

Melody of Dharma

☸ Buddhist Tantra: Some Introductory Remarks

A teaching by H.H. the Sakya Trizin

☸ Remembering Great Masters

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö

☸ Maitreya's Semtsema

A teaching by Khenchen Appey Rinpoche



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

HIS HOLINESS THE SAKYA TRIZIN

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Dear Dharma friends,

It makes me very happy to extend to each and every one of you my most auspicious wishes for this New Year of the Water Dragon.

I hope that the closing year has brought you many blessings. My family and myself have had a very good year, filled with felicitous events and fruitful Dharma activities. First of all, we have been graced with the birth of my third grandchild, Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo Sakya, who has not only brought immense joy to her parents, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Dagmo Kushok Sonam Palkyi, but also has joined her two cousins, Dungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche and Jetsunma Kunga Palter Sakya, in bringing light and joy to the Phodrang.

This was also a very good year for the Dharma, with my sons and myself having the privilege of imparting teachings in the Americas, Europe and India, and the added boon of bringing Sakya wisdom treasures to Latin America for the first time. This year was also made very special by my first visit in many years to the Sakya Phuntsok Phodrang in Seattle and to Vancouver, where I could spend some time with my sister Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding..

Centres were consecrated, including Tsechen Kunchab Ling in New York, which so graciously hosted the Lamdre teachings last summer; grounds were blessed for future centres to be built; and Sa-Ngor Gompa, the first Sakya Monastery to be founded outside of Tibet, celebrated its Golden Jubilee, besides hosting the precious Vajrayogini teachings, the second ones to be held this year.

In the light of the tragic events that beset the state of Sikkim last September, it was fortuitous that our schedule should bring us there in the aftermath of the earthquake that devastated it, and that we were able to show solidarity to its victims and pray alongside them for the alleviation of their suffering.

Another gift of Dharma that the year brought was the celebration of the Global Buddhist Congregation, held in New Delhi in November. The first of its kind, it had as Guest of Honour His Holiness the Dalai Lama, and was attended by the heads of most of the main schools of all the Buddhist traditions – Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana. I had the good fortune to participate in the conference, and was deeply inspired by its aim to consolidate all aspects of the Buddha Dharma, and to make it relevant in an increasingly complex world.

I pray that the spirit of the conference set deep roots and that the Buddha Dharma bring peace and solace to all beings everywhere. And I pray that each day of this New Year bring you and your loved ones fulfillment of all your aspirations and wishes.



Sakya Trizin

1st February 2012

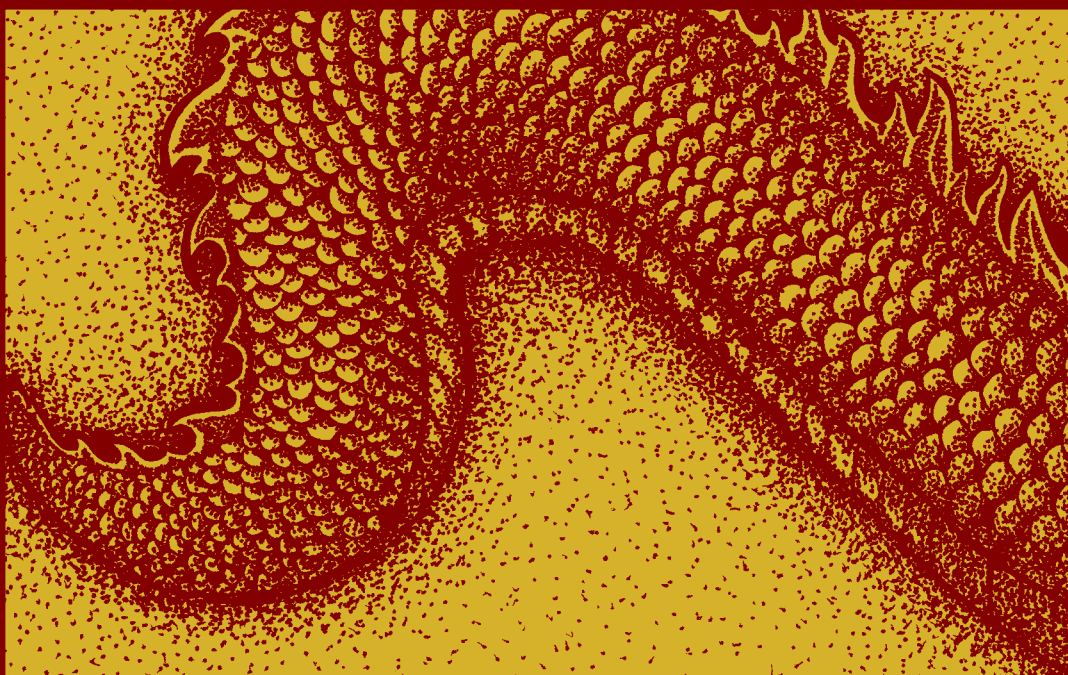


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May this New Year of the Water Dragon bring you great joy, ease in your
 spiritual practice and fulfillment of all your aspirations.
 May each of its moments bring you closer to Enlightenment.

Sakya Trizin

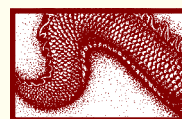
Happy New Year



*May the Year of the Water Dragon bring
happiness, prosperity and spiritual fulfillment to
you and all your loved ones.*

*In the Dharma,
Khonrig Ratna Vajra Sakya
& Family*

Artwork by Dagmo Kalden D. Sakya





HAPPY TIBETAN NEW YEAR

༄༅། བོད་རྒྱལ་ལོ་ ༢༧༥༧ རབ་གནས་ཆུ་འབྲུག་གནས་ལོའི་འཇུག་
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नव वर्ष की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ।

WATER DRAGON YEAR 2139

水龙年 2139

BEST WISHES,

KHONDUNG GYANA VAJRA
JETSUNMA TSEJIN LHAMO
DAGMO SONAM SAKYA

GCS

From The Editors

Dear readers,

It brings us great pleasure to extend to all of you our heartiest wishes for a joyful and prosperous year of the Water Dragon. We sincerely hope that it brings you deep satisfaction and success in all your enterprises.

As a new year appears, an old one vanishes, leaving behind it rich experiences, spiritual growth and fond memories. It has brought us farewells, with the passing into Parinirvana of Khandro Tsering Chödrön, and it has brought us new arrivals, with the blessed birth of Her Eminence Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo Sakya.

It has also brought numerous and invaluable gifts of Dharma to disciples in three continents, with His Holiness, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche touring the Americas, Europe and India. Importantly, the year has brought the invaluable gift of Sakya teachings to new corners of the world, with His Holiness and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche travelling for the first time to Latin America.

There is every likelihood that this year will, in its turn, bring many blessings, with the numerous Dharma activities of His Holiness and of the Dungsays that are scheduled to take place during its course. We form the aspiration that many among our readers may have the good fortune to attend these, and that we ourselves can satisfactorily chronicle the events to those who are unable to.

It has been an enormous privilege for us to share with our readers the teachings and Dharma activities of our Gurus over the past two years, and we are infinitely grateful to the members of the Sakya Dolma Phodrang, as well as to all our sponsors and contributors, for their unwavering support over this period. We are, however, finding that the quarterly gathering of the necessary funds to print and ship *Melody of Dharma* to readers across the world, is proving too onerous a task, and so we have resolved to condense our material into three issues annually. We deeply regret having to make this decision, and beg our readers' forgiveness. Please rest assured, nevertheless, that all current subscribers will be receiving the four issues which they have been promised, and that we will, to the best of our ability, continue to keep our readers close to our Gurus by providing them with their news and their teachings.

Happy Tibetan New Year!

The Editing Team

2012 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR H.H. THE SAKYA TRIZIN

DATE	PLACE	ACTIVITY
March 7-15	Pema Ts'al Monastic Institute Pokhara, Nepal	Consecration of new temple (see www.pematsal-sakya.org for details)
March 15-23	Kathmandu, Nepal	Activities in and around Kathmandu
April 5 – May 3	Sakya Centre, Rajpur, India	Wangya Norbu Trengwa initiations
May 27 – Jun 12	Singapore	Programme to be confirmed
June 12- July 30	Taipei, Taiwan	Lamdre
July 30- Aug 9	Manila, Philippines	Programme to be confirmed
Aug 9- 16	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Programme to be confirmed
Aug 16-24	Sibu, Kapit, Kuching, Malaysia	Programme to be confirmed
Aug 24	Return to India	

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE FOR KHÖNDUNG RATNA VAJRA RINPOCHE

DATE	DAY	VENUE	PROGRAM
03-Mar	Sat	Departure for Kathmandu, Nepal	Joining His Holiness on Pema Ts'al programme
20-Mar	Tues	Otkritiy Mir Centre, Moscow, Russia	19:00 - Lecture on 'Parting from the Four Attachments'
21-Mar	Wed	Otkritiy Mir Centre, Moscow, Russia	Lecture on Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen's 'Short Melody of the Eight Dream-Like Practices'
23-Mar	Fri	Gar Kunphenling Retreat Centre (near Moscow)	Lecture on 'The Nature of the Mind'
24-Mar	Sat	Gar Kunphenling Retreat Centre (near Moscow)	Vajrakilaya Initiation (Preliminary)
25-Mar	Sun	Gar Kunphenling Retreat Centre (near Moscow)	Vajrakilaya Initiation (Actual initiation)
26-Mar	Mon	Gar Kunphenling Retreat Centre (near Moscow)	AM: Commentary on the short Vajrakilaya sadhana PM: Departure for Delhi
13-Jun	Wed	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	Conference on Buddhism
14-Jun	Thurs	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	Parting from the Four Attachments
15-Jun	Fri	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	6PM: Chenrezig in the King's Tradition empowerment
16-Jun	Sat	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	Two initiations (White Manjushri, Saraswati)
17-Jun	Sun	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	One initiation (Kurukulli)
19-Jun	Tues	Sakya Drogon Ling, Denia, Spain	5PM: Dharma talk-How To Be Happy in Difficult Times 6PM: Medicine Buddha - Preparatory empowerment
20-Jun	Wed	Sakya Drogon Ling, Denia, Spain	3PM: Medicine Buddha - Main empowerment
21-Jun	Thurs	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	10AM and 6PM: Introduction to Vajrayana - General Explanation of Empowerment
22-Jun	Fri	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	10AM and 6PM: Guru-disciple Relationship
23-Jun	Sat	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	4PM: Kalachakra wang - first day, preparatory empowerment
24-Jun	Sun	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	3PM: Kalachakra wang - second day, main empowerment
26-Jun	Tues	Anandakara, Audenge+ Terres De Bodhisattvas, Mont De Marsan, France	Dharma talk on the Paramita of Patience according to the Bodhicaryavatara
27-Jun	Wed	Anandakara, Audenge+ Terres De Bodhisattvas, Mont De Marsan, France	Hayagriva, Vajrapani, Garuda empowerment with short explanation
29-Jun	Fri	Sakya Kunga Ling, Paris, France	Empowerment and teaching (exact program to be confirmed)
30-Jun	Sat	Sakya Kunga Ling, Paris, France	Empowerment and teaching (exact program to be confirmed)
1-Jul	Sun	Sakya Kunga Ling, Paris, France	Mahakala puja
7-Jul	Sat	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	6PM: Hevajra Cause Empowerment
8-Jul	Sun	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	3PM: Hevajra Cause Empowerment
9-Jul	Mon	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	7:00 to 9:30 PM - 50 Verses of Guru Devotion
10-Jul	Tues	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	7:00 to 9:30 PM - 50 Verses of Guru Devotion
11-Jul	Wed	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	7:00 to 9:30 PM - Teaching on Samaya. Prerequisite: any major Annutara yoga Tantra empowerment
12-Jul	Thurs	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10AM Vajrayogini - Naropa 5PM Vajrayogini - Indrabuti
13-Jul	Fri	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10AM Vajrayogini - Maitripa 3:30PM 3 initiations 1. Singhanada 2. Black Manjushri 3. Multi-coloured Garuda
14-Jul	Sat	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10AM Two initiations 1. Kurukulle 2. Takkiraja 3:30PM Three initiations 1. Ganapati 2. Kurukulle Phagmo Nyingki Sertak Chen 3. Red Vasudhara
15-Jul	Sun	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10 AM Two initiations 1. Tinuma 2. Red Jambhala



Sakya Monastery Kalimpong

The Sakya Monastery Kalimpong sits on a mountaintop in the Darjeeling District of West Bengal, in the Mahabharat Range of the lesser Himalayas.

Kalimpong was for a long time a gateway for trade between India and Tibet and, over the years, many merchants from Tibet put down roots in the region. In addition, when Tibetans lost their homeland in 1959, many sought asylum in Kalimpong, leading to a substantial Tibetan Buddhist community growing there, including a considerable number of Sakyapa followers.

With the nearest Sakya Monastery in Ghoom some thirty kilometres away, exiled Kalimpong Sakyapas found themselves divested of the cultural and spiritual guidance that they had been accustomed to in Tibet, and for which they yearned.

It is with this in mind that His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's resolved to create a monastic institution that would not only cater to their spiritual needs but would, at the same





The old warehouse alongside the new senior monks' quarters



The old temple hall



The kitchen

time, contribute to the preservation and enrichment of the cultural and spiritual legacy of the Eastern Himalayan region. In 2005, some two acres of land were purchased in the Topkhana area of Kalimpong, whereupon sat a large two-story warehouse. Once it was made habitable, the building was to multitask as temple, classroom, kitchen, dining room and dormitory for the 170 or so monks who were subsequently brought in from India, Bhutan and Nepal.

On 17th September, 2006, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche inaugurated the Sakya Monastery with an Interfaith gathering, which was attended by some five

hundred academics, religious leaders and scholars. Following the laying of the foundations, a religious ceremony was held to consecrate the site. Shortly afterwards, twenty-five novices, the first to take their monks' vows at the monastery, did so before His Eminence.

In October 2011, the monastery was blessed with a visit by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin and His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, during which they held an elaborate ceremony to bless the monastery grounds. His Holiness also bestowed a Mahavairocana puja and a Tsewang to more than a thousand followers who had flocked from



Mealtime



Cleaning duty



Lama Zopa showing His Holiness around the construction site



different parts of the region to receive these precious empowerments.

In recent years, thanks to contributions by generous donors, construction of a proper monastery has begun, under the direction of the Venerable Lama Tsopa. A structure housing senior monks and teachers has already been completed, with the second floor reserved for His Holiness and Family when they visit, and the upper floor serving as a shrine room until completion of the new temple. Construction of an additional four-story building is well on its way that will serve as classrooms and dormitories for the 300 monks that are eventually expected to live at the monastery, and several monks have moved to their new quarters. Furthermore, foundations have been laid for a temple, and its construction will begin as soon as the living quarters are ready.

Once everything is in place, Sakya Monastery intends to offer traditional monastic training according to the Sakya tradition, along with a graded education in secular subjects including maths and English. Also on the curriculum is Tibetan language as, in most cases, this is not the monks' native language and they need to master it in order to study the Buddhist scriptures.



Construction of new quarters for the monks is under way

Monks from the monastery accede to requests from the community to recite prayers and to perform pujas on their behalf. But this brings little income, and most of the monastery's expenses are currently



Site for the new temple

shouldered by His Eminence Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, who has personally supervised its progress, and for whom the completion of the monastery as a fully functioning monastic establishment is a priority. Appointed as director, Lama Lodoe Senge administers the general functioning of the institution.

The overwhelming majority of the monks are under twenty and so, under the capable guidance of the monastery abbot, Khenpo Dorje Khyentse, there is every hope that they will emerge as a new generation of monastics that will enliven and nurture the Dharma in a region that so thirsts for it.



Monastery director, Lama Lodoe Senge



Khenpo Dorje Khyentse and monks in the shrine hall



Some of the young monks

Remembering Great Masters

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö
c.1893-1959

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was one of the most outstanding Buddhist masters of the last century, a treasury of knowledge and realization, and a champion of all traditions and lineages of Tibetan Buddhism.

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö's previous incarnation, Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo (1820-1892), was a spiritual giant, who had transformed and revitalized the practice of Buddhism in Tibet. He had sought out and gathered all the rare lineages, transmissions and instructions that existed in Tibet, enriching them, wherever needed, with further instructions, and supplementing them with his own revelations. Working closely with the great masters Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Tayé and Chokgyur Dechen Lingpa, and others such as Jamyang Loter Wangpo, he inspired the Rimé 'non-partisan' movement that rejected the sectarianism rife at that time, and amounted to a spiritual renaissance all over eastern Tibet. The overarching principle behind the Rimé approach was to preserve and spread all traditions as widely as possible, while



acknowledging their essential unity, and the fact that they all embody a single ultimate understanding and arrive at the same essential point. Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo's seat was at the Sakya monastery of Dzongsar Tashi Lhatsé, near Derge in Kham, where he spent the last thirty years of his life.

This was the extraordinary legacy that Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö inherited and maintained, as he devoted his life to mastering and transmitting teachings from all the eight practice lineages of Tibetan Buddhism. Sogyal Rinpoche said: "You might never imagine that anyone could have taken the place of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. But then came Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, who did fill his shoes, and became an exceptional master, not simply because he was an incarnation, but also because of his own learning and realization." Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche first met Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö in Lhasa. He said: "In Kham, this tulku (incarnation) became as famous as the great Khyentse himself; he was not just a tulku of the first Khyentse, but a near replica... He was familiar with all the writings of every single master I mentioned to him, and he also knew all the termas (revelations) of the different 'treasure revealers'; people said he was the most learned master of his time. Don't forget this was no small achievement. There were many learned and accomplished masters during his day, but he was regarded as 'the crest of the victory banner'."

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was born in 1893 at Sangen in Kham, and was recognized by Jamgön Kongtrul as one of the five incarnations of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, his 'activity emanation'. He was enthroned at Kathok, the oldest of the six 'mother' monasteries of the Nyingma school, by Kathok Situ Chökyi Gyatso, an eminent Nyingma master and nephew of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. From an early age, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö

was able to remember his previous lives, for example, as King Trisong Detsen and the great masters of the Sakya lineage. Kathok Situ assigned him his very own tutor, Khenpo Thupten Rigdzin, who was known for his rigorous discipline and the toughness of his training. Yet in later life, Jamyang Khyentse would speak movingly of his gratitude to his tutor, whom he nursed through his final illness. As a young tulku, he astounded those around him by memorizing complex texts after a single reading, and he came to be regarded as an emanation of Manjushri, the Buddha of Wisdom.

When Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was about fifteen years old, his life took a dramatic turn. The young incarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo at Dzongsar Monastery suddenly died, and Kathok Situ told Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö that he would have to leave Kathok to take up his predecessor's seat at Dzongsar. Although he had been trained at a Nyingma monastery, he impressed the entire congregation at Dzongsar with his flawless performance of a Sakya ritual that involved very elaborate ceremonies and mudras (symbolic gestures), after reading the explanatory text just once.

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö studied with more than sixty masters, among whom he had a number of outstanding root teachers. Of them all, the one who introduced him to the nature of mind was the great Sakya master Loter Wangpo. His other important teachers included his own father Gyurmé Tsewang Gyatso, Kathok Situ Rinpoche, Shechen Gyaltsap Rinpoche, Dodrupchen Jikmé Tenpé Nyima, Tertön Sogyal Lerab Lingpa, Gatön Ngawang Lekpa, Khenpo Kunpal and Amdo Geshe Jampal Rolwé Lodrö.

Around the age of twenty-eight, Jamyang Khyentse set off on a pilgrimage to Dzongsar's mother monastery, Ngor, in Central Tibet. He was received by the thirteenth Dalai Lama in Lhasa, and visited the

great Nyingma monastery of Mindrolling and other sacred sites. On his return journey to Kham, while Jamyang Khyentse was debating with the monks at the important Gelukpa monastery of Kalden Jampaling in Chamdo, the abbot, Chamdo Phakpa, proclaimed: “At this moment in time, there is no greater lama in the whole of Tibet than Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö.”

By 1927, many of the eminent masters of eastern Tibet, such as Kathok Situ, Shechen Gyaltsap, Dodrupchen and Tertön Sogyal, had passed away. Jamyang Khyentse assumed spiritual leadership of the Nyingma monasteries of Kathok and Shechen. To assist him with his growing responsibilities, he asked his nephew, Tsewang Paljor, who would later become Sogyal Rinpoche’s step-father, to manage his labrang (monastic household).

Throughout the 1930s and 1940s, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö developed a very close bond with Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, the ‘mind emanation’ of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche recalls his first meeting with Jamyang Khyentse at Palpung monastery, “Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, lord of the ocean of teachings in Tibet, came to Palpung. That is when I first met him, and I felt a natural, genuine faith and affection, like a son meeting his father.” Every summer, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche would travel to Dzongsar to receive teachings and to be with Jamyang Khyentse. The affection they shared for one another was extraordinarily deep and warm, so much so that Jamyang Khyentse used to weep when they had to part. In his autobiography Dilgo Khyentse wrote: “Whenever I went to see Lama Rinpoche at Dzongsar, he took care of me with such great affection that I felt like I was coming home.” Jamyang Khyentse would urge anyone who came for an audience with him to get to the point quickly, so that the two masters could resume their discussions.

In 1949, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö’s life took another significant turn. He had been afflicted by illness for some time when his attendants discovered, hidden in his room, a prophecy by Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo that his incarnation would need to take a sangyum (spiritual consort) to prolong his life. So at the age of fifty-six Jamyang Khyentse agreed to take as his sangyum Khandro Tsering Chödrön, of the Lakar family, who for centuries had been great benefactors of the Dharma. In the following year, Sogyal Rinpoche, Khandro Tsering Chödrön’s nephew, went to live with Jamyang Khyentse, having been recognized by him as an incarnation of Tertön Sogyal.

Khandro Tsering Chödrön came to be widely regarded as one of the great hidden masters of Tibet. Her spiritual connection with Jamyang Khyentse is considered to be the reason he was able to live for a further decade, during which time he passed on many transmissions and teachings to the next generation of Tibetan masters. Everyone we interviewed spoke of her remarkable qualities—her simplicity, humility and playful humour, and her embodiment of the true meaning of devotion. For Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö’s disciples, she is identical with him and actually embodies his continuous living presence.

In Seattle, Dagmo Kusho-la, wife of the great Sakya master HH Sakya Dagchen, fondly recounted to us the time she spent in the company of Khandro Tsering Chödrön at Dzongsar in 1954. Disciples from all schools had gathered to receive the Lamdré transmissions of the Sakya tradition, when Jamyang Khyentse decided to suspend the teachings so that Sakya Dagchen could join the fourteenth Dalai Lama for a meeting with Mao Zedong and Chinese leaders in Beijing. Jamyang Khyentse adored picnics, and during this break in the teachings, Dagmo Kusho-la remembered camping with him and Khandro Tsering

Chödrön, along with Dezhung Rinpoche and Sogyal Rinpoche, in the beautiful Meshö valley with its snow-capped mountains, sacred caves and lakes, where they would all practice together and then relax with games, dancing and storytelling.

Many masters seized the opportunity to visit Dzongsar to request teachings and transmissions from Jamyang Khyentse during the early 1950s, including the fourth Doderupchen Rinpoche and Alak Zenkar Rinpoche. “Whenever Jamyang Khyentse was teaching,” remembered Ngari Tulku Rinpoche, “the monastery was always completely full of people. Not only the monastery, but all the fields surrounding Dzongsar were covered with tents. So much so that the visiting monks from all the different schools far outnumbered those who lived at Dzongsar.” The young Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche later recalled some prophetic words that Jamyang Khyentse said to him at that time: “A new era has begun in which the pure doctrine of the Lord Buddha lies in the hands of individuals. The situation is very serious, many of us are old, and perhaps it is young people like you, the new generation, who shall bear the burden.”

In 1955, as conditions deteriorated in eastern Tibet, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö made plans to slip away on a pilgrimage to Central Tibet. Traveling in the guise of an ordinary lama, he crossed the Derge Jamda River, where Chinese troops were quartered. Although he blessed the many people gathered on the other side, he carefully avoided any activity that would betray his identity. Dagmo Kusho-la recalled: “The Chinese officials let him through, never dreaming that the most famous Sakya lama in Kham was slipping past.” Jamyang Khyentse had become one of the most respected and influential leaders in eastern Tibet during these turbulent years, and his reputation preceded him as he traveled towards Tibet’s capital. The great Sakya master Chogyé Trichen Rinpoche,

abbot of Nalendra Monastery, recalled: “When he arrived in Central Tibet, all the great masters living at that time flocked to receive teachings from him.”

Traveling with a party that included the Lakar family and Sogyal Rinpoche, Jamyang Khyentse arrived in Lhasa in 1955 and stayed in the Samdrup family home, opposite the famous Jokhang Temple. Almost immediately, he had an audience with the fourteenth Dalai Lama at the Potala palace, the first of several meetings. Later, Jamyang Khyentse gave empowerments and teachings to many lamas, including HH Sakya Trizin, the sixth Dzogchen Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche, Tulku Urgyen Rinpoche and Trulshik Rinpoche.

Jamyang Khyentse and his party spent Losar, the Tibetan New Year, at Tsurphu with the sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa, Rangjung Rigpé Dorje, head of the Karma Kagyü school. He then returned to Lhasa to give further transmissions before continuing his pilgrimage, visiting many of the sacred sites of southern Tibet, including Samyé, Tibet’s first monastery, established by King Trisong Detsen in the eighth century. There, on Mount Hépori, where Guru Rinpoche had subjugated the negative forces impeding the construction of Samyé, Jamyang Khyentse performed a special practice to overcome negativity. Trogawa Rinpoche and Sogyal Rinpoche recalled that the sky was perfectly clear, but when Jamyang Khyentse began to wield the vajra, a violent wind got up and clouds completely covered the sun. There was a sudden thunderclap, and then a storm broke, with a lot of dust and sand. As soon as the practice was over, the wind dropped and the clouds dispersed. And as the dust settled, those present caught sight of Jamyang Khyentse, and were struck by how radiant and magnificent he appeared.

Jamyang Khyentse spent his final month in Tibet at the great monastery of Sakya before reluctantly

turning south. Following the Karmapa's advice that he should not seek safety in southern Tibet, he traveled into exile as a guest of the King of Sikkim, Chögyal Tashi Namgyal. He continued his pilgrimage, first traveling to Nepal and then to India, where he joined in the Buddha Jayanti, the 2,500th anniversary of Buddha's birth. In Benares early in 1957, he briefly met the Dalai Lama, who was returning to Tibet for his final attempt to negotiate with the Chinese government.

Back in Sikkim, Jamyang Khyentse stayed at the royal palace temple and continued to give teachings and empowerments to his disciples in Gangtok, Kalimpong and Darjeeling. They included an increasing number of lamas who were arriving from Tibet, as well as a small number of Indian and European students.

In June 1959, just three months after the Lhasa uprising, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö passed away. After his death was announced to his closest disciples, Dodrupchen Rinpoche entered the room where Jamyang Khyentse's body sat in meditation posture, touched his head to his master's feet and wept. Later, he wrote a poem expressing the desolation of Jamyang Khyentse's disciples as they gathered together in Gangtok:

*The whole world is changing
before us like a magic show.
Appearances are unreliable like bubbles.
The monasteries, the loved ones in the
Dharma, and our kin—
All have become mere memories.*

Those who were in Gangtok remembered that his passing was marked by extraordinary signs—an earthquake and an incandescent light that lit up the sky after dark. Some of the lamas said that Jamyang

Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was attaining buddhahood, and so all the other thousand Buddhas of this age were sending their light. HH Sakya Trizin, who was then just fifteen years old, along with Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and many other great lamas, led the ceremonies following Jamyang Khyentse's death. Later, Jamyang Khyentse's disciples, led by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, gathered for his cremation at Tashi Ding, the most sacred site in Sikkim, where they built the stupa for his relics with their own bare hands. It was an extraordinary testimony to the devotion he inspired.

Among Jamyang Khyentse's many qualities as a master, those whom we interviewed remembered his deep humanity and kindness. They were struck by how he always made a point of caring for people in the community, at every stage of life and death. When he visited Sakya, they said, it was the ordinary people who gathered around him, sometimes in their thousands, and wanted to be with him wherever he went. They also recall that he possessed all the simplicity, contentment and lack of attachment of a true chöpa (Dharma practitioner). His attendant Tashi Namgyal said that he had never seen him happier than when they left Dzongsar and Jamyang Khyentse insisted on going by foot, and carrying his own backpack.

Ngari Tulku Rinpoche remembered: "Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö never lost his temper. Whether during teachings or in regular conversations, Rinpoche was always one hundred per cent in the spiritual domain, never wavering from it for an instant. This great man, our Dzongsar Khyentse Jamyang Chökyi Lodrö, has been constantly living in this state and from there he has given us guidance."

Sogyal Rinpoche wrote: "With Jamyang Khyentse's passing, a whole epoch, sometimes it seems a whole dimension of spiritual power and

knowledge, passed with him.” Without a doubt, Jamyang Khyentse foresaw the tragedy that was to befall Tibet, and even as time was running out, he consciously prepared a generation of teachers, and sought to safeguard the vast wealth of lineages he held. His disciples recalled how, whenever he taught, he always took particular care to give the teachings of each lineage strictly according to its own view and its own distinct tradition. When Jamyang Khyentse gave the Sakya teachings, he would wear the Sakya hat and do everything perfectly according to the tradition; and when he gave Nyingma teachings, he wore the Nyingma hat and did everything in accord with that tradition, and likewise for each school. He conducted all the teachings and practices perfectly, and never mixed the traditions. During his lifetime, he was the leading upholder of the Rimé approach, and abhorred any kind of sectarianism or disharmony. Sogyal Rinpoche wrote: “Because he was the master of masters, and since the lineage-holders of all the traditions had received initiations and teachings from him, and so revered him as their root teacher, he was able naturally to draw them together, in a spirit of devoted harmony and cooperation.”

In the field of study, one of Jamyang Khyentse’s greatest achievements was the founding of the Khamje Shedra, the study college that he established at Dzongsar in 1918 under the leadership of the renowned Khenpo Shenga. Students from all traditions traveled to study there under its eminent khenpos, and many of those who graduated from Dzongsar as khenpos then spread the spirit of Rimé throughout Tibet, and established about eighty study centres of their own. Jamyang Khyentse also re-established the Gyudé Shedra at Kathok, and restored the Karmé Taksang retreat centre and many other temples and monasteries. So widespread was his work that there was hardly a single monastery in Kham that did not

receive offerings from him of statues, books, stupas and other sacred objects.

Jamyang Khyentse spent long periods in retreat, every winter and sometimes the entire year. His realization was extraordinary: he left one whole volume devoted to the many visions and prophetic dreams he had. For example, when he prayed beneath the Bodhi tree in Bodhgaya, he had a vividly clear vision in which he saw all the thousand buddhas of this age, along with their great disciples. When he read Jamyang Khyentse’s secret autobiography, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche realized that he had been present when Jamyang Khyentse had visions of the

Buddha and Guru Padmasambhava; he said, “yet nothing in his outer behaviour indicated anything about the deep and powerful vision that my teacher was experiencing at that moment.” Sangharakshita, the founder of the Friends of the Western Buddhist Order, received teachings from Jamyang Khyentse in Kalimpong. He told us: “At certain points in the initiations that he gave, he would be visualizing the bodhisattvas, and I could see that as he did so, he was looking up with a beautiful smile, a very beatific expression, as though he could actually see those bodhisattvas floating there in the air before him, and he gave a sort of smile of recognition, ‘Ah yes, there you are again.’”

Had Jamyang Khyentse not passed away when he did, he was destined to have become a teacher of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. As it happened, in the course of time, it was Jamyang Khyentse’s own disciples like Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche and Trulshik Rinpoche who came to fulfill that role. In Lhasa in 1955, Jamyang Khyentse had composed a long life prayer for HH the Dalai Lama that is recited today by the monks at the Dalai Lama’s Namgyal Monastery.

HH Sakya Trizin believes that it is nothing less than a prophesy, predicting that the Dalai Lama would

become a future world leader, give the Kalachakra empowerment many times, and become a holder of the teachings of all schools of Tibetan Buddhism, in the Rimé tradition. “All these things have come true more than thirty to forty years later,” said Sakya Trizin. “There are no words to say Nobel Peace Prize, but the meaning is clear, because he wrote, ‘all the world will honor him as a Dharma king’.”

Not only did Jamyang Khyentse recognize and confirm many incarnate lamas, but he also gave enormous care and encouragement to the teachers of the future. To his greatest disciple, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, he transmitted the blessing of his wisdom mind, and it was Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche who continued his vision, as the foremost upholder of the Rimé ideal and the Khyentse lineage.

In Sikkim, Jamyang Khyentse had predicted to Tulku Urgyen: “From now on, the Buddhadharma will spread further west.” Many of his disciples took a leading part in teaching and founding Dharma centres in the West, including HH Sakya Trizin, HH Sakya Dagchen, Dezhung Rinpoche and Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding; the sixteenth Gyalwang Karmapa, Kalu Rinpoche and Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche; and Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Tarthang Tulku Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, Chagdud Rinpoche and Namkhai Norbu Rinpoche.

Jamyang Khyentse’s legacy can also be seen in the work of his two principal incarnations, both of whom were brought up under the care of Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche. Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Norbu Rinpoche, the grandson of Dudjom Rinpoche and son of Thinley Norbu Rinpoche, was recognized by HH Sakya Trizin and enthroned in the palace temple at Gangtok in 1967. Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, the son of Kangyur Rinpoche, was recognized by Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche, Dudjom Rinpoche and the sixteenth Karmapa, and is today deeply involved

in the important work of the Padmakara Translation Group. In 1983, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche began to oversee the restoration of Dzongsar Monastery in Tibet, which now has a medical institute and a primary school. The Kham-je Shedra there is once again a thriving centre of learning for all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. A third emanation of Jamyang Khyentse was recognized in Khyentse Yeshe Rinpoche, the brother of Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche and Dzigar Kongtrul Rinpoche.

On 28 June 2009, to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Jamyang Khyentse’s passing, Sogyal Rinpoche shared some of his memories of his master while leading a retreat in Ireland. “Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö possessed an incredible presence and charisma, yet he was extremely humble, and would never put on airs. A holiness, a saintliness, and wisdom, knowledge and compassion seemed to just flow from him. During his time, there were many, many great masters in Tibet, and yet even among them Jamyang Khyentse stood out. But what was so unique about him was that not only was he respected by the greatest lamas of all lineages, he was also seen as the source of all their teachings, transmissions and instructions. I simply don’t have any words to describe how extraordinary he was. He was, and is still, regarded in Tibet as the greatest master of his time. He was an authority, an inspiration, a spiritual leader who brought all the lineages together.

“If you had seen and met him, then you would know what a buddha looks like, in human form. I am so fortunate to have had that experience. Because for me, Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was the background to everything. And I am so grateful that I was able to witness his life.”

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www.viewmagazine.org"

His Holiness the Sakya Trizin Remembers Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö

“Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was a very great master, and I believe that he was the activity incarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo. The unique thing about him was that he received teachings from all schools, practised them and then taught them to other people according to their needs; for example he gave Sakya teachings to Sakyapas, Nyingma teachings to Nyingmapas, and so on. So he was very, very famous.

The first time I met him was in Lhasa, when he came from Kham. He was a great inspiration, as he was not only very learned but was also a greatly realised master. I was staying with one of the wealthier Tibetan families in Lhasa when they requested him to give the circle of Dzogchen empowerments and teachings. He gave the Longchen Nyingthig, which is an important Dzogchen empowerment and teaching. As I was staying there, I was very fortunate to receive the whole cycle of Longchen Nyingthig from him.

We also invited him to our residence and requested him to bestow some major initiations of the Sakya order. Then he travelled to the Southern part of Tibet, and we went back to Sakya.

Later, in the autumn, he came to Sakya and stayed for a month. We invited him to stay at our palace, and we requested him to bestow many teachings and initiations, which he did. I also had the good fortune of travelling with him to a holy shrine nearby, where he gave mostly Sakya initiations and teachings, but also Nyingma teachings.

And at that time, I became acquainted with his Khandro, Tsering Chödrön – I had met her before briefly in Lhasa, but we hadn’t had much contact. But while Khyentse Rinpoche stayed at our palace, we became very close; she was also very, very special, a real dakini, and I remember that she cooked some home-style food, which was extremely delicious. Also at that time, we met Sogyal Rinpoche, who was the nephew of Khandro Tsering Chödrön; we were both very young, so we played together. Khandro Tsering Chödrön had a very good voice, and she sang very beautiful chants, mantras, and songs of the great masters.

After this, they left for India, and we left soon after them, because it was the 2500th anniversary of the Buddha’s Mahaparinirvana, and there was a huge celebration attended by His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many Tibetan lamas. Although I was very small and didn’t take part in any of the conferences or ceremonies in India, I did visit the holy places. When the celebrations ended, we started back to Tibet. But when we reached Sikkim, the weather turned and we became snowbound. So we were kind of stuck in Gangtok!

Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was also there, staying at the royal palace, and we went to visit him many times. We even celebrated the Tibetan New Year together. I remember that very well. He invited us for celebrations and we had lunch together. After that, we went back to Tibet and he stayed in Sikkim.

I was told that he actually predicted all the things that would happen in Tibet long before they happened. He gave advice to do certain rituals and to make some statues and stupas and so on. But somehow, his advice wasn't heeded – or even if something was done, it wasn't done according to his instructions. It seems to me that perhaps things would not be so bad now if his advice had been heeded.

He always wanted to go back to Tibet, but the situation in Tibet at that time was getting worse day by day, and of course, his attendants advised him not to go.

And so he stayed, and divided his time between Darjeeling and Gangtok. In the summertime, he'd go to Darjeeling and in the wintertime, he'd stay in Gangtok.

And then, in 1959, we had to escape from Tibet and we left for India. Sakya is very, very close to the Sikkim border, less than 100 kilometres, but there was no road and it took a long time to cross, about three days. Once we had crossed the border into Sikkim, our original plan had been to stay not far from the border in a place called Thangu. There was a good house there, and the weather was not too cold, so we had planned to spend the summer there. It was a lot warmer than Tibet – but compared to Rajpur, of course, not so warm!

But many people warned us that Thangu wasn't really safe, with very few security guards, and so we moved a little farther down to a place called Lachen.

While we were there, we received news of Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö. Actually, the person who brought us the news was my future father-in-law! We were already acquainted, but neither of us knew at the time that we would become related. He told us that Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö was unwell in Sikkim, and suggested that we travel to Gangtok to be with him.

So we left Lachen and went to Gangtok. When we first met him, he wasn't very ill. He was rather weak, but not very sick. So we had a lot of discussions and had lunch together, and I performed some rituals, long-life rituals for him. But he passed away, in July, I believe. We performed all the ceremonies and his body was embalmed and kept there the whole summer. People from different traditions performed different rituals for him.

It was then that we left for Darjeeling.”

Heart Advice in a Nutshell

– by Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö

Homage to Guru Rinpoche, the lord of Orgyen, the incomparable object of refuge!

This unique, free and well-favoured human form is so difficult to obtain.

Since we have actually attained it this time,

Let us endeavour to unfold the realisation of its full potential,

And not leave it to rot.

The root of all dharmas is one's mind.

If unexamined, it rushes after experiences and is ingenious in the games of deception.

If you look right into it, it is free of any ground or origin,

In essence free of any coming, staying or going.

All the dharmas of samsara and nirvana are one's own mind,

Only determined by its display, pure or impure –

In reality, neither exist.

Pure from the beginning, free and empty,

Not falling into the concept of an 'empty' emptiness,

Instead, in the luminosity of its self-existing energy it is fully accomplished.

This is the very ground for the manifestation of compassion's rigpa.

Rigpa is beyond designation and verbalisation,

Out of it arises, as its display, the variety of appearances of samsara and nirvana.

Manifestation and manifester are not two –

In this state of oneness naturally remain

You won't be ashamed at the moment of death,

And in this life and others you will go from happiness to happiness – there is no doubt.

The one who has been most gracious to you –

Your lama and Orgyen Chenpo, inseparable –

Visualise on top of your head,

And offer your 'heart and soul' in fervent and one-pointed devotion.

Whatever arises, good or bad, happiness or sorrow,
Rely on your only father lama and pray to him,
Mix your mind one with him.

At the moment of death, abandon thoughts of attachment and aversion,
Visualise Orgyen Guru, your lama, on your head.
Your consciousness in the form of light symbolised by HRIH,
Transfer it into the wisdom mind of the Lama Orgyen Chenpo.
If you meditate and practise in this manner, always,
At the moment of death, it will come easier.
Recite the prayer of Zangdok Palri. 1

In conclusion, Dharma practice is:
To cut attachment to samsara,
To generate love and compassion for all beings of the six realms,
To tame this mind of ours completely.
This, I plead, take to heart and practise all the time – please do!

Colophon

Even though I have no practice in myself,
This short advice – the words of the noble ones of the past,
Was written by the one who has no Dharma, the stubborn parasite, the so-called ‘Chökyi Lodrö’
For the fortunate woman-practitioner Pelu,
Just not to reject her request.

Sarva mangalam.

1. Prayer to be born in Zangdok Palri (Copper-Coloured Mountain), the Pure Realm of Guru Rinpoche, in the next life.

Translated by Ven. Sogyal Rinpoche during Rigpa's first summer retreat, which he conducted at St Cézaire near Grasse, France in August 1981.

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Teachings on Tantra (part2)

Buddhist Tantra: Some Introductory Remarks

by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin



There is a common misconception among many non-Buddhists (and even among certain Buddhists) that the Tantras are late and corrupt additions to the Buddha's teachings. This is false. The tantras are genuine teachings of the Lord Buddha, and

they occupy a paramount position within the overall framework of the Buddhist doctrine.

Some of the misconceptions about the Tantras stem from their esoteric nature. Since the time of the Buddha, the Tantras were always taught secretly

and selectively. For their correct understanding, they have always required the oral instructions of a qualified master; without such explanations, they can easily be misunderstood in wrong and harmful ways. As a follower of this tradition, I too am prevented from discussing most aspects of Tantra here. But it is perhaps permissible in these circumstances to say a few general things about Buddhist thought and practice. For this, I shall base myself on the teachings of our tradition, such as the ‘General System of the Tantras’ by Lobpön Sönam Tsemo.

What is Tantra?

In the Tibetan tradition, the word ‘Tantra’ (rgyud) normally refers to a special class of the Buddha’s teachings, and to the scriptures that embody it. But contrary to its English usage, the word does not usually refer to the whole system of Tantric practice and theory. For the doctrinal system of Tantra, the terms ‘Mantrayana’ and ‘Vajrayana’ (‘Vajra’ or ‘Adamantine Vehicle’) are used instead.

In its technical sense, the word ‘tantra’ means ‘continuous’. In particular, Tantra refers to one’s own mind as non-dual Wisdom; there exists a continuum because there is an unbroken continuation of mind from beginningless time until the attainment of Buddhahood. This continuum, moreover, has three aspects or stages: the causal continuum, the continuum involved in applied method, and the resultant continuum. Sentient creatures in ordinary cyclic existence are the ‘causal continuum’. Those who have engaged in methods of gaining liberation are ‘continuums involved in method.’ And those who have achieved the ultimate spiritual fruit, the Body of Wisdom, are the ‘resultant continuum’. The causal continuum is so called because there exists in it the potential for producing a fruit if the right conditions are met, even though at present that fruit

is not actually manifested. It is like a seed kept in a container. ‘Method’ is so called because there exists means or methods by which the result latent in the cause can be produced. ‘Method’ is like the water and fertiliser needed for growing a plant. ‘Fruit’ or ‘result’ refers to the actualisation of the result that was latent in the cause. This is like the ripened flower that blooms when one has planted the seed and properly cultivated the plant.

The Place of Tantra in the Buddhist Teachings

In His infinite compassion, wisdom and power, the Lord Buddha gave innumerable different teachings aimed at helping countless beings of differing mentalities. These teachings can be divided into two main classes: the Sravakayana (which includes the present Theravada), and the Mahayana. The Sravakayana, sometimes also called ‘Hinayana’, is mainly aimed at individual salvation, while the Mahayana stresses the universal ideal of the Bodhisattva, the being intent upon Enlightenment, who selflessly strives for the liberation of all beings, vowing to remain in cyclic existence until all others are liberated. First, the Mahayana or Great Vehicle can also be divided into two: the Paramitayana, or Perfections Vehicle, which we also call the ‘cause vehicle’ because in it the Bodhisattva’s moral perfections are cultivated as the causes of future Buddhahood, and secondly, the Mantrayana, or Mantra Vehicle, which is also known as the ‘Result-Vehicle’ because through its special practices one realises the Wisdom of Enlightenment as actually present.

The Spiritual Fruit to Be Attained through Tantra

The spiritual fruit that is aimed at in both branches of Mahayana practice is the Perfect Awakening or

Enlightenment of Buddhahood. A Perfectly Awakened Buddha is one who has correctly understood the status of all knowable things in ultimate reality,

A Perfectly Awakened Buddha is one who has correctly understood the status of all knowable things in ultimate reality, who possesses consummate bliss that is free from the impurities, and who has eliminated all stains of the obscurations.

who possesses consummate bliss that is free from the impurities, and who has eliminated all stains of the obscurations. The latter characteristic, freedom from the obscurations, is a cause for other features of Buddhahood. It consists of the elimination of the three types of defilements: defilements such as hatred and desire, defilements that obstruct one's knowledge of reality as it is in its multiplicity, and defilements that pertain to the meditative attainments.

The Path that Leads to the Fruit

We speak of a method of spiritual practice as a 'path' because it is a means by which one reaches the spiritual goal that one is aiming at. There are two types of paths. One is the common path that leads to inferior results, and the other is the extraordinary path that leads to the highest goal.

Inferior Paths

Some religious or philosophical traditions, while claiming to yield good results actually lead their practitioners to undesirable destinations. For instance, the inferior Tirthikas (certain non-Buddhist Indian schools), as well as those who propound nihilism, only lead their followers to rebirths in the miserable realms of existence. The higher Tirthikas can lead one to the acquisition of a rebirth in the higher realms, but not to liberation. And even the paths of the Sravakayana and Pratyekabuddhayana are inferior, for they lead only to simple liberation, and not to complete Buddhahood.

The Special Path

The Mahayana itself has two major divisions. As mentioned above, these are the Perfections Vehicle and the Secret-Mantra Vehicle. The first of these is also termed the general Mahayana because it is held in common with both Mahayana divisions, whereas the second is termed the particular one because its profound and vast doctrine is not found within the general tradition. The two vehicles derive their names from the practice predominating within them. In the Perfection Vehicle, the practice of the Bodhisattva's perfections (paramitas) predominates, and in the Secret-Mantra Vehicle, the practice of tantra is the main element.

One essential difference between the two Mahayana approaches can be explained by way of their approach to the sensory objects that are the basis for both cyclic existence and Nirvana. In the Perfections Vehicle, one tries to banish the five classes of sensory objects outright. One first restrains oneself physically and verbally from overt misdeeds related to the objects of sense desire, and then by studying and reasoning, one learns about their nature. Afterwards, through meditative realisation, one removes all attachment to them. This is done on a superficial level, through meditatively cultivating the antidote to the defilements, such as by cultivating love as the

Sense objects are not fetters to realisation by their own nature; rather, one is fettered by the erroneous conceptual thoughts that surround them.

antidote to anger, and a view of the repulsiveness of the sense objects as the antidote to desire. And on the ultimate level, one removes one's attachment through understanding and meditatively realising that all of these objects in fact are without any independent self-nature.

In the Mantra Vehicle too, one begins by restraining oneself outwardly (the essential basis for one's conduct is the morality of the Pratimoksa and Bodhisattva), but in one's attitude toward the sense objects, one does not try to eliminate them directly. Some will of course argue that such objects of sensory desire can only act as fetters that prevent one's liberation, and that they must be eliminated. Though this is true for the ordinary individual who lacks skillful methods, for the practitioner who possesses skillful means, those very sense objects will help in the attainment of liberation. It is like fire which, when out of control, can cause great damage, but when used properly and skillfully is very beneficial. While for the lower schools the sense objects arise as the enemies of one's religious practice, here they arise as one's teachers. Moreover, sense objects are not fetters to realisation by their own nature; rather, one is fettered by the erroneous conceptual thoughts that surround them.

The Superiority of Vajrayana over Paramitayana

The Secret-Mantra Vehicle is superior to the Perfections Vehicle from several points of view, but its superiority primarily rests on the greater efficacy and skillfulness of its methods. Through Mantrayana practices, a person of superior faculties can attain Awakening in a single lifetime. One of middling faculties who observes the commitments will attain enlightenment within seven to sixteen lifetimes. These are much shorter periods than the three 'immeasurable' eons required through the Paramitayana practices. But even though the Mantra Vehicle is superior in skillful methods, its view of ultimate reality is identical with the Madyamaka view of the general Mahayana. For both schools, ultimate reality is devoid of all discursive developments or elaborations. One view cannot be higher than the other since 'higher' and 'lower' are themselves but discursive developments or conceptualisations.

Preparations and Prerequisites for Tantric Practice

The foregoing text has provided a general introduction to a few of the basic ideas of Buddhist Tantra. The real question is how to apply these theoretical considerations in a useful way, that is, how to practise them. The practice of Mantrayana

Even though the Mantra Vehicle is superior in skillful methods, its view of ultimate reality is identical with the Madyamaka view of the general Mahayana.

and further in-depth study of its philosophy require first of all a special initiation from a qualified master. Before one can be initiated, one will first be examined by the teacher, who will ascertain whether one is a fit receptacle for the teachings. One's master may require that one purify and prepare oneself through specific preparatory practices. Finally, after one has been led into the glorious mandala by the master, one begins one's practice, carefully observing the various vows and commitments of the Vajrayana. These vows are primarily mental, and as such, they can be even more challenging than those of the Pratimoksha and Bodhisattva systems. One must also devote oneself to further study, and to practising specialised visualisations and yogas according to the master's instructions.

Buddhist Versus Hindu Tantra

Buddhist Tantra is thus distinguished from the other branches of Mahayana by its special methods. It is, however, identical to the Mahayana Madyamaka in its ultimate view, and it is the same as all Mahayana schools in terms of its aim and motivation. Hindu Tantra, by contrast, has a different philosophical basis and motivation, even though it shares some of the same practical methodology. Some persons have suggested that Buddhist Tantra must not belong to pure Buddhism because it shares many elements of practice with the Hindus. This is specious reasoning, because certain methods are bound to be shared by different religious traditions. Suppose we had to abandon each and every element of practice shared with Hindu traditions. In that case, we would have to give up generosity, morality, and much more.

There are, of course, many further differences between Buddhist and Hindu Tantras in their terminologies, their philosophies, the details of their meditative practices, and so forth. But I shall not attempt to explicate them since my own first-

hand knowledge is limited to the Buddhist tradition. Here it will suffice to stress that Buddhist Vajrayana presupposes the taking of refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha (and the Guru as the embodiment of these three), the understanding of Emptiness, and the cultivation of love, compassion and Bodhicitta (the Thought of Awakening). The latter is the firm resolve to attain perfect Buddhahood in order to benefit all sentient creatures, through one's great wish that they be happy and free from sorrow. These distinguishing features are not found in the non-Buddhist Tantras.

Conclusion

The study of Tantra can only be fruitful if one can apply it through practice, and to do this one must find, serve, and carefully follow a qualified master. If one finds one's true teacher and is graced by his blessings, one can make swift progress towards the goal, perfect Awakening for the benefit of all creatures. In composing this account, I am mindful of my own immeasurable debt of gratitude to my own kind masters. Here I have tried to be true to their teachings and to those of the great masters of our lineage without divulging that which is forbidden to be taught publicly. I shall consider my efforts to have been worthwhile if some harmful misunderstandings have been dispelled.

Maitreya's Semtsema

A Teaching by The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche (part 4)

Maitreya's 'Semtsema' is one of the teachings by the great Bodhisattva Maitreya that were brought down to earth from Tushita Heaven and given to Arya Asanga.



We have already seen in the preceding parts of this teaching that the Buddha's qualities are infinite and impossible for ordinary beings to fathom. We have seen how through His clairvoyance, wisdom and infinite compassion, the Fully Enlightened One has the power to liberate sentient beings from the four maras, the causes of the suffering of beings.

The text goes on to expound a further set of qualities of the Buddha, known as the four fearlessnesses of the Fully Enlightened One.

According to these, the Buddha has total inner confidence and courage, which make Him totally unaffected by any kind of opposition to, or criticism of, Himself and His teachings. The activities related to these four fearlessnesses are twofold: first, they provide the Buddha with an unequivocal sense of confidence in His teachings, thus keeping Him completely safe from any vilification by detractors. Secondly, this complete conviction in His teachings allows Him to help beings; for example, through His

absolute knowledge of the thirty-seven attributes of Enlightenment, the Fully Enlightened One intrinsically knows each one of the defilements of sentient beings and each one of their antidotes; furthermore, He knows how every single defilement of every single being can be purified. Through this conviction, He can help beings to become free of their defilements and thus ripen their liberation.

Because of these four fearlessnesses, the Buddha is indomitable. He is impervious to any kind of challenge by holders of extreme views, heretics or even powerful gods. However valid or logical these challenges might seem, the Buddha is easily capable of defeating them, and they are unable to cause the slightest dent in His confidence and courage.

The Fully Enlightened One intrinsically knows each one of the defilements of sentient beings and each one of their antidotes... He can help beings to become free of their defilements and thus ripen their liberation.

A further set of the Buddha's qualities is that He has no need to keep anything secret. He feels no apprehension that, by others being privy to His views or thoughts, He might make Himself vulnerable to refutation or intimidation. When in the midst of large gatherings, nothing makes Him feel inhibited, nervous or threatened, and so He's able to dispense His teachings with great confidence and glowing qualities, instilling consummate respect in the minds of His listeners.

Yet another set of qualities is that of the three well-established recollections, or mindfulnesses. This refers to the ability of the Buddha to stabilise the mind with awareness. When the Fully Enlightened One teaches, He feels no attachment or aversion to the reaction of His audience. Whether His listeners are filled with good intentions, respect and devotion, or whether they are physically present but mentally absent and do not appreciate the teachings, or whether they begin the session with great enthusiasm and gradually lose it, the Buddha is not affected. He feels no attachment to those who revere Him, and no aversion toward those who ignore or reject Him. The Buddha is able to free Himself from the two extremes of aversion and attachment, and can thus remain in a perfect state of equanimity. This is what we call the power of stabilising the mind with mindfulness.

Another aspect of the three mindfulnesses is that the Fully Enlightened One shows no sign of weariness while dispensing the teachings and is able to abide in the equanimity of mindfulness from the beginning to the end of His exposition. Due to these qualities of mindfulness, the Fully Enlightened One is persuasive and is able to attract and captivate the minds of His audience.

The Buddha is able to free Himself from the two extremes of aversion and attachment, and can thus remain in a perfect state of equanimity... The mind of the Buddha is completely and permanently aware and conscious.

The next verse reads: “Homage to You, the Omniscient One, who are truly meaningful because You are not capable of anything but omniscient conduct at all times and in all Your activities.” This refers to the ability of the Buddha to only perform appropriate actions of body, speech and mind. There is never a single activity of the Buddha that is not in accord with the needs and benefit of sentient beings, never an activity that is ill-timed or ill-gauged. Whilst certain actions of Arhats, however well-established in their enlightened qualities they may be, can at times be flawed, there is not the remotest possibility of any single action of the Buddha being faulty.

And the text goes on in saying: “In Your activities in the world for all beings, You’re never untimely and therefore Your deeds are always meaningful. Homage to You who are never forgetful.” The Buddha is perfectly accurate in His timing, His activities are always performed at exactly the right time, never an instant too early or too late. The mind of the Buddha is completely and permanently aware and conscious and therefore never suffers from any kind of forgetfulness or lack of punctuality; thus He is able to carry out the right activity at exactly the right time, in exactly the right place.

There is never a single activity of the Buddha that is not in accord with the needs and benefit of sentient beings.

The following verse eulogises the ever-compassionate mind of the Buddha, whose single intent to benefit each and every sentient being is actualised at every moment. The Buddha gazes and, through His watchful eye, He sees the needs



of sentient beings and looks after their well-being. Unfailingly altruistic and compassionate in His intention, He knows how best each and every kind of suffering can be relieved.

The compassion of the Buddha is ‘mahakaruna’, or great compassion. There is a great difference between compassion and great compassion. Whereas the Sravakas and Pratiekabuddhas are endowed with compassion, only the Fully Enlightened One is endowed with great compassion. Sravakas and Pratiekabuddhas do not have compassion for all sentient beings. They feel compassion primarily for beings suffering in the Kharmadatu, or desire realm. They only see the manifest suffering of sentient beings, and do not take the initiative of relieving or eliminating it. They don’t have the altruistic compassion to take the suffering of others upon themselves.

On the other hand, the great compassion with which only the Fully Enlightened One is endowed, is such that there is not a single being that is not its object, from beings in the lowest forms of rebirth to those dwelling in the Bodhisattva stage, including the Sravakas and Pratiekabuddhas, not to mention ordinary beings. His great compassion includes every single being that is not fully enlightened, and it takes on their suffering and the causes of their suffering. His

willingness and determination to relieve this suffering, this ardent act of empathy, is what is referred to as Mahakaruna.

So in the light of this, when we practise the path of Mahakaruna and we begin to feel the suffering of sentient beings, we should be driven to take on all that suffering, and create the firm intention to relieve and remove it. Such an altruistic shouldering of the responsibility of eradicating the suffering of all beings is proper to the path of the Great Vehicle.

**The compassion of the Buddha is
'mahakaruna', or great compassion... His
great compassion includes every single
being that is not fully enlightened, and it
takes on their suffering and the causes of
their suffering.**

The next set of qualities of the Buddha that are described in the eulogy is that of His eighteen unmixed unique characteristics. This refers to the characteristics of the Buddha that are unique to Him, and are therefore unmixed, unshared by anyone else.

These eighteen unique characteristics are: six unique qualities related to the conduct of body, speech and mind; six unique characteristics related to realisation; three unique characteristics related to wisdom; and three unique characteristics related to enlightened activities.

Of the six unique characteristics related to the conduct of the Buddha, the first appertains to the conduct of the Buddha's body, which is absolutely free from mistaken physical conduct. The physical conduct of the Sravakas far surpasses that of ordinary beings,

but in comparison to that of the Fully Enlightened One, it is somewhat faulty. There is nothing in the physical conduct of the Buddha that is inappropriate or flawed.

As for the unmistakable verbal conduct of the Buddha, His voice is utterly unable to produce an unpleasant or undesirable sound. Even Arhats at times will generate certain ungainly sounds with their voices or their laughter, but this never happens with the Buddha.

And as regards the unmistakable mental conduct of the Buddha, His unfailing mindfulness ensures that it is always impeccable. Unlike Sravakas and Arhats, who sometimes lack mindfulness and therefore whose actions don't always live up to their intentions, the Buddha never strays from meditative stabilisation, and therefore His mental conduct is flawless. A further quality of the Buddha's mind is that He sees no duality between Samsara and Nirvana. Unlike Sravakas and Arhats, who are still prone to dualistic conceptions and feel attachment to Nirvana and aversion to Samsara, the Buddha doesn't see an iota of duality in anything whatsoever within Samsara and Nirvana. One more unmistakable quality of the Buddha's mental conduct is that His mind doesn't suffer from lack of analysis. Whereas Arhats may sometimes engage in analysis as to how to best help beings, but actually fail to apply the correct remedy, the Buddha's mind is free of any kind of faulty analysis, and His actions are always well analysed and well executed.

**A further quality of the Buddha's mind is
that He sees no duality between Samsara
and Nirvana.**

The reason why a comparison is made between Arhats and the Buddha is not to diminish the qualities of the Arhats. The purpose of this exposition is rather to emphasise the magnitude of the infinite qualities of the Buddha by comparing them favourably to those of Arhats, themselves endowed with supreme qualities. This comparison is made with an aim to inspire ordinary beings to generate stronger faith in and veneration for the Buddha's qualities.

The next set of unmistakable qualities of the Fully Enlightened One refers to qualities related to realisation. First among these is the willingness or determination to show the truth of the Dharma to sentient beings in order to eliminate their suffering. The Buddha engages joyously and with perfect mindfulness in His effort to show beings the path of remaining in the meditative concentration that leads to the understanding of the lack of inherent existence of the self. As a result of this, moksha, or thorough liberation is attained by these beings.

And so these are the six unmixed unique characteristics in relation to the realisation of the

Buddha. These are not shared by Sravakas and Arhats because of the degeneration of their realisation. This does not mean that they were formerly endowed with something that degenerated, but rather that there are gross defilements, obscurations of knowledge, still obstructing their minds and preventing them from attaining realisation. The Fully Enlightened One, on the other hand, has removed all defilements and obscurations of knowledge, and has therefore attained thorough liberation.

The mind of the Buddha transcends any duration of time [and space]... The mind of the Buddha is unfathomable and inconceivable, it cannot be comprehended by anyone.



Next are the three unmixed qualities in relation to the aspect of the mind of the Buddha that knows the present, past and future, instantly and spontaneously. There is nothing that obstructs or hinders effortless and simultaneous realisation of all things present, past and future, no matter how lengthy the passing of time. In this aspect as well, the knowledge of the Buddha infinitely surpasses that of the Arhats. There is a story related to this. It is about a householder called Palkye who strongly desired to become ordained. He approached Shariputra with his request, but was turned down because he was not deemed by Shariputra to have the necessary merit or seed of virtuous inclination that would make him worthy of ordination. Palkye approached several Arhats with the same plea but, as none of them could see any virtuous

inclination in his mind, he was again rebuffed on the same ground that he lacked the required merit. When Palkye's wish was finally brought to the attention of the Fully Enlightened One, He reprimanded Shariputra and the Arhats, saying that Palkye did indeed have the seed of virtuous inclination that would warrant him to be ordained. The Buddha related how, in a previous life where Palkye had been reborn as a pig, he had been chased by a dog around a stupa, thus creating the meritorious seed that would make him worthy of ordination. And so, whereas the Arhats cannot perceive the duration of eons and the space between eons, the mind of the Buddha transcends any duration of time, nothing is beyond His omniscience.

The same applies to inconceivable space, what we call 'eons of eons of space', meaning the distance between one place and another. Whereas even the Arhats' concept of space is limited, the Buddha's omniscient mind is unhindered by distance, however great. As an example of this, there is the story of Maudgalyanaputra, who had many miraculous abilities and great clairvoyance, but nevertheless could not see where his mother would be reborn. He consulted many Arhats, but none could help except the Fully Enlightened One who, through His omniscient mind, unhindered by the concept of distance, knew that Maudgalyana's mother would be reborn in a realm called Öserchen, or the "Light-Filled Realm". No one apart from the Buddha could see this, not even Maudgalyana himself.

Like eons of eons of time and space, the mind of the Buddha is unfathomable and inconceivable, it cannot be comprehended by anyone, not even by the Arhats.

Next are the three unmistakable characteristics of the Buddha relating to His enlightened activities, or 'thinley' in Tibetan. Of all the enlightened activities of the Buddha's body, speech and mind, there is not

a single one that won't be virtuous or beneficial. On the other hand, although Arhats would never engage in non-virtuous deeds, there are times when their virtuous actions become mixed with neutral activities. But there is not the slightest possibility of the Enlightened One engaging in an activity that is not virtuous, while even His neutral activities are transmuted into virtuous ones. This is because there is not a single activity of the Buddha that is purposeless or meaningless. Every single one of His activities is generated by His primordial wisdom.

Of all the enlightened activities of the Buddha's body, speech and mind, there is not a single one that won't be virtuous or beneficial.

And here the author pays homage to these eighteen unique characteristics of the Fully Enlightened One, which make Him the peerless master and supreme teacher of all beings, including Sravakas and Pratiekabuddhas.

Advice Concerning The Great Meditators of The Land of Snow

By Sakya Pandita (1182 – 1251)

There are many great meditators in this snowy mountain range.
We should estimate them
By whether they are excellent, mediocre, or inferior.
Please listen to me with respect.
Give up your divisive positions about these things!

There are meditators who are not distracted
And do not contrive theories.
Their bodies retain a pure strength.
Their features are clean.
Their behavior is pure.
They wear turquoise dread locks.
These great meditators live with the snow lions!

There are those who wear the armor
Of working to benefit countless living beings.
They ride the two accumulations [of merit and wisdom]
As a horse.
They are motivated by the irons of fortitude.
They use wisdom to decimate antagonistic emotional conflicts.
These great meditators are engaged in a hero's battle!

There are those who have wallets filled with the jewels
Of three unstained trainings: [morals, wisdom, and absorption].
They give a charity to the living:
Fearlessness in the face of the confusions of the world.
They distribute the holy Dharma.
They put people on the path to liberation.
These great meditators organize to get things done for others.

These three kinds of great meditators are the best.
Let it be known that their hearts are wonderful!
There are those who do not fully comprehend the teachings,
But meditate that their teacher sits at the crown of their heads.

They pray to him, and tears flow from their eyes.
These great meditators are guides
On the road to liberation.

There are those who are gripped by incomprehensible theories,
But they open their hearts
With the jewel of the enlightened mind.
They do not take it easy
When it comes to getting things done for the sake of others.
These great meditators are wish fulfilling jewels who benefit others.

There are those who are unable to achieve the supreme vehicle
In the usual way,
But they use a bouquet of flowers,
The samaya commitment of the four empowerments,
As if it were a human skull,
To encourage serious renunciation.
These great meditators quickly liberate the world.

There are those who do not think about doing things
Out of love for others,
But they listen to the scriptures and holy teachings
To encourage themselves to take things up and abandon things
According to cause and effect.
These great meditators shut the narrow door to evil existences.

These three are called
“The Ones Who Have Entered the Door of the Teachings.”
They are known to be intelligent people.
They go on pathways of their own choosing.
They give confidence to others,
So they should be supported.

There are those who cannot give up speculating
About the holy instructions.
They keep their minds in a depressing passivity
So that the darkness of ignorance gets worse and worse.
These great meditators are drunken rats.

There are those who cannot control where their minds go
Due to the things they believe and the things they want.
They compete for support on remote mountains.
They are constantly contemplating avenues
For getting what they want.
These great meditators are the wildlife
That lives in the mountains.





There are those who have given up the path of liberation
And are involved in all kinds of harmful things.
They pass their time living in desirable mountain homes.
Then they become experts
In the merchandise of the men and women who support them.
These great meditators are like foxes
Hustling through a thousand markets.

There are those whose desire for fame in the Dharma
Is like fire on grass.
They are diligent at wandering around everywhere
Just to talk.
Their lives are messed up and they want to live forever.
These great meditators are the dogs and thieves
Who hang out at the edge of town.

There are those who wear maroon
While they take to the ways of evil kings.
They surround themselves with all kinds of people
Who carry the weapons of lust and hatred.
They work to further non-virtuous behavior in every direction.
These great meditators increase the number of residents
In the three evil existences:
[Animals, ghosts, and those in hell].

These people oppose virtue
Physically, verbally, and mentally.
They are evil-doers that rob and steal the Dharma.
They enter the door of the teachings
While they hate what a teacher does.
I ask that you reject people who are engaged in perversity.

May this sun
Shining with the light of good information
Give rise to an understanding
That is a giant Mandala
In the sky of the instructions on the unstained teachings
So that the gardens of my students
Will grow in virtue.

The glorious Sakya Pandita wrote this verse in the land of 'Ga', which is to the North [of Tibet], when he was attending to the great meditators of the Land of Snow.

The text is found in The Complete Works of Pandita Kun Dga' Rgyal Mtshan compiled by Bsod Nams Rgya Mstsho; The Tokyo Bunko. Tokyo, Japan. 1968. Pp. 400d-401c.

Translated from Tibetan to English by Christoph Wilkinson (Jamyang Chopel) and edited by Moke Mokotoff (Jamyang Dorje) and reproduced by their kind permission.

Dharma Activities

H.H. the Sakya Trizin and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche in Seattle and Vancouver

In our last issue, we followed His Holiness' and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche's steps on their American Teaching Tour. Time constraints, however, prevented us from including an account of two important stops on their journey: one in Seattle, where His Holiness, Khöndung Gyana Vajra and H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo were to spend two days with members of the Sakya Phuntsok Phodrang, and a second one in Vancouver, where they enjoyed a four-day stay with His Holiness' sister, H.E. Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding. Throughout both these visits, His Holiness was to give empowerments, teachings and public talks to large crowds of both followers and newcomers.

Seattle

His Holiness arrived in Seattle on the 14th of August. It was His first trip to the city and to its Sakya Monastery in several years. The Sakya Monastery in Seattle is the main seat of H.H. Dagchen Rinpoche, head of the Sakya Phuntsok Phodrang. This special visit not only provided disciples with the unique chance to receive teachings from H.H. the Sakya Trizin, but also yielded the opportunity for a rare



H.H. the Sakya Trizin, H.H. Dagchen Rinpoche and the Dungsey Rinpoches at Sakya Monastery

gathering of the illustrious Khön family.

With the advent of a new generation of grandchildren, this was the largest reunion between the two Phodrangs in decades, as His Holiness and Family visited the homes of the Phuntsok Phodrang Dungsey Rinpoches.

On their arrival at Sakya Monastery His Holiness, Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and H.E. Gyalyum Kushok were given a traditional Tibetan welcome, a novel and exciting spectacle for local residents.

His Holiness' program in Seattle was intensive, beginning with an audience requested by the Tibetan



Family reunion of the two Phodrangs

Association of Washington. This was followed by a reception organised by Dagmo Lhazey, where guests were regaled with a traditional performance of song and dance, seasoned with succulent Tibetan delicacies.

The Sakya Monastery also arranged for a visit to the Centre for Spiritual Living, where His Holiness bestowed the 'Chenrezig in the King's Tradition' initiation to some three hundred people. The occasion was graced by the presence of the Phuntsok Phodrang Dungsey Rinpoches.

On the second day of His visit, His Holiness gave a teaching on "The Non-Differentiation Between



Chenrezig initiation at the Centre for Spiritual Living

Samsara and Nirvana" and, later in the day, bestowed the Mahakala initiation to over 150 people, before continuing on His journey.

The members of both palaces parted, but not without promising to meet again very soon.



His Holiness with the Seattle Sangha following the Mahakala initiation

Vancouver

A second memorable occasion of His Holiness' trip was His stop in Vancouver, where His Holiness visited His sister, Her Eminence Jetsun Kushok Chimey Luding, and imparted the Vajrakilaya empowerment and teachings to a large assembly of followers.

On His arrival, His Holiness was greeted by Jetsun Kushok and her husband Sey Kushok, and the



His Holiness and Gyalyum Chenmo arriving at Jetsun Kushok's home



His Holiness giving the Vajrakilaya teachings



Jetsun Kushok offering the *Mendal Tensum* to His Holiness



Family reunion

Family was able to spend some precious time together before His Holiness' first engagement, a public talk at the Sty-Wet-Tan Auditorium, with over 200 people in attendance. This attractive hall, entirely built of wood in the Native-American style, provided the venue for the next three days, during which His Holiness bestowed the Vajrakilaya teachings.

His Holiness' stay in Vancouver provided Him with a rare occasion to spend time with His sister and to visit the houses of each of His three nephews, where, Gyana Vajra Rinpoche and

Gyalyum Chenmo became acquainted with a new generation of grandnephews.

His Holiness also found time to visit the beautiful Thrangu Monastery in Richmond, where He gave a



His Holiness at Thrangu Monastery

teaching to some 400 people and was presented with an elaborate mandala offering.

His Holiness' four-day visit all too quickly came to an end, and as He took leave of His sister and her

family to conclude the last part of His American tour, the Vancouver sangha was left basking in the combined light of these supreme masters, and already aspiring for their prompt reunion.

The Last Rites of Khandro Tsering Chödrön

The funeral ceremonies for Khandro Tsering Chödrön took place on the 2nd of September 2011 beneath beautiful blue skies in southern France. The ceremonies provided an opportunity to pay a moving final tribute to one of the most loved and revered practitioners of Tibetan Buddhism of recent times.

Khandro Tsering Chödrön was the spiritual wife of Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, who was

amongst the most respected and influential Tibetan Buddhist teachers of the last century. For eleven years, Khandro served as Jamyang Khyentse's constant companion, as he conferred countless transmissions and teachings to the next generation of Tibetan masters, including His Holiness the Sakya Trizin.

When Jamyang Khyentse passed away in Sikkim in 1959, Khandro continued to live at their home in Gangtok for many years, dedicating her life to prayer





and practice. In 2006, she went to live at Lerab Ling, the retreat centre founded by Sogyal Rinpoche—her nephew—in southern France. It was there that she passed away at the end of May 2011, and she showed all the signs of attaining the final accomplishment of a great Dzogchen practitioner.

The ceremonies at Lerab Ling were presided over by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, who was accompanied by Their Eminences Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, and Gyalum Chenmo-la. Also present were Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche, Alak Zenkar Rinpoche, Pewar Rinpoche, Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche, Rangdrol Rinpoche, Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche, Sogyal Rinpoche, Orgyen

Tobgyal Rinpoche, and other eminent lamas and monks. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and many other masters were requested to direct their prayers and practice for the ceremonies, which were attended by nearly two thousand people.

The lamas practised in the four cardinal directions, conducting peaceful fire pujas based on different sadhana practices. In the East, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin presided over a practice of Vajrayogini, along with Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, Khenchen Sherab Gyaltsen Amipa Rinpoche, and Gyalum Chenmo-la. In the South, Dzongsar Khyentse Rinpoche presided over a practice of Tukdrup Barche Kunsel, with Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche, Pema Wangyal Rinpoche and Rangdrol Rinpoche. In the West, Sogyal Rinpoche,



Alak Zenkar Rinpoche and Orgyen Tobgyal Rinpoche conducted the practice of Minling Dorsem, and in the North, Ratna Vajra Rinpoche led a practice of Hevajra.

Throughout the day, there was a beautiful blue sky, which is often the case when a great Dzogchen master who has reached the highest level of realization passes away. The following day, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin confirmed that the proceedings had been extremely auspicious. “The ceremony was very, very glorious and magnificent because the weather was perfect; and also, as a sign that she was really a truly highly realized person and great practitioner, rainbows appeared. When her body was carried from the temple, rainbows started, so I feel this is a very significant sign,” said His Holiness. “The whole atmosphere was very peaceful and we could feel a great blessing. In fact, we felt that Khyentse Dorje Chang Chökyi Lodrö



was present, right in front of us.”

Text: Andy Fraser

Images: Courtesy of Tertön Sogyal Trust

Celebration of the Annual Vajrakilaya Ritual at the Sakya Centre



Each year at the Sakya Centre in Rajpur, a major Vajrakilaya puja is conducted that lasts for ten days. It is one of the most important rituals held at the Centre. This year, its celebration took place from the 8th to the 18th of September. Officiating at the ritual were His Holiness the Sakya Trizin, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, as well as Their Eminences Avikrita Rinpoche and Asanga Rinpoche from the Phuntsok Phodrang.

This year's ritual took on added significance as, on its third day, it fell upon H.E. Asanga Rinpoche to deliver the entire text of the puja by memory. No small task, this is part of a demanding examination undertaken each year by a selected group of monastics who have spent the previous months memorising

the text, and who take it in turns to recite it on a specific day. In spite of his young age, Asanga Rinpoche rendered the text faultlessly – His Eminence is all but 12 years old.

The ritual always closes with the distribution of *tsok*, and this year six thousand devotees made their way up the temple stairs to collect their portion. It was during this time that those sitting in the temple felt a tremor: an earthquake had struck Sikkim and neighbouring regions, leaving death and devastation in its wake. When news of the disaster

reached that evening, all prayed that the blessings reaped by the Vajrakilaya puja shower on those affected by it and alleviate their suffering.



H.E. Asanga Rinpoche leading the ritual

Long-Life Ceremony Celebrating The 67th Birthday of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin

On the morning of 28th September, a Long-Life ceremony took place at the Sakya Centre to celebrate His Holiness' 67th Tibetan Birthday. He was joined by Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, who had been holding pujas for His Holiness' long life over the five preceding days. Also attending was Dungsey Rinpoche's young daughter H.E. Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo, as well as H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo and H.E. Dagmo Kushok Sonam Palkyi, accompanied by



Dungsey Gyana Vajra Rinpoche offers His Holiness the *Mendal Tensum* and a statue of Amitabha for His long life



His Holiness leaves the Phodrang for the ceremony at the Sakya Centre

her parents Urgen Chopel and Semo Sonam Dekyi.

During the ceremony, His Holiness was presented with mandala offerings and symbols of enlightened body, speech and mind by members of



His Family, as well as by H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche and by the several tulkus and high lamas who were in attendance. He also received many gifts from devoted followers.



A special Birthday offering

It was H.E. Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo's first attendance at the Sakya Centre, and there was much to do.



Jetsunma and her mother do prostrations upon entering the temple



His Holiness thanks Jetsunma for her offering



The festivities concluded with the auspicious launching of prayer balloons from the temple stairs.

Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Bir

On the 20th of September, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche arrived at the Dzongsar Institute in Bir, accompanied by his family, in order to bestow the second part of the Dorje Gur teachings that he had initiated last year. H.E. Avikrita Rinpoche, H.E. Dzongsar Khyense Rinpoche, and many tulkus and khenpos were there to receive these valuable



The Dzongsar Institute at Bir



Dungsey Rinpoche is welcomed by H.E. Dzongsar Kyentse Rinpoche



Rinpoche teaching in the Dzongsar Institute shrine room

teachings, which were to begin on the 30th and last for seventeen days, until the 16th of October.

Over the course of those weeks, Dungsey Rinpoche visited three schools, beginning with the Sambhota School, which invited him to participate as guest speaker at the celebration of its 30th anniversary. Also present was His Eminence Avikrita Rinpoche. The students paid homage to their visitors with a performance of song and dance, as well as a session of debate and a display of their handicrafts.

Dungsey Rinpoche also visited the Suja TCV School, where he gave a commentary on Atisha's *Sangye Chotsoma*, a teaching on the Triple Gem and on the Bodhisattva vows.

Lastly, Rinpoche visited another TCV school in Chauntra, where he bestowed the Long-Life initiation and gave a talk to a hall replete with students and members of the community. Young students from this school had, a few days earlier, requested Dungsey

to give them the Mahayana *Sojong* teachings, and so they and a few teachers had been invited to the Dzongsar Institute early on the morning of the 11th to receive them. The *Sojong* involves the taking of a vow to observe the five precepts and to abstain from food after noon on specific days of the Tibetan calendar.

Near the end of his trip, Rinpoche spent two days giving the *Thöle* Vajrakilaya empowerment at the Driru Gompa, Dungyud Tulku Rinpoche's monastery in Bir.

And finally, Rinpoche and his family left Bir in order to rejoin His Holiness in Gangtok, Sikkim, where He was to bestow the Vajrayogini empowerment and teachings.



Rinpoche giving an initiation at the Driru Gompa



Rinpoche at the Chauntra TCV

H.H. the Sakya Trizin in Northeast India

With less than a month's rest following His summer American teaching trip, His Holiness left His residence in Dehradun on the 3rd of October for what was to be a demanding six-week tour of West Bengal and Sikkim, His first visit there in nearly twenty years. His Holiness was accompanied on His journey by H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo and a small group of attendants. Everywhere they went, His Holiness and Luding Khen Dorje Chang were greeted with an overwhelming show of devotion, motorcades of followers escorting their arrivals and departures wherever they travelled. Their vehicles adeptly, and sometimes at considerable speed, manoeuvred the vertiginous twists and turns of the Himalayan roads, as motorcycle riders in traditional dress cleared the way for them, their *chubas* flowing in the wind, a scene vividly evocative of the cavalcades that accompanied the movements of the great masters in Tibet as they travelled from one monastery to another.



His Holiness and H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche in Kalimpong



Stacks of burning juniper purified their path and a profusion of flowers adorned it, as pockets of people lined the road, hugging their *khatas*, their faces alight with the anticipation of catching a furtive glimpse of His Holiness at such close range. Some devotees timidly presented elaborate offerings of rice or grain to His passing car, in the hope that its illustrious passenger would bless them by pinching a bit from them, while others, bolder, stretched their hands through the open window in an audacious attempt to touch the Guru's holy robes. A group of devotees had

even built a provisional shrine on the roadside, where His Holiness alighted and performed a blessing. And everywhere He went, His Holiness was given the welcome of a Dharma King, as ritual musicians, *cham* dancers and emissaries greeted His arrival.

KALIMPONG MONASTERY

His Holiness' first stop on his journey was at Kalimpong Monastery, where He was to spend a week imparting empowerments to the resident monks and to the substantial community of Tibetans who live in the vicinity. There was elation all around, both for a mature generation that had received teachings from His Holiness nearly two decades earlier, and for a younger generation who were setting eyes on Him for the first time, and for whom His Holiness has the stature of a legend. Not only this, but also the presence of so great a master as Luding Khenchen Dorje Chang, lent to the occasion the feel of a once-in-a-lifetime event.

The week at Kalimpong Monastery was filled with activities performed by His Holiness and Luding Khenchen Rinpoche. Among other things, His Holiness bestowed the Buthadamara empowerment, after which a selection of monks took it in turns to recite poems as an offering to His Holiness, who then presented each one of them with a gift. Some of the young monks were too small for the podium and were provided with a box on which to stand during their performance – sometimes to no avail, as several among them still had to balance on their tiptoes.

The following morning, His Holiness and Luding Khenchen Rinpoche performed an elaborate land-blessing ceremony in a marquee overlooking the grounds where the monastery temple is to be built.

The next day, devotees were blessed with the bestowal of two special empowerments. In the



His Holiness performing the Mahavairocana ritual



morning, Luding Khenchen Dorje Chang gave the Vajrapani *Gyundul* in the shrine room, while in the afternoon over a thousand people flocked to the monastery to receive the Mahavairocana empowerment from His Holiness, which is renowned to be particularly powerful. His Holiness concluded His visit to Kalimpong with a *Tsewang*, which attracted an even larger crowd.



Land-blessing ceremony



On the morning of 9th October, His Holiness and entourage left Kalimpong Monastery to make their way to the Sa-Ngor Chotsog Centre in East Sikkim where, from the 20th to the 31st, His Holiness was to bestow the precious Vajrayogini blessing and teachings.

SIKKIM

His Holiness and His party were welcomed at the Ngor Gompa by His Eminence Thartse Khen Rinpoche, current head of the Ngor sub-sect of the Sakya Order.

Established by His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, Sa-Ngor Chotsog Centre was the first Sakya monastery to be established in exile, and the one closest to the Tibet border. It was most auspicious

that both His Holiness and Luding Khenchen Dorje Chang should be at the monastery for the celebration of its Golden Jubilee on the 19th of October.

Sikkim has had strong ties with Tibetan Buddhism for several centuries - in the 8th century Guru Rinpoche and his consort Khandro Yeshey Tsogyal visited Sikkim and, perhaps predicting the troubles that would eventually beset Tibet, hid many *termas* in safer Sikkim. For several centuries, Vajrayana Buddhism was the prevailing religion in the country, and with the 1959 events, many great masters, including Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö, sought exile here.

The Khön family in particular has had a close relationship with Tibet's neighbour ever since Jowo Khye-Bumsa, a scion of the Minyak House in eastern



Sa-Ngor Monastery in Gangtok

Tibet, contributed to the building of the main Sakya monastery in central Tibet and, as a gesture of appreciation, was given the Sakya Hierarch's daughter in marriage. Khye-Bumsa and his family eventually left Tibet and settled in Sikkim, thus becoming the ancestors of the ruling Sikkimese dynasty. Five generations later, his descendant Phuntsok Namgyal was consecrated as the first Chögyal (Dharma King) of Sikkim by three Tibetan lamas.

This kinship between the Namgyal and the Khön families has endured through the centuries until recent times, when His Holiness' grand-uncle, Kyamgön Ngawang Lhundrup Gyantsen took a Sikkimese princess as his wife and, more recently still, when the reigning monarch of the time, Chögyal Chenpo Palden Thondup Namgyal lent his unwavering support to the Sakya family in exile by magnanimously donating the land where the current Sa-Ngor monastery now stands.

And so, it was highly significant that after an absence of nearly twenty years, His Holiness should be visiting Sikkim at a time when it had been the victim of tragic circumstances, and was struggling to recover from the destruction brought by the devastating earthquake that had devastated it three weeks earlier.

During the days preceding the Vajrayogini teachings, His Holiness visited different monasteries and sites of religious interest in the region. His Holiness' first stop was at the 100-foot high Guru Rinpoche statue at Namchi in South Sikkim. Built under the guidance of the great Nyingmapa master Kyabje Dodrupchen Rinpoche, the statue is the highest of its kind in the world. With a sizable group in His tow, His Holiness held a blessing ritual at the foot of the statue, before performing a puja inside its base for the many faithful who had congregated for the occasion.

Then on to Rabangla Buddha Park, an ambitious project undertaken by the Sikkimese government to create a mountaintop pilgrimage site. Five years in the making, it is near completion with, at its heart, a bronze statue of the Buddha, and around it a complex



Guru Rinpoche statue at Namchi



His Holiness performing a blessing at the foot of the statue

including a hotel, shops and, more significantly, the handsome Mani Choekorling temple, where His Holiness conducted a puja. At an altitude of 2100 metres, Buddha Park is not easy of access, and so a helipad has been built nearby.

While in Rabangla, His Holiness also visited the Kunphenling Tibetan settlement where, among other things, He performed a short blessing ceremony on a piece of land recently acquired for the construction of a Sakya Monastery. His Holiness also gave a *Tsewang*, and *Powa* empowerments, as well as the *lung* for several mantras, to the settlement members. Entire families attended, a large number of them comprising four generations.

Next on His Holiness' itinerary was a visit to the handsome Rablang Choekhorling Kagyu Monastery, where He had been requested to bestow the *Thimey Namnyi* ("Devoid of Scent") empowerment, a very special empowerment normally given when the building of a *stupa* is about to be undertaken.

His Holiness was received there by Tsurphu Goshir Gyaltsab Rinpoche, a leading incarnate lama in his lineage. Over the three days that His Holiness spent at the monastery, Gyaltsab Rinpoche and his



An escort precedes His Holiness to the Mani Choekorling temple



The lakhang at Buddha Park

monks offered Him a munificent welcome and, when the moment came to part, lavished Him with sumptuous gifts.



Old and young come together to receive the *tsewang*



Rablang Choekhor Ling

On the 16th October, His Holiness' travels around Sikkim came to a close, as He made His way back to the Sa-Ngor Gompa in Gangtok, where He was to spend the following three weeks bestowing empowerments and presiding over important ceremonies.

SA-NGOR GOMPA

His Holiness' stay at Sa-Ngor was marked by several significant events. Not only was He to bestow the Vajrayogini blessing and teaching, but He was also to preside over the celebration of the centre's 50th Anniversary. In addition, a Fire Puja was to be held in benefit of the victims of the earthquake that had devastated parts of Sikkim a month earlier.



Gyaltsab Rinpoche makes a mandala offering to His Holiness



H.E. Gyalum Chenmo offers a mandala to Gyeltsab Rinpoche

During His stay at Sa-Ngor Gompa, His Holiness was accompanied by H.E. Dungsey Asanga Rinpoche, H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, founder of the monastery, H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche, current Head of the Ngor branch of the Sakya Tradition, H.E. Khar Shabdrung Rinpoche, and several tulkus and lamas. Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and his family arrived from Kalimpong a few days later, on time for the Vajrayogini teachings.

Bhutadamara Fire Puja

As His Holiness arrived, preparations were on their way for the *Gyungdul Shiwai Jensek* (Vajrapani Peaceful Fire Puja) that was to take place on the following day in benefit of the earthquake victims.

The purpose of the ritual is the propitiation of Vajrapani Bhutadamara, through music, prayer, and the offering of blessed substances to the flames, for purification and the removal of obstacles.

The ritual lasted for several hours, during which offerings of different kinds of grass, wood, grains, flowers and oils were blessed by His Holiness before being thrown into the flames.

Among those attending the ceremony were the Speaker of the Sikkimese Legislative Assembly, K.T. Gyaltsen and other dignitaries of the state administration.



His Holiness blesses *Yang Shin* sticks before they kindle the flames





His Holiness blesses a libation of oil



Offerings for the fire



Sacred spoons for the blessing of liquids

When all the offerings had been fed to the flames, sheets of paper carrying the names of the victims were finally consigned to them for their purification.

The ritual ended only when the flames has been reduced to smouldering charcoals. All merits were

dedicated to the victims of the earthquake, and to the happiness of all sentient beings.



The flames roar as they receive the oil



Legislative Assembly Speaker makes an offering to the fire



Papers carrying the names of the victims are offered to the pyre

His Holiness' Activities in Gangtok

During His stay in Gangtok, His Holiness visited several centres, as well as the Museum at the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, a treasure trove of Tibetan scriptures and religious artifacts, some of them several centuries old. In the evening, His Holiness gave a public talk to some two hundred people at Chitan Bhavan, entitled “A Basic Understanding of Buddhism”. Interestingly, in the questions and answers session that followed the talk, most of the queries came from participants who knew little or



His Holiness blessing the land for the Mani Lakhang in Chandmari



Conducting a puja at the Sera-Je Dro-Phen Ling Gompa



Bestowing the *Powa* empowerment at Tsechen Tshogpa



At the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology

nothing about Buddhist philosophy, and dealt in their majority on the nature of emptiness.

Golden Jubilee of Sa-Ngor Gompa

On the morning of 19th October, Sa-Ngor Gompa celebrated its Golden Jubilee. It was indeed fifty years ago that His Eminence Luding Khenchen Rinpoche, 75th Supreme Head of the Ngor sub-sect of the Sakya tradition, founded the Sa-Ngor Chotsog Centre. The centre has since then flourished and, thanks to the efforts of its supporters and the dynamic dedication of founding member and current director, Kunga Yonten Hochotsang, it has grown into an important centre of monastic activity. Khenpo Designate Lupon Jamyang Dakpa provides spiritual guidance to the centre's monks.



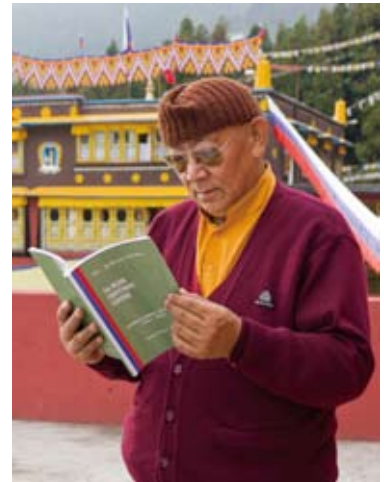
His Holiness and the Chief Minister unveil the inaugural plaque



H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche welcomes the guests



His Holiness and Luding Khenchen Rinpoche with the Chief Minister



Kunga Yonten perusing his Golden Jubilee memorial book

This significant event attracted several important guests, including the Chief Minister of Sikkim, Dr. Pawan Kumar Chamling, and the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Mr. K.T. Gyaltsen.

H.E. Thartse Khen to address the gathering, following which His Holiness, together with the Chief Minister, unveiled the inaugural plaque for the projected *shedra*, or College for Philosophical Studies.

His Holiness was the last to take the podium, giving thanks to all who had supported Ngor Gompa since its inception, and stressing the close ties that have existed throughout the centuries between

Sikkim and the Khön family, adding that these ties were particularly relevant at a time when Sikkim was undergoing grave difficulties. His Holiness stressed that it was at times such as these that efforts must be multiplied to cultivate kindness and compassion towards all beings. His Holiness then offered a prayer for the victims of the earthquake.

The ceremony ended with the Chief Minister making a long-life offering to His Holiness, followed by a concluding prayer.

Lunch was served for everyone in a large tent erected next to the temple for the occasion.

Vajrayogini Teachings

From the 22nd to the 30th of October, His Holiness bestowed the Vajrayogini blessing and teachings at Ngor Gumpa to the eminent Sangha accompanying Him and to senior Ngor Gumpa monks, as well as to a handful of foreigners, mostly come from Taiwan and Singapore. Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and his family, who had been spending a few days in Kalimpong following their time in Bir, joined the teachings on the 24th.

Over the course of the week, His Holiness bestowed the initiations and teachings in Tibetan in the morning, whilst in the afternoon Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Luding Khenchen Rinpoche conducted

the revision in English and in Tibetan respectively. Although no translation of the teachings had been planned, the few foreigners who attended were favoured with translations into Chinese and English, by Phula Rinpoche and Khenpo Jorden respectively.

And so, the occasion was an enormous privilege for those who had the good fortune to find themselves there. All the participants felt very blessed.





Dungsey Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Luding Khenchen Rinpoche conducting their revisions



▲ Young tulku receiving the empowerment



► Young Marnie flew all the way from Australia for the teachings



The Ta Chak-Kyung Sum empowerment

Vajrapani, Hayagriva, Garuda Initiation

On the afternoon of the 30th, a gathering of several thousand devotees flocked to Sa-Ngor to receive the *Ta Chak-Kyung Sum* empowerment from Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche.

This precious initiation is a very effective propitiation of three of the most important tantric deities for the protection of body, speech and mind, and Ratna Vajra Rinpoche's bestowal of it is particularly powerful. Those who were present on that day were fortunate indeed to receive such a precious empowerment from this outstanding master.



Ngor Gumpa Tsechen Samten Ling Retreat Centre



Performing a blessing on the roof

Ngor Gumpa Retreat Centre

With the Vajrayogini teachings over, His Holiness was able to enjoy a well-deserved two-days' rest, during which He and His entourage visited the monastery's retreat centre, the Ngor Gumpa Tsechen Samten Ling Retreat Centre, built and inaugurated by Luding Khenchen Dorje Chang in 2002. A robust walk up the wooded hill behind the main compound and well ensconced in a glade, is a small but comfortable forest cloister, where a handful of monks are doing retreat. His Holiness held a short puja in the centre's diminutive temple, and then climbed to the roof to bless the building and the grounds.

Tsewang

His Holiness' last public activity in Gangtok took place on the afternoon of the 2nd of November. This



was the bestowal of a *Tsewang* to a gathering of some 15,000 people. This very special Guru Yoga *Tsewang* originated with the great Mahasiddha Tangton Gyalpo actually travelling to Zangdopalri (Copper-Coloured Mountain),

and receiving it there from Guru Rinpoche Himself. It is said that if you keep the pledge of reciting 1000 mantras and 100 prayers daily, you are guaranteed to live to a hundred.





Dungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche participates in the puja

His Holiness' visit to Ngor Gumpa was brought to a close on the 3rd of November with a *Tangrak* Mandala offering presented to Him by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, Dungsey Asanga Rinpoche, H.E.

Luding Khenchen Rinpoche and H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche.

That afternoon, the hustle and bustle that had reigned for the past three weeks at Ngor Gumpa hushed, and as H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche led the monks into a Mahakala puja, preparations for departure began, this time to Darjeeling.

DARJEELING

On the 4th of November, His Holiness and entourage bid their farewells to H.E. Luding Khenchen Rinpoche and H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche, and left Ngor Gumpa to make their way back to West Bengal, this time to the Sakyaguru Monastery in Ghoom, in the outskirts of Darjeeling.

Sakyaguru Monastery

As was the case in Kalimpong and Sikkim, this was His Holiness' first visit to Darjeeling in close to twenty years, and so the occasion was filled with emotion when His Holiness arrived at the Sakyaguru Monastery. Often referred to as 'Little Potala' by its residents due to its perching position on the hillside, it was here that the Ghoom monastery's erstwhile owners offered His Holiness His first residence in India when He was forced into exile from Tibet. Later,



in 1961, its owners donated the land and building to His Holiness, and it was incorporated as a Sakya monastery. It is renowned for its Mahakala puja, which is performed there every year during the first week of the sixth Tibetan month.



His Holiness' first residence in India



Statue of Ngachang Kunga Rinchen



Sakyaguru Gumpa abbot Dorje Lopon Palden Phuntsok

The day after His arrival, His Holiness bestowed a special Long-Life initiation on a small group of monks and a handful of lay people. This took place in the small but elegant monastery temple, which boasts a magnificent Vajrayogini statue as well as a striking gold-plated bronze statue of Ngachang Kunga Rinchen, an erstwhile Khön throneholder.

Over the next few days, His Holiness was to give empowerments and blessings in and around Darjeeling to both monks and lay people. A sizeable group of pilgrims had come all the way from Sakya in Tibet to receive His Holiness' blessing, and their overwhelming devotion was palpable as they attended every function that His Holiness conducted over the course of the week.



His Holiness' program in Darjeeling began with His bestowing the *Logyama Tsewang* and the *Drakpo Sumdral* initiation to a crowd of thousands of people who, in spite of the poor weather, filled a school sports field overlooking the monastery.

His Holiness also performed the *Powa* empowerment and teachings in a nearby Tibetan settlement, as well as the Mahavairocana *Wang* and *Pholung* at Sakyaguru Gumpa. It is traditional for Tibetans to bring the clothes of deceased family members to the temple to be blessed during the Khünrig empowerment, before giving them away to the needy, and so as the ritual progressed, piles of



His Holiness performing the Tsewang in Ghoom

clothes and blankets began to accumulate until they occupied a sizable section of the temple floor.

The last stop on His Holiness' five-week tour was at the Sakya Choepheling Institute of Higher Buddhist Studies in Rimbick. His Holiness was given a hearty welcome as trumpets heralded the approach of His motorcade, and a twirling dancer in colourful garb cleared its path through the village streets up to the monastery gate, where His Holiness was greeted by the *shedra* abbot Khenpo Ngawang Gyatso and other lamas.

During His stay at Rimbick, His Holiness bestowed a *Tsewang* on the large crowd of followers who had gathered there from nearby towns and villages. The initiation was followed by a cultural



His Holiness arrives at Rimbick

show of song and dance and by a heated session of debate by the *shedra* monks which, to the uninitiated eye, might have seen somewhat unfair as two monks were being submitted to a gruelling sortie of challenging philosophical questions by ten of their peers, the most unrelenting among whom was a sprightly thirteen-year-old.

The following morning, His Holiness and His party made their way back to Darjeeling, where they

were to be reunited with Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche. Dungsey Akasha Vajra Rinpoche and Jetsunma Kunga Palter arrived shortly afterwards with their mother, H.E. Dagmo Kalden Kushok. Their arrival was greeted with due pomp and circumstance, as the young Dungsey and Jetsunma were escorted to their thrones inside the temple. Both children displayed astonishing poise as Khöndung Akasha Vajra Rinpoche was presented with a mandala offering



Traditional Nepalese dance



Young debater making a strong point



His Holiness with Rimbick abbot Khenpo Ngawang Gyatso and *shedra* monks



Sakyaguru abbot Dorje Lupon Palden Phuntsok pays his respects to Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche

by the Sakyaguru khenpo and other dignitaries.

With this, His Holiness' teaching tour of Northeast India came to an end. On the 15th of November, He and His family flew to Delhi, where His Holiness



Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche and H.E. Jetsunma arrive at Sakyaguru Monastery



Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche blesses a young devotee

and Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche parted ways. His Holiness and entourage were to make their way back to the Phodrang in Rajpur, while Ratna Vajra Rinpoche would fly to Singapore to embark on a six-week teaching tour there and in Malaysia.

Annual Grand Pujas at the Sakya Centre (JAN-MAY)

- **Dochen Puja** - 23rd of the 11th lunar month for 7 days (Jan 17 – 23)
- **Gu-Tor** - 23rd of the 12th lunar month for 7 days (Jan 31 – Feb 6)
- **Annual Grand Vajrayogini Puja** - 8th of the 1st lunar month for 3 days (Mar 1 – 3)
- **Annual Grand Vajra Nairatmya Puja** - 8th of the 2nd lunar month for 7 days (Mar 30 – Apr 5)
- **Annual Grand Mahavairocana Puja** - 11th of the 4th lunar month for 5 days (May 31 – Jun 3)

Great Festival

- **Chotrul Düchen**: 1-15 (February 22-March 8)

This celebrates Shakyamuni Buddha displaying 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”.

Important Dates

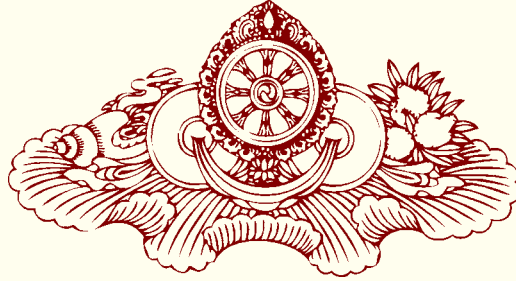
Birthdays - Tibetan / Western

- **Jetsunma Kunga Palter Sakya** - 14th of the 11th lunar month / Jan 2
- **Khöndung Akasha Vajra Rinpoche** - 12th of the 2nd lunar month / Mar 27
- **Jetsunma Ngawang Tsejin Lhamo Sakya** - 29th of the 1st lunar month / Apr 2
- **Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche** - 10th of the 5th lunar month / Jul 5

Holy days

- **Parinirvana of Dagshul Thinley Rinchen (Grand-father of H.H. the Sakya Trizin)** – 3rd of the 1st month (Feb 24)
- **Parinirvana of Kunkhyen Gorampa Sonam Senge & Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo** – 21st of the 1st month (Mar 13)
- **Parinirvana of Yabje Kunga Rinchen (Father of H.H. the Sakya Trizin)** – 8th of the 2nd month (Mar 30)
- **Parinirvana of Jetsun Drakpa Gyaltsen & Khangsar Shabdrung Ngawang Lodroe Tenzin Nyingpo** - 13th of the 2nd month (Apr 3)
- **Parinirvana of Khenchen Dorje Chang Jampa Jampal Sangpo** - 23rd of the 2nd month (Apr 14)
- **Parinirvana of Khuwo Rinpoche Kunga Gyaltsen** – 26th of the 2nd month (Apr 16)
- **Parinirvana of Jamgon Loter Wangpo** – 30th of the 2nd month (Apr 21)
- **Parinirvana of Phende Khenchen Ngawang Khedup Gyatso** – 15th of the 3rd month (May 6)
- **Parinirvana of Dezhung Tulku Kunga Tenpei Nyima** – 18th of the 3rd month (May 8)
- **Parinirvana of Gongkhar Dorje Denpa Dzonpa Kunga Namgyal** -25th of the 3rd month (May 15)
- **Parinirvana of Gaton Ngawang Lekpa, Luding Khenchen Jamyang Thupten Lundok Gyaltsen** – 29th of the 3rd month (May 19)

✿ Lamp offerings for the monastery and food offerings for the lamas are welcome during all important pujas and ceremonies. Kindly contact the Sakya Centre in Rajpur if you wish to make an offering: sakyacentre@paldensakya.org.in



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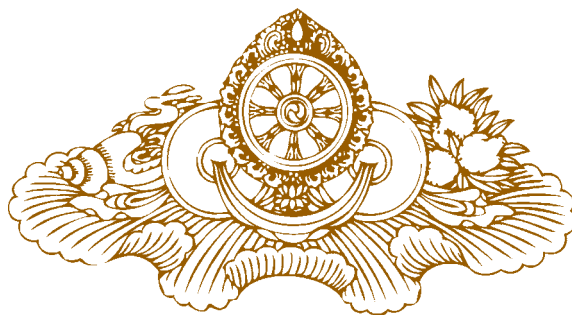
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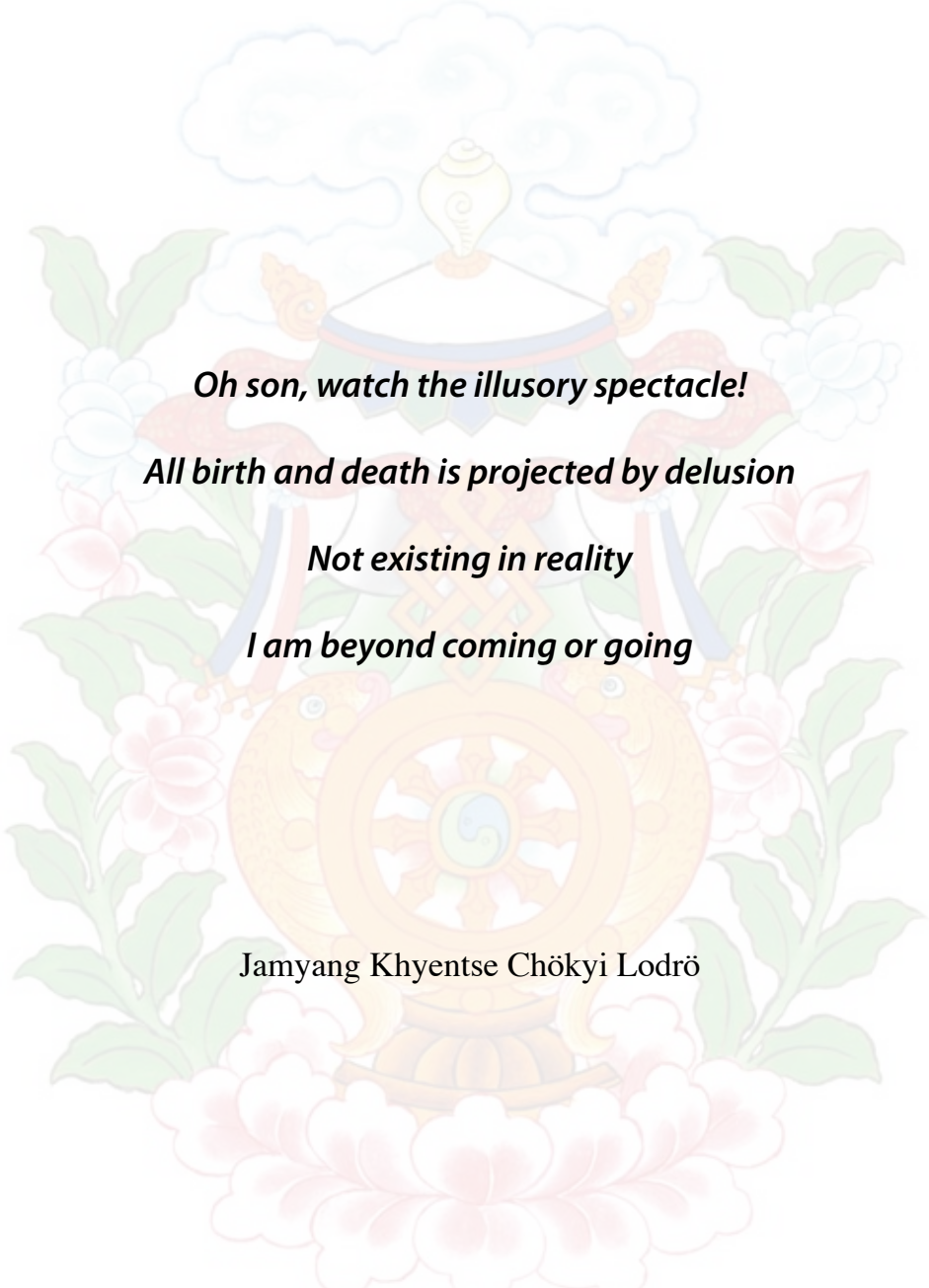
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Oh son, watch the illusory spectacle!

All birth and death is projected by delusion

Not existing in reality

I am beyond coming or going

Jamyang Khyentse Chökyi Lodrö



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