "Khandro-la's very being was a blessing to all who came in contact with her, because in one glimpse, one could receive this profound teaching from her, just because of who she was and how she was." Another said, "To be with Khandro was like coming home. It was a feeling of freedom; of resting in yourself, of being content with yourself, and of being completely happy."

Many visitors to Lerab Ling have established a strong connection with Khandro merely by seeing a photograph of her—even those who are not Buddhist practitioners.

Khandro's magnificent memorial stupa was the vision of Sogyal Rinpoche, Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche and many other masters, and the consecration provided an opportunity to remember her extraordinary life and invoke her blessings.

The fact that such a great gathering of lamas was present at Lerab Ling reflected the tremendous love, respect and devotion that all the masters had for Khandro. His Holiness Sakya Trizin, who after His Holiness the Dalai Lama is one of the most respected masters in the Tibetan Buddhist lineage, was ac-



accompanied by his wife Gyalyum Chenmo-la, and together with his youngest son, Khondung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, he conducted the consecration according to the Sakya tradition. At the same time, there was a consecration according to the Nyingma tradition conducted by Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche, Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche, Rangdrol Rinpoche and Tulku Rigdzin Pema.

Since the time of the Buddha himself, it has been customary to construct stupas to enshrine the relics of great masters—as symbols of their enlightened mind and because a stupa is a powerful means through which these teachers can continue to bring immeasurable benefit in the future. It is said that simply for us to set eyes on a stupa is enough to create a connection that will eventually lead to our enlightenment.



After the ceremonies, His Holiness Sakya Trizin remarked on how perfect the consecration had been, saying: “Before the consecration it was raining, and after it was raining, but on that particular day it was really pure. There were absolutely no clouds. It was really clear. I think this is a very significant sign that it was very auspicious... Everything went very smoothly without any kind of problems, so this is a very auspicious beginning.”

The stupa, which contains relics of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö and Khandro Tsering Chödrön, along with countless scriptures and other precious objects, was adorned with a beautiful brocade canopy and five-coloured silk, streaming down from its golden spire. Beneath a photograph of Khandro, a garland of flowers was placed on the stupa bearing the inscription:

“For as long as the sun and moon shall rise, may the name of Khandro Tsering Chödrön remain.”

You can read more about Khandro's stupa and how it was constructed in the latest issue of View magazine <http://bit.ly/memorialstupa>

On the 3rd of August, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin concluded His European teaching tour with a one-day visit to Sakya Kalden Ling, Frankfurt. He was met by Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, who was giving teachings there at the time.

And so, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's 2014 summer teaching tour came to an end. His Holiness was now to make His way back to India where, after a brief pause at His residence in



Dehradun, He was to travel to Bir for the performance of very special Dharma activities.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Russia



On the 3rd of May 2014, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Moscow, where he was to give the precious initiations and teachings of the Thirteen Golden Dharmas.

Although Vajrayana Buddhism doesn't have a strong profile in Russia, its presence is of long date. Russian sovereigns - from Empress Elizabeth Petrovna, who ruled the land from 1741 to 1762 and declared it an accepted religious expression, through Catherine the Great who immediately succeeded her on the throne, to Nicholas II, the last of the Tsars - had close ties with Vajrayana Buddhism. For a people with a strong affinity for mysticism, Vajrayana Buddhism was an attractive alternative to the autocratic Ortho-

dox Church whose ecclesiastical jurisdiction prevailed in the land.

With the disappearance of the restrictions imposed on religious practice by the Communist governance during the better part of the last century, a spiritual renaissance is now being experienced in Russia, with Vajrayana Buddhism as one of its manifestations. The members of Sakya Tsechen Namgyal Ling in Moscow are enthusiastically part of this revival. And for them, a visit by such a great master as Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche was certainly a tremendous boon.

Pavel Kreis of Sakya Tsechen Namgyal Ling writes of Rinpoche's visit:

"From the 3rd to the 9th of May 2014, at the invitation of the Moscow Buddhist Center Sakya Tsechen Namgyal Ling, His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche made his second visit to Russia. During the visit, Rinpoche bestowed the Hevajra empowerment from the Vajramala cycle and the Thirteen Golden Dharmas according to the Sakya tradition. Many students from all over Russia were immensely happy to see Rinpoche and to receive these precious teachings. More than 70 people gathered at a retreat center near Moscow, in order to receive these important transmissions.

The Thirteen Golden Dharmas are said to derive from the time of Sachen Kunga Nyingpo (1092-1158) when he received initiations and teachings that were considered so precious that only gold could be offered to the Guru for their bestowal, and that the latter should not be given "beyond the walls of the monastery".

Different traditions and monasteries specialized in different practices and the Khön family concentrated on the practice of the Three Great Red Ones (Marpo Kor Sum).

The Thirteen Golden Dharmas are an assortment of important empowerments and practices that are imbued with utmost efficacy in removing the veil of ignorance from its practitioners and leading them to full enlightenment.

At the end of the teachings, a group of Russian students officially requested Rinpoche for the first time to bestow the precious Lamdre teachings in their country, to which His Eminence answered in the affirmative. With its deep religious roots ripped out during recent times and now thirsting to recover its spiritual patrimony, Russia provides a fertile soil for the seed of Dharma to grow and prosper. May it be so, and may it benefit countless beings."



Much to his Russian students' regret, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left Moscow on the 10th of May,

en route for the United Kingdom, where other avid students were awaiting his presence and teachings.

Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in the U.K. and Europe

On the 10th of May, following his Russian trip, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche travelled to the United Kingdom, where he was to give teachings in London, Reading, Bournemouth and Bristol.

Rinpoche began his U.K. trip with a stay in London, on the invitation of Lama Jampa Thaye, a long-time student of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's.

Rinpoche's previous journey to the U.K., close to three years ago, had left students yearning for his presence and his teachings, a wish which they now gladly saw realised.

Rinpoche's visit to these three cities are best described by the words of members of their respective centres:

H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche visits the Sakya Centre, London



"On Saturday, 10 May His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and his attendant, Lama Ngawang Tengay, arrived in London. In the evening of 10 May, His Eminence gave the initiation of Vajrapani, Hayagriva and Garuda. This combined initiation of these three deities of power is very effective in dispelling obstacles to Dharma practice. It originates with the great 14th century Nyingma master Drubchen Laykyi Dorje and has subsequently been preserved in a number of lines of transmission. This well-attended event saw people from the UK and Europe in attendance. Lama Jampa Thaye made the traditional offering of the Mandal Tensum to His Eminence during the initiation.



The morning of 12 May saw His Eminence visit and bless the Tibetan Peace Garden in Geraldine Mary Hamsworth Park in London, at the invitation of the Tibet Foundation. The Peace Garden was opened on behalf of Tibet Foundation by His Holiness the Dalai Lama in May 1999, and subsequently blessed by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin. Lama Jampa Thaye and Dechen Dolma were also in attendance at the blessing.



Ratna Vajra Rinpoche at the Peace Garden in London

In the evening of 12 May, His Eminence taught Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen's "Short Melody of the Eight Dream-Like Experiences". His Eminence gave an extensive explanation of this brief text covering the causal links

from the development of a calm and stable mind through to the achievement of happiness for ourselves and others. The teaching began with emphasising the need to first develop a calm and stable mind through daily meditation practice, and went on to show how such practice would be strengthened and brought to fruition by further contemplation and analysis of the nature of one's experience. His Eminence concluded the teaching by leading the audience in a short session of calm-abiding (shamata) meditation.

His Eminence departed for Bournemouth in the morning of 13 May to visit the Sakya Centre in Bournemouth, Sakya Thubten Ling. His Eminence will travel to Bristol on Friday, 16 May and will bestow the initiation of Chakrasamvara from the tradition of Lohipa on 17 and 18 May."

H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche visits Sakya Thubten Ling

On the 13th of May 2014, we were highly honoured to receive a three-day visit by H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche to the Sakya Thubten Ling Buddhist Centre in Bournemouth. His Eminence led us in marking Vesak or 'Buddha Day' with the celebration of the 16 Arhat Puja. This Puja or prayer ceremony is in remembrance of the sixteen disciples who followed Buddha in his lifetime and were instrumental in preserving the words of Buddha in the form of the sacred Buddhist Texts.

On Wednesday evening, we held a reception for His Eminence, which combined the celebration of the centre's 10th Anniversary at its present location, and an opportunity for members to greet and receive blessings. Vedant, Chairman of the Trustees, gave a summary of all the teachings and visits we have received over the years. This was followed by His Eminence speaking about the origins of the Sakya School of Buddhism in Tibet and the role of its centres around the world in helping to lessen the suffering of others and develop compassion for all beings as well as facilitating the Gurus' Teachings.

In the morning, His Eminence was invited by the Chinese Buddhist community in Charminster for a splendid lunch at the Wonderful Kitchen Restaurant.

On Thursday afternoon, a Refuge Ceremony was held for new students becoming Buddhists and others who wanted to renew their vows. In the evening, His Eminence bestowed the 1,000-Armed Avalokiteshvara empowerment for Vajrayana practitioners.

We feel privileged to have witnessed the wisdom, compassion and insight of an outstanding member of the new generation of great Buddhist masters. We look forward to his return, hopefully in the near future.



H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche visits Sakya Centre, Bristol

"Sakya Centre Bristol was honoured by the visit in May of HE Ratna Vajra Rinpoche. Invited by Lama Jampa Thaye, His Eminence arrived on the afternoon of Friday 16th May and was welcomed by Lama Jampa and the local sangha. Lama Jampa recalled Rinpoche's first visit to the centre 36 years ago and reiterated the Centre's close connection with the Dolma Phodrang. Lama Jampa then offered the Mandal Tensum, and this was followed by a reception in honour of His Eminence.



Over the weekend of 17th and 18th May, His Eminence bestowed the major initiation of Chakrasamvara from the Vajra Mala tradition, the same tradition from which His Holiness Sakya Trizin gave the Kalachakra initiation in London in 2010. This empowerment is one of the most important of the Anuttara Tantra initiations, and the venue was filled to capacity with sangha from all over the UK, while others had travelled from Bulgaria and even Mexico in order to receive this precious teaching.

We were all extremely grateful for His Eminence's great kindness in bestowing this powerful teaching and very sad when He and his attendant monk Ngawang Tengay took their leave on Monday morning. Sakya Centre Bristol looks forward to His Eminence's next visit in the not too distant future."



At the request of Sakya Ling Reading, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche also spent two days in this city, where he gave the Medicine Buddha initiation as well

as a teaching on the Bardo. As always, the event was well attended, with members of the local Tibetan community forming the majority of the congregation.



Rinpoche with Sakya Kalden Ling students



Rinpoche teaching at the Tibethaus in Frankfurt

And so, on the 21st of May, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left the U.K. for Biarritz where, on the invitation of Sakya Thukje Ling, he would be conferring the Vajrapani Bhutadamara empowerment, a teaching on the Triple Vision and a public talk.

Rinpoche also travelled to Frankfurt, where he bestowed the Bhutadamara empowerment and its sad-

hana explanation at Sakya Kalden Ling, as well as a teaching at the Tibethaus in Frankfurt, entitled Introduction to *Madhyamika*.

The next stop on Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche's teaching tour was in Stuttgart, on the invitation of Lama Jampa Thaye.

"Sakya Dechen Ling, Stuttgart has been honored by the visit of H.E. Ratna Vajra Rinpoche at the invitation of Lama Jampa Thaye. His Eminence arrived in the afternoon on Wednesday 28th May from Frankfurt and was welcomed by Lama Jampa Thaye. This was the second visit of His Eminence to Stuttgart after the first one in 2011.

In the evening of the first day His Eminence gave a teaching about Mahayana practice, explaining the seven great aspects of the Mahayana. On the second day His Eminence bestowed the initiation of Chenrezig according to the King's Tradition, which was revealed as a terma connected with the Tibetan king, Songtsen Gampo. This was a rare opportunity to receive this precious initiation which is not often given. Also in attendance were Khenpo Pema from New York, Lama Gendün from Switzerland, Tseador from the Phodrang in Dehradun, India and His Eminence's attendant, Ngawang Tangay.

At the conclusion of the visit, the party left for Switzerland to continue His Eminence's teaching tour of Europe. Sakya Dechen Ling looks forward to His Eminence's next visit in the not too distant future."



On the invitation of the Sakya Tashi Choling centre, Khöndung Ratna Rinpoche then spent three days



Rinpoche giving an empowerment in Budapest

in Budapest, where he gave the Chenrezig empowerment in the King's Tradition and the common Kuru-kulle Jenang. Rinpoche's last stop in Europe was in Berlin where, on the invitation of Siddhartha's Intent, he gave a two-day teaching on the Introduction to the Triple Vision. During his time in this beautiful and historic city, Rinpoche had some free time to do some sightseeing.

On the 8th of June, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche concluded his European tour and left for Asia, where his next stop would be Mongolia.

Berlin photos by Arne Schelling



Rinpoche with Lama Kalsang at Sakya Tashi Choling



Rinpoche teaching at Siddhartha's Intent



Visiting the Berlin Wall Memorial



Rinpoche and his group at the Reichstag



Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in Singapore

On the 11th of May, 2014, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Singapore, where he would be conducting a one-week intensive programme of teachings and initiations at the Sakya Tenphel Ling Centre.



Rinpoche was accompanied on his trip by a group of monks from Sakya Centre and Sakya Institute Puruwalla, who were to remain in Singapore and Malaysia for nearly two months performing the invaluable Vajrakilaya Drupchod.

Rinpoche's programme opened on the 13th of May, with the celebration of Vesak. Also known as 'Buddha Day', Vesak is one of the most important days in the Buddhist calendar and celebrates the birth, enlightenment and Parinirvana of the Lord Buddha.

Traditionally, this is a day when devotees gather in great numbers in their freshly decorated temples, bringing with them new sets of robes to adorn the body of the main Buddha statue, as well as bountiful offerings of flowers, candles and incense to place at its feet. Additionally, a small Buddha statue is placed on the altar, sitting on a basin surrounded by flowers.



The temple was adorned with beautiful and bountiful offerings for Vesak day

Devotees, one by one, pour water over its head, to commemorate the time of the Buddha's birth, when the heavenly deities anointed the newly born Shakya-muni with water. Perambulations are then performed, during



Small Buddha statue for the anointing ceremony

which offerings are offered to neighbouring shrines. This is a time for Buddhists to renew their eight precepts, with a strong emphasis on the first one, which forbids any kind of killing. As an extension of this, it is customary to perform animal-releasing ceremonies, where birds, fish, insects and all kinds of animals are set free in their respective habitats.

Not only this, but new resolutions are made to double efforts to lead a noble, moral and generous life, while prayers are dedicated to the happiness of all beings and alms are distributed to the needy.

And so, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche began this auspicious day with a Robe Adornment ceremony, following which he led the congregation in taking the Eight Precepts.



A new robe for the temple's main statue



As a follow-up to taking the first precept, the group made its way to the nearby Tampines River, bringing with them containers replete with thousands of fish, and set them free in the waters.



Releasing life ((photo by Ven. Ngawang Dakpa)

Upon returning to the centre, Rinpoche blessed shrines that had been set up for the occasion. He was



Blessing the centre shrines



Sixteen-Arhat Puja

accompanied by H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche, who had joined him to celebrate this holy day and who was also to attend the Buddha Shakyamuni initiation that Rinpoche was to bestow, as well as the Sixteen-Arhat puja that followed. A homage to Buddha Shakyamuni and His Sixteen preeminent disciples, this puja is an exhortation for them to bless the temple with their presence and to accept the pure offerings laid out for them.



The Sixteen-Arhat Mandala

"The ground is as smooth as the palm of a hand and is adorned with trees and lakes which are decorated with precious ornaments. In the middle of this pure land there stand four walls and four doors made of jewels; within is a throne adorned with a lotus, sun and moon, upon which is the Protector of beings, He who by compassion establishes His disciples on the path of liberation during this degenerate age.

We supplicate you, oh Highest Muni and great holy elders, to come to this place with your retinues. All you Conquerors of the ten directions, with your Spiritual Sons, whose blazing fire of wisdom dries up the ocean of addictions, and the Community of Listeners in the ten directions whom the Buddha praised as a field of merit for liberation, I beseech you to be seated.

I invite you to this place of worship and make offerings. By these offerings, I pray that you come for the sake of all beings. Protectors of the Teachings, great Saints, you upon whom the Shakya Lion, the Protector of Living Beings has bestowed His Teachings, the openers of the treasure chest of precious scriptures, I beseech you to be seated. I invite you in order to spread the Holy Teachings. By my offerings, I pray that you come for the sake of living beings."

(Excerpt from the "Sixteen-Arhat Puja"; Courtesy of Tsechen Kunchab Ling, Walden, NY)



Tara Puja

This had been a long and fruitful morning, filled with sacred activities, and it would be followed by an equally meritorious afternoon. After granting refuge to new students, Gyana Vajra Rinpoche led the monks in the performance of the Tara Puja and then in the recital of prayers for all sentient beings.

The day closed with Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, accompanied by H.E. Thartse Rinpoche, leading the congregation in a perambulation to neighbouring shrines, where various assortments of offerings were made.

With this, Vesak Day closed. It is believed that all actions performed on this holy day are multiplied by a million, and so everyone who was blessed enough to spend it under Rinpoche's guidance had the opportunity to gather uncountable merit and to dedicate it to



Perambulation to neighbouring shrines

the happiness of all beings.

Over the remainder of the week, Gyana Vajra Rinpoche bestowed a two-day Vajrakilaya Wangchen and a Green Tara Jenang on the fortunate Sakya Tenphel Ling centre members and, on the last day of his stay in Singapore, Rinpoche closed his programme by leading the monks in the first day of the Vajrakilaya Torma Throwing Ritual, after which, on the 20th of May he left for India, leaving his group of monks to perform the seven-day Vajrakilaya Drupchod at the centre.

In a thanksgiving ceremony, the Singapore sangha expressed their enormous appreciation to Rinpoche for the blessings brought by his visit, and enjoined him to return as soon as circumstances allowed.

Singapore photos: Norzang



Rinpoche with his group of monks and the Sakya Tenphel Ling sangha



Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in Malaysia



major lineage holder of the Khön family.

The *Drupchod* is known to be extraordinarily powerful in eliminating obstacles to individual and communal happiness and spiritual accomplishment. Earnest participation in this ritual is said to bring results similar to those of a one-year retreat. An intensive group practice, it involves several complex

procedures, among which the making of a mandala, the performance of ritual music and incantations, and torma offering rituals. All these elements contribute to creating the pure realm of the deity and its perception in the minds of the participants.

The programme began on the 10th of June, with the two-day preparation of the sand mandala.

On the 9th of June 2014, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Kuching, Malaysia, where he was to lead a nine-day Grand Vajrakilaya Ritual on the invitation of the Sakya ChospheL Ling centre.

Rinpoche had last visited Kuching in 2012, when he had accompanied His Holiness the Sakya Trizin on a teaching tour of East Asia. And now he was back to lead the celebration of the Vajrakilaya Drupchod, one of the most important rituals in the Sakya tradition. It was, for the students of the Kuching centre, an extraordinary blessing that this age-old ritual, so much an integral part of the Khön family practice, should be conducted in their premises, by a



Creating the mandala

The making of a sand mandala is a complex and extensive procedure that calls for the collaboration of several monks equipped with considerable expertise. It begins with the drawing of a geometric pattern comprising symbolic shapes, whose execution requires absolute precision and adherence to given specifications. Sand granules of various colours are then applied to the pattern from the centre outwards. This is done with infinite

accuracy through the use of small tubes and scrapers called *chak-pur*, with each shape covered in a specific colour. Once this is achieved, seventy-five *kilayas*, ritual daggers, are placed on it, again according to exact specifications.

All this is done under the careful guidance of the Vajra Master, and with his participation in the key stages of the execution.

Once the mandala is created, it becomes the focus of the main



The Grand Vajrakilaya Ritual



ritual. From it, the deity Vajrakilaya emanates as the manifestation of all the Buddha's activities as the destroyer of all obstacles. The ritual at Sakya Chosphe Ling went on for three days, during which offerings were made to Vajrakilaya and his retinue as well as to the other major deities of the Vajrayana pantheon, requesting their protection of the Buddha Dharma, their

support of our Gurus' activities and the fulfillment of all our wishes.

With the puja over, the time comes for the dissolution of the mandala. This is a process that symbolises the impermanence of all phenomena and demands the same precision and adherence to set specifications as does its making. This procedure is initiated by the Vajra Master, who ceremonially removes the kilayas in a very specific order and then rakes the sand with his vajra, in an equally specific manner. Once this is done, the monks - and in this case with the assistance of sangha members - proceed to sweep all the sand from



Dissolving the mandala

the mandala surface, down to the last grain. This is collected in a container wrapped in silk, which is then thrown into moving waters.



Tsok

The Vajrakilaya Puja culminated in a two-day Torma-Throwing ritual called Gu-tor. Just as the mandala is created for the deity to manifest itself, tormas are crafted during the preparation of the ritual, designed to entice and capture all negativities and obstacles that might present themselves, such as negative emotions, hindering the way to spiritual attainment and





Torma-Throwing ritual

happiness. These tormas, along with all the negativities that they contain, are then destroyed by fire during this Torma-Throwing ritual.

The holy activities of the *Drupchod* at Sakya Chosphe Ling



Vajrakilaya Peaceful Fire Puja

continued, this time with the Vajrakilaya Peaceful Fire Puja, whose purpose is the propitiation of the deity, through music, prayer and the offering of blessed substances to the flames, with an aspiration to be purified of all negativities and to



be free of every kind of obstacles.

This magical week for the members of Sakya Chosphe Ling ended with a Vajrakilaya Torma Blessing initiation during which, through the intercession of the Vajra Master, the ritual Torma becomes imbued with the deity's presence and is placed on each participant's head for its blessing. The ceremony closed with the offering of the mandala to Rinpoche for



Vajrakilaya Torma Blessing Initiation



Offering of the mandala

the invaluable gift of Dharma that he had granted the grateful Sakya ChospheL Ling sangha.

And so, on the 22nd, after granting Kuching disciples the Kurukulle initiation, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche left for Sibu, where he was to spend the following three days imparting initiations at the Pusat Sakya Samdrub Ling centre.



Rinpoche with a happy Kuching sangha



Initiation at Pusat Sakya Samdrub Ling



A joyful Tsok

On this happy note, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche's stay in Malaysia came to an end. On the

26th of June, Rinpoche returned to India, where more Dharma activities awaited him.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Mongolia

On the 12th of June 2014, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Ulaan Baatar, Mongolia, just on time to sit for an interview conducted by the National Television Network.

Accompanied by his wife, H.E. Dagmo Kalden Dunkyi Sakya and their three children, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche was visiting Mongolia on the invitation of the Sakya Pandita Dharma Chakra Monastery, which he had inaugurated in the summer of 2012. Thanks to the unremitting hard work of its founding members it has, since then, come leaps and bounds, in spite of the arduous financial difficulties that it has faced in its short history.



The Sakya Pandita Dharma Chakra Monastery is at the forefront of the effort to revive the unique rapport that thrived throughout the centuries between Mongolia and Vajrayana Bud-



dhism, and in particular the Sakya School. Temporarily interrupted by Communist rule during the past century, this close relationship is currently experiencing a renaissance, in which Ratna Vajra Rinpoche is playing an active part.

Rinpoche's main activity while at the Sakya Pandita Monastery was the bestowal on the 14th and 15th June of the Hevajra empowerment, gratefully received by some seventy monks and three hundred



lay devotees. The previous day had seen the auspicious consecration of three new statues, which now grace the monastery temple.

Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche closed his Mongolian trip with visits to small monasteries scattered around the surrounding countryside, for whose highly devoted congregations such an occasion is truly viewed as manna from heaven.





Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Ladakh



On the 3rd of July, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left Delhi for Ley, Ladakh, in order to represent His Holiness the 41st Sakya Trizin at the 33rd Ka-



lachakra initiation to be held by His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama from that day until the 14th of July 2014.

Jointly organised and sponsored by a group of Tibetan organisations, this was a huge undertak-

ing, which would be attended by over 150,000 devotees from all over the world and would require sufficient food, accommodation and basic amenities for each one of them.

The term 'Kalachakra' refers to the three cycles of time - the external and internal cycles, which deal with concrete existence and the alternative cycle, which deals with particular practices designed to liberate from the first two. These practices have as their essence the complex Kalachakra initiation as was being conferred on this occasion by His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

During his visit to Ladakh, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche found the time to give teachings in neighbouring monasteries, in-





Ratna Vajra Rinpoche teaching at Matho Gomba



Rinpoche at Zangdog Palri



With the young nuns at Sakya Nunnery

cluding the Sakya Matho Gomba, Sakya Nunnery and Zangdog Palri in Choglamsar.

Ratna Vajra Rinpoche also travelled to nearby Stock village, where he was hosted by their Majesties the King and Queen of Ladakh.



Rinpoche with the King and Queen of Ladakh

And on the 13th of July, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche joined a small group of high Lamas, along with state oracle Nenchung Rinpoche as well as Sikyong Lobsang Sangay, in offering a tenshug to His Holiness the XIVth Dalai Lama.



Tenshug for His Holiness the Dalai Lama

The next day, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche was to leave Ladakh for New Delhi, from where he would travel to Taiwan in order to confer the Thirteen Golden Dharma's initiations and teachings.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Taiwan



Lamdre teachings that His Holiness had bestowed in this city in 2012 and to the re-teachings that Ratna Vajra Rinpoche had himself

conferred there in 2013.

Over two hundred people attended the Sadhana Explanation, which was held in the recently



The Manjushri centre was beautified for its special visitor



On the 17th of July 2014, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Taipei, Taiwan, where he would be giving six weeks of teachings, including the Hevajra Sadhana Explanation and the Thirteen Golden Dharmas.

The Hevajra Sadhana Explanation served as a follow-up to the



Ratna Vajra Rinpoche pays his respects at the Manjushri Centre altar



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrives at the Taoyuan International Airport



Rinpoche teaching at the Vajrayana Manjushri centre

purchased and beautiful Manjushri Sakya Vajrayana Centre. Many of the students hailed from other Asian shores, their majority from Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Some days into the teachings, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche conducted a consecration ceremony, during which he cut the inaugural ribbon, and lit its first butter lamp to ensure that all the centre's future activities would be crowned by success.

Rinpoche's visit to Taiwan coincided with the horrific gas explosion that took place in Kaohsiung and destroyed so many lives. In spite of a full programme, Rinpoche accepted to travel to Kaohsiung and lead the purification prayer vigil that was being held there by monastic representatives of the four traditions of Tibetan Buddhism.



A thousand worthy offerings for Ushnisha Vijaya

While in Kaohsiung, Rinpoche also performed the Ushnisha Vijaya Thousand Offering Ritual. A beautiful sight to behold, the offerings were certainly plentiful, as their preparation was overseen

by Rinpoche down to the slightest detail, while a group of volunteers dedicated a full day of their time preparing a banquet of beauty that would delight the deities.

Rinpoche also made another



Excursion at the Fo Guang Shan Buddha Memorial Centre in Kaohsiung

excursion outside of Taipei, this time in Taohiuan, where he performed the Chenrezig Purification Puja in a prison for all those who had passed away in these unfortunate premises.

Within Taiwan, Rinpoche gave teachings at other Sakya centres, including H.E. Thartse Rinpoche's centre as well as that of H.E. Tharig Rinpoche where, on the auspicious day of the Lord Bud-



Rinpoche at Thartse's Rinpoche's centre

dha's conception, Rinpoche gave the Shakyamuni Jenang, special in that its recipients are blessed by the Buddha to practise the ten Dharma activities, including reading the Buddha's scriptures.

For the first time, Rinpoche gave a public talk at the National Taiwan University. This was attended by many professors, several among whom are leading scholars in their country and enthusiasti-



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche giving a talk at the Taiwan University



Initiation at Tharig Rinpoche's centre



Lighting the candles for His Holiness' Birthday

cally participated in the question and answer session that followed the talk.

On the occasion of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's Birthday, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche performed the White Tara puja for His long life. A lavish seven-tiered cake was offered for the occasion at the summit of which Rinpoche, with great delight, lit the twin candles.



Bidding farewell...

On the 25th of August, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left Taiwan for India, in order to attend the Chime Phagpa Nyintig ritual that was to be conducted in Bir by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

Taiwan photos: Ven. Dawa Dolma; Ngawang Jungney



Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in Frankfurt

On the 2nd of August, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche travelled to Frankfurt, where he was to give a weekend of ini-

tiations and teachings at Sakya Kalden Ling, and where he was to greet His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo and

entourage on their arrival from the South of France. Rinpoche's visit is described by a centre member:

"On the afternoon of Saturday 2nd August, H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrived in Frankfurt from Lerab Ling, Sogyal Rinpoche's centre in the South of France. His Eminence was visiting Frankfurt on the invitation of the Sakya Kalden Ling centre.

After enjoying a late lunch in his company, we made the temple ready for the evening when Rinpoche, acceding to our request, was to bestow the initiation and teaching of Manjushri Aparacana, the Splendid Melodious Voiced One, the Bodhisattva that represents the wisdom of all the Buddhas of the ten directions and the three times. This was an amazing opportunity for all the participants, who had come from everywhere in Germany, France and Switzerland to receive Rinpoche's teachings.



On Sunday morning, several more students joined the group, fortunately for them, as Rinpoche gave a very special empowerment, that of Red Saraswati. We had expected him to give the White Saraswati initiation, and so we were surprised and elated when Rinpoche told us of his new choice of initiation, saying "At the end, all the different Buddhas are one." Saraswati is consort to Manjushri, the queen of all primordial wisdom, the embodiment of intelligence, and so any initiation of this deity is exalting, but the Red Saraswati empowerment is a very special esoteric empowerment, a terma, so very precious.

Following the Initiation, many Tibetans arrived at our centre from Belgium and Germany to welcome His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and His entourage, who were arriving from the South of France. His Holiness was greeted at the airport by H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, our treasurer Lama Gedün, and our Vice-President Jampa Kungashar.

Upon His Holiness' arrival at the centre, we took great joy in welcoming Him

with sweet rice and tea, followed by a Mandala-Offering in our Gompa. That afternoon, H.E. Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and the entourage monks celebrated the Mahakala puja, inviting all our guests to participate.

At noon the next day, His Holiness, Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and the entourage left Frankfurt, leaving us very happy, blessed and thankful."



His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in the Himachal Pradesh



tayus, White Tara and Ushnisha Vijaya, wishing His Holiness a long life, utterly free of obstacles.

After paying His respects to H.H. the Dalai Lama, His Holiness continued His journey towards Bir, where He was given an elaborate welcome at the Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute by its founder and life force H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche. Also there to greet His Holiness was Phuntsok Phodrang Dungsey H.E. Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche, who

On the 17th of August, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin left Dehradun for Bir, in Himachal Pradesh where, on the invitation of H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and Tulku Orgyen Topgyal Rinpoche, He would be spending the following ten days performing extraordinary Dharma activities.

The next morning, His Holiness stopped in Dharamsala, to pay a visit to His Holiness the Dalai Lama. The two holy masters spent precious moments together in conversation. As they parted, H.H. the Dalai Lama graciously presented H.H. the Sakya Trizin with a statue of the combined three deities Ami-



Arriving at the Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute



H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche welcoming His Holiness at the Institute



His Holiness greeting H.E. Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche



His Holiness is welcomed at Tsering Dzong

is currently pursuing the course of studies in Buddhist Philosophy at the Institute. His Holiness graciously conferred the *Dragpo Sum Dril* initiation on the hundreds of Institute students present.

His Holiness and His entourage were then taken to Tsering Dzong, the magnificent residence of Tulku Orgyen Topgyal Rinpoche, where they would be hosted for the remainder of their stay in Bir. It was in the temple adjoining the residence that the celebration of the Chime Phagme Nyingtig would be held over the course of the following week, in dedication to His Holiness' long life.

Tsering Dzong provided an idyllic setting for the celebration

of this memorable event. Chigme Phagme Nyingtik, or Heart Essence of the Sublime Lady of Immortality, is a long-life practice that was discovered as a mind terma by the

great Rime master Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo in the 19th century. It is centred on a highly intricate mandala of White Tara in the aspect of White Tara Wish-fulfilling



The magnificent Tsering Dzong



H.E. Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö statue at Tsering Dzong



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrive at Tsering Dzong



His Holiness the Sakya Trizin



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche



H.E. Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Khangsar Shabdrung Rinpoche



Jewel, in union with Amitayus. This practice is extraordinarily powerful in removing obstacles to a long life and was the main practice of several outstanding masters. It is also a very special practice for His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, who received it several times from great masters as a child. His Holiness

has bestowed its empowerment a number of times, including twice in France last summer.

The arrival on the 26th of Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Khöndung Gyana Vajra

Rinpoche, which was greeted with a stately show of pageantry, added to the numbers of the distinguished masters that were there to celebrate together this unique ritual.



H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche



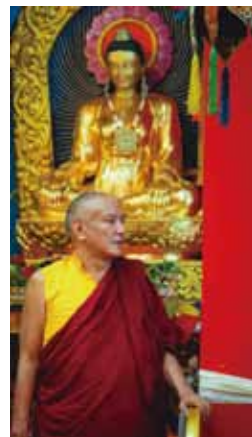
H.E. Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche



Their Eminences Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche and Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche



Pewar Rinpoche



Tulku Orgyen Topgyal Rinpoche



The grand Chime Phagme Nyingtig Mandala



The consecration ceremony

The proceedings began on the 19th, with a groundbreaking ceremony meant to clear any obstacles to the consecration of the strikingly intricate mandala that was to be the heart of the proceedings. On the next day, Tulku Orgyen Topgyal Rinpoche made an elaborate Ganachakra feast offering and performed the recitation of the Chime Phagme Nyingtig *Kangwa*, an

exhortation designed to submit the will of the deities to the Vajra Master's bidding.

With the necessary preparations in place, the ritual began in earnest. With H.E. Dzongsar Kyentse Rinpoche as Vajra Master, it was imbued throughout with deep and intense religious fervour, expressed in



Ganachakra Feast offering





Dakinis made offerings to His Holiness



Even the plastic-free tsok participated in this splurge of colour



an intricate web of dazzling beauty, colour and movement.

Parallel to the celebration of the *Driipchen* was the melodious recitation of the Chime Phagme Nyingtig mantra that was sustained day and night, without pause, by an assembly of young monks, whose numbers were swelled by a group of dedicated foreign devotees, as a five-coloured string tethered the heart of the mantra chant leader to the mandala.

The last day of the ritual was dedicated to a long-life ceremony, during which a life-size statue





His Holiness wearing Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's *dunka*



Guru Rinpoche Lotus crowns

of His Holiness was taken to the river as a decoy for the Dakinis to snatch, leaving His Holiness behind to lead a long and healthy life for the benefit of all beings.

At the conclusion of this ceremony, much to His Holiness' delight, Tulku Orgyen Rinpoche brought out a veritable treasure trove: Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's *dunka* (sleeveless shirt worn

by monks), which he presented to His Holiness to wear, while H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche was offered one that belonged to his previous incarnation, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lödro. As if this were not enough, Guru Rinpoche lotus crowns were brought for His Holiness, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche to don. And last, but certainly not least, Tulku Orgyen Rinpoche produced an exceptionally holy White Tara thangka, from which this deity had actually spoken to Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo and also to other masters, and had conferred teachings upon

them.

Following the ritual, His Holiness and the Dungseys stepped outside the temple to share the fount



H.E. Khangsar Shabdrung Rinpoche with the wondrous White Tara thangka

of blessings that had been accumulated with the devotees who had eagerly gathered on the grounds to be part of this memorable happening. Thousand of devotees sat out-



Sharing the blessings

side, waiting for this moment. No one went without their blessing.

The last day of His Holiness' stay in Bir was marked by a visit to the Khyentse Labrang, also known as Grantha Griha, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche's main residence. After showing his special guests around the manour, Rinpoche led them to the heart of the house: the stupa containing the kûdung of H.E. Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö.

Also included in His Holiness' Bir programme were a public talk at the Sujah Tibetan Children's Vil-



His Holiness pays His respects to Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö's *kudung*



lage, the bestowal of the Mahakala initiation at the Sakya Dirru Monastery and the celebration of the Manjushri initiation at the Dzong-



A great blessing for the Sujah TCV students

sar Institute, along with the distribution of certificates to this year's Philosophy graduates.

And on the 20th of August, much to everyone's regret, the time came for His Holiness and His party to leave Bir. These had been an extraordinary ten days, filled to the brim with holy activities, that had brought incalculable blessings





His Holiness at the Sakya Dirru Monastery



His Holiness at the Sakya Dirru Monastery



H.E. Avikrita Rinpoche at the Manjushri initiation



H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche



Dzongsar Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö Institute in Chauntra, Bir



H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo offers a khatag to H.E. Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche



Bidding farewell



This year's graduates at the Institute

to all those who had participated, and that doubtless had also benefitted the universe as a whole.

Farewells were bidden, and ardent promises were made to meet again as soon as the opportunity arose.

Photos: Ven. Jamyang Zangpo



The Annual Vajrakilaya Puja at the Sakya Center



This year's Vajrakilaya ritual was held from the 2nd to the 15th of September. It was special in that it featured a rare Vajrakilaya empowerment, as well as a precious oral transmission on Vajrakilaya by Ameshab Ngawang Kunga Sonam, the 27th Sakya Trizin, which involved His Holiness reading a record 400 two-sided page pecha to the congregation. It was also special, as it included a

new Khön family member, Khöndung Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche.

The puja was presided over by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and was Vajra Mastered by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche. In attendance were Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, along with his wife, Dagmo Sonam Palkyi Sakya and their children H.E. Dungsey Siddharth Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Jetsunma Tsejin Lhamo Sakya.



Also there, were Phuntsok Phodrang Dungseys Their Eminences Avikrita Vajra Rinpoche, Asanga Vajra Rinpoche and Abhaya Vajra

Rinpoche. H.E. Jigme Kyentse, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche and Rangdrol Rinpoche were also present, along with a group of their students.

During the course of the puja, on the 7th of September, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's 69th western Birthday was celebrated at the Sakya Centre. To everyone's delight, His Holiness was presented with a lofty seven-layer cake, which was shared all around.



Happy Birthday, Your Holiness!

Thirteen students were taking the gruelling Vajrakilaya exam this year, and the results were extraordinarily high. H.E. Lo Shabdrung was among the candidates, and scored top marks. It was the first time that Kalimpong monk stu-



H.E. Lo Shabdrung taking his exam



Successful candidates

dents were participating, and out of this monastery's six candidates, two got maximum results, as did one monk from Sakya Centre.

On the 16th of September, His Holiness conferred a very special Vajrakilaya empowerment. Referred to as a 'lower mandala' initiation, which entails that it is not concerned with the central deity, but rather with the deities of its retinue, it is rarely given due to the complex procedures that it involves. During its course, several sacred images were consecrated by His Holiness and then are placed

on each of the participants' foreheads as a blessing. On this particular instance, these individual blessings were performed by the Khön Rinpoches and other high lamas, making them even more precious.

Then came the time for the dissolution of the mandala during which, as every year, the Vajra Master removes the ceremonial daggers from the mandala, and



A blessing with consecrated objects



The Vajra Master blesses himself with the deity's nectar



Tasting the nectar

proceeds to bless himself and then his family members with each one, after which these are carried away by monks to bless everyone in the temple and to then place them on the altar on the parvis, for everyone gathered in the courtyard to file by and also get their blessing - along with their bountiful tsok.

His Holiness 70th Birthday in Kathmandu



Without a day's respite following His transmission of Ameshab's commentary on Vajrakilaya at the Sakya Centre, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin left India on the 21st of September for Kathmandu, where He was to hold a four-day programme that would include the celebration of His 70th Tibetan Birthday.

During his stay in Kathmandu, His Holiness was in residence at the International Buddhist Academy, accompanied by His wife, H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo and by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and his family. The day after His arrival, His Holiness made His way to H.E. Tharig Rinpoche's monastery in Pharping, whose new retreat centre

He was to inaugurate. Endowed with beautiful rooms, the retreat centre provides an ideal setting for whomever wishes to withdraw from mundane activities and enter into spiritual solitude. In close vicinity to Guru Rinpoche's cave, its mere location already provides it with incomparable blessings; many great masters have gone into retreat



His Holiness blessing H.E. Tharig Rinpoche's Pharping Retreat Centre

in Pharping, including Khenchen Appey Rinpoche when he concluded his tenure at the Sakya College in Dehradun.

Parallel to this, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche began the celebration of a four-day Long-life puja at Tharlam Monastery, in preparation for His Holiness' birthday.



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche leads a Long-life puja for His Holiness

On the 24th, a multitude carpeted the grounds of the Boudanath stupa as His Holiness bestowed a

Long-Life initiation to the public. With His Holiness conducting the ritual from inside the stupa, the logistics involved in each person receiving a personal blessing from His Holiness were elaborate, as the thousands of expectant devotees



Standing in line for a personal blessing



Long-life initiation at the Boudanath Stupa

columned around the stupa before finally filing by His Holiness' throne and receiving their kago.

On September 25th, the celebration of His Holiness' 70th Tibetan Birthday began mid-morning at Tharlam Monastery, leaving just enough time for Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and his accompanying monks to finish the preparatory puja and, sided by head of Tharlam Monastery H.E. Dezhung Rinpoche, to greet His Holiness as He arrived.



Awaiting His Holiness' arrival at Tharlam Monastery

There to celebrate this special day with His Holiness were Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche's wife, H.E. Dagmo Kalden Dunkyi Sakya, and their three children,





Their Eminences Dungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche, Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya, and Jetsunma Kunga Chimey Ngawang Sakya, as well as many

distinguished guests including members of the royal families of Bhutan and Sikkim, high Sakya Lamas and representatives of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile. The day was a joyous one, animated by cultural shows replete with colour and exuberance, and featuring accolades including speeches offered by dignitaries in honour of His Holiness, as well as the distribution of prizes by His Holiness to deserving community members.

When the time came to cut the delectable cake



Many Happy Returns to His Holiness



Tenshug for His Holiness at Tharlam Monastery

that had been brought before Him, His Holiness jocularly remarked that He rather preferred His western birthday, at it made Him a year younger than His Tibetan one!

The last day of His Holiness' stay in Kathmandu, was marked by a Tenshug ceremony at Tharlam Monastery, during which H.E. Dezhung Rinpoche offered His Holiness the universal mandala, while Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche presented Him with the auspicious offerings of body, speech and mind.

So came to an end the first of two visits by His Holiness to Kathmandu, the next one to follow His upcoming journey to Mustang, where He was to conduct the inaugural ceremony of H.E. Thartse Rinpoche's newly-built Tsechen Kunga Choekhor Ling in Jomson.

His Holiness' second visit to Kathmandu, which

would take place some ten days later, was dedicated to the consecration of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche's stupa at the I.B.A., a ceremony that was briefly graced



His Holiness with H.H. Drikung Kagyu Kyabgön Chetsang



His Holiness at the stupa with Khenpo Jorden

by the presence of H.H. Drikung Kagyu Kyabgön Chetsang.

His Holiness concluded the second and last part of His visit to Kathmandu with a visit to the Sakya Nunnery at Boudanath, accompanied by His grandchildren Their Eminences Dungsey Akasha



Vajra Rinpoche, Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya, and Jetsunma

Kunga Chimey Ngawang Sakya.

It was His Holiness' first visit to the Nunnery since its founding in November 2012 by H.E. Gyayum Chenmo. His Holiness gave words of advice to the young nuns and distributed certificates of excellence and prizes to the best students, leaving the young nuns elated and jubilant.

Later that evening, on the 9th of October, His Holiness ended His memorable Nepal journey and left Kathmandu.



Visit to Sakya Nunnery in Boudanath



His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in Mustang



View that greeted His Holiness from the helicopter that carried Him to Mustang

On the 28th of September, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin arrived by helicopter in Jomson, Mustang from Pokhara, where He had made a stopover on His way from Kathmandu.



His Holiness is greeted on arrival by H.E. Thartse Rinpoche

His Holiness had been invited by the Mustang Sakya Buddhist Association to inaugurate Tsechen Kunga Choekhor Ling, a Sakya monastery newly built in Jomsom by H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche, an island



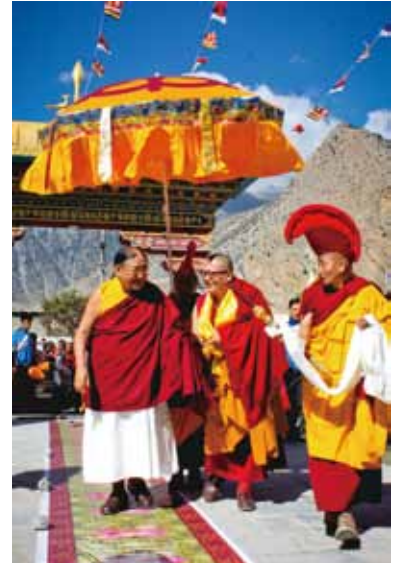
Tsechen Kunga Choekhor Ling

of colour and resplendence amid a dramatically bare and arid landscape.

Devout Mustangi townsfolk lined His Holiness' path as His car, escorted by drums and trumpets, approached its destination. Traditional offerings were made of grain, flowers and refreshments were made of which, as custom wills it, His Holiness accepted a pinch through His car window. H.E. Thartse Khen



A traditional Mustangi welcome



Rinpoche greeted His Holiness' arrival at the monastery with an offering of the mandala.

A visit by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin was an undreamed-of opportunity for the local population, staunchly Buddhist in their totality, for whom the creation of an important monastery would provide essential spiritual care and guidance. They had come in

throngs to greet this historic moment.

Although geographically part of Nepal, Mustang's history has been tied with that of Tibet for centuries. Untouched by the upheaval that shook Tibet during the last century, it is now the pure repository of an age-old tradition of Tibetan Buddhist culture and religion.



H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche welcomes His Holiness to Tsechen Kunga Choekhor Ling

On the 1st of October, the inaugural programme began in earnest, with the celebration of the Vajrapani Bhutadamara Fire Puja, led by



Blessing for all at the new monastery



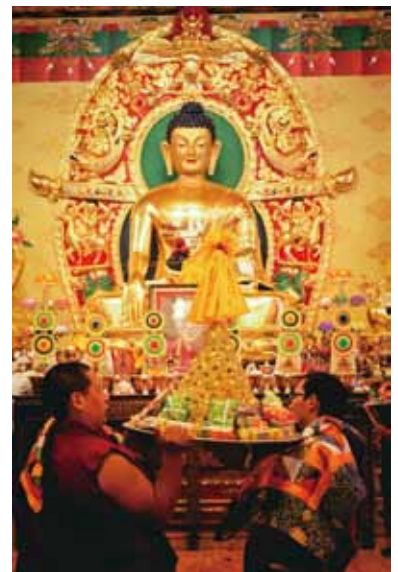


Bhutadamara Peaceful Fire Puja

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin. The next day marked the consecration of the temple and its statues.

The 3rd of October witnessed the official inauguration of the

Tsechen Kunga Choekhor Ling, which was attended by representatives from various monasteries as well as guests both local and foreign. Dignitaries such as Their



Consecration of the temple and its statues



Highnesses the King and Queen of Mustang, Constitutional Assembly Members of Mustang, Chief District Officer of Mustang District, Army Chief of Mustang District, Chief Police of Mustang District, Former Ministers and Former Constitutional Assembly Members of the Government of Nepal. The ceremony ended with cultural performances.

On October 4th, the last day of the event, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin bestowed a Long-Life initiation to some 6000 people consist-

ing of numerous local Mustangis as well as foreign disciples. Towards the end of the initiation, H.E. Thartse Rinpoche, H.E. Rinchen Paljor Rinpoche and all khenpos in Mustang presented a Thanksgiving Mandala Offering to His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

And so ended His Holiness



His Holiness bestows a Tsewang at Jomson

the Sakya Trizin's memorable visit to Mustang, as He boarded the helicopter that was to take Him to Pokhara, where He would stop for two days before continuing His journey back to Kathmandu.

The Pema Ts'al Monastic Institute was created in 1999 by Ven. Khenpo Pema Wangdak and Ven. Khenpo Kunga Dhondup in response to the deterioration of cultural values that was afflicting the Mustang region. Inaugurated in 2012 by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, it houses and educates near one hundred monks and caters to the spiritual needs of the local population, which includes five Tibetan refugee settlements.

During His short stay at Pema Ts'al, His Holiness conferred a Long-life initiation and granted some basic teachings to the monastics and lay congregation that had gathered for His precious visit. On the 7th of October, His Holiness travelled once again to Kathmandu, where He was to conclude His trip to Nepal.



Mustang photos: Ven. Jamyang Zangpo

HIS HOLINESS SAKYA TRIZIN 2015 IN MALAYSIA



Venue: WISMA HRIH LOTUS

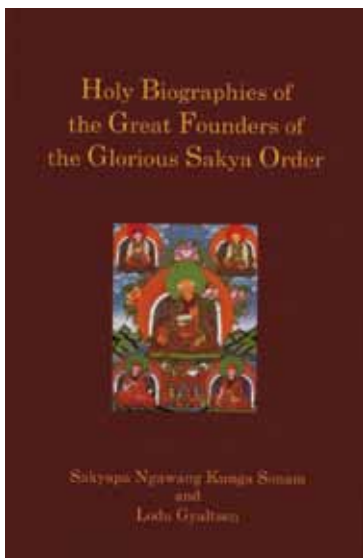
7th Floor , Lot 442, Jalan Pahang, Setapak 53000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: +603 - 4024 6699 Fax: +603-4024 6622

If you wish to attend ,kindly register with us

Email: haitaolf@gmail.com / Website: www.myhaitao.org

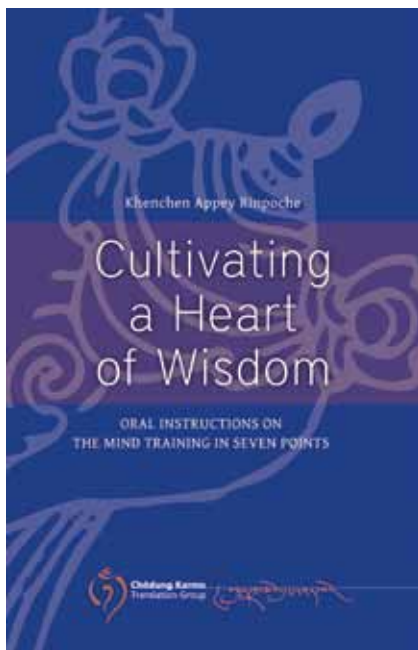
SUGGESTED READING



Holy Biographies of the Great Founders of the Glorious Sakya Order

The book contains English translations of full biographies of each of the great founders of the Sakya Order. The biographies were written in the seventeenth century by the great Tibetan scholars Sakyapa Ngawang Kunga Sonam and Lodu Gyaltsen and translated by Venerable Khenpo Kalsang Gyaltsen and Chodrungma Kunga Chodron.

Tsechen Kunchab Ling Publications, New York
sakya@sakyatemple.org



Cultivating a Heart of Wisdom

**ORAL INSTRUCTIONS ON THE MIND TRAINING IN SEVEN
POINTS**

by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche

**Translated by: Chödung Karmo Translation Group
Vajra Books 2014, Kathmandu**



Distinguishing the View

**MOON RAYS ILLUMINATING THE CRUCIAL POINTS OF THE
EXCELLENT VEHICLE**

By Gorampa Sönam Senge

**Translated by: Khenpo Jamyang Tenzin and Pauline
Westwood
Vajra Books, Kathmandu, 2014**

Year of the Wooden Sheep 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	HOLY DAYS
1-3	Parinirvana Day of Dagshul Thinley Rinchen (Grand-father of H.H. the 41 st Sakya Trizin)
1-21	Parinirvana Day of Kunkhyen Gorampa Sonam Senge & Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo
2-8	Parinirvana Day of Yabje Kunga Rinchen (Father of H.H. the 41 st Sakya Trizin)
2-12	Parinirvana Day of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen & Khangsar Shabrun Ngawang Lodroe Tenzin Nyingpo
2-23	Parinirvana Day of Khenchen Dorje Chang Jampa Jampal Sangpo
2-26	Parinirvana Day of Khuwo Rinpoche Kunga Gyaltsen
2-30	Parinirvana Day of Jamgon Loter Wangpo
3-15	Parinirvana Day of Phende Khenchen Ngawang Khedup Gyatso
3-18	Parinirvana Day of Dezhung Tulku Kunga Tenpei Nyima
3-25	Parinirvana Day of Gongkhar Dorje Denpa Dzongpa Kunga Namgyal
3-29	Parinirvana Day of Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Luding Khenchen Jamyang TUEpten Lundok Gyaltsen
4-12	Parinirvana Day of Khenchen Dhampa Dorje Chang Ngawang Lodoe Shenpen Nyingpo
4-23	Anniversary of Mahasiddha Virupa's attainment of the First Bhumi
4-25	Parinirvana Day of Ngorchen Dorje Chang Kunga Sangpo

TIBETAN	HOLY DAYS
5-2	Parinirvana Day of Sachen Kunga Lodro
5-6	Parinirvana Day of Khyentse Dorje Chang Jamyang Chokyi Lodro
6-20	Parinirvana Day of Ngawang TUEtop Wangchuk
6-29	Parinirvana Day of Dorje Chang Ngawang Lodro Rinchen
7-14	Parinirvana Day of Ngakchang Kunga Rinchen
7-15	Parinirvana Day of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso
7-19	Parinirvana Day of Ngakchang Kunga Tashi
9-14	Parinirvana Day of Bari Lotsawa, Khön Konchok Gyalpo & Sachen Kunga Nyingpo
9-21	Parinirvana Day of Ngorchen Konchok Lhundrup
10-8	Parinirvana Day of Munchen Konchok Gyaltsen Sempa Chenpo
11-10	Parinirvana Day of Jamgon Ameshab
11-11	Parinirvana Day of Lopon Sonam Tsemo
11-14	Parinirvana Day of Sakya Pandita Kunga Gyaltsen Pal Sangpo
11-22	Parinirvana Day of Drogön Chogyal Phagpa & Dezhung Anjam Rinpoche
11-23	Parinirvana Day of Khenchen Appey Rinpoche
12-4	Parinirvana Day of Chogyé Trichen Dorje Chang Ngawang Khyenrab Lekshey Gyaltsö

Melody of Dharma

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This Issue was Generously Sponsored by

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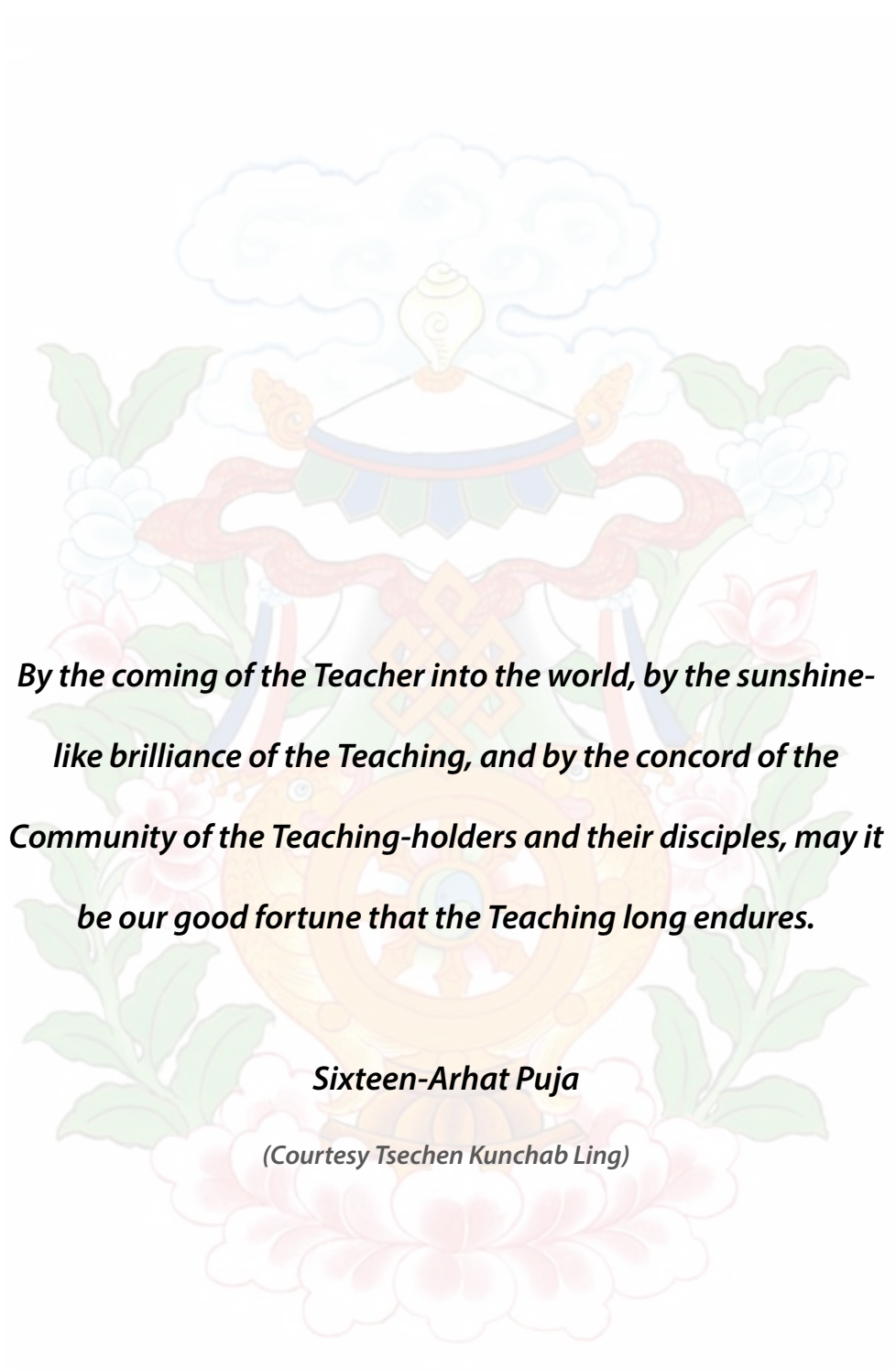
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***By the coming of the Teacher into the world, by the sunshine-
like brilliance of the Teaching, and by the concord of the
Community of the Teaching-holders and their disciples, may it
be our good fortune that the Teaching long endures.***

Sixteen-Arhat Puja

(Courtesy Tsechen Kunchab Ling)



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