

# Melody of Dharma

## ❁ Finding the Spiritual Master

A teaching by H.H. the Sakya Trizin

## ❁ The Practice of Guru Yoga

A teaching by H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche

## ❁ Remembering Great Masters

• Kotalipa

## ❁ His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in Nepal



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## From The Editors

Dear readers,

We hope that this our third spring issue finds each and every one of you in good health and spirit, and that your lives have been filled with goodness and auspiciousness over the past months.

Our teachers have, as always, been very busy benefitting beings since our last issue, with His Holiness giving teachings and initiations in Nepal and at the Sakya Centre in Rajpur, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche teaching in Singapore, Malaysia and Moscow, and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche doing spiritual practice.

As this goes to print, our gurus are embarking on new teaching tours, with His Holiness and Gyana Vajra Rinpoche travelling to the Far East while Ratna Vajra Rinpoche will be spending the summer teaching in Europe. Among other Dharma activities, His Holiness will be bestowing the precious Lamdre Tsogshey in Taiwan to over eight hundred disciples.

This issue is special in that it carries several profound teachings, including H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche's invaluable instructions on the practice of Guru Yoga as well as precious texts by Kotalipa, Sakya Pandita and Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen. We are deeply grateful to their translators for their selfless generosity in allowing us to share these Dharma treasures with our readers.

We also wish to thank all those who have kindly contributed to the magazine in one way or another, whether it be through their sponsorship, donation or subscription, or through sharing their photographs or texts with us.

We keenly wish to continue to be instrumental in sharing this valued material with our readers but, in order to do so, we need financial support. Although our economic burden has been lightened by reducing publication from four yearly issues to three, our printing and shipping costs are still considerable, and we have no source of income aside from that kindly offered by our readers. So please show your support by helping to sponsor an issue of Melody of Dharma or by becoming a subscriber. We are thankful for all offerings, large or small.

Thanking you and wishing everyone a very pleasant summer,

*The Editing Team*

# H.H. THE SAKYA TRIZIN AND KHÖNDUNG GYANA VAJRA RINPOCHE

## 2012 SUMMER PROGRAMME

DATE	PLACE	VENUE	PROGRAMME
May 27	His Holiness and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrive in Singapore		
May 27	Singapore	Sakya Tenphel Ling	Welcome Ceremony
May 28 - 29	Singapore	Tai Pei Buddhist Centre	Talk on "Freeing the Heart and Mind"
May 30	Singapore	Sakya Tenphel Ling	Mind-Resting Two-Armed Chenrezig Initiation
Jun 1- 2	Singapore	Sakya Tenphel Ling	Vajrakilaya Wangchen
Jun 3	Singapore	Sakya Tenphel Ling	Explanation on the Vajrakilaya Sadhana
Jun 4 - 10	Singapore	Sakya Tenphel Ling	Vajrakilaya Drupchod
June 11	Singapore	Sakya Tenphel Ling	Hevajra Path Empowerment
June 12-	His Holiness and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrive in Taipei		
June 16	Taipei	Wa Sha Conference Centre	Manjushri Initiation / Welcome Dinner
June 17	Taipei	Wa Sha Conference Centre	Zambhala Initiation
June 18 – July 15	Taipei	Wa Sha Conference Centre	Lamdre
July 15	Taipei	Wa Sha Conference Centre	Grand Thanksgiving Tsok
July 30	His Holiness and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrive in Manila		
Aug 1	Manila	Manila Sakya Monastery	am: Welcome Ceremony & Long-Life Initiation pm: Manjushri initiation & teaching on "Parting from the Four Attachments"
Aug 2	Manila	Manila Sakya Monastery	Medicine Buddha Initiation & teaching on "Introduction to Buddhism"
Aug 3	Manila	Manila Sakya Monastery	Mahavairocana ritual for the deceased
Aug 4	Manila	Manila Sakya Monastery	Zambhala Initiation & teaching on "Introduction to Buddhism"
Aug 5	His Holiness and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrive in Cebu		
Aug 6	Cebu	Cebu Sakya Monastery	Welcome ceremony; Medicine Buddha initiation; teaching on "Introduction to Buddhism"
Aug 7	Cebu	Cebu Sakya Monastery	Tara Initiation & teaching on "Introduction to Buddhism"
Aug 9	His Holiness and Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche arrive in Kuala Lumpur		
Aug 10	Kuala Lumpur	5th floor, Lot 442 Komplex Galleria Jalan Pahang 5300	aft: Vasudhara Initiation eve: Teaching on "Inner Wealth and Outer Abundance"
Aug 11	Kuala Lumpur	5th floor, Lot 442 Komplex Galleria Jalan Pahang 5300	aft: Vajrakilaya Torma Initiation eve: Teaching on Vajrakilaya
Aug 12	Kuala Lumpur	5th floor, Lot 442 Komplex Galleria Jalan Pahang 5300	Opening Ceremony and consecration of the new centre
Aug 14	Kuala Lumpur	5th floor, Lot 442 Komplex Galleria Jalan Pahang 5300	aft: White Tara special Long-Life initiation (Phagma Nyingthig) eve: Kurukulle initiation (Gyana Vajra Rinpoche)
Aug 15	Kuala Lumpur	5th floor, Lot 442 Komplex Galleria Jalan Pahang 5300	aft: Tara initiation (Gyana Vajra Rinpoche) eve: Teaching: Tara (His Holiness the Sakya Trizin)
Aug 16	Sibu		
Aug 17	Sibu		
Aug 18-21	Kapit		
Aug 21	Kuching		
Aug 22	Kuching	New Sakya Centre	
Aug 23	Leave for Delhi		



# KHÖNDUNG RATNA VAJRA RINPOCHE

## 2012 SUMMER PROGRAMME

DATE	DAY	VENUE	PROGRAM
May 25	Fri	Sakya Tsechen Ling	8pm: Teaching on Mind training
May 26	Sat	Sakya Tsechen Ling	10am: Manjushri Initiation & Sakya Pandita Guru Yoga Initiation 8pm: Teaching on Manjushri & Sakya Pandita combined Sadhanas
May 27	Sun	Sakya Tsechen Ling	10AM: Teaching on Manjushri & Sakya Pandita Combined Sadhanas 2:30PM: Teaching on Manjushri & Sakya Pandita
May 28	Mon	Sakya Tsechen Ling	10AM: Lama Chopa Guru Yoga Ritual
Jun 13	Wed	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	Conference on Buddhism
Jun 14	Thurs	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	Parting from the Four Attachments
Jun 15	Fri	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	6PM: Chenrezig in the King's Tradition empowerment
Jun 16	Sat	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	Two initiations (White Manjushri, Saraswati)
Jun 17	Sun	Sakya Kunga Choling, Trieste, Italy	One initiation (Kurukulla)
Jun 19	Tues	Sakya Drogon Ling, Denia, Spain	6PM: Dharma talk- How To Be Happy in Difficult Times 6PM: Medicine Buddha- Preparatory empowerment
Jun 20	Wed	Sakya Drogon Ling, Denia, Spain	8PM: Medicine Buddha- Main empowerment
Jun 21	Thurs	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	10AM and 6PM: Introduction to Vajrayana- General Explanation of Empowerment
Jun 22	Fri	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	10AM and 6PM: Guru-disciple Relationship
Jun 23	Sat	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	4PM: Kalachakra wang- first day, preparatory empowerment
Jun 24	Sun	Sakya Foundation, Alicante, Spain	8PM: Kalachakra wang- second day, main empowerment
Jun 26	Thurs	Anandakara, Audenge+ Terres De Bodhisattvas, Mont De Marsan, France	Dharma talk on the Paramita of Patience according to the Bodhicaryavatara
Jun 27	Wed	Anandakara, Audenge+ Terres De Bodhisattvas, Mont De Marsan, France	Hayagriva, Vajrapani, Garuda empowerment with short explanation
Jun 29	Fri	Sakya Kunga Ling, Paris, France	Empowerment and teaching (exact program to be confirmed)
Jun 30	Sat	Sakya Kunga Ling, Paris, France	Empowerment and teaching (exact program to be confirmed)
Jul 1	Sun	Sakya Kunga Ling, Paris, France	Mahakala Puja
Jul 7	Sat	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	6PM: Hevajra Cause Empowerment
Jul 8	Sun	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	8PM: Hevajra Cause Empowerment
Jul 9	Mon	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	7:00 to 9:30 PM- 50 Verses of Guru Devotion
Jul 10	Thurs	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	7:00 to 9:30 PM- 50 Verses of Guru Devotion
Jul 11	Wed	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	7:00 to 9:30 PM- Teaching on Samaya. Prerequisite: any major Annutara Yoga Tantra empowerment
Jul 12	Thurs	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10AM Vajayogini- Naropa 5PM Vajrayogini- Indrabhuti
Jul 13	Fri	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10AM Vajrayogini - Maitripa 3:30PM 3 initiations 1. Singhanada 2. Black Manjushri 3. Multi-coloured Garuda
Jul 14	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
Jul 15	Sun	Sakya Foundation, Frankfurt, Germany	10 AM Two initiations 1. Tinuma 2. Red Jambhala
Aug 4-8		Sakya Tenphel Ling, Singapore	Empowerments
Aug 17-22		Sakya Tenphel Ling, Singapore	Changchog
Sep 20-31		Ladakh	

# Tsechen Shed-Dub Santem Phuntsok Ling

Also known as the "Sakya College for Nuns", Tsechen Shed-Dub Santem Phuntok Ling at Manduwala is the first Sakya institution to give nuns the opportunity to engage in higher Buddhist studies on a par with those offered to monks at the Sakya College in Dehradun and at the Sakya Institute in Puruwala.

It had for a long time been the wish of His Holiness the Sakya Trizin that advanced study of the Buddhist scriptures be made accessible to nuns, and this aspiration first saw the light when, on the occasion of His bestowal of the Lamdre teachings at the College in 2000, His Holiness blessed its land. At that time, its function was that of a retreat centre, but thanks to His Holiness' blessing and support, along with the initiative and guidance of Sakya College's Khenpo Gyatso, new facilities were built, and the College was inaugurated by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin as a centre of higher learning on 26th September 2009.

Under the very able direction of Venerable Khenpo Jampa Khedup



Khenpo Gyatso



as their abbot and of Acharya Ani Dechen Wangmo as their principal, the College shows every promise of becoming a major centre of study, where nuns prepare to become worthy repositories of Sakya Buddhist knowledge. Carefully selected for their outstanding aptitudes and qualifications from a high number of Sakya Nunnery applicants, twenty-five nuns were enrolled in the pilot programme. Since then, the College has come on in leaps and bounds. Ten more nuns joined last summer and, funds permitting, a new batch of ten will do so next summer and ten more the following year. This will bring numbers up to fifty-five, which is as many as the current infrastructure can cater to.

The nuns' day is long and not a second of it is wasted. The gong rings at five in the morning for the nuns to get ready for the six o'clock Long Tara puja. Fresh tormas are prepared every day, and the nuns take turns to be chant master. Apart from the long horn



Early morning Tara puja

(*dungchen*), all the ritual instruments are present, and several of the nuns excel at playing them.

Breakfast follows, and then begins the academic day that will last until a quarter to eleven at night, only to be interrupted by tea and meal breaks. The morning hours are dedicated to Buddhist philosophy class with Khenpo Jampa Kedhup, followed by a period of self-study on the topic covered.

The afternoon starts with a language class (Tibetan, English and Hindi) with Ani Dechen Wangmo, followed by a revision of the morning's topic with Khenpo la.

Then, as if this were not enough, an unrelenting three-hour session of heated debate on the same topic begins, that will last until the evening meal. A period of self-study is next and then an hour and a half of free time, the only one in the day, before lights go out at ten forty five.



Daily debate session





Philosophy class with Khenpo Jampa Kedhup



The nuns still find time to do cleaning, cooking, maintenance and basic gardening work, with a single employee to share their load. One would think that such a demanding schedule would carry its toll, but there is not one single nun at the Institute who doesn't beam with joy, generosity and intelligence. In spite of their qualifications, which well put them at a par with

their male counterparts, the nuns retain the humility and bashfulness that is traditional to their robes.

Among the disciplines covered at the Institute are vinaya, abhidharma, logic and madhyamika philosophy. The academic year is divided into two semesters, with a set of gruelling exams at the end of each semester. The nuns can pursue their studies



Household duties with a smile



Language class with Ani Dechen Wangmo





Khenpo Jampa Khedup and Ani Dechen Wangmo with the shedra students

for as long as 14 years and earn the highest degrees attainable in the Sakya tradition. Eight years of study will obtain them a Kachupa degree, while a Loppön degree will require two additional years. For those who wish to pursue their studies further, a Rabjampa degree can be gained, subsequent to the successful passing of a demanding examination and the submission of a thesis, which they then need to defend. And finally, with the completion of 14 years of study, candidates can earn the Ngagrampa degree,

the highest achievable in the Sakya tradition, and equivalent to a postdoctoral degree.

With the first batch of students due to achieve the Kachupa degree in 2016, hopes are high that many will follow in their footsteps, swelling the ranks of knowledge holders and enriching the Sakyapa School with a precious wealth of realised potential.



In-depth study of the texts

# Remembering Great Masters

## KOTALIPA The Peasant Guru

(11<sup>th</sup> Century CE)

**K**otalipa, known in Tibetan as *Tog tse pa*, was one of the eighty-four Mahasiddhas, or highly accomplished tantric yogis, that are said to have lived in India between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> centuries of our common era.

Kotalipa was a labourer, whose life consisted of digging and ploughing an arid and barren mountain land, his only stead since being forced by hostile forces to flee from his war-torn home.

He was mercifully released from his wretched existence when he met his master, the Mahasiddha Shantipa, a disciple of Naropa's and abbot of the famous Vikramashila University, who was on his way back to Magadha from Sri Lanka, where he had been invited by the king to give teachings.

When Shantipa saw Kotalipa's suffering, he was taken by compassion and gave Kotalipa instructions on how to free himself from his misery. He told Kotalipa that rather than wasting his body on fruitlessly excavating the mountain soil, he should instead excavate his mind, and gradually uncover its true nature.



Kotalipa spent the following twelve years putting Shantipa's advice into practice, and finally attained Mahamudra. Having achieved this, Kotalipa felt such gratitude toward his teacher that he decided to go to Shantipa and thank him for his kindness.

When he presented himself before Shantipa, the latter didn't recognise him and asked him who he was. Kotalipa reminded him of their erstwhile roadside encounter and of how Shantipa's

instructions had relieved him of his suffering and led him to liberation. On hearing this, Shantipa replied that he himself had been too busy to practice his own teaching and had therefore not been able to attain realisation. He then requested Kotalipa to bestow upon him the very same teaching that he himself had given his student years earlier. He in turn practiced these and eventually attained liberation.

Kotalipa was a staunch advocate of nondual awareness and of devotion to the guru, on which he gave detailed instructions in his work "The Inconceivable Stage".

*Title image of Kotalipa: courtesy of [www.himalayanart.org](http://www.himalayanart.org)*

# The Inconceivable Stage

by the Mahasiddha Kotalipa

(From Sakya Mahamudra)

*In Sanskrit: Acantyakramo-upadeshanama*

*In Tibetan: bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i tim pa'i man ngag ces bya ba*

*In English: The Intimate Instruction of the Inconceivable Stage*

*I prostrate to Sri Vajrasattva*

1. Homage to discriminating wisdom that arises  
as the supreme essence,  
the nature of inconceivable nondual space.  
I will write of returning to the stage of perfection  
that Bhadrappa taught.
2. The great secret method and wisdom,  
the characteristic of inconceivable compassion,  
the wisdom whose range is beyond speech  
will arise naturally.
3. That perception perceiving with the form  
of an object is not meditation;  
the supreme nonduality self-arisen  
with the nature of a blissful aspect.
4. Bodhicitta can't be seen  
by vajraholders because it's not real;  
the ultimate will not be seen as duality  
by an analysis of the permanent and impermanent.
5. This nature of phenomena  
is not an object and is not empty;  
non-dual wisdom will blaze  
because of investigating duality.
6. That aspect of all is non-dual  
those dualities do not exist;  
the aspect of uniform one taste  
is the supreme inconceivable wisdom.
7. The supreme nonduality is not meditated  
with the concepts of a conceptual yoga;  
the non-conceptual vajra of bliss  
will be obtained with the inconceivable.
8. Creation causes conceptuality,  
and completion, both of them are the same;  
freed from the aspect of duality,  
the possessor of traces gives up traces.
9. Bhadrappa taught the stage to which one returns is  
wisdom, free from the aspects of traces,  
self-arisen, not a pretense.
10. Traces with the nature of real  
and unreal are bondage;  
severed by the inconceivable  
with a non-conceptual nature.
11. It is said: "The Jewel Mind is made impure  
by the net of the impurities of concepts;  
by freeing it from impurities, it is Buddhahood,  
'non-dual wisdom'."
12. The yogi must always see  
everything in the non-conceptual nature;  
this is the Samadhi meditation  
taught by Bhadrappa.
13. The nature of anything non-arisen  
will not itself cease;  
that wisdom is nondual  
and perfectly free of all conceptuality.
14. Buddha Vajradhara and so on  
explain conceptuality as external;  
the meaning of non-conceptuality arises  
with the glorious vajra of great bliss.



15. The whole world actually exists  
because of inner and outer conceptuality'  
nonduality is completely liberated from duality,  
wisdom will arise naturally.
16. Do not meditate on non-existents,  
also do not meditate on existents,  
the bliss of heroes is without extremes,  
the inconceivable exists without duality.
17. Whatever sentient beings think  
dwells in the aspect of discriminating wisdom's  
essence,  
the arrow of blossoming compassion  
hits the target, great bliss.
18. Inanimate and animate phenomena  
abide as appearances because there is no duality;  
they are naturally pure,  
peace, space, and immaculate.
19. Nonduality is merely a name,  
even that name will not exist;  
sensation and one who senses are free from  
indications,  
nonduality is great bliss.
20. Liberated from all concepts,  
without the dualism of duality, supreme peace,  
like space, liberated from conceptuality,  
this is called non-dual,
21. the meditation on the appearances of all  
phenomena  
with the yoga of abiding in the inconceivable,  
the stage of Dharmasena,  
taught by Bhadrappa.
22. Dividing the non-dual into appearances,  
the glorious greatly blissful protector,  
of a single nature,  
emanates as different appearances because of  
living  
beings.
23. Those deceived by telling lies,  
talking about emptiness as an object,  
will not realize the highest bliss  
because of the bondage of confusing concepts.
24. Pure method and wisdom  
is beyond conceptual imputations of evil,  
the great yoga of non-dual wisdom,  
is itself unique great bliss.
25. Because something is naturally inconceivable,  
Buddhahood is not within the domain of the mind,  
its nature is everything,  
self-arising, transcending thoughts.
26. All creatures on earth  
will be harmed by the net of conceptuality,  
that unique nondual wisdom  
is free from all conceptuality.
27. A stream and its channel will not be two things  
no matter how long  
also there is nothing in the middle,  
supreme nondual wisdom.
28. The differences of everything relative  
duality and nonduality are conceptual;  
the great yoga of method and wisdom  
is called non-dual one taste.
29. There isn't anything in the middle between  
one who is passionate and free from passion;  
bliss is never truly known,  
that is called nonduality
30. Free from a basis of characteristics and  
characteristics,  
free from a knower and the known,  
the Jewel Mind is best realized  
by giving up the selfless individually.
31. Because existents lack a nature,  
also non-existents will never be seen;  
by realizing eye consciousness,  
non-dual wisdom is amazing!
32. Completely free from all proliferation,  
and immaculate like space;  
cutting the nets of concepts  
inconceivable nonduality is supreme.
33. Penetrated by the elixir of nonduality-  
like heavy wood and stone  
are turned in a statue of a god  
Bhadrappa has taught.



34. Method, wisdom and great compassion,  
aspects of unique one taste,  
in that wisdom is perfected  
the nondual great bliss itself.
35. Beyond form, sound, taste and so on,  
free from smell and touch and so on,  
becoming the dharmadhatu, pure,  
supreme nondual wisdom.
36. Liberated from all concepts,  
free from subject and object,  
natural purity is uncovered,  
the meaning of nonduality is the sublime.
37. Non-arisen and unceasing,  
unchanging and non-abiding,  
supreme real nondual wisdom,  
this is itself mahamudra.
38. Qualities and faults  
are described as appearances in the ind;  
therefore, supreme one-pointed wisdom  
from the nature without pretense,
39. wisdom naturally arises  
without any meditation at all.  
What is the reason? This inconceivable Dharma  
Is the non-dual abode of the Buddhas.
40. More pure than very purest,  
free from meditator and an object of meditation  
the only source of glorious bliss  
will certainly be seen through non-conceptuality.
41. The forms of the deity are manifold,  
Vajrasattva and so on,  
The Buddhas are all reflections,  
and the assembly of the mandala of yoginis,
42. all the wrathful kings,  
likewise the vidya goddesses,  
the excellent mandalacakra,  
the immaculate aspects of appearance,
43. likewise, the sutra-pitika,  
further, the stages of the perfections,  
mantra, mudra, rigpa,  
likewise, accomplishing the essence
44. all explanation of mantras  
the activities of the mandala and the fire offerings,  
recitations, the offering rituals,  
self arise from nonduality;
45. the view is Shiva and Surya;  
likewise, the suitable offerings, Vishnu,  
those who claim the authority of the Vedas  
and the others will self-arise.
46. This yoga, the abode of the omniscient,  
inconceivable and non-conceptual,  
the view called 'Samantabhadra',  
is non-dual, like a wish-fulfilling gem,
47. the [siddhis] of the underground, swords, pills,  
wooden shoes, a vase and a yakshini,  
also elixir and excellent eye medicine  
are self-accomplished, not existing elsewhere.
48. Mantrins should not meditate existents  
also should not meditate non-existents,  
liberation is non-conceptual,  
everything is self-arisen.
49. Also when Buddhahood itself is accomplished,  
what need to speak of Shiva, Vishnu and so on?  
Its characteristics do not exist,  
Lacking form, characteristics or color.
50. The excellent holder of an illusory appearance,  
the immaculate nature of existents,  
the appearance of natural luminous clarity  
the joyful source of eternal bliss.
51. Free from body, speech and mind,  
the shining appearance of a mirror,  
the bliss of supreme joy's appearance,  
the source of eternal great bliss.
52. Names and colors are best described  
by demonstrations that utilize words;  
because of being beyond words  
it's not easy to express to others,
53. though with the method of passionate activities  
the desired goal is easy,  
at the time of the great secret offering,  
one becomes nondual with the prajna,
54. because the traces are exhausted  
in the nature that has a single aspect,  
Bhadrapa taught  
Buddhahood itself will definitely be obtained.

55. Receiving the empowerment with the stains of traces,  
from the different applications of texts,  
with different separate colors,  
is not the non-dual itself,
56. free from beginning, middle and end,  
free from creation and completion,  
free from thought and thinker  
nondual wisdom is supreme,
57. taught by Bhadrapa  
as 'nondual Buddhahood'.  
Therefore, through realization of Buddhahood  
The sublime siddhas became Buddhas.
58. Buddhahood is named "nondual"  
because of the application of words of the demonstration;  
because of the way the ultimate is undifferentiated,  
there is no Buddhahood and no nonduality.
59. If wisdom becomes supreme,  
it is far away from the stains of concepts,  
The emperor is hidden from  
All concepts of existents and so on.
60. Yogis upholding "the non-dual"  
through the yoga of cultivating experience  
by the kindness of Bhadrapa  
be patient towards me.
61. Also scholars should be very diligent  
in order to exhaust traces;  
otherwise there will be no Buddhahood  
for incalculable eons.
62. Traces are exhausted  
led by non-dual wisdom;  
when traces are exhausted,  
nonduality is called "Buddhahood."
63. In the state of free from traces,  
there is no division at all  
into medium or ordinary people,  
they are called "Buddhas".
64. Also Bhadrapa taught  
wisdom perfectly abides  
because of the natureless nature,  
method is the creator of phenomena,
65. through the yoga of one-taste  
that has a nature of unifying those,  
Bhadrapa said:  
"This is the supreme nonduality."
66. Bhadrapa said excellently:  
"There is no instruction, meditation, or contemplation;  
Buddhahood itself is attained  
Because of the beautiful consort possessing supreme joy."
67. An example cannot be given  
for all phenomena,  
eye through mental consciousness  
are free from the phenomena of the examples.
66. Unique, without beginning,  
without end, perfectly abiding appearances,  
to be understood by the excellent one,  
from the kindness of the Guru.
67. Yoga will now be explained to people:  
anuyoga is relative,  
non-dual wisdom is great yoga  
the yogin himself will become a Buddha.
68. When the sun and moon are seized by the eclipse  
Buddhahood itself arises here  
Through the non-dual wisdom which  
Melts from the union of the prajna and the vajra.
69. The nature of ultimate joy  
is free from subject and object,  
without doubts about the form of accomplishment  
supreme non-dual compassion;
70. Any form, supreme, medium or common,  
can be seen by anyone's eye;  
the sublime see nonduality  
with nature of the ultimate object.
71. The function of both ears, pleasant and unpleasant sounds,  
can be heard by anyone's ears;  
supreme wisdom is beyond sound,  
the ear of supreme nonduality.
72. Good taste and bad taste  
can be tasted by anyone's tongue;  
supreme nonduality is realized  
with the six tastes of different things.

73. Because the scent of musk and so on,  
smelled with the nose is a smell consciousness;  
supreme nonduality will be known  
by its unique nature.
74. Because of having been born in different  
birthplaces  
through the nature of physical contact,  
the perfect union of method and wisdom  
is the supreme nonduality.
75. Pervading everything without spaces,  
from the light rays of the appearances of wisdom,  
is independent supreme joy,  
the sublime bliss of nondual Buddhahood.
76. Formations, sensation, ideation,  
matter and consciousness are  
the bodies of the five different wisdoms,  
the dualistic is non-dual.
77. Combining the five lords together,  
Vairocana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava,  
Amitays and likewise Amoghasiddhi,  
Is the sixth, the Great Blissful one.
78. Earth, water and likewise fire,  
air and also space itself,  
the innate five elements  
are transformed into nondual awakening.
79. The mirror-like, equality, activity  
discrimination and the dharmadatu wisdoms  
are comprehended to be concepts,  
be confident in nonduality alone.
80. Influenced by sentient beings' wishes  
with the fortune of texts, and so on  
Shiva and so on, Vishnu, Brahma,  
And omniscience are nonduality alone.
81. The domain beyond all  
objects and so on, and the mind;  
the name "the nondual ultimate"  
is a relative verbal proliferation.
82. Other than differentiations of the ultimate state  
Buddhahood does not exist and duality does not  
exist;  
Because of concepts, the 'yoga of space'  
is also said to be a verbal proliferation.
83. The words of various treatises  
explain through different aspects;  
nondual Buddhahood  
cannot be spoken of to others.
84. Explaining emptiness,  
investigating the ten discriminating wisdoms,  
and also explaining the Buddhas as five,  
and the eight relatives are non-dual.
85. See everything as if it  
were a reflection in the mirror;  
likewise, in this non-dual wisdom  
Buddha's awakening is inconceivable.
86. In all three realms,  
all of the causes of birth and location  
the source of all living beings will be  
from non-dual wisdom.
87. Oceans, mountains, trees,  
roots, branches, vines and so on,  
nondual wisdom is the source of those,  
here there can be no doubt.
88. Father and mother are one  
two do not exist here;  
from actual non-dual wisdom  
moreover everything will arise;
89. Thus, from the non-dual nature of  
wisdom joined with the method  
here, the yogin  
immediately attains Buddhahood.
90. The supreme pure wisdom,  
the text of the lineage of Gurus,  
from mouth to ear, mouth to ear,  
was taught by Bhadrappa.
91. Because of this, through the kindness of  
Bhadrappa  
the yogin of the inconceivable meditation  
will definitely attain Buddhahood  
with the yoga of completion.
92. The lineage of Ashvavajra, Vinavajra,  
Indrabhuti, Lakshminakara  
Lilavajra, Ghunaderi  
greatly compassionate Master Padma,

93. and Dharmasena,  
encountered in Bhadrapa  
all have one intention  
supreme non-dual wisdom.
94. In all the teachings of mantra,  
likewise, the system of the perfections,  
the sutra-pitika, and so on,  
here is only great nondual bliss.
95. The individual tenets of  
mChod'os, Surya, Shiva, and so on;  
The Dharma of Vishnu and Manu,  
are demonstrated as nonduality.
96. There is nothing outside nonduality.  
Gods, titans and common people  
Are all nondual wisdom  
That will be seen in different appearances.
97. The one who integrates compassion with  
nonduality,  
holds method and wisdom equally  
specifying emptiness separately,  
Buddha is the highest of all.
98. This, Bhadrapa's text,  
is the ultimate ocean of wisdom,  
like churning milk, the appearances  
of others all will be born from it.
99. Those known as Bhrama, Vishnu, Ishvara  
any Buddhas, and so on,  
along with the sun, moon and stars,  
arise from the ocean of wisdom.
100. Lakshmi and Sarasvati  
are the supreme taste of amrita;  
with the gods, titans and men,  
everything arose from amrita.
101. The virtuous stage of Vajradhara  
is also explained to be the thirteenth.  
Arising in the form of a triangle,  
this is called the dharmakara.
102. By being filled with the sun, moon and water,  
the form of the Prajna blazes more;  
In order to obtain Buddhahood  
all great bliss is from bliss.
103. The great lotus has ten million petals,  
supreme and common anthers exist inside it,  
perfectly endowed with the vowels and  
consonants.
104. Concealed by the covering of the moon and sun  
uniformly endowed with nine Prajnas;  
the aspect of dripping and blazing  
is the supreme source of the lunar bindu.
105. That excellent woman creating joy,  
she who bestows of the ultimate result  
completely  
very full of the first amrita,  
is equal to possessing a precious jewel.
106. The abode of limitless qualities,  
the abode of the blissful Sri Vajradhara  
the creator of all happiness,  
the creator who can cause destruction,
107. the forms of the deity are manifold,  
and produced from the ocean of non-dual  
wisdom.  
Dharma, sambhogarupa  
and nirmana are the kayas,
108. turning the wheel of Dharma  
for the benefit of all sentient beings  
in all the utter reaches  
of all the world systems in the ten directions.
109. Possessing the power of the ten wisdoms.  
The space of the sublime Prajna Queen's lotus  
is the path upon which to travel,  
to return to Bhadra's stage.
110. The heart lotus, the navel lotus,  
likewise, the throat lotus  
also the coiled birth place lotus,  
exist as the door through which to travel.
111. When the movement of feces, urine, and sperm  
are met at the nine gates;  
the deity, meditation, hearing,  
and supreme taste are transformed into rigpa.
112. The uniform lotus body  
abides above and below,  
this is explained as "The Prajna"  
the consort of all Buddhas.



113. The deity abiding inside her,  
the nondual sublime lord  
will sport in the three-fold lotus,  
the omniscient great blissful one.
114. Ornamented with fire,  
water, earth and air,  
carried by the vidya's slow movement  
into the three separate [nadis].
115. From applying the end of the tip  
with the coiled lunar path,  
the non-dual rosary of Buddhahood,  
is in the channel of the vajra with a root.
116. If thoroughly afflicted because of movement,  
after relaxing the coiled tip  
having applied the vajra's tip  
one should drink the amrita.
117. After that, the body is purified,  
one's nature becomes immaculate  
one's intelligence is excellent and one is  
knowledgeable,  
aging and death are destroyed.
118. Bhadrappa taught this yoga  
to me without difficulty,  
truly Samadhi is called "amrita"  
there is no other truth.
119. By different inhalations through the nose  
the indestructible form of Ham  
is carried into the path with the path  
of the coiled channel, and abides with certainty.
120. That is relaxed at the door,  
the pure aspect, luminous clarity,  
called 'beginningless nonduality'  
perfectly abides in the form of glorious bliss.
121. After that, by exhaling the air,  
also great power will appear,  
also the definitive path will appear,  
one is the supreme uncontrived lord,

122. attainer of the thirteenth stage  
abiding like the lord of bliss,  
the form that was never created,  
the turner of the wheel of Dharma.
123. The stages Bhadrappa taught  
are the brief stages of essential meaning;  
having accepted whatever was heard,  
that is itself the hearing, contemplation and  
meditation.
124. By Bhadrappa's kindness  
the one called 'Virtuous Kotalipa'  
correctly compiled  
this yogic meditation that was received.
125. May I be born as a servant again and again  
of Bhadrappa  
of other masters and yogins,  
and of all sentient beings.
126. Thus, through such a wish  
whether I become a Buddha  
or not and go to hell,  
hell itself blissful.

The yoga of the limitless purity of the stages of  
the Guru  
is the text that has become the nature of mantra  
of all those of great intelligence.  
The section on inconceivable nonduality is the  
completion stage itself,  
The divine form that is essence of all the textual  
systems of yoga.  
Because I am confused, of little intelligence, I  
have  
Written it in topics for my own recollection.

*"The Stages of the Inconceivable" by the siddha of Mahamudra, Sri Kotalipa, is finished. Translated by the Indian abbot Ratnavajra and the Bhikshu Shakya Yeshe.*

*Translated by Acharya Lama Migmar Tseten and Loppon Kunga Namdrol 2006*

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# Finding the Spiritual Master

A Teaching by His Holiness the Sakya Trizin



Two kinds of beings inhabit this universe: inanimate and animate beings. ‘Inanimate’ refers to beings that have no mental feelings, such as rivers and mountains and so forth, while ‘animate’ refers to humans and all other beings that have mental feelings.

We humans belong to the animate class of beings, and our mental feelings are very powerful. There are many different kinds of human beings, numerous races and various cultures, each with their own views and beliefs, but there is one thing that is common to all - the wish to be free from suffering and to experience happiness.

Further, there is no disagreement to be found with this; everyone agrees on the same goal. Whatever

race we belong to, no matter what we believe in, whether we are believers or non-believers, everyone strives to become free from suffering and to attain happiness. Every individual, society, government, and country aims for this goal. For the sake of happiness, humankind has made enormous progress in the field of science and technology and, through this, has gained great benefit.

Simultaneously, it is quite clear that material progress alone cannot secure the true peace and happiness that we are seeking. In order to attain true happiness, it is very important that we achieve internal, spiritual development. To attain happiness, we need to make both material and spiritual progress.

Here the pertinent question is: how can we progress in the spiritual field?

The base for our spiritual development is our Buddha Nature. The Buddha said that every sentient being possesses Buddha Nature, which means that the true nature of our mind is pure, naturally pure, right from the beginning. However, at the moment, we do not see the true nature of our mind. It is covered by our illusions and obscurations.

These obscurations are not in the nature of the mind. They are only temporary, and so we can free ourselves of them. If they were in the nature of the mind, then we could not eliminate them. For example, no matter how much we try to wash coal, it will never become white. If one uses the right remedies, we can remove our obscurations. Like a white cloth that is covered with dirt won't reveal that it is white, but with the proper methods of applying soap and water, all the dirt will be washed away and then we can then see the actual colour of the cloth.

In the same way, our mind is naturally pure and obscurations are only temporary, and there are right methods to eliminate defilements permanently. Therefore, as ordinary persons, if we apply the correct methods and efforts, we can eliminate our obscurations and realise the true nature of our mind, and thus attain the absolute goal, which is real peace and happiness.

Even if we don't reach ultimate realisation, our efforts to progress spiritually will bring us many benefits, and can give us experiences of deep peace and happiness.

The very first condition that will allow us to grow spiritually is faith, faith in the teachings. By faith we do not mean blind faith. Here faith means that through our own careful investigation, we come to the irrefutable conclusion that the teachings are genuine.

Without this first condition being in place, it is impossible for us to develop any virtuous qualities or

to accomplish any virtuous deeds. Like a seed that is roasted cannot grow in soil, we cannot develop any virtuous qualities without faith.

According to the teachings, there are three kinds of faith.

The first faith is called "clear faith". When we perceive the great qualities of the Buddha, His teachings and community, all our confusion is cleared and our mind is refreshed. Clear faith is similar to the state of mind of a person suffering from the heat being refreshed by remembering snow mountains or any cold landscape.

The second faith is called "aspiration". This refers to the aspiration to achieve spiritual attainment and to acquire virtuous qualities for one's own sake as well as that of others. Much like the only goal of a thirsty elephant in a hot climate is to find water, so our only aspiration is to attain spiritual realisation.

Finally, the third kind of faith is called "trust". Trust in the teachings of the Buddha, particularly in the law of cause and effect and the qualities of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This is like a mother and child who meet after a long separation, and still instinctively trust each other.

A human being who is endowed with these three kinds of faith is one who has, by thorough investigation and analysis, developed unshakable faith in the teachings and will not be tempted to forsake the teachings of the Buddha due to the usual causes of abandoning the spiritual path mentioned earlier.

There are four of these usual causes and the first one is desire. Desire for worldly attainments such as wealth or fame is something that can lead us to leave the spiritual path.

The second cause is hatred. The rise of anger in one's mind toward someone can move us to abandon the path.

Fear is the third cause of leaving the spiritual path. For example, if our staying on the spiritual path

can give rise to undesirable circumstances, even the loss of our life, this could bring us to abandon the path.

Lastly, the fourth cause is ignorance. By this we mean the ignorance of not knowing what to adopt and what to abandon. This lack of clarity could also take us away from the spiritual path.

In order to eliminate these four causes of abandoning the spiritual path; we need to fully realise their futility and the harm that they cause us. In the case of the first cause, desire, we need to remember that no matter how much we attain in our worldly life, how high a position we reach, this is only temporary and not really beneficial. There is no comparison to be made between material benefit and spiritual benefit.

As for the second cause, hatred, this is the worst defilement that we can harbour. Even the merits that have been accumulated over thousands of eons can be lost by giving way to anger even for a single moment. By always remembering the terrible harm that anger can cause, we can eliminate it.

Fear, the third cause, can be eradicated by realising that no matter what harm we face by remaining on the spiritual path, even the loss of our life, this can never be as dire as falling into the lower realms by abandoning the path.

To eliminate the fourth cause, ignorance, we need to always be conscious of what keeps us on the path, and what takes us away from it, and to abide by these criteria.

Therefore, the very first thing that we must do on the spiritual path is to establish faith, unshakable faith that will utterly subdue these four causes. This immovable faith will become the base for all our virtuous qualities. Equally, if we are to embark on the spiritual path, it is crucial that we find a teacher, a spiritual master, who can guide us along the way.

Even when we undertake an ordinary task, such as acquiring a new skill or going on a journey, the

assistance of an experienced guide or teacher is essential. Without this, one can easily learn wrong methods and even go astray. Hence, even on a worldly level, the guide or teacher is essential.

This is particularly relevant in the spiritual field. Knowledge of the spiritual path is not within the reach of ordinary people, it is beyond our comprehension. Therefore it is imperative that we find the right kind of spiritual guidance when we embark on the spiritual path.

There are different classes of spiritual masters, endowed with varying characteristics and qualifications. We can qualify the masters according to the level of vows that they have taken. There are three such levels of vows.

The Pratimoksha vow, according to which we pledge to abstain from negative deeds. This vow is taken with a view to our own personal liberation.

The Bodhisattva vow, which entails not only abstaining from negative deeds, but also striving toward liberation for the sake of other beings.

Finally the Vajrayana or Tantric vow, which is the highest level of vow, and this is where the supreme methods are used to gain liberation for the sake of others.

The master who has taken all three of these vows is the highest kind of master that one can find. Finding the spiritual master is the source of all qualities, but it is not enough to find this master. We also need to follow his instructions, much like we would a doctor's. In order to recover from an illness, we need to find a good doctor. Not only this, but we need to follow his advice. Otherwise, even if we have the best doctor possible, if we don't follow his advice, we'll never recover from our illness. So not only is it vital to find the right spiritual master, but it is equally important that we follow his instructions.

When we choose a spiritual master, it is essential that we be very careful. We need to evaluate him or



her thoroughly before we take him or her as our guide.

Even in worldly life, when we undertake something new, we need to evaluate the different ways of proceeding. If we're thinking about buying a house, we have to compare different houses, look at each one's positive and negative attributes, see which one is more advantageous financially, and so forth. Only after such careful investigation can we decide which house to buy. We must utilise these same evaluation tools when finding a spiritual master.

Compared to this, of course, decisions regarding our spiritual life are far more important. Buying a new house, or a new anything is something that will be part of our life for a hundred years at best. So if we make a mistake, it won't be harmful for too long a time. But in the spiritual path, if we make a mistake, then not only are we hampered during this lifetime, but also for many subsequent lives. Hence, finding the right spiritual path and the right spiritual guide is the most important thing that we can do.

In ancient times, there were many teachings in place to guide disciples on ways to evaluate teachers and for teachers to evaluate disciples. Only once both teacher and disciple were satisfied with each other's qualities did they establish a teacher-disciple relationship. This preliminary evaluation is essential, and it can be very dangerous for a teacher and a disciple to establish a relationship before a proper evaluation has been carried out. This is especially important for the disciple, for whom falling into the wrong hands can be greatly detrimental. As illustrated, finding the right spiritual master is extremely important.

The teachings state that there are several levels of spiritual masters – superior, inferior, mediocre, and so forth – and they classify these levels according to their qualifications. But whatever level a master belongs to; the minimum requirement that he or she should satisfy is that of good discipline or right moral

conduct, because moral conduct is the foundation of all qualities. This moral conduct should not limit itself to appearances, but must be genuine.

The second requirement that a teacher should fulfill is that of wisdom – wisdom acquired from knowledge and from meditation. If a teacher is not endowed with deep-rooted knowledge and understanding of the sutras and tantras, then he cannot pass them on to his or her disciples.

The third requirement is compassion. The teacher must be motivated by compassion for his disciples. He or she must feel genuine desire for them to become free from ignorance, to abstain from negative deeds, and to practise virtuous deeds.

In this Dark Age, it is difficult to find the perfect teacher, but one who actualises these three requirements, whose moral qualities are highly developed and whose faults are minimal, then he or she qualifies as a suitable teacher.

Especially in the Vajrayana teachings, the teacher is absolutely essential. If we try to learn Tantra on our own, or through books, this can actually cause more harm than benefit. Vajrayana is the most advanced teaching of the Buddha, and can only be received through the direct transmission of an unbroken lineage that originated with Buddha Vajradhara and has been passed on from one master to another until the present.

It is not only the words and their meaning that are conveyed in the teachings. More importantly, it is the blessing that is transmitted from one person to another. Without this blessing, it is impossible to practise any of the tantric teachings or to attain any of its results; it can, in fact, be very harmful. This is why the Vajrayana teachings place so much importance on the spiritual master.

The sun shines brightly in the sky every day, but if we want to channel and maximise its energy, we need certain instruments. Similarly, the blessings of the Buddha shower on sentient beings all the time, but

without proper instruments, we cannot receive these blessings. Due to our lack of merit brought about by our negative deeds, we cannot see the Buddha in person. The guru is the instrument that helps channel and maximise the Buddha's blessings. The guru appears to us in ordinary form, and through him or her, we can hear the teachings of the Buddha and thereby receive His blessings.

Again, it is extremely important in Vajrayana to find a teacher and to thoroughly investigate his qualities. Once we are convinced that he is a genuine spiritual master, then we can take him as our teacher and receive Vajrayana teachings and initiations from him. Once we have established a master-disciple relationship with this teacher - whatever circumstances may arise - we should never break our bond with our teacher and never abandon our faith in him.

Even if we see faults in our master, we should never see these as faults. Whatever faults we see in the guru, we should see as our own faults. Much like the moon's reflection on water: if the water is clear, the reflection of the moon is also clear; and if the water is muddy, then the moon's reflection is blurred. If, due to our obscurations, we find fault with the master, we should always remember to look at this as our own shortcomings, our own faults, not those of the guru.

There are many wonderful stories about ancient Indian masters. These great mahasiddhas often displayed outlandish behaviour and did weird things, very weird things. The disciples who lost faith in their master didn't progress on the spiritual path, while those who didn't lose their faith in their master experienced spiritual attainment.

There is much talk about the 'root lamas'. According to the Vajrayana teachings, a root lama or guru is someone who bestows the major initiations on us, as well as the tantric teachings and pit instructions. This is our root guru.

In actuality, we can have several root gurus.

Then, among these, we can also have a very special root guru, for instance our karmic link guru. This is our most important guru, one with whom we have a karmic connection, who has been our guide through the course of many lifetimes.

If we have such a guru, then it is essential that we never cease to feel intense devotion for him and that we never lose faith in him, whatever happens.

Even if our root guru is just an ordinary person and not a realised being, if we as a disciple see him as the Buddha, then we can receive the blessings of the Buddha, because both he and we are endowed with Buddha nature.

As explained, it is very important in the Vajrayana or Tantric teachings, to find the right guru and, after finding him or her, to establish a strong karmic connection. Without this, it is impossible to make any spiritual progress. It is clearly mentioned in the teachings that if one wants to practise tantra on one's own, without depending on a spiritual master who can bestow upon us the unbroken transmission of blessings, this can be very dangerous and can lead us to fall into the lower realms.

In every tradition, Hinayana, Mahayana and Vajrayana, finding the spiritual master and following him in the right way is the source of all qualities. This is particularly true in the Vajrayana path, where the unbroken lineage of transmission from the Buddha Vajradhara to us is an essential practice.

The spiritual master who gives us this transmission is the one who clears all our obscurations and confusion and who leads us on the path to liberation.

I pray that everyone may find the right spiritual master and successfully establish the karmic links with him or her that will allow them to receive all the blessings of the Buddha.

# Maitreya's Semtsema

## A Teaching by The Most Venerable Khenchen Appey Rinpoche (part 5)

*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 seen in the previous part of this profound teaching on the qualities of the Buddha how His mind is unfathomable, utterly and permanently aware, and free from all conceptual fabrications and duality. His *Mahakaruna*, or Great Compassion, embraces every single being and knows each one's defilements and their respective antidotes. There is not a single one of the Buddha's activities that is not completely virtuous and dedicated to the benefit of all beings. Another among the qualities of the Buddha that this eulogy describes - is His omniscience, His perfect knowledge of the spectrum of all phenomena without exception.

All the qualities described here are inherent in the three kayas, or bodies, of the Buddha. The first among these is the *dharmakaya*, or form body. This true body is one that is devoid of any impurities or obscurations, and it is defined by its complete realisation of the lack of inherent existence of phenomena. The *dharmakaya* refers to the mind of the Buddha.

The second kaya is the *sambogakaya*. This refers to the enjoyment body of the Buddha. This is a manifestation of the form body, which by definition spins the wheel of Dharma of the greater vehicle, the Mahayana, and the only disciples who receive teachings from the *sambogakaya* are Bodhisattvas.

The third kaya is the *nirmanakaya*. This is a manifestation of the *sambogakaya* that appears



to beings of superior qualities. It is the result of a deliberate act by the Buddha of assuming any physical form that can be seen by beings and is beneficial to them.

There are three kinds of *nirmanakaya*, containing as many manifestations as are needed to suit the needs of beings of different levels or predispositions. The first of these three is birth *nirmanakaya*. An example of birth *nirmanakaya* is Maitreya Buddha, who is currently residing in Tushita heaven. Although He is enlightened, He is the reigning Buddha in Tushita heaven.

The second kind of *nirmanakaya* is excellent *nirmanakaya*, referring to the excellent qualities

possessed by this manifestation of the Buddha. An example of this is Shakyamuni Buddha, who assumed a physical form and displayed twelve great deeds of enlightenment in order to bolster the faith of disciples.

The third is artistic *nirmanakaya*, and an example of this is the story of the Buddha when, shortly before attaining mahaparinirvana, He tamed a proud disciple called Rabga. The latter was a great Gandarva, or king, who was so proud of his lute-playing talents, that he felt that he didn't need to attend the Buddha's teachings. In order to correct Gandarva Rabga's arrogance, the Buddha artistically assumed the form of a lutist and, challenging the proud musician to a contest, played infinitely better than him, shattering his exaggerated sense of self-importance. Gandarva Rabga was one of the last disciples to be tamed by the Buddha.

There are three levels of enlightenment, with that of the Buddha being great enlightenment, or *mahabodhi*, which is superior to the other two levels. *Mahabodhi* means that the Fully Enlightened One has perfect knowledge of the nature of both relative and ultimate phenomena, of the way things appear in the relative form and the way things actually are in ultimate reality. The Buddha is omniscient and is able to sever the doubts and obscurations of all sentient beings. If a being is able to make a single mistake, he is likely to make others, and is therefore not fully enlightened. On the other hand, there is absolutely no possibility that one who is fully enlightened can make the slightest mistake.

The next set of qualities with which the Buddha is endowed, is that of the six perfections. The six perfections are the path of the great vehicle, and one who has accomplished these perfections has, by the same token, overcome their opposing factors. And so here, the author pays homage to "You who are without grasping". An act of giving, whether it be offering one's virtuous behavior or one's body, must be free

from grasping to either the act itself or to its result. Here, the Buddha's total freedom from grasping to acts of giving is being praised.

The second perfection is that of morality, and here the Buddha is praised as "You who are without moral fault". Most beings, as ethical as their conduct may be, are prone to committing moral infractions at some point or another. But the Fully Enlightened One will never transgress moral dictates by an iota. His morality is perfect.

The third perfection is patience. "You who are never distracted" applies to the Buddha's quality of equanimity, acquired through the practice of patience. This means that whatever harm is directed to Him, instead of letting Himself become disturbed or agitated by this, He remains in an unperturbed state of tranquility.

The fourth perfection is diligence. "You who do not remain lazily" refers to the quality of diligence, whereby the Buddha never ceases to engage joyously in virtuous activities, without ever being affected by any kind of indolence or laziness.

Meditative concentration, or *samadhi*, is the fifth perfection. This is the ability to remain one-pointedly focused on the object of meditation without being distracted by anything or being agitated by discursive thoughts. There is never a single moment when the Buddha is not in *samadhi*.

And the last of the six perfections is that of wisdom. This is the knowledge of the nature of things as they are, not as they appear. It is the understanding of reality, totally free from discursive elaboration. The Buddha's mind remains fixedly in the understanding of things as they are, and there is no object or phenomenon whatsoever that causes it to fall prey to digressive thought.

Thus ends the eulogy to the Buddha composed by the Lord Maitreya. He now pauses and elaborates no further. This is not because he knows no additional



qualities of the Buddhas that are worthy of praise, but rather because He feels contented with the ones that He has expounded so far.

Sakya Pandita, who felt that there were more qualities of the Buddha that were worth praising, writes the rest of the *Semtsema*. This begins with the two meaningful activities of accomplishing perfection for oneself and for the benefit of others. He writes; “You who have acquired all obtainable excellent qualities”, alluding to the Buddha being endowed with both common and unique qualities, that is to say, those gifted by arhats as well as those unique to the Buddha. In short, the Buddha possesses all conceivable qualities. These very qualities provide Him with the potential to engage in activities that lead not only to His own accomplishment, but also to that of others.

These activities of the Buddha directed to the accomplishment of others are of inconceivable magnitude and constancy. The Fully Enlightened One never ceases even for a fraction of an instant to benefit beings, and He constantly benefits as many beings as there are atoms.

Further, the Fully Enlightened One knows everything that is knowable and carries out every single beneficial activity that needs to be completed, and each one of these activities leads to accomplishment. So these three: perfect knowledge, activity, and accomplishment - constitute another set of the qualities of the Buddha.

Sakya Pandita then begins to describe a further set of qualities of the Buddha called the ‘thirty-seven attributes of enlightenment’, or ‘*Bodhipaksha*’. These are divided into seven categories, the first of which is called the ‘four frames of reference’. This indicates the qualities of mindfulness of body, feelings, consciousness and mental attributes, through which the Fully Enlightened One achieves full realisation of selflessness, of the lack of inherent existence of self.

The second of the seven categories is that of the

vigours, or exertions. This refers to the four pure accomplishments, or the four thorough renunciations attained by pure effort. These are: the joyous effort of destroying non-virtuous habits, not introducing new non-virtuous habits, sustaining existing virtuous conduct and introducing non-existing wholesome conduct.

The third category is that of meditative absorption. In this context, meditative absorption refers to the ability to create miraculous appearances. There are four attributes related to this faculty, called the four legs of miraculous accomplishment, which points to the fact that meditative concentration is as important to attaining enlightenment as legs are to walking.

The fourth and fifth classifications are the five faculties and the five powers. They both have the same five components – faith, energy, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom, but their meaning is different in each respective category. For example, the five powers have the potential to destroy their opposites – doubt, laziness, and so forth, while the five faculties empower one to carry out activities conducive to helping beings. While the first three categories are related to the path of accumulation, the two latter ones are linked to the path of preparation.

The sixth category is the seven factors of awakening, and is related to the path of seeing, which leads to insight into the true nature of things. This is related to the meditative stabilisation of the first bhumi or state of enlightenment.

The seventh and last category is the Eightfold Noble Path, which corresponds to the path of meditation. Having gone through the first three paths of accumulation, preparation and seeing, one arrives at the path of meditation, where one becomes stabilised in the state of full realisation.

Moreover, the verse “I pay homage to you who have well accomplished all thirty-seven attributes” is very important, in the sense that the arhats and

pratyekabuddhas also possess these attributes, but that the latter are only fully accomplished by the Fully Enlightened One.

And here, Sakya Pandita begins the eulogy of the Buddha's nine meditative absorptions. These are the four *samadhis* of meditative concentration, the four meditative stabilisations in relation to the formless realms and the meditative stabilisation of total cessation.

The function of these meditative absorptions or *samadhis* is to eradicate all defilements and mental afflictions of all beings residing in the three realms of existence. The author says "You who have brought perfect completion, the power that crushes the hard, uncultivated soil", referring to the mind stream of beings that is completely hardened with residues from afflictions and is difficult to penetrate. The power of the Buddha's mindfulness and teachings is able to crush and pulverise the hard soil of the mind stream of beings.

And then, the author pays homage to the quality called 'the three thorough doors of liberation'. The first among these is the thorough door of the liberation of emptiness, illustrating that the Buddha's mind sees no inherent duality between subject and object, but only sees its absence. The second is the thorough door of wishlessness, which means that the Buddha's mind is no longer concerned with contaminated phenomena, whether this is form, object or body. There's not a single object that His mind covets or feels aversion to. Third, is the thorough door of signlessness, which means that the Buddha's mind remains in a state that is free of signs. Signs of empty and non-empty, existent and non-existent - these are all dualistic concepts - from which the Buddha's mind is free.

The three thorough doors of emptiness, wishlessness and signlessness are also within the domain of arhats, but only the Buddha is endowed with their perfect forms.

Sakya Pandita goes on to praise the conquest of the Buddha over the four evils or *maras*, the first of which is the *klesha mara*, or *marā* of the defilements of desire, hatred and ignorance. The Fully Enlightened One has completely overcome and destroyed any trace of these afflictions. The second *marā* is that of the *skandas*, or psycho-physical constituents to which we're subjected due to our karma and defilements – we have a psycho-physical body that is the basis of all our suffering, whereas the Fully Enlightened One has overcome the desire to have a body. As for the *mrityu mara*, or *marā* of death, the Buddha is not threatened by it because He is not pushed by the desire to take a body that can die. Also, the *devaputra mara*, or *marā* of the son of god, is one that creates obstacles and harm to those who engage in the practice of the dharma, and it can be easily defeated by the Buddha.

The verse "To you who have subdued well" pays homage to the one who, through eons of practicing wisdom and compassion, has made His mind both worthy and powerful in order to conquer the four *maras*. The first three *maras* are subdued by the practice of wisdom. Because primordial wisdom is the root cause for the realisation of the lack of inherent existence of the self, it defeats the defilements, or *kleshas*. Once the *kleshas* are defeated, the desire that pushes one to be reborn is also defeated and, as mentioned above, if we are not born into an ordinary body, then we are not subject to death.

As for the *marā* of the son of god, this is vanquished by compassion. If one practices loving kindness and compassion toward all beings, the chances of attracting obstacles are greatly reduced and eventually eliminated.

And so the Fully Enlightened One has completely vanquished all the *maras*, and is free from any kind of obscurity or defilement.

# Oral Instructions on the Practice of Guru Yoga

A teaching by H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche  
(part 1)



When a great Lama passes away, everyone feels sad. His disciples are heartbroken, all the teachers feel very sorry, and the other high Lamas also

mourn the loss of a great teacher. I am always very sorry when a master passes away. Nonetheless, when the time comes for a master to pass away, there are

different signs that occur, and these can be confirmed by methods of Mo divination, and so on.

Once the Guru has passed, there often remain other teachers who have a close connection with him, and this is very helpful for the disciples. Many prayers and rituals are offered, and these bring blessings, and benefit everyone greatly. In our tradition, we generally perform the Vajrayogini rituals, as well as many other rituals, when a great master passes.

Now the Guru has passed into the pure realms (*zhing kham*s), so there is no need to feel dejected, as the master has now manifested his own pure realms. All the lamas and disciples are praying, and the blessings of the Guru will reach the disciples, they will reach whoever has faith. I myself will also pray for the disciples.

While we may feel sad when our Guru passes, we should also let ourselves be at peace; there is no need to feel unhappy all the time. The most important point is that we practice Guru Yoga. If we practice Guru Yoga well at these times, we will receive blessings and we will see signs of these blessings in our practice. This will be helpful for our faith and our connection with the Guru. If we are able to do retreat sometime soon after the passing of our Guru, this will bring even greater benefit, and the signs of practice will be very good.

During the time when a great teacher has passed away, everyone prays together that the teacher will swiftly return to us. For example, Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche passed away here in Nepal and has come back to us; it is the same for Tulku Ugyen Rinpoche, and for many other Lamas. During their years of following the teacher, disciples accumulate a great deal of merit. At the time of the Guru's passing, the disciples can dedicate all their merit and pray for the swift return of their teacher. This will help the teacher return quickly to guide his disciples. It is also

important to maintain good friendships and harmony among the disciples, as this will also help bring the Guru's return.

Although your Guru has passed away, do not feel that he is separate from you. Your Guru is in the pure realms now, and this is something wonderful. At the same time, he knows everything that is taking place, and he knows about you and your situation. Do not feel that your Guru is now separate from you. You are still together, just as you have been. He will always take care of you, now and in the future.

When the master is in the pure realms, the benefits and blessings available to disciples are very special. If you practice Guru Yoga, his blessings will continue to be with you, and they will increase through your practice.

All the disciples have worked very hard, and have pleased the mind of their Guru. I will pray for you and dedicate your merit. Your teacher deeply appreciates your hard work, and does not want you to feel disheartened. Most of all, the Guru will show his disciples how happy he is with them by continuing to bless them. For this, the practice of Guru Yoga is most helpful.

## The Guru-Disciple Relationship

According to the teachings of Secret Mantra (*sang ngag*), the relation between the Guru and the disciple should be like that of a father and child, where the disciple regards the Guru as their father. The ideal relationship between Guru and disciple is that of a parent and child who share a very close bond and a deep affection for one another. In normal life, the parent will place great trust in his child, and the child will have the same trust in his parents. The disciple needs this to have this kind of trust in the Guru. While it is of great benefit to know about the spiritual



qualities of the Guru, in order to truly have deep, heartfelt devotion (*mogu*) toward the Guru, it needs to be based on our own experience.

It is also important that disciples maintain the kind of affection for their fellow disciples that they would feel for a beloved brother or sister with whom they share a unique, deep bond. To regard one's Guru as one's parent, and one's Dharma brothers and sisters as one's siblings, is the best way to maintain the Samaya vows. If we begin by being mindful of these ways of relating to the Guru, our faith will grow.

To maintain the relationship between teacher and student, we have the three groups of vows (*dampa sum*; *sdom pa gsum*); those of the Hinayana, the Mahayana, and the Vajrayana. Guarding the vows we have received, and keeping them pure, maintains our relationship with our Guru, which is the basis for all of the vows. When the vows are properly respected, the teacher has become like a father to us, and we have become like a child to our teacher.

These vows are the sacred commitments between the Gurus and disciples, the vows of Hinayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. The vows represent the discipline and training we have undertaken with our Gurus, and they guide and protect the nature of our relationship with them. In brief, by maintaining a very positive attitude at all times toward the Guru and his disciples, all will be well. The Guru's wishes and activities will be fulfilled. The essence of the three vows is that the Guru is a loving father, and the disciple is a devoted child. With this kind of relationship, the disciple's qualities of faith and devotion will continue to improve and flower.

Just as a child is given everything by his parents, the disciples should always think that whatever qualities (*yonten*) they may possess, such as renunciation and morality, love and compassion, faith and devotion, knowledge and wisdom, everything has

been given to them by their precious Gurus. When you pray to the Guru, say to him. "Whatever I have comes from you!" I am grateful to my Gurus for everything I have received from them. In the tradition of Secret Mantra (*sang ngak*), the source of all spiritual qualities is the Guru.

## Guru Yoga and Freedom from Ego-Clinging

The Buddha said that the cause of suffering is ignorance. Ignorance takes many forms. One aspect of this is clinging to a personal self, which leads to attributing a self or identity to other persons and to phenomena in general. Clinging to a personal self manifests as a kind of pride and sense that oneself is more important than others.

We constantly give great weight to our thoughts and emotions, to the ideas and images we hold about ourselves. This is ego-clinging (*dag dzin*), our sense of self-importance (*che 'gying*). Whether we think we are a very good person or a very bad person, in either case we attribute great importance to ourselves in our thoughts and feelings. Thus there is a subtle pride involved.

This sense of self-importance results in selfish behavior. The mind training (*lojong*) teachings of the Mahayana vehicle explain many meditations on love, compassion, exchanging self for others, and bodhicitta. All of these meditations will greatly help to eradicate selfishness from our mindstream of being, and diminish our sense of self-importance.

Furthermore, the very idea of self is a delusion, yet we may hold very definite ideas about ourselves in mind, and cling to them very adamantly. This clinging to oneself, or ego-clinging (*dag dzin*) is grasping on to the sense of "I am" (*nga yin dzinba*). Due to ego-clinging, we experience a constant cycle of emotions

that all have the same reference point (*tay so; gtad so*), which is our idea and image of ourselves.

This reference point is like a magnet (*khad long*), a point of attraction for all our confused thinking and afflictive emotions. It is the idea and image we have of ourselves as a defined identity, as an independent entity (*ngopo; dngos po*). To develop clear insight (*vipashyana; lhag tong*) and transcendent intelligence (*prajna; sherab*), we need to move beyond this reference point of self.

If we wish to rid ourselves of the delusion of self-centered pride, which is the ongoing sense of our own importance, the supreme method is to rely on the Guru. When practicing Guru Yoga, the unification with the Guru, once the Guru dissolves into us and we merge our body, speech, and mind with that of the Guru, we rest in emptiness. In the state of emptiness, there is no self, no personal reference point.

As soon as we have a sense of self, immediately there are others, other persons and phenomena that have a relationship to our self. As the Vajrayogini texts explain, based on the initial ignorance that arises through the uniting of the mother and father's red and white elements, we subsequently have attachment toward some things and aversion toward others. From this point, birth and the whole of conditioned existence unfold within our experience. Once there is no self, there is nothing that we can say is "mine". We do not cling to persons and things, as there is no one to hold on to them, no one to possess them. Once there is nothing we possess, there are no friends and relatives to whom we are attached, nor foes and enemies to feel anger and aversion toward. Rather, we experience equanimity toward friend and foe, free of hope and fear. We become free of all this tension, liberated from a host of cares and woes. Once the self is empty, the other is empty as well.

To liberate ourselves from clinging to the self, we

need to rely on the Guru. When we have merged with the Guru and come to rest in emptiness, the clinging to our ordinary sense of self is gone. We have merged with the pure body, speech, and mind of the Guru. Our ordinary body, speech, and mind have disappeared into emptiness. We disappear and instead assume the pure vision of ourselves as the enlightened body, voice, and mind of the Gurus and Deities.

The reason we visualize our Gurus and ourselves in the enlightened form of deities, which is the practice of pure vision (*dag nang*), is to cut away ego-clinging, the sense of grasping at a self. It is to remove our deluded sense of the importance of our ordinary self, of our ordinary body, speech, and mind. The practice of Guru Yoga purifies the delusion of clinging to a self and clinging to the existence of the world and beings.

## Faith and Devotion: The Pure Vision of the Guru

All of the Buddhas of the past, present, and future attained Enlightenment only through relying on the Guru, through the practice of Guru Yoga, the unification with the Guru. Without practicing Guru Yoga, there would be no Buddhas of the past, present, or future. Shakyamuni Buddha had his own Indian teachers, and He was the disciple of many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas throughout His past lifetimes. The Buddha definitely relied on the practice of Guru Yoga, for without this practice, he would not have attained Enlightenment. Guru Yoga is the real path to attaining Enlightenment. In order to practice Guru Yoga, the most important point is to have deep and abiding faith (*depa*) and devotion (*mogu; mos gus*).

There have been countless great Gurus of Tibet. Each of the schools of Buddhism in Tibet has its five founding masters, such as the five founding masters

of the Nyingma, those of the Kadampa, of the Sakya, Kagyu and Gelug, twenty-five in all. Every one of these masters became enlightened through the practice of Guru Yoga.

All of the twenty-five masters that founded Buddhism in Tibet demonstrated miraculous signs of accomplishment (*drub tag; grub rtags*), such as plunging their phurba into rock as though it were butter, or leaving handprints and footprints in solid rock. Scientists have made machines that can cut through stone, but these masters accomplished this through the realization of emptiness. Milarepa, for example, rode up into the sky and back to earth, gliding on the rays of the sun.

If we see the Guru as an ordinary person, we will receive the blessings and qualities of an ordinary person. If we see the Guru as a fully enlightened Buddha, we will receive the qualities of the Enlightened Ones. Even if the Guru does not have many special qualities and is just a simple person, if the disciple meditates on the Guru as a deity, he is able to receive the blessings of a deity. This is illustrated by the story of a woman who prayed to a dog's tooth, believing it to be a relic of the Buddha, and gained spiritual accomplishment. It is important to know that all of the results of practice depend on faith (*depa*). If we wish to enhance and develop our practice of Guru Yoga, this requires increasing our faith (*depa*) and devotion (*mogu*). Faith and devotion, together with applying the teachings on how to recognize clear luminosity (*osal*), lead to realization of Dharmata, the true nature of phenomena. Realization depends on one's quality of faith, as faith is the seed of all spiritual qualities (*cho kyi yunten*). If the seed is ripe, it will germinate, grow, and bear harvest.

Without faith, no matter how much you try to merge with the Guru's mind in the View, you will not receive the blessings of the Guru's wisdom (*yeshe*).

Faith is the root of accomplishing the practice of Guru Yoga, which leads to the realization of Dharmata. Faith and devotion are like fertile seeds that give rise to the fruits of wisdom, the recognition and realization of the View.

If we wish to increase and enhance our faith, we must not think of our master in his ordinary form, but in the enlightened form of a Guru or deity. This is a practice of pure vision (*dag nang*). Normally, monks will think of their Guru in the form of a noble abbot (*khenpo*) or an Arhat. Those on the Bodhisattva path of the Mahayana may visualize the Guru in the form of one of the Bodhisattvas. For practitioners of Vajrayana, the Guru is visualized in the form of one of the enlightened Gurus or deities (*vidam*). One visualizes one's master as a deity, or in the Buddha's Dharmakaya or Sambhogakaya form, such as Buddha Vajradhara.

In the practice of Vajrayogini, we visualize the Guru as Buddha Vajradharma, as Vira Vajradharma, as Chakrasamvara, or as Vajrayogini. In the Hevajra tradition, we visualize the Guru as Buddha Vajradhara or as Hevajra. In this way, we begin with pure vision (*dag nang*), looking upon the Guru and his surroundings with utter purity. In this way, the whole basis of our faith is the pure vision of the Guru in enlightened form.

If we look upon the master with pure vision, our faith and devotion will begin to increase. The qualified Vajrayana master will always manifest his own body, speech, and mind in the form of the deity's body, mantra, and wisdom mind. His body is the form of the deity, his speech is mantra, and his mind recognizes emptiness.

In this way, the Guru remains in the pure vision of the deity (*vidam*) and embodies the deity's qualities, which he transmits to the disciple in the form of blessings and teachings. If the master has perfected

the qualities of the deity practices, and teaches them to the disciple, this makes the relationship between them one of pure vision.

Why is it said that the most important point is to have strong faith and devotion? All other spiritual qualities (*yonten*) of the Dharma depend on faith. Whatever Dharma practices of study, contemplation, and meditation we may do, without faith and devotion they will not be successful. Faith is known as the gate that opens the way for all of the enlightened qualities of the Dharma to manifest, and pure vision is the basis for faith (*depa*).

Even if the master is a very simple person with no qualities, if the disciple thinks that the master is a deity, then the disciple can, through his faith, receive the blessings of the actual deity. Whatever qualities children have, they receive through their parents, don't they? Whatever qualities practitioners have, they have received them from their Gurus. The Siddhis, the accomplishments (*ngodrub*; *dngos grub*) of Tantric practice, come about through blessings that depend on maintaining our sacred commitments, our samaya relationships with our Gurus.

In general, there is self-visualization and front-visualization. The most important is visualization of the Guru. Why is this so? For the practitioner, all of the Buddhas of the three times have their source in one's own master, our kind root Guru. Without the root Guru, even the name of Buddha is not truly heard or understood. Every great and noble Enlightened One has depended on the Guru. Thus it is said that to attain Enlightenment, the Guru is the most important of all.

All the great masters, the Buddhas, and enlightened beings are included within our root Guru (*tsawai lama*) himself. All sources of the Dharma are condensed into (*chig dril*) the master himself. Whatever Buddha or deity we may think of, we should not consider them as separate from our own

Guru. They are all included within one, the kind root Guru, though they may appear in a myriad of different forms. The Guru must be seen in a body of light, which dissolves into light and is absorbed into one's heart. Then, one's own state merges with the mind of the Guru, so that there is no separation.

## Faith

The Buddhist Teachings speak of three kinds of faith. The first of these is sincere faith (*dangwai depa*; *dang ba'i dad pa*). Some people may feel this kind of faith arise spontaneously upon meeting a master or after spending a little time with him, due to their past life connection with him. Milarepa had spontaneous faith (*lhan kye depa*) upon merely hearing the name of Marpa for the first time.

In general, many Tibetan people have this first type of faith, sincere faith, and this is quite beneficial for them. Although they might not have a detailed understanding of the qualities of the Guru and the Dharma Teachings, still they deeply believe that these qualities are present, and this faith comes very naturally to them. They have others around them who know the qualities of the Dharma, and so they naturally feel admiration for the Gurus and the Teachings. Because of this, they are able to receive a lot of blessings. In contrast, someone with no faith is like a burnt seed; a parched

seed will not bear fruit in the future. If you plant a burnt seed, the plant might grow roots and leaves. But it will not produce any seeds from itself. Similarly, without faith, the seeds of spiritual qualities within us will not appear and ripen to fruition.

Sincere faith is not the same as superstition or blind faith (*mong day*; *rmong dad*). In his work, "The Stages of Meditation on the Perfection of Wisdom" (*par chin gom rim*), the Master Rongton, founder



of Nalendra Monastery, says that there are many people who believe that a cow is a jewel. In fact, the cow cannot give them anything but milk, but when they see the cow there, they are convinced that it is a precious jewel. This means that they have blind faith, not knowing the real nature of the object of their faith.

For this reason, to develop our faith, we need to know the qualities of those in whom we place our faith. If we do not have any intelligent basis for our faith, someone may say, "Oh, that cow is a precious jewel", and we might believe them!

Longing faith (*dodpai depa*) develops out of sincere faith (*dangwai depa*). Starting out with sincere faith, we admire the qualities of the Guru and the Three Jewels, and we aspire to know and develop those qualities. Then, the quality of longing faith develops as we strengthen those aspirations further. We contemplate the qualities of the Guru, aspiring and yearning to draw near to those spiritual qualities, to emulate them and bring them forth from within ourselves. This is longing faith (*'dod pa'i dad pa*). Longing faith is very helpful for receiving the descent of blessings (*jin bab*) from the Guru and lineage masters. As we become more confident in the qualities of the Enlightened Ones through knowledge and through longing faith, we will gain the third type of faith, confident faith (*yid chepai depa*).

It is also called the faith of knowing the reasons (*rgyu mtshan shes pa'i dad pa*). We have contemplated the qualities of the Guru and the Three Jewels, and through aspiration we have received blessings and have gained some experience of these qualities for ourselves. We discover many reasons for our faith that are based on our own experience. Seeing the spiritual qualities of our Guru, we have also been able to find them in ourselves, through the Guru's blessings and our own diligence in practice.

At this point, faith arises naturally, by itself,

without our needing to generate and develop it in meditation practice. This natural faith (*rangzhin depa*) that arises by itself (*rang jung*) is a sign of having gained the stage of confident faith. It is no longer necessary to contemplate the qualities of the Gurus through reading biographies and learning the qualities of the Enlightened Ones. This faith is always present within us, through our own practice.

In some teachings, the final kind of faith is also called irreversible faith (*chir mi dogpai depa; phyir mi ldog pa'i dad pa*). This is when one has gained experience and realization of the qualities of the Guru within oneself. One is able to see the Guru as the Buddha, as possessing all qualities. Irreversible faith comes about through blessings that have ripened into realization.

*Translated by John Deweese and Guru Rinchen Chodar  
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# A Song of Experience to Questions of Good Health

By Jetsün Drakpa Gyaltsen

I bow at the feet of the lord masters.

Let me tell the story of my current situation.

I have many connections of karma,  
so when meeting morning and evening  
I'm asked about my good health.

And when going to another place  
I'm asked about my health.

And when returning from another place  
I'm asked about my health.

If my health is good I'm glad,  
but the dependently arisen connections  
for good health are few.

Grounds for illness in the illusory body are many,  
obstructions to the expressive voice are many,  
sufferings in the lucid mind are many.

Both attachment and aversion  
to things ravage body and mind.

The work of conceptualizing never ends.  
That's the problem with being born in samsāra.

If free from samsāra I'd be glad,  
but the dependently arisen connections  
for freedom from samsāra are few.

The true reality of things is unarisen emptiness.  
But propensities for confusion are solid  
and grasping at things has not been purged,  
so in the empty hollows of the three realms of samsāra  
the storms of the five and three poisons erupt.

In the woodpile of diverse bad karma,  
the great fire of diverse suffering blazes.

The tree of primordial mind itself burns.  
The sprouts of enlightenment are reduced to ash.

The six realms, that wheel of suffering,  
like a firebrand constantly spins.

The dangling cord of birth, old age,  
sickness, and death is seized time and again.

In a dungeon of no escape,  
mind itself is held captive and suffers.

No escape—how poignant.  
How poignant—nothing to do.

There is something to do, but no one does it.

E Ma Ho! Living beings—oh, so afflicted.

A song by the precious venerable lord Drakpa Gyaltsen of glorious Sakya.

*Translated by Cyrus Stearns  
Reproduced by kind permission of Cyrus Stearns*



# Advice to Myself

By Sakya Pandita

Om Svasti!

I pay homage to the Three Jewels!  
The jeweled glory of your goodness is a splendor.  
You are a shelter for all the living,  
Including the gods.  
All my sorrows disappear when I remember you.  
There is nothing like you.

Seeds from the different sorts of karma we create  
Are planted in the earth of our basic consciousness,  
Where predispositions are stored.  
Then harvests of illusory appearance sprout forth.  
Bless me that these apparent delusions fade into space.

The crazy apparitions of the world are like dreams.  
They are not real.  
But they cause many joys and sorrows.  
Don't chase after them.  
Reject the longings inside you.  
Lotsawa, don't get stuck on what happens.

The Dharma of Samsara has no heart.  
This is obvious.  
Humans are a race of lost sheep.  
They have endless tasks and duties.  
You cannot please them even if you really try.  
Lotsawa, stop trying to fit in with people.

If your status is high  
Your pride gets even higher.  
If you are in dire straights  
Everyone puts you down.  
If you are middle class  
There are reasons to be jealous.  
Lotsawa, consider what is at the heart of your employment.

If you act honestly  
Most people will hate you.  
If you act like a crook  
Crap will ripen in your mind.  
If you hang out  
You are obviously unmotivated.  
Lotsawa, consider the results of what you do.

If you talk too much  
You can't abstain from blabbering.  
If you don't talk at all  
You will be an idiot in the dark.  
If you exaggerate and trivialize  
You will be a mindless chatterer.  
Lotsawa, consider the meaning of what you say.

If you agree with everyone  
Your heart is inconsiderate.  
If you ask no questions  
You are proud of your lack of education.  
If you do all kinds of things  
You will see your conditions getting better and getting worse.  
Lotsawa, consider what it means when you do something.

If you wear nice clothes  
They say you're collecting students.  
If you wear tatters  
They will look at you in shame and criticize you: Ha!  
If you wear different styles  
They will make a lot of repetitive gossip about it.  
Lotsawa, consider the situations in which you do things.

If you say nice things  
You are a social climber who lacks the Dharma.  
If you use rude words  
Your enemies gather like clouds.

If you are silent

You cannot penetrate their mean hard faces.

Lotsawa, look at the results of your words.

If you live alone

They believe you have given up helping others.

If there are a lot of students around

They think you're worried about how many are in the group.

If you travel all around

They remember you as a bow-legged traveler.

Lotsawa, look at the way things are put together.

If you live in a lonely place

You will be disturbed

By the need to meet and part from people.

If you are disturbed

They will say you have lost your absorption.

If you do a bunch of different things

You will be caught up in a bunch of day dreams.

Lotsawa, think about what Samsara really is.

If you teach well

You can't concern yourself with what things mean.

If you meditate in equanimity

You can't pay attention to the things that you want.

If you meditate on what things mean

You'll be stuck with half a mind.

Lotsawa, consider what has happened to your purpose.

Your followers and those who serve you

Do not scheme out all the bad things they do.

But when you give them good advice over and over

They look at you like an enemy.

In response to the kindness of taking care of these people

Who are endowed with nothing

You are treated badly.

Lotsawa, consider what is in the hearts of your followers.

You can't help everyone all at once.

If you take care of some of them

There will be some others that think you are their enemy.

If you are fair about it

They will only be offended.

Lotsawa, what will you do with corrupt followers?

They don't do anything

But they bloat their carcasses with pride.

They don't accomplish their own objectives;

They don't have time to accomplish anything at all.

They engage in the Dharma

But it's obvious that they are doing harm.

Lotsawa, what's the use of befriending humans?

If you are pristine and honest

They use that for something to fight about.

If you use skill in many kinds of methods

They think you're trying to deceive them.

Even though you do things without ulterior motives

People are never pleased.

Lotsawa, aren't you entertaining people you can't accommodate?

If you don't give up lusting after connections

You will always be miserable.

If you give up mingling with them

They say you have no compassion.

No matter what you think about

You will find nothing that is blameless.

Lotsawa, you rush around for a bunch of day dreams.

If you take care of every little thing

You are discriminatory.

If you only take care of the big things

They say your samaya is broken.

If you work to prevent some things and accomplish others

Enemies will proliferate, both public and insiders.

Lotsawa, don't work on worldly Dharmas even if times are bad.

If the assembly is large

They get carried away with disruptions.

If the assembly is absent

They say there is no way to get food.

No matter what you do

There will be cause to worry about your hopes and fears.

Lotsawa, what are you trying to do in these evil times?

If you give up luxuries



They toss you around like straw for making bricks.  
If you keep your luxuries  
They say you are a big hoarder.  
If you say you are satisfied  
They think you are practicing worldly Dharma.  
Lotsawa, think about what is in the hearts of the worldly.

If you confidently give in abundance  
They say you are rude.  
If you don't give anything  
You cut off your connections.  
If you claim you are giving the right amount  
They say you worship the Eight Dharmas [of the World].<sup>1</sup>  
Lotsawa, why do you work so hard to do meaningless things?

Friends, servants, and followers offer sustenance to their teachers  
Because they are connected in so many ways.  
That's how you get tied up.  
Each depends on the other,  
But the river of sorrow does not stop.  
Lotsawa, observe the condition of Samsara.

You can see that the Dharmas of Samsara are heartless.  
It's hard to get anything done with them.  
Delusion's hassles are never over,  
No matter what you try to do.  
It's easy to get scared.  
Lotsawa, think about what you will do when you die.

You go on the paths of the dead all by yourself.  
Your dear friends and family  
Stand around the side of your bed.  
Your thoughts are left behind due to the pain of disease and death.  
Lotsawa, nothing helps besides the Dharma.

The mandala of the body is made of the four elements.  
They resolve back into the earth, wind, and water.  
You cannot get up.  
Everything you see is washed in tears.  
Lotsawa, there is no protector besides the Dharma.

When you die your water and wind energies resolve into fire.

Your mouth dries up, your lips retract, and your tongue withdraws.  
You feel like you are being carried away in a terrifying river.  
Lotsawa, nothing helps but the Dharma.

When your wind energy resolves into the wind  
Your body's wind and fire disappear.  
You see tongues of fire surround you.  
You can't handle the fear.  
Lotsawa, consider what, besides the Dharma, will help.

Your wind energy resolves into the sky.  
Your breath flow stops.  
It feels like you are uncontrollably carried away  
By a large tornado.  
Lotsawa, nothing will protect you besides the Dharma.

Your awareness of the world disappears.  
You can't control it.  
On the other side  
You see the fearful Lord of the Dead.  
You can't figure out what to do.  
You become deeply depressed.  
Lotsawa, there is no shelter besides the Dharma.

The dead person is shuffled to the side of the bed.  
The body can't get back its breath.  
The sound Ngar Ngar comes out from inside the throat.  
Lotsawa, nothing besides the Dharma will help.

Your inner workings stop.  
The pain is beyond comprehension.  
Both eyes turn upward.  
The breath is still.  
Then all the scary things in the Bardo start to appear.  
Lotsawa, nothing helps besides the Dharma.

You might have lived a long time,  
Lost in your evil karma.  
You may even have obtained a human birth.  
Now you won't be able to do the things you wanted to.  
At the time of death each of us must travel alone.  
Lotsawa, consider the continuous impermanence of things.

You will leave your country behind.  
Be happy that you could visit humanity for a while.  
Things that were disgusting are now the things you want to eat.  
You dine on a diet of inequity, without master or servant.  
Lotsawa, look at the way things are.

You might have followers, students, and sumptuous luxuries  
In this life,  
But not one of them will accompany you when you die.  
When you get to the other side you'll want something  
dependable.  
Lotsawa, there's no friend besides the Dharma.

Renounce all these things that you enjoy.  
There is no virtue in pursuing evil,  
Yet you go after inequity and sorrow.  
If you really think about it you'll be crying all the time.  
Lotsawa, consider getting rid of your samsaric attitudes.

The first priority of bad-tempered people  
Is usually the development of lust and hatred.  
They study, contemplate, and meditate  
So that they can decide what to lust for and what to hate.  
Most of them don't think of anything but what they want.  
Lotsawa, consider the conditions under which you teach.

You are taken care of by a holy guru.  
From the depths of your being  
You long for things deep in meaning.  
Stop yourself, body, speech, and mind,  
From sitting around in comfort.  
Lotsawa, wrap yourself up alone with the Dharma.

If you study a lot  
You will know the generalities of the Dharma.  
If you think critically  
You piece apart distinctions and differences.  
If you meditate in Samadhi  
Realization will dawn in your mind.

Lotsawa, keep the two stages [of generation and perfection]  
In your mind.

Some have got a faultless human body.  
They have opportunity and lack impediments.  
But the glory of their youth  
Fades away like a cloud in the autumn.  
They throw their lives away trying to find distractions.  
Lotsawa, keep repeating this in your mind.

Things that appear on the surface  
Are like dreams and illusions.  
The things that dawn on you  
Are baggage for an empty mind.  
Observe the uncontrived natural state  
Of the Mahamudra.  
Lotsawa, the ability to remember is dear.

This is how a Great Pandita<sup>2</sup> wrote down his thoughts  
One summer while living in the province of Sakya  
To give himself advice.  
If there are mistakes,  
Or problems with it  
I hope that the wise will forbear.

By virtue of this  
May anything I or any sentient beings do  
Become a pathway of the Dharma.  
May we get to the level of the omniscient Victorious One  
Where anything that happens feels good.

This was written by Kunga Gyaltsan Pal Zangpo  
in the year of the male wood rat<sup>3</sup> on the eighth day  
of the month of Shravana.<sup>4</sup> I hope that this will be of  
enormous benefit to the teaching and to sentient beings.

*Advice to Myself by Sakya Pandita*  
*Translated by Christoph Wilkinson, 2011*

*Reproduced by kind permission of Christoph Wilkinson*

1 Acquisition, loss, reputation, infamy, praise, blame, happiness, and sorrow.

2 Pan Chen is a title of learning. It is also the title of an important Lama of the Gelug tradition, The Panchen Lama.

3 The year 1204/5. Sakya Pandita would have been 32 or 33 years old.

4 Tib: Gro bzhin. This is the name of the constellation Alpha Aquilae..



# Dharma Activities

## Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Singapore and Malaysia

On 16<sup>th</sup> November 2011, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left New Delhi to embark on a six-week teaching tour of Singapore and Malaysia. This came in the wake of Rinpoche's visit to Northeast India where he had, among other things, participated in His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's bestowal of the Vajrayogini teaching and empowerment at Sa-Ngor Gompa in Gangtok, Sikkim.

Rinpoche's journey in Southeast Asia began with a two-week stay in Singapore, during which time he imparted empowerments and teachings at Sakya Tenphel Ling. These had as their central theme the Sakyapa view of the non-differentiation of samsara and nirvana, along with daily Dharma practice



Rinpoche teaching at Sakya Tenphel Ling

according to the Sakyapa tradition, known as the 'Four Unbreakables'.

Rinpoche's stay in Singapore ended on the 4th of December with a "Wish-Fulfilling Family Day", a joyous occasion for everyone and a suitable farewell to Rinpoche, who was beseeched by one and all to return soon.



Rinpoche at the 'Wish-Fulfilling Family Day'

Rinpoche then left Singapore for Malaysia, where he was to bestow teachings in Johor Baru, Yong Peng, Kuala Lumpur as well as in Sibu and Kuching in East Malaysia. The overall theme of the program was Sakya Pandita, on whom Rinpoche gave talks and empowerments. Rinpoche also gave Chenrezig



Rinpoche at the 'Wish-Fulfilling Family Day'

empowerments as well as the Jambhala Rigtied and Medicine Buddha. Rinpoche performed many more Dharma activities, including group recital of mantras and Fire Pujas with the Sangha, which everyone found highly inspiring.



## Kalachakra 2012 at Bodh Gaya

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of January, H.H. the Sakya Trizin joined H.H. the Dalai Lama and other heads of Tibetan Buddhist lineages at Bodh Gaya for the 32nd Kalachakra initiation to be bestowed by H.H. the Dalai Lama. Also present at the initiation were hundreds of high lamas of all lineages and 200,000 followers who had travelled from 63 countries to participate in this significant event.

The Kalachakra Tantra, also referred to as Kalachakra Laghut tantra, is considered to be the most complex teaching in Tantric Buddhism. It revolves around the concept of time (*kala*) and cycles (*chakra*), embracing both microcosmic and macrocosmic ambits. Its deity represents time and its consort timelessness, and together they symbolise omniscience.

Its origins go back to the time of the Buddha, who first gave the teaching and initiation to King Suchandra of the mythical Kingdom of Shambhala, in response to the King's







request for a teaching that would allow him to practice the Dharma without renouncing his worldly pursuits.

The teaching eventually disappeared from India under the Mogul invasions, but survived in Nepal, from where it was brought to Tibet in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It is currently practised by all schools of Tibetan Buddhism. His Holiness the Sakya Trizin is one of the major Kalachakra lineage holders and has bestowed its initiation many times.

H.H. the Sakya Trizin arrived in Bodh Gaya on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of the event, previous to which H.H. the Dalai Lama, senior lamas and the monks from Namgyal Monastery had been holding purification rituals to consecrate the venue.

With the preliminary teachings over, Namgyal Monastery monks performed the sacred Kalachakra Ritual Dance, designed to clear all obstacles to the initiation and to enjoin the Dharma Protectors from the Ten Directions to watch over the proceedings.







With this, conditions were ripe for His Holiness the Dalai Lama to confer the Kalachakra initiation upon the congregation.

The event came to a close on 10th January with His Holiness conferring a *Tsewang* on the assembly. During the ceremony, His Holiness took the podium and, directing Himself to foreign disciples in



English, talked lengthily about the all-importance of warmheartedness, both on a human and on a spiritual level.

A *tenshug* followed, on which occasion H.H. the Sakya Trizin addressed the assembly to render homage to H.H. the Dalai Lama on behalf of the Ecumenical International Organisation of the Tibetan





Buddhist Traditions, presenting Him with an award for His incalculable achievements and conferring upon Him the title of “Sovereign Master of the Complete Teachings of Lord Buddha Shakyamuni”. The heads of all the lineages then came together to offer the award to their supreme leader.

The ceremony was also marked by the participation of three oracles, notably Nechung Dhammapala and Khandro Lhamo Tseringma, State Medium of the Tenma Oracle.

The 2012 Kalachakra at Bodh Gaya was a memorable occasion, if only for the amount of faithful that it brought together. The logistics of offering the

customary tea and *pale* (bread) to those present were intricate, to say the least. Every day, when tea break approached, a caravan of 500 monks emerged from the kitchen and scurried along what open path they could find to serve everyone on time for all to have tea with His Holiness.

It is worth mentioning that, in the early days of the gathering, H.H. the Dalai Lama granted a joint group audience to devotees who had come from mainland China and from Tibet. His Holiness first spoke to the Tibetans, and then to the Chinese, who as one, raised their khatas high, forming a giant silk wave, as they chanted “*Quang shu ying...Quang shu Ying....*”, Chinese for Chenrezig, its literal meaning being ‘You who hear the voice of the world’. With this gesture, the Dalai Lama rightly deserved the praise that He received from one and all for yet again bringing His message of peace by breaking down political boundaries and giving way to the natural kinship that exists between all beings.

*Photographs courtesy of: [www.sgnltv.com](http://www.sgnltv.com)*



## Gutor at the Sakya Centre

Between the 14<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> of February, the annual Vajrakilaya Torma-Throwing ritual, also known as Gutor, took place at the Sakya Centre in Dehradun. This year, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche was to act as Vajra Master of this all-important practice. Central to it is the performance of rites which aim at the destruction of negativities accrued over the

closing year, and the elimination of any obstacle that may obstruct the harmonious unfolding of the new year that Gutor ushers.

As is customary, the ritual culminated on its last day with the Black Hat Dance which, as Vajra Master, it was the mantle of Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche to perform. Vajrakilaya is very special to the Khön





His Holiness with Vajra Master Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche

family, and so the celebration of its ritual acquires an added dimension when it is conducted by a member of the Khön lineage. If last year's celebration of Gutor, led by Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche, was characterised by intense fervour, this year's was in turn marked by an unfathomable spiritual



The ceremony is held in the temple courtyard





Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche performing the serkyem offering ritual

depth that is only found within the domain of the very highest masters. Throughout the ceremony, the temple courtyard was imbued with Vajrakilaya's presence, and the rites were a powerful expression of his holy activity.

The ritual began with effigies representing the past year's negativities being brought down the temple stairs into the courtyard, where a series of purification rituals were carried out by the Vajra Master and his assistants, culminating in the casting of the effigies into a bonfire and, with this, the elimination of all negative influences that could create obstacles to the new year.



Effigies representing last year's negativities are brought down the temple stairs



Vajrakilaya's 'attendants' performing a purification dance



The effigies are thrown into the flames

## Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche in Moscow

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of March, Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche left His Holiness the Sakya Trizin's entourage in Kathmandu to fly to Moscow, where he was to give teachings and a Vajrakilaya initiation.

Rinpoche began his visit with the bestowal of two lectures at the Otkritiy Mir Centre, the first on 'Parting from the Four Attachments', and another on Jetsün Dragpa Gyaltsen's 'Short Melody of Dream-Like Practices'. The talk attracted large crowds, both sangha members and newcomers.



Rinpoche giving a talk at the Otkritiy Mir Centre



A magical setting

Rinpoche then left Moscow to spend four days at the Gar Kunphenling Retreat Centre in the outskirts of the city, where he gave the Vajrakilaya initiation and a commentary on its short sadhana.

The setting was fairytale, the venue an isolated *dasha* in the forest. Even more wondrous was crossing its lintel into a different realm, the inside of it transformed into a Tibetan Buddhist temple.





Gar Kunphenling Retreat Centre



Vajrakilaya participants

The program was intense, but Rinpoche still found time to enjoy the Russian winter.

*Photographs: Courtesy of Grigory Smirnov*



Ratna Vajra Rinpoche with the centre's mascot

## His Holiness the Sakya Trizin in Nepal



On the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, His Holiness arrived in Pokhara, Nepal, where He was to consecrate and inaugurate the newly constructed Pema Ts'al Monastery, following which He was to travel to Kathmandu to give teachings and transmissions in different establishments in the city and surroundings.

His Holiness was joined on His journey by Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, Their Eminences Dungsey Asanga Rinpoche and Dungsey Abhaya Rinpoche, H.E. Dungsey Akasha Rinpoche and H.E.





His Holiness and entourage on the roof of Pema Ts'al

Jetsunma Kunga Trinley, H.E. Thartse Khen Rinpoche, H.E. Shabdrung Rinchen Paljor Rinpoche, H.E. Lo Shabdrung Rinpoche and H.E. Tharig Tulku Rinpoche. His Holiness was also accompanied by H.E. Gyalyum Chenmo, and by H.E. Dagmo Kushok Kalden Sakya.

The Pema Ts'al Monastic Institute was created in 1999 by Ven. Khenpo Pema Wangdak and Ven. Khenpo Kunga Dhondup in response to the dire situation facing the next generation of Mustangi youths.

Situated on the Tibetan border of Northwest Nepal, Mustang was formerly a small Vajrayana Buddhist kingdom. Traditionally under the cultural and spiritual tutelage of Tibet, the political changes that swept the region in 1959 left it isolated and bereft of guidance.

With no educational facilities in place nor any suitable framework for its traditions to survive, the region is now at risk of finding itself in a cultural void. It is with this in mind that His Holiness the Sakya Trizin lent his patronage to the creation of an institution that would address this crucial problem.



Their Eminences Dungsays Asanga Rinpoche and Abhaya Rinpoche also joined His Holiness



With His Holiness' blessing, Venerable Khenpos Pema Wangdak and Kunga Dhondup set about finding a suitable site for such an institution. Kathmandu was originally chosen as a location but for several reasons, not least among which the level of pollution that afflicts the city, a decision was taken to relocate it. An extended search took the Khenpos to Pokhara, not only ideal for its natural beauty, moderate weather and clean air, but also home to a setting that mirrors H.E. Chogye Trichen Rinpoche's vision of a monastery standing on a plateau where two rivers meet. This location is also ideal in that it is within walking distance from five refugee camps and, although removed from the city, it still has all its amenities at hand.

And so, thanks to the generous support of sponsors, mostly from the U.S. and Japan, construction of the Pema Ts'al Sakya Monastic Institute began. Pema Ts'al means "Lotus Growth", a name particularly suited to the monastery, considering how it blossomed in spite of the adverse conditions from which it emerged. Standing against a backdrop of snowy peaks, the monastery is of outstanding beauty. It currently houses eighty monks and is designed to eventually accommodate one hundred and twenty. Graduating Khenpos are sent at regular intervals from Dzongsar Shedra at Bir to do a tour of duty as teachers at the institute.

The significance of the creation of Pema Ts'al Monastic Institute is of such importance that His Holiness the Sakya Trizin conferred upon its founders, Lama Pema Wangdak and Lama Kunga Dhondup, the title of Khenpo. The week-long celebrations surrounding the inauguration of the monastery were of huge magnitude for all those whose lives it touches, from its founding khenpos and its sponsors, to the monks that it now harbours and the community whose needs it will be serving.

Following are some the week's more memorable moments captured in photographs:



Inauguration day: sponsors Tom Roberts and Stephen Goetz await His Holiness' arrival at the temple



His Holiness blesses the temple doors



Khenpo Kunga Dhondup making a mandala offering to His Holiness





Sponsors and supporters of Pema Ts'al receive certificates of appreciation from His Holiness



His Holiness giving the Phurba Torwang at Pema Ts'al



Monks performing the Vajrakilaya ritual dance







A lively and colourful cultural show was held for the inauguration



During His stay in Pokhara, His Holiness took the opportunity to visit several schools and institutions.



Great Compassion Boarding School



Pal Ewam Namgyal Monastic School





Land blessing at Thartse Khen Rinpoche's site



Sakya Orgyen Ling



Sakya Orgyen Ling sangha

And on the 15th of March, after over a week of basking in their Guru's light, the Pema Ts'al monks and the Pokhara Sakya community bid farewell to His Holiness the Sakya Trizin as He continued His Nepalese journey, this time to perform Dharma activities in Kathmandu and surroundings areas.



Impermanence

His Holiness' arrival at the International Buddhist Academy in Kathmandu was greeted with due pomp and circumstance, on this His first visit since His Holiness performed the final rites for the Most Venerable Appey Khenchen Rinpoche last year.



Greeting His Holiness at IBA in Kathmandu



His Holiness spent His first three days in Kathmandu at the Zarong Dho- ngag Thupten Choeling Thrulsig Monastery, where He performed a Vajrakilaya puja before the *kudung* of the late Kyabje Trulshig Rinpoche.



His Holiness pays His respects to Thrulshig Rinpoche's kudung

While in Swayambu, His Holiness took the opportunity to bless different local centres.



His Holiness at the Triyana Dharma Centre



His Holiness and Shechen Rabjam Rinpoche performing the Vajrakilaya puja



Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche and Mindrolling Penam Rinpoche



Jigme Khyentse Rinpoche and Tharig Tulku Rinpoche



Empowerments at the Mustangi gompa in Swayambu



His Holiness spent the remainder of His stay in Boudhanath, where His first activity was to bestow the Manjushri *chenang* to a roomful of monks and students at IBA, followed by a Dharma talk in English on Jetsun Dragpa Gyaltzen's 'Songs of Realisation'.



Manjushri Chenang at IBA

His Holiness was to visit several centres in and around Boudhanath, including Byoma Kusuma, Rana Rinpoche's centre in Bishalnagar, Wangduk Lama Gompa and Walung Monastery, which His Holiness consecrated.



Wangduk Lama Gompa



Walung Monastery



And on the 21st, His Holiness performed a *Tsewang* for the public at the Gyang Guthi Gompa on the periphery of the Boudhanath stupa, which found itself surrounded devotees. His Holiness' motorcade laboured its way through the crowd as it went full circle around the stupa, ushered by Tharig Tulku Rinpoche, before finally stopping at the gompa. There, His Holiness climbed up to a first-storey balcony, from where He bestowed the initiation on the eager crowd.



Tharig Tulku Rinpoche leads His Holiness' motorcade around the Boudanath stupa



His Holiness performs the Tsewang at Gyang Guthi Gompa



Boudanath stupa surrounded by devotees





His Holiness arrives at Tharlam Monastery



Dungsey Asanga Rinpoche offers a mandala to His Holiness

His Holiness' last official visit was to Tharlam Monastery, where He imparted the Guru Rinpoche empowerment from the Apong Tertön Terma cycle and the Chenrezig empowerment.



Tharlam Monastery monks receive an empowerment from His Holiness



On the 25th of March, His Holiness left Kathmandu for Delhi, but not before giving some important words of advice to the group of IBA translation students and staff. :

"I am very happy to be here at IBA. Generally speaking we, as human beings, have different requirements but the most important thing is spiritual practice, because all the other worldly things are for the sake of this life. In the next life they do not benefit us. Spiritual practice, however, is not only for this life, but for many other lives – and not only for ourselves but for all sentient beings, so it is very good that all of you have come from different parts of the world to Nepal to train as translators. Here it is very beautiful: Nepal has the highest mountain in the world and also the Great Stupa (of Boudhanath). There are many holy shrines here and great masters like Guru Rinpoche and others have visited and practised here. Surely, this place is filled with great blessings.

It is said that you can practise in other places for months and years, but only a week here is more beneficial. So this is a very beautiful and holy place. So, since you have come all the way here to Nepal, you have to spend your time in the most purposeful and most meaningful way: to study Dharma, to contemplate and meditate. The great Acharya, Vasubandhu, said that our study and practice must be based on sound moral conduct, good discipline. This is very important, because it is the foundation of all the positive qualities. If you don't have good discipline but have knowledge it does not bring any benefit. To benefit from wisdom one has to have sound moral conduct. Then, study, contemplation and meditation can follow. This pattern is common to all Buddhist traditions: Theravada, Mahayana and Vajrayana.

Therefore you have come here. You have very good teachers and you have all the facilities necessary. My great teacher, Khenchen Appey Rinpoche was a great Bodhisattva who always thought first about other people's needs and their wellbeing and also the teachings of the Buddha. So, for these reasons, he spent all his life teaching and helping others. He created IBA specifically to benefit foreigners who are interested in learning Dharma but who have no chance to study, learn or to receive teachings. So he created IBA and spent a lot of money to build and create these facilities you have around you. Now you are here, and are using them, which makes me very happy - and now you must study!

There are many different kinds of teachings. So many things are happening in the world. Whether you practise or not is up to you as individuals, nobody can force you to practise, but one has to think very carefully. If you practise, how does this benefit, how does this make a difference? Also, if you don't practise, what kind of consequences will you face? So, if we practise, it will help and benefit you but, in order to practise, you have to study.

The ancient masters in their commentaries said that our discipline should be according to the Vinaya, which is the antidote to desire, and explains all the different levels of moral conduct, with different precepts for lay people and ordained monks and nuns. So our conduct should be according to the Vinaya. Meditation should be according to the Sutras, which are the antidote to anger, which is the most difficult thing to conquer, the most severe defilement.

This we can conquer through meditation. To meditate we have to study and also we have to analyse. Through meditation we can eliminate the defilements. So, meditation should be according to the Sutras. Next the explanations, the teachings, should be according to the Abhidharma, which is the antidote to ignorance because it explains the wisdom that removes our ignorance. If you want to practise the Mantrayana then this should be according to the great Tantras. So if we practise in these ways, we are on the right path and it will be of great benefit to ourselves as well as to others.

Nowadays, we see so many people in the world who are interested in Dharma. Therefore, I think it's very important for us to try to help them. So we need to translate the great teachings into different languages. Of course, translating is a difficult task. I feel there are two different kinds of translators. Some people place a lot of emphasis on the actual words, and they just translate the exact words of the texts. In this way, although it may be a very good translation, it can be difficult to understand, especially for newcomers ... I

think that what is most important for translators is that they must understand the actual meaning of the texts. If you know the actual meaning then you can present it in a different way: though the words may be a little different, the actual meaning is still conveyed. So this, I feel, is more important.... If you don't know the overall meaning, then whatever way you translate can be wrong, very confusing or difficult to understand.

However, if you know the overall meaning then presenting it is easier. Many great scholars have said that the best practice in dealing with some very difficult subjects, is to make them easier to understand. If we try to be more scholarly and make it more difficult to understand, then it is of no use. The main thing is the overall meaning. What Tibetan, English, Chinese or translators from any language must do, before you translate word by word, is to know the overall meaning. Then, if you know the whole meaning, you can convey the translation in a suitable way."

*Source: IBA website*



IBA translators



## Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya's First Tibetan Lesson

**O**n the morning of the 1st of May, as is wont by the Khön family tradition, His Holiness the Sakya Trizin gave His eldest granddaughter, H.E. Jetsunma Kunga Trinley Palter Sakya, her first lesson in the Tibetan letters.

The ceremony took place in His Holiness' private shrine room in the Phodrang. Just before it began, His Holiness broke into a smile and said: "I remember very clearly this moment in my own life".

When He was still a small child, His Holiness received His first lesson in the Manjushri temple of the Sakya Dolma Phodrang in Tibet from his guru Lama Ngawang Lodrö Rinchen. The ceremony began with a Manjushri initiation, following which His Holiness was taught His first four letters of the Tibetan alphabet from a gold-scripted scroll that had been used to teach successive generations of Dungseys. It then fell upon

his appointed teacher to introduce Him to the second set of four letters, this time in normal black and white script.

And now, it was Jetsunma's turn to pursue the family tradition, and the proceedings began with the reciting of the Manjushri mantra, following which His Holiness pointed to the first letters of the alphabet on a wooden board and called them by their name for Jetsunma to echo them.

Present at the ceremony was Acharya Chenyang Gyatso, whose responsibility it will be to complete Jetsunma's education in the Tibetan letters. At the conclusion, both Jetsunma and her tutor were offered khatas by members of the family including H.E. Luding Khen Rinpoche, and by the Phodrang staff, while everyone wished them auspiciousness and success in their endeavour.



His Holiness teaches Jetsunma her first letters



His Holiness looks on as Jetsunma and Acharya Chenyang Gyatso begin their first lesson



Student and teacher are offered khatas





## Wangya Norbu Trengwa Initiations at the Sakya Centre

On the 5th of April began the third part of the Wangya Norbu Trengwa wangs at the Sakya Centre in Dehradun. This was the continuation of the cycle of initiations that, three years ago, Lama Thubten Zopa Rinpoche had requested His Holiness the Sakya Trizin to bestow to himself and to other



His Holiness bestowing the wangs



Lama Zopa Rinpoche



Kunde Ling Rinpoche



Namgya Norbu Trengwa initiations 2012





Lama Zopa Rinpoche receiving nectar from His Holiness

Gelugpa high lamas, including H.E. Kunde Ling Rinpoche.

The Wangya Norbu Trengwa initiations, or ‘Jewel Garland of a Hundred Wangs’, had their origins with the Jonang tradition of Tibetan Buddhism, but were later compiled by a Mongolian Gelugpa master called Toyö Lhatsin Sogpo. Later still, Chonjang Kunga Trotchog had the idea of making them into a collection, a task eventually achieved by Yeshe Thundrup Gyantsen. As these initiations are now very rare in the Gelugpa school, and their equivalent are found in the ‘Collection of Tantras’ of the Sakya tradition, the request was made for His Holiness to bestow the latter to high lamas from the Gelugpa school.

Also participating in this important set of initiations were Khöndung Ratna Vajra Rinpoche, Phuntsok Phodrang Dungseys Avikrita, Asanga and Abhaya, as well as H.E. Kharsang Shabdrung and H.E. Tharig Tulku and several other high Sakyapa lamas.



Many high lamas received the initiations



The teachings ended on the 29th of May, with an elaborate *Tenshug* ceremony offered to His Holiness by Lama Zopa Rinpoche and other high lamas in gratitude for the bestowal of such rare and precious teachings. Lama Zopa also lavished His Holiness with a vast array of magnificent gifts as a token of his heartfelt appreciation.

And thus the Namgya Norbu Trengwa set of initiations drew to a close, leaving their fount of wisdom in the hearts and minds of all those who were fortunate enough to be present at the Sakya Centre on such a memorable occasion.



Wangya Norbu Trengwa initiations 2008



*Tenshug* for His Holiness



A gift of gratitude



## Annual Grand Pujas at The Sakya Center (June – Sept)

- **Annual Mahavairocana Puja** - 11<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month for 5 days (May 31 to Jun 4)
- **Annual Guru Rinpoche Puja** - 10<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month for 1 day (June 29)
- **Annual Vajrakilaya Puja** - 11<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month for 11 days (August 27)

### Great Festivals

- **Saka Dawa Duchen** – 15<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month (Jun 4)
- **Chokhor Duchen** – 4<sup>th</sup> of the 6<sup>th</sup> month (July 23)

### Important Dates

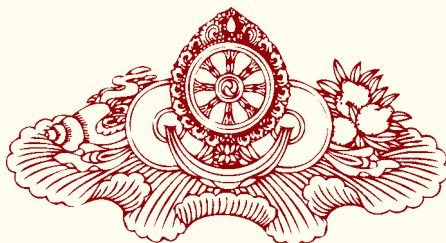
#### *Birthdays - Tibetan / Western*

- **Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche's Tibetan Birthday** – 10<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month (June 29)
- **H.H. the Dalai Lama's Tibetan Birthday** – 12<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month (July 1)
- **Khöndung Gyana Vajra Rinpoche's Western Birthday** – (July 5)
- **H.H. the Dalai Lama's Western Birthday** – 18<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month (July 6)
- **H.H. the Sakya Trizin's Western Birthday** – 23<sup>rd</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Sept 8)

#### *Holy days*

- **Parinirvana of Khenchen Dhampa Dorje Chang Ngawang Lodoe Shenpen Nyingpo** – 12<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month (Jun 1)
- **Virupa attains the First Bhumi** – 23<sup>rd</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month (Jun 12)
- **Parinirvana of Ngorchen Dorje Chang Kunga Sangpo** – 25<sup>th</sup> of the 4<sup>th</sup> month (Jun 14)
- **Parinirvana of Sachen Kunga Lodro** – 2<sup>nd</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month (Jun 21)
- **Parinirvana of Khyentse Dorje Chang Jamyang Khyentse Chokyi Lodrö** – 6<sup>th</sup> of the 5<sup>th</sup> month (Jun 25)
- **Parinirvana of Ngawang Thutop Wangchuk** – 20<sup>th</sup> of the 6<sup>th</sup> month (Aug 7)
- **Parinirvana of Dorje Chang Ngawang Lodrö Rinchen** – 29<sup>th</sup> of the 6<sup>th</sup> month (Aug 16)
- **Parinirvana of Ngakchang Kunga Rinchen** – 14<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Aug 30)
- **Parinirvana of Tsarchen Losal Gyatso** – 15<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Aug 31)
- **Parinirvana of Ngakchang Kunga Tashi** – 19<sup>th</sup> of the 7<sup>th</sup> month (Sept 4)

✿ 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: shrisakya@yahoo.co.in



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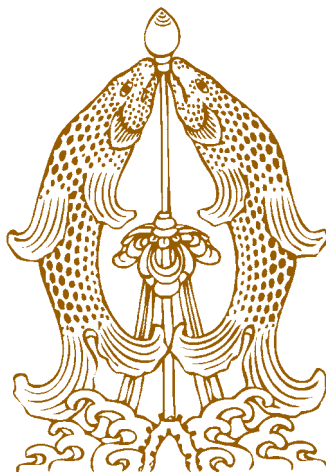
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***"Both pleasure and pain are created by the mind."***

KOTALIPA

